

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut)

PLACE: 26472

ADDRESS: 76 Bates Road, Emu Bay, Kangaroo Island, SA, 5223

HISTORY

The nomination for the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) at Emu Bay suggests that the place may have State Heritage significance because of its early historical associations. In particular, the hut is reputed to be a pre-settlement structure that may have been the residence of John Stokes, and later, had significant associations with agricultural development on Kangaroo Island. Consequently, the following history is divided into two sections, each providing a brief history to enable the various claims within the nomination to be addressed. The first considers the history of the pre-settlement sealers, their dwellings as described by accounts recorded during the early 1800s and finally the official settlement of Kangaroo Island. It is followed by an account of the development of Emu Bay and the construction of the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut).

Pre-settlement Sealers and the Early Settlement of Kangaroo Island

According to the Aboriginal peoples of the Fleurieu Peninsula and Lower Murray, Kangaroo Island is believed to be a 'stepping stone for the soul' on its way to the place where ancestral spirits went.¹ Consequently, Kangaroo Island was uninhabited immediately prior to European settlement in the early 1800s. Captain Matthew Flinders named Kangaroo Island in 1802 after a successful hunting trip on the island provided the crew with their first fresh provisions in four months.² While a number of individuals may have hunted seals around Kangaroo Island from the late 1700s, Joseph Murrell and his crew are noted as the first sealers to base themselves on the Island. The *Marcia* left Murrell and his party on the Island in 1806 on the understanding that the ship would return in three months. It was 1809 before the sealers returned to Sydney.³

Declining seal numbers in Bass Strait resulted in increased numbers of sealers basing their activities from Kangaroo Island from the 1810s. While some of the sealers became permanent or long-term residents, many, like Murrell, were only seasonal workers. Unlike Murrell, the seasonal sealers typically resided on Kangaroo Island for only a few months to a year.⁴ Whether a seasonal or permanent resident, the main products collected for trade were seal and kangaroo skins and salt collected from the dry lagoons. The salt was considered to be of a high quality and was well regarded for its abilities to prevent spoilage.⁵

Many of the sealers based on Kangaroo Island were involved in the forcible abduction of Aboriginal women. The women and in some cases girls and boys were primarily taken from Tasmania and the Lower Murray area of South Australia. Historically, the women and girls

are referred to as the men's 'Aboriginal wives'. The Aboriginal women taken to Kangaroo Island were responsible for tending gardens, hunting small animals for both skins and food, fishing, and undertaking a range of household duties. A number of children were born to the Aboriginal women and sealers. Although some accounts from the time claim the women were treated well, it is clear from others that many women were treated cruelly and with inhumanity, both at the time of their abduction and during their enslavement.⁶

The pre-settlement population of Kangaroo Island was in a constant state of flux as different individuals came and went. Ruediger in his history of Kangaroo Island, claims that the population in 1826 was 200 and was composed of 40 sealers, 60 Aboriginal women and 100 half-caste children. Moore, whose work is largely composed of extracts from period documentation, indicates a smaller population. Although, it is important to note that encounters between visitors to Kangaroo Island and the pre-settlement population may not record the whole population of the Island at that time. The various period sources state the population was 40 individuals in 1827, 16-18 men in 1831 and 7 men and 5 women in 1834.⁷ Captain Hart recorded the population, in 1836, as 8 men and 16 Aboriginal women.⁸ Notable and/or notorious pre-settlement sealers included but are not limited to: George (Fireball) Bates, William Thompson, William Walker, Waller, G. Meredith, Jacob Seaman, George Brown, Nathaniel Thomas, James Allen, William Day, John Anderson (Abyssinian Jack) and the self-proclaimed Governor of Kangaroo Island Robert Wallen also referred to as Whalley, Warland, Walker and Worley.⁹

Most of the sealers appear to have settled on the northern and north-eastern coast of the Island. However, Captain Sutherland noted during his trip around Kangaroo Island in 1819 that there was a group of sealers living on the southwest coast. He described the men as savages who lived in 'bark huts' and smelt like 'foxes'.¹⁰

'Governor' Robert Wallen reputedly arrived on Kangaroo Island at Nepean Bay in 1816 with two Aboriginal women. Soon after his arrival he moved to Three Wells, now known as Cygnet River, and established a farm there. Later, he was joined by George Copper and a third Aboriginal women called Bess. Bess was also known as Polecat because of her propensity to scratch the faces of the men when she was angry with them. Wallen's hut was described by Dr Leigh soon after settlement. 'Let one fancy a square about ten feet by five, the side resembling a letter A composed of the bark of a tree, a little fence in front to keep away all vexatious intruders and render it snug.'¹¹ The same structure was described in the second supplement of the first report of the South Australian Company as being constructed from 'trees driven into the ground like piles, pointed with clay and thatched'.¹² While the written records from the time continue to, on occasion, mention that the sealers lived in huts, rarely are they described in the same detail as Wallen's.

An article in the *Sydney Gazette*, in 1826, noted at least one settlement large enough to be called a village. 'They live in regular villages, are all clothed with a cloak made of the skins stitched together and ornamented...'. The village was led by John Anderson or Abyssinia

Jack who was regarded as a brutal man. The village was located in the interior of the Island and was occupied for only a part of the year as the group camped on the coast during the sealing season. At the conclusion of the sealing season the men, women and children relocated to their village located in a valley. The village was composed from a number of small huts and had a garden.¹³

The accounts indicate that the dwellings built by the pre-settlement sealers tended to be wattle and daub or bark-clad timber structures. The huts were built using simple construction techniques and fulfilled the sealers requirements for shelter.

