

MINING HISTORY WEEKEND AT CALLINGTON

14-15 May 2016

During History Month 2016, Greg and Lynn Drew organised another successful mining history weekend, this one held at Callington over 14-15 May. Thirty odd members of the South Australian Mining History Group attended along with an equal number of local residents who fronted up for the seminar sessions. Foremost among them was Mr Bob Goering, representing the Kanmantoo-Callington Consultative Committee, who gave the introductory and closing remarks on the impact of the Kanmantoo open-cut copper mine and expectations for the future. Other contributors were Greg Drew, who covered the district's mining and copper smelting history, concentrating on the early period from 1846, Philip Payton who, needless to say, spoke on 'The Cornwall of the Colony', Peter Bell, who addressed heritage issues, Barry Cooper, who looked at the geology and landscape of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges, Harry Seager, who described the local flora and fauna, some of which is being attracted by the revegetation carried out by Hillgrove Resources, and Steve McClare, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Hillgrove Resources Limited, who outlined conservation and remediation work carried out by the company to date and work being planned for the future.

Saturday's well-illustrated sessions were broken by a walk to look at the site of an original smelter located by Greg Drew and to peer from the road at the State Heritage-Listed Bremer Mine ruins, soon to be obscured as the current owner has planted a shield of trees and shrubs to deter the curious.

The Sunday was given over to a 'brain storming' session on the future for the Kanmantoo-Callington District followed firstly by a tour of the nearby Aclare mine site, courtesy of the owner, Robert Mock. Safely led by Robert, our party clambered around the hilltop shaft and inspected the deteriorating ruins of the mine manager's cottage and the 1895 French-Stewart furnace and chimney stack. A tunnel with remnants of rail track used to extract the silver-lead ore has long been closed. The Aclare Mine was worked intermittently from 1859 to 1899.

Next stop was Staughton, also close to Callington, on the picturesque Dawsley Creek. Staughton is now the property of Peter and Kathy Schneider, who have ascertained that the original village of Staughton, surveyed in 1846, once boasted 34 dwellings housing Cornish miners recruited to develop the first Kanmantoo copper mine. Two of the original cottages survive and were shown to us by Kathy and Peter along with an old shearing shed, featuring early masonry, and remnants of the cemetery wall.