The official settlement of Kangaroo Island commenced in July 1836 when the first of the South Australian Company ships, *Lady Mary Pelham* and *Duke of York*, arrived at Reeves Point. The South Australian Company founded the town of Kingscote (Reeves Point) as its base for whaling operations. By 1838 Kingscote's population was approximately 400 and the fledgling settlement contained a store, boarding house, workshops and a post office. The settlers variously lived in tents, brush or timber huts and stone cottages. However, the population plummeted late in 1838 when the South Australian Company relocated its headquarters to Adelaide. The current town of Kingscote was located close to the original settlement and reached a population of approximately 700 by 1901.¹⁴

After official settlement, some of the pre-settlement sealers relocated to other parts of the Island, ostensibly to get away from the settlers. George (Fireball) Bates, a notable pre-settlement sealer, moved from Antechamber Bay to Hogs Bay in 1836. It was at this time that he built himself a small stone cottage. The cottage is believed to be the first stone building constructed on Kangaroo Island; although this claim is unsubstantiated.¹⁵

The population of Kangaroo Island grew slowly in the decades after official settlement and had only reached 500-600 by the mid-1860s. Farms, wallaby hunters and individual dwellings and/or small settlements were recorded at Kingscote, Antechamber, Hog, Emu, Smith, Stokes, Dashwood, d'Estree and Vivonne Bays, Eastern Cove, Snellings Beach, Snug Cove and along the Cygnet and Hog Bay Rivers. Barley was successfully cropped and was considered to be the best grown in South Australia at the time. Barley continued to be the main crop grown around Emu Bay in the late nineteenth century.¹⁶

Emu Bay and the Sealer's Hut

The following section is divided into three parts; each part considers different aspects of the development of Emu Bay. The first concentrates on John Stokes, whom the nominator believed might have been responsible for building the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut). The second focuses on the early agricultural development of Emu Bay by the Hamilton's as well as the area's survey that resulted in its rapid settlement for agriculture. Finally, the construction of the nominated place by the Whittle family in the late nineteenth century is considered.

John Stokes

The first recorded resident of Emu Bay was John Stokes. Historical texts regarding Stokes' arrival on Kangaroo Island vary. However, it is widely considered that he was a pre-settlement sealer who arrived on Kangaroo Island in about 1817. His life is portrayed as one of Kangaroo Island's early romantic tragedies. One account claims Stokes was late in returning to his home town in England from a sea voyage and his brother, Henry, married John's sweetheart, Margaret, in his absence. John Stokes left England broken-hearted and ended up on Kangaroo Island, settling at Emu Bay where he built himself a hut close to the beach and an adjacent well. Henry and Margaret migrated to Kangaroo Island in the late 1830s or early 1840s. The three accidentally bumped into each other on the beach when John went to see the newly arrived colonists. The family was reconciled and John returned to Emu Bay and Henry and Margaret established themselves at Hair Seal Bay now Stokes Bay. Another account is that John and Henry arrived on the Island together about 1817. At the time John was approximately 20 and Henry 8 years old. Bell claims that John was therefore born c1798.¹⁷ Bell's account fails to explain how Margaret becomes married to Henry. It simply states that Margaret was Henry's wife.

The *Biographical Index of South Australia 1836-1885*, compiled by the South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society records that both John and Henry arrived in South Australia c1817. Further noting that Henry was born c1808, died 14 September 1898 and that he married Margaret who was born c1818 and died 11 October 1894. The Index also recorded that John married Margaret and provides no dates for his birth or death.¹⁸ To add to the confusion, the *Index of Death Registrations 1842-1915* states that John died 28 February 1884 at the age of 81 and the *Register* 17 February 1884 aged about 75. The *Index of Death Registrations* records Henry's death as 12 September 1898 age 89, resident of Emu Bay. There is no record for Margaret Stokes Kangaroo Island or indeed any female with the last name of Stokes from Kangaroo Island. Ruediger records Margaret's death as occurring on 9 October 1894 aged 76.

Therefore, the varying accounts indicate:

- John was born either c1798, c1803 or c1809,
- Henry, was born either 1808 or 1809,
- Margaret was born in 1816, and
- Margaret was married to either John or Henry.

Consequently, if John did arrive in 1817 he would have been aged either 20, 14 or 8. While Henry was 8 and Margaret was only one year old. Consequently, the romantic tragedy story, as told, is not possible.

Newspaper articles written at the time of John's death suggested that he arrived on Kangaroo Island in 1837-1838. However, the claim cannot be verified from the available passenger lists.¹⁹ A couple of years prior to his death, John was relocated to the Destitute Asylum in Adelaide and then the Hulk at Semaphore where he worked until his death, most

likely due to a stroke.²⁰ While there is confusion about the date Stokes arrived on Kangaroo Island and his age, it can be confirmed he did reside at Emu Bay and built a hut close to the beach in what became section 210 of the Hundred of Menzies.

William Holmes Hamilton

William Holmes Hamilton is recorded as one of Emu Bay's earliest residents. Hamilton built his first home at Emu Bay, just above the landing place, in the late 1860s. Hamilton's home was typical of the early stone structures built on Kangaroo Island after settlement. It was described as a two roomed hut with concrete walls, thatched roof and flagstone floor; three 18 foot wells were located close by. Hamilton left Kangaroo Island in 1871 but returned in 1881. At the time of his return the Hundred of Menzies was in the process of being surveyed. Subsequently, he variously purchased and leased 3000 acres, including sections 109 and 244 adjacent to his father's section 108 in the Hundred of Menzies, Emu Bay. The Hamilton's also owned Dover Farm.²¹

The survey of the Hundred of Menzies resulted in a proposed but unrealised town at Emu Bay named Maxwell. Maxwell was planned as a typical nineteenth century government parkland town composed of town allotments surrounded by a belt of parkland, suburban sections and then country sections.²² Noted on the survey were a number of the existing huts, wells, ruins, various reserves for water and stone and landing places amongst other annotations. Hamilton's first residence was indicated on the survey map. However, there is nothing indicated at suburban section 229, the site of the nominated hut.²³ Many of the country and suburban sections were either purchased outright or via credit selection or leased in the early 1880s. While some of the selectors managed to farm good crops of barley, by the late 1880s and early 1890s, concerns were being raised about the exodus of people from Emu Bay and adjacent areas due to poor yields.²⁴ Despite the problems experienced in the late 1880s and early 1890s, barley continued to be grown in the Emu Bay area. A much sought after jetty was completed in Emu Bay in 1918 and enabled the surrounding farmers to transport their crops, more easily, to market on the mainland.²⁵ A small residential settlement has subsequently evolved on the town allotments and is known as Emu Bay.

Albert Thomas Whittle

As previously noted, the nominated farmhouse is located on suburban section 229. Section 229 and the adjacent sections numbered 228-234 and amounting to 42 acres were first purchased by Samuel Robert Fox, an Adelaide-based accountant, in 1884. Little is known about Fox and while there is no evidence to suggest it there remains a small possibility that Fox may have built or partially constructed a hut on section 229. The combined 42 acre parcel of land was later sold to Albert Thomas Whittle in 1889, and was passed down through the Whittle family until the 1970s.²⁶ In the museum of the Kangaroo Island Branch of the National Trust of South Australia is an annotated map of the Hundred of Menzies. The annotations identify the site and owner of a number of huts and ruins not included on the earlier government survey. Section 229 is annotated to indicate a hut owned by AT

Whittle. Further, Malcolm Whittle, a current ancestor of AT Whittle, believes that the nominated farmhouse was built by one of his family members.²⁷ Consequently, it is most likely that the nominated farmhouse was built c1889 by AT Whittle.

Chronology

- 1802: Captain Matthew Flinders names Kangaroo Island after a successful hunting trip provides fresh rations for his crew.
- 1806-1809: Joseph Murrell and crew are the first known sealers to use Kangaroo Island as a base for their sealing activities.
- 1810s-1820s: Increasing numbers of sealers use Kangaroo Island as a base for their sealing activities.
- 1816: 'Governor' Robert Wallen arrives on Kangaroo Island.
- 1817: John Stokes possibly settles at Emu Bay.
- 1826: Kangaroo Island population is approximately 200, including 40 men, 60 Aboriginal women and 100 children. John Anderson (Abyssinia Jack) heads a small village located in a valley in the interior of the Island and has a coastal camp during the sealing season.
- July 1836: South Australian Company ships the *Lady Mary Pelham* and *Duke of York* arrive on Kangaroo Island carrying the first official colonists to South Australia and establish the town of Kingscote (Reeves Point).
- 1836: George (Fireball) Bates relocates from Antechamber Bay to Hogs Bay and builds a stone cottage – reputedly the first stone cottage on the Island.
- 1836-1837: John Stokes most likely settles at Emu Bay and builds himself a stone cottage.
- 1838: The South Australian Company relocates its headquarters to Adelaide and the population of Kingscote plummets.
- 1860s: William Holmes Hamilton establishes his first residence at Emu Bay slightly north of the Landing Place.
- Mid-1860s: Kangaroo Island population reaches 500-600.
- 1871: William Holmes Hamilton leaves Kangaroo Island.
- 1881-1882: Hundred of Menzies is surveyed, the township of Maxwell is proposed and the surveyed land is offered for sale and/or lease.

- 1881: William Holmes Hamilton returns to Kangaroo Island and purchases and leases 3000 acres and builds a second home at Emu Bay.
- 1884: Samuel Robert Fox purchases adjacent sections 228-234.
- 1889: Albert Thomas Whittle purchases Fox's land including section 229.
- c1889: Albert Thomas Whittle builds the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut).
- Late 1880s-early 1890s: Concerns are raised about poor crop yields and the exodus of farmers from the Menzies area.
- 1901: The population of Kingscote reaches 700.
- 1918: The Emu Bay jetty is completed and local crops, including barley, are transported directly from Emu Bay to the mainland for sale.
- 1976: Sections 228-234 are sold to Ronald Langdon and Margaret Hazel Sweet.
- 1989: Section 229 is sold separately.
- 1994: Clive Colenso begins the restoration of the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut).

DESCRIPTION

The nominated farmhouse is a three roomed, rectilinear stone structure with a gable roof and extensive fireplace and chimney. Two additions were constructed at the rear of the building; the first is a small stone lean-to addition and chimney that appears to have been built at the same time as the original structure and was used as a kitchen. The other addition was constructed in the past two decades by the current owner. The original farmhouse and kitchen were in a dilapidated state by the 1990s and were restored by the current owner. Further, a stone-lined well is located to the immediate north of the farmhouse; it is currently covered and continues to be a source of water for the building.

The farmhouse is constructed from mortared, locally gathered, random sized, irregularly shaped and squared bluestone. The squared bluestone is primarily laid at the corners and in the lower portion of the walls as well as the chimney. On the southern façade, part of the wall is buttressed in a manner that suggests a chimney may have been partially built in that location. The roof frame is constructed from round pole joists and rafters with sawn-timber ridge board and purlins. The round poles are de-barked local or bush timbers. The roof is clad with sheets of corrugated zincalume.

The eastern façade has three timber-framed fixed windows with timber lintels and a timber front door. The front door opens into the main room which is dominated by the approximately 2.4m wide fireplace that extends along the western façade of the building. The flooring in the main room is timber boards and squared bluestone flags. The squared bluestone flags are laid the width of the room and extend across the front of the fireplace. While most of the interior walls are exposed bluestone, some portions are rendered and painted. Portions of the walls in the roof cavity are plastered. The ceiling is constructed from painted timber boards. A small room is located at either end of the main room; each room is accessed via a timber framed doorway with a timber lintel. An additional doorway located on the southern side of the fireplace leads into the first addition or kitchen.

In 1994, the farmhouse was in poor condition due to extensive cracking in the walls. A major crack in the northeast corner of the building resulted in the separation of that portion of the wall from the main structure. Sections of wall in the kitchen lean-to had also collapsed. To stabilise the farmhouse a number of metal rods were inserted through the stonework and fixed in place with large metal plates located on the exterior walls. The stonework was repointed with cement and it appears that some of the roof cladding has been replaced. A verandah was also added along the eastern façade or front of the building at that time.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), Emu Bay does not meet any of the criteria for a State Heritage place. Consequently, there is no statement of heritage significance.

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

The Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), Emu Bay is a vernacular, domestic dwelling that is potentially associated with two aspects of South Australia's history. The first is pre-settlement; the other is the agricultural development of the State.

Heritage Investigations (Marsden et al) and Historical Consultants Pty Ltd (Linn, et al) undertook a Heritage Survey of Kangaroo Island in 1986, with the resulting document being published in 1991. As well as consulting historical records and surveying the physical fabric of places on the island, the survey process also invited members of the community to recommend sites of heritage significance. During this process, the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), Emu Bay was not identified as either a State Heritage Place or Local Heritage Place.

The 1991 Heritage Survey identified and recommended a number of pre-settlement sites for both State and Local Heritage listing. Of the built pre-settlement sites identified in the survey, only eight were huts or hut ruins. Of the eight, six were recommended as State Heritage Places and two as Local Heritage Places. Subsequently, three of the

recommended places were listed as State Heritage Places, however none of the recommended places have been included in the Local Heritage Register.

The pre-settlement sites with a hut or hut ruin listed as State Heritage Places are:

- Jacob Seaman's Hut SHP14752
- Freshfields House and Graves SHP10394
- Grassdale Homestead SHP14645

The three pre-settlement sealers associated with each of the above State Heritage Places were respectively Jacob Seaman, Nathaniel Thomas and an unnamed sealer or sealers.

The sites recommended as State Heritage Places that were not subsequently listed are:

- Wilkinson Hut Ruin (the South Australian Heritage Council endorsed progressing the assessment 5 July 2017)
- Stokes House Ruin (the South Australian Heritage Council endorsed progressing the assessment 5 July 2017)
- Wallen's Farm and SA Company Office (nominated 1993, rejected by the South Australian Heritage Council 31 August 1995)

The three unlisted but recommended sites were associated with Wilkinson, John Stokes and 'Governor' Robert Wallen. The last two were well known pre-settlement figures; Stokes is widely believed to be Emu Bay's first resident.

The sites recommended as Local Heritage Places (currently unlisted) include:

- House and Site (George (Fireball) Bates)
- Hut Ruin

Like Wallen and Stokes, Bates was a notable and/or notorious pre-settlement figure on Kangaroo Island.

In addition, the 1991 Survey recommended a further twelve pre-settlement sites as either State Heritage Places or Local Heritage Places that represented other aspects of 'European' contact or pre-settlement history on Kangaroo Island. For example salt lakes (early industry); landing sites for the explorers Flinders and Baudin; wells; sealers campsites; and the Penneshaw Cemetery. Of the twelve, two are State Heritage Places and one is a Local Heritage Place and include:

- Penneshaw Cemetery (burial site for pre-settlement sealers) SHP14747
- Frenchman's Rock Monument, Well and Trees (Baudin) SHP14651
- Prospect Hill (Flinders) Local Heritage Place (identified as a potential State Heritage Place 1991, the South Australian Heritage Council endorsed progressing the assessment 5 July 2017)

Like the pre-settlement sites, there are a number of sites on Kangaroo Island that have been registered as State Heritage Places due to their significance to the agricultural and/or

pastoral development of Kangaroo Island and the State. The places all date from the late nineteenth century or very early twentieth century and include:

- Threshing Floor, Pelican Lagoon Conservation Park SHP14737
- Rock Rover Homestead, Flinders Chase National Park SHP12588
- Cassini Station Complex and Mulberry Tree SHP14750
- 'The Bluff' formerly Reeves Cottage, Seaview Farm SHP14406
- Threshing Floor, Cape Gantheaume Conservation Park SHP14738
- Threshing Floor SHP14736
- Bates Farmhouse, Threshing Floor & Roller, Baudin Conservation Park (no association with George (Fireball) Bates) SHP14112
- Dwelling, Rock Villa, Hog Bay River Station SHP14749
- Tilka Huts, Shed and Grave Site SHP14744

Further, there are numerous late nineteenth century and early twentieth century farm houses/cottages and/or ruins that have been identified as Local Heritage Places. In most instances they meet criteria (a), (b) and (d) and more rarely (e). Briefly, the criteria represented are historical and social themes of local importance; customs and ways of life characteristic of the local area; construction techniques significant to the local area; and/or links to a notable local personality. Local Heritage Places in the Emu Bay area include:

- Whittaker's Cottage (1884)
- Emu Bay Homestead (late 1920s)
- Ruin, North Coast Road (early twentieth century)
- Dover Farm Ruin.

An additional State Heritage Place in the Emu Bay area that illustrates typical construction techniques and uses Emu and Smith Bay stone is the former Wisanger School SHP10977, built in 1884. The local community built the simple structure as a school and meeting room. The building operated as a school until 1945 and was a hub of community activities from the time of its construction until the 1970s.

Assessment against Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*):

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the state's history.

In regard to this criterion consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.

The Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) was nominated in the belief that it is 'the only known sealers hut in South Australia' and that after settlement it became a farm and supported the production of barley on Kangaroo Island. However, research indicates that the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) does not have a clear association with the pre-settlement sealers who resided on Kangaroo Island prior to 1836. The huts built by the pre-settlement sealers tended to be wattle and daub or bark-clad timber structures. While it is possible that some of the sealers built stone huts prior to 1836, for example Jacob Seaman's Hut SHP14752, other sealers such as George (Fireball) Bates did not construct stone huts until after settlement. Further, there are a number of structures, ruins and sites associated with pre-settlement sealers already entered in the South Australian Heritage Register, including the following:

- Jacob Seaman's Hut SHP14752
- Freshfields House and Graves SHP10394
- Grassdale Homestead SHP14645

Therefore, the nominated Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) is not the only known example of a sealer's hut in South Australia.

The only known pre-settlement sealer to be associated with Emu Bay is John Stokes. Despite common belief that Stokes arrived on Kangaroo Island c1817 the records support the later arrival date of c1836-1837. While it is unlikely that he was a pre-settlement sealer, he is widely believed to be Emu Bay's first resident. Stokes built his hut in Emu Bay close to the beach and adjacent wells on what became suburban section 210 of the Hundred of Menzies. Given that the nominated place is located on section 229 and Stoke's hut ruin is located on section 210, the evidence does not

support the nominator's assertion that the reputed Sealers' Hut may have been John Stokes dwelling.

The Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) was most likely constructed after 1889 by AT Whittle. The Whittle's are one of Emu Bay's earlier farming families and successive generations of the Whittle family farmed in the Emu Bay area. Therefore the nominated place is associated with the Whittle family. The Whittles are only one of a number of farming families located on Kangaroo Island during the nineteenth century who contributed to the agricultural development of the Island. As a result, there are a number of sites listed as a State Heritage Place due to their association with early agricultural production on Kangaroo Island. The State Heritage Places include:

- Threshing Floor, Pelican Lagoon Conservation Park SHP14737
- Rock Rover Homestead, Flinders Chase National Park SHP12588
- Cassini Station Complex and Mulberry Tree SHP14750
- 'The Bluff' formerly Reeves Cottage, Seaview Farm SHP14406
- Threshing Floor, Cape Gantheaume Conservation Park SHP14738
- Threshing Floor SHP14736
- Bates Farmhouse, Threshing Floor & Roller, Baudin Conservation Park (no association with George (Fireball) Bates) SHP14112
- Dwelling, Rock Villa, Hog Bay River Station SHP14749
- Tilka Huts, Shed and Grave Site SHP14744

The above places are of State Heritage significance due to their clear association with the evolution of agricultural practices in South Australia, for example the construction and use of threshing floors and/or their association with the early establishment of agricultural production on Kangaroo Island and South Australia. While the Whittles are known to be an early farming family on Kangaroo Island, they did not purchase section 229 and construct the farmhouse until after barley cropping was well established in the Emu Bay area. Further, there is no evidence to suggest that the farmhouse is associated in any special way with the evolution of agricultural practices in South Australia. In addition, there are also a number of existing State Heritage Places that better represent agricultural development and history both on Kangaroo Island and, more broadly, within South Australia.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (a).

(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.

In regard to this criterion consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost,

or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in future.

The Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), built c1889, is not associated with the pre-settlement sealers who resided on Kangaroo Island prior to 1836, therefore it cannot be considered to be a rare example of a pre-settlement structure in South Australia.

The Whittle Farmhouse is associated with the farming history of South Australia as it was built by AT Whittle, a barley farmer in the Emu Bay area. The Whittles purchased the section in 1889 and presumably built the hut soon afterwards. By that time barley farming was already well established on Kangaroo Island and at Emu Bay. Therefore, the Whittles could not be considered to play a special role in the agricultural development of the State, and the Sealer's Hut is not associated with a cultural practice that is rare, uncommon or endangered.

The farmhouse or hut is a simple, vernacular, stone dwelling, typical of that type of structure built on Kangaroo Island during the nineteenth century. In particular, the nominator believes that the '6ft fireplace is unique'. Many similar structures were built at that time and were two or three roomed huts constructed from mortared, local stone; with round timber or bush pole roof frames, clad with either corrugated iron or brush; and have a substantial fireplace. Images of the fireplaces indicate that they are, like the Whittle Farmhouse fireplace, constructed from mortared local stone and of a comparable size. Not only were these structures built as dwellings, but like the former Wisanger School SHP10977, also as community buildings. A number of similar structures were identified in the Kangaroo Island heritage surveys undertaken by Heritage Investigations and Historical Consultants in 1986 and, later, Weidenhofer Architects in 2006 and include:

- Freshfields SHP10394
- Grassdale Homestead SHP14645
- Cassini Station Complex and Mulberry Tree SHP14750
- Stokes House ruin
- Former Wisanger School SHP10977
- Brackenmore
- Hawkes Nest ruin LHP
- Kaiwarra LHP
- Farmhouse Hogg Bay Rd

- 'Tilka' ruin LHP
- Whittacker's Cottage
- Dover Farm ruin LHP

In addition to the above huts and cottages and ruins of huts and cottages that have fireplaces of a comparable size, a number of substantial freestanding fireplaces/chimneys of comparable size were also identified as components of ruin sites that have state heritage significance. The fireplaces/chimneys include:

- Threshing Floor and Chimney SHP14736 (note: the listing is for the threshing floor only)
- Wilkinson's Hut ruin (the South Australian Heritage Council endorsed progressing the assessment 5 July 2017)

Consequently, the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) cannot be considered to be a rare example of the small, vernacular, mortared stone buildings built on Kangaroo Island during the nineteenth century. Neither is it of exceptional interest. Further the fireplace/chimney is neither rare nor unique.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (b).

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the state's history, including its natural history.

In regard to this criterion consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.

It is possible that there is evidence not currently visible at the Whittle Farmhouse that would provide a small amount of additional information about the life of the Whittle family. However, the information yielded would be specific to the Whittle family and would not yield physical evidence that would meaningfully contribute to an understanding of the State's history.

In addition, the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) was built in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and therefore is not associated with the pre-settlement sealers who may or may not have resided at Emu Bay. Certainly, the nominated place is not associated with John Stokes. Stokes was reputedly the only known person to possibly be a pre-settlement sealer at Emu Bay and resided on section 210 and not section 229 where the farmhouse is located. As a result, it is highly unlikely that the site would yield any archeological evidence about the sealers who based their activities from Kangaroo Island prior to official settlement in 1836.

It is recommended that the nominated place does **not fulfil** criterion (c).

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.

In regard to this criterion consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.

Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.

There is no evidence that the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) belongs to a class of places of cultural significance, as it is neither a pre-settlement structure, nor one that dates back to the early settlement of KI and the state.

The Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) is typical of the huts built on Kangaroo Island after official settlement occurred in 1836. It is classed as a vernacular structure as it utilises traditional building practices and patterns, is not architect designed, and is constructed primarily from local materials. The Whittle Farmhouse is a small, simple, rectilinear structure with a gable roof. It was constructed from local bluestone, fieldstone and primarily bush timbers. It was built using standard construction techniques including mortared stone, a timber roof frame composed from rafters, joists, ridge board and purlins, and has timber lintels to support the window and door openings.

While the Whittle Farmhouse represents nineteenth century vernacular dwellings located on Kangaroo Island, the structure cannot be considered to be an outstanding

example due to its loss of integrity first through deterioration as an abandoned homestead, and then due to restoration. The walls of the building, as noted previously, were badly cracked and parts of the wall were separating from the main structure. To tie the building together, metal rods were inserted through the walls and were secured with large, unsightly plates attached to the exterior of the building. In addition, the stone walls were heavily repointed with concrete. In some areas the walls were so heavily repointed that the concrete obscures the stonework.

As a result of the altered condition of the Whittle Farmhouse, its representative qualities have been degraded and the hut cannot be considered to be in a good state of integrity. Consequently, the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) no longer faithfully represents its original period of construction.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (d).

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

In regard to this criterion consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its time. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.

Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.

The Whittle Farmhouse is typical of the huts built on Kangaroo Island during the nineteenth century. It is a vernacular structure as it utilises traditional building practices and patterns, is not architect designed and is constructed primarily with local materials. The Whittle Farmhouse is a small, simple, rectilinear structure with a gable roof and substantial fireplace/chimney. It was constructed from local bluestone, fieldstone and primarily bush timbers. It was built using standard construction techniques including mortared stone, a timber roof-frame composed from rafters, joists, ridge board and purlins, and has timber lintels to support the window and door openings. Therefore the Whittle Farmhouse is a simple, ordinary structure that does not exhibit aesthetic, creative or technical achievements or abilities that are beyond the ordinary for the period. Further, the nature of the restoration undertaken in the

mid-1990s, discussed previously, has undermined the building's ability to be an outstanding representative of the vernacular construction techniques of the period.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfill criterion (e)

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.

In regard to this criterion consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.

Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised only by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.

The Whittle Farmhouse is associated with the farming history of Emu Bay and, in particular, the Whittle family. However, it does not have an ongoing, strong or direct association with a particular community or cultural group. The Emu Bay area is comprised of a mixture of permanent residents and holiday homes. The area is widely promoted as a tourist destination because of the beach and other various water based tourist activities – not its farming history. While the property may have a special association for some members of the Whittle family, that association is neither direct nor continuous as the Whittle family sold the hut in the 1970s. In addition, the Whittle family does not constitute a group of State significance. Further, by the mid-1990s the Whittle farmhouse was in imminent threat of collapse.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (f).

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

In regard to this criterion consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be

more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.

Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only a brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.

The nominator maintains that the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) was associated with the pre-settlement sealers who resided on Kangaroo Island prior to 1836, in particular, John Stokes. However, evidence suggests the hut was not built until about 1889, considerably later than the first settlement of the island. In addition, there are no historical records that support the assertion the 'Sealers' Hut' could have belonged to John Stokes. Stokes built his hut adjacent to the beach in what became suburban section 210 in the Hundred of Menzies; whereas the subject hut is located some distance from the beach in suburban section 229 of the Hundred of Menzies. Further, it is also likely that John Stokes was not a pre-settlement sealer. Therefore the Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) has neither a direct association with John Stokes nor with the pre-settlement sealing industry.

The Hamilton and Turner families are recognised as being early and prominent farming families in the Emu Bay area. In particular, the Hamiltons were among the first farmers to settle and farm at Emu Bay, initially from 1861 for a decade and then again from 1881. In contrast, the Whittles (who built the subject hut in c1889) were a less prominent early farming family. The Whittles began farming in the Emu Bay area some years after the Hundred of Menzies was surveyed, and many of the sections were sold and/or leased in the early 1880s. Therefore, while the Whittle family did contribute to Kangaroo Island's agricultural history, their contribution is later in that history and is of local interest rather than of State Heritage significance.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g).

Extent of Listing / Significant Fabric / Curtilage:

No extent of listing has been defined for the nominated place, Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), Emu Bay, as it does not fulfil any of the criteria for a State Heritage Place.

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NAME: Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), Emu Bay **PLACE NO.:** 26472

SITE RECORD:

FORMER NAME: Unknown

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Three-room, bluestone cottage

DATE OF COMPLETION: c1889

REGISTER STATUS: Nominated
9 January 2017

CURRENT & PREVIOUS USE: House
c1889-present

BUILDER: AT Whittle
c1889

SUBJECT INDEXING: **Group:** Farming and Pastoral / Residential
Category: Farm House / Cottage

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Kangaroo Island Council

LOCATION: **Street No.:** 76
Street Name: Bates Road
Town/Suburb: Emu Bay
Post Code: 5223

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title Reference:** CT/5107/768
Lot No.: Allotment 4
Hundred: Menzies

MAP REFERENCE: **MGA Zone:** 52
Easting (x) 1270705.91694
Northing (Y) 6027589.33933




SITE PLAN

NAME: Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), Emu Bay **PLACE:** 26472
Bay



Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), 76 Bates Road, Emu Bay, Kangaroo Island

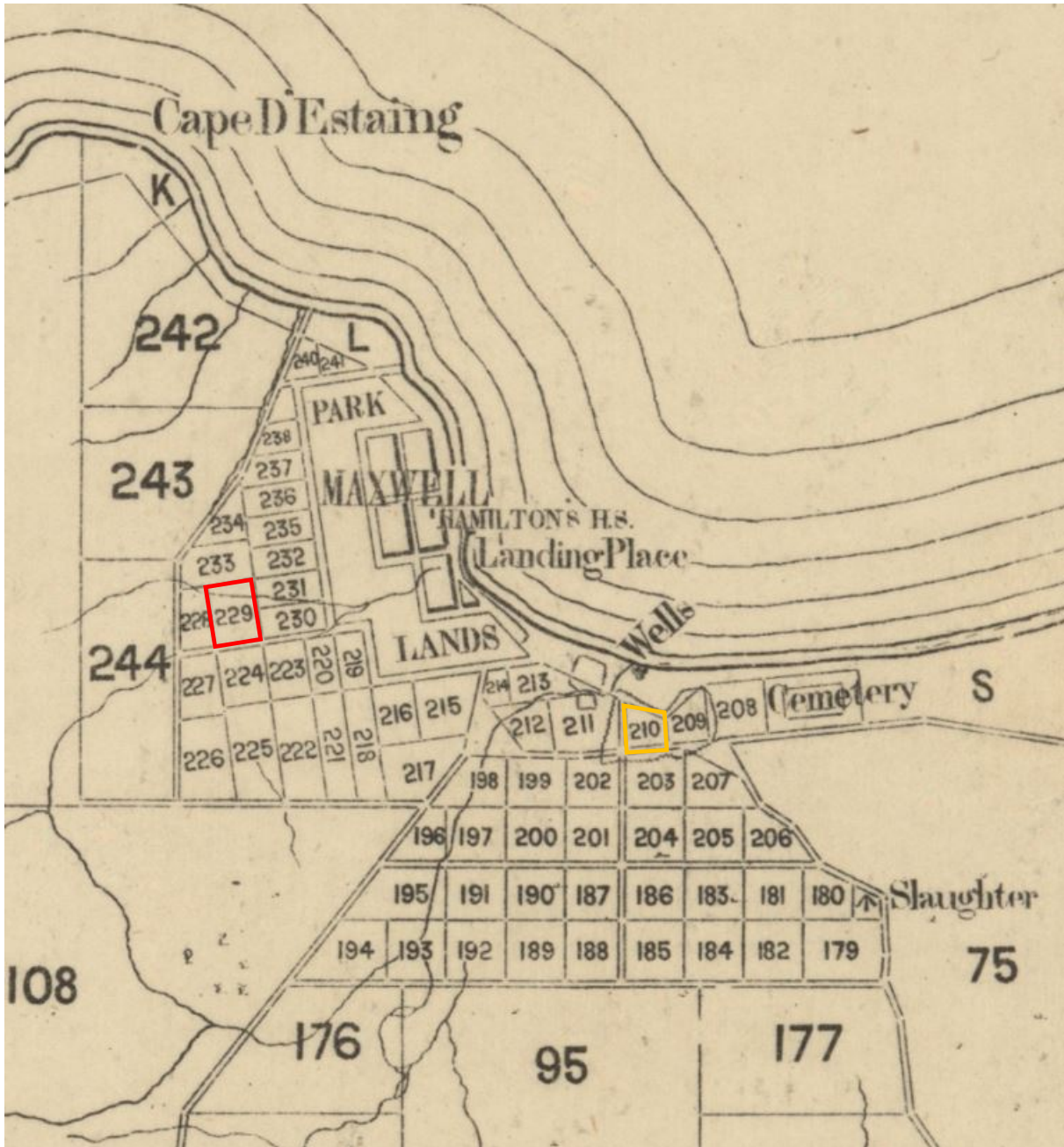
Legend

-  Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut)
-  Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut) Allotment Boundary
-  Parcel Boundaries

N ↑

PHOTOS

NAME: Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut), Emu Bay **PLACE:** 26472



Detail of the Hundred of Menzies showing the township of Maxwell 1892

Note: Landing Place and Hamilton's House

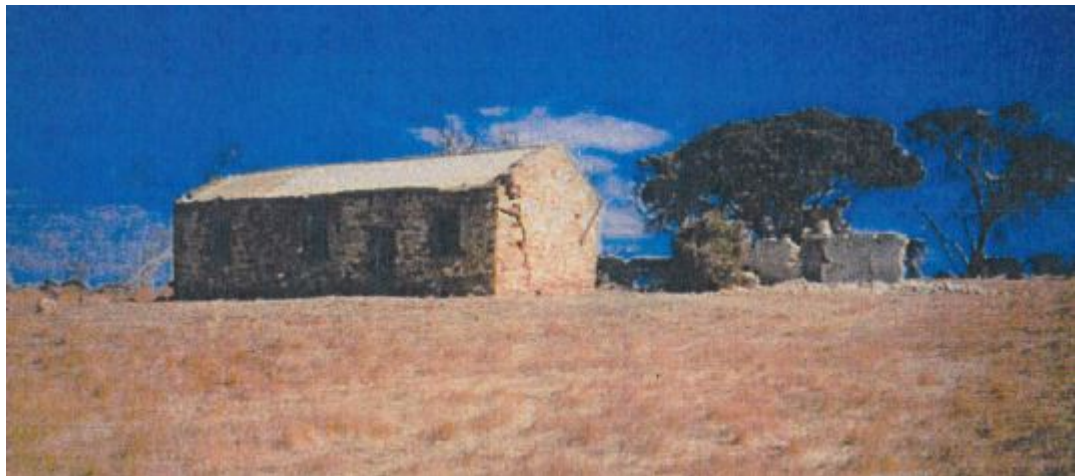
Legend

- Section 210 location of John Stokes' Hut
- Section 229 location of Whittle Farmhouse (reputed Sealers' Hut)



Whittle Farmhouse view from the north, 1994, prior to restoration. Note the substantial cracking, chimney, addition and well in the foreground.

Source: C Colenso



Whittle Farmhouse view from north-east (front of the building).

Source: C Colenso



Whittle Farmhouse, north-east corner of the building where the most substantial cracking had occurred. Note the extensive use of concrete to repoint the stonework and the metal plates.

Source: State Heritage Unit Site Visit 13 April 2017.



Whittle Farmhouse view to the south. Note the chimney and the restored lean-to kitchen and new addition.

Source: State Heritage Unit Site Visit 13 April 2017.



Whittle Farmhouse southern façade. Note the partially-constructed chimney, the restored lean-to kitchen, extensive use of concrete to repoint the stonework and the bracing plates.

Source: State Heritage Unit Site Visit 13 April 2017.



Whittle Farmhouse, roof frame. Note the use of bush and sawn timbers.

Source: State Heritage Unit Site Visit 13 April 2017.



Whittle Farmhouse fireplace.

Source: State Heritage Unit Site Visit 13 April 2017.



Emu Bay from the Whittle Farmhouse. Note the distance to the beach.

Source: State Heritage Unit Site Visit 13 April 2017.

INDICATIVE IMAGES



Chimney Wilkinson's Hut, Penneshaw, c1986.

Source: *Heritage of Kangaroo Island*.



Whittaker's Hut, Smith Bay, c2016.

Source: Save Smith Bay Facebook page



John Stokes' Hut Ruin, Emu Bay, c1986.

Source: *Heritage of Kangaroo Island*



Former Wisanger School, c1986.

Source: *Heritage of Kangaroo Island*



George (Fireball) Bates' Hut, Hog Bay Kangaroo Island c1880.

Source: State Library of South Australia B17488

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⁹ Moore, pp.81-135. Bull, *Extracts from Early Experiences of Life in South Australia* 2nd ed.

¹⁰ Moore, p.121.

¹¹ Wells, p.26.

¹² Moore, p.97.

¹³ Quoted in Cumpston, p.84-85.

¹⁴ Heritage Investigations and Historical Consultants (1991), *Heritage of Kangaroo Island*, (Adelaide: South Australian Department of Environment and Planning.

¹⁵ Wells, pp.31-35. Nunn, p.174.

¹⁶ Cumpston, p.185.

¹⁷ Garnet Bell (1997), *Kangaroo Island This Remote Isle of the Southern Sea Kangaroo Island History 1836-1996*, (Kingscote, Garnet Bell), p.17.

¹⁸ Jill Statton ed. (1986), *Biographical Index of South Australia 1836-1885*, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society Inc, pp.1552-1553.

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²⁰ Ruediger, p.47. Nunn, p.29. 'Obituary', *South Australian Register* 15 March 1884, p.2. The South Australian Deaths Index of Registrations 1842-1915 Vol 4 N-S, (Adelaide, Genealogy and Heraldry Society Inc), p.1382.

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²² While the basic road platt and parkland belt is evident the name of Maxwell has not endured.

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²⁴ 'The Exodus of the People', *Observer* 19 October 1889, p.12. Nunn, pp.207-208.

²⁵ 'Emu Bay Jetty', *Kangaroo Island Courier* 24 August 1918, p.3.

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²⁷ Pers Com. Malcom Whittle 8 June 2017.