

## A History of Burnside



The Traditional Owners of the area of Burnside are the Kurna people. Prior to European colonisation, the Kurna people lived around the creeks of the River Torrens during the winter and in the Adelaide Hills during the summer. In 1839, Peter Anderson, a Scots migrant, settled in the area and named his farm 'Burnside' after his property's location adjacent to Second Creek (in Scots, 'Burn' means creek or stream). The village of Burnside was established shortly after, and the District Council of Burnside was gazetted in 1856, separating itself from the larger East Torrens Council (1853-1997).

British colonists arrived in the 19th century to establish a free colony, with no convict settlers. The mainstays of the early Burnside economy were viticulture, mining and olive groves; Glen Osmond boasted substantial mineral deposits, and vineyards were established at Magill. The present council chambers were built in 1926 in Tusmore; the council became a municipality in 1935. With strong growth and development throughout the region, Burnside was then proclaimed a city in 1943. The 1960s brought to Burnside a community library and a swimming centre; both were further expanded and upgraded between 1997 and 2001.

The village of Kensington was established in May 1839, only 29 months after the foundation of the colony. The village was primarily agricultural and had a close relationship with the nearby village of Norwood. The two villages formed one of Adelaide's first municipalities settled by free people in 1853 as the Town of Norwood and Kensington, evolving into today's City of Norwood Payneham St Peters. Parts of Kensington that are now included in Burnside are the suburbs of Kensington Gardens and Kensington Park. The village of Makgill (later Magill) was first established as the 524-acre (2.1 km<sup>2</sup>) Makgill Estate, owned by two Scots—Robert Cock and William Ferguson—who met on board the Buffalo en route to the newly founded colony. It was named after Mrs Cock's trustee, David M Makgill. Ferguson, who was charged with farming the estate, built the estate's homestead in 1838. Soon after farming started, the two were short of funds, and thus Magill became the first foothills village to be subdivided.

The village of Glen Osmond was closely associated with the discovery of silver and lead on the slopes of Mount Osmond by two Cornish immigrants. Their discovery of minerals provided the colony with valuable export income, at a time when the early South Australian economy was not yet established and facing bankruptcy. Governor Gawler visited the early discovery and the first mine, Wheal Gawler, was named in his honour. South Australia's first mine exported overseas throughout the 1840s, providing employment to early Cornish and then German immigrants after several mines were bought by a German businessman. The early village assumed a strong Cornish, and later a German character. Mining declined after an exodus of workers when a gold rush began in 1851 in the neighbouring colony of Victoria.

The Anderson family was the first to settle the land that was to become the village of Burnside. They brought with them good character testimonials from Scotland, valuable farming experience and 3000 pounds; however, the farming patterns in Scotland differed greatly from those in the antipodes, and the family failed to adapt. The Andersons moved on to Morphett Vale in 1847, selling their land and abandoning their homestead. The buyer of the Anderson land, William Randell, soon decided to build a village in his new property in 1849. He hired surveyor and planner Nathan Hailes to lay out the new village. Hailes was both surprised and disappointed when he found that it had already been settled and left—especially since the growth and adaptation of European foliage to the area. The first villages to be established in the region, those of Glen Osmond, Magill and Kensington had existed for some time when the new village of Burnside was proclaimed. The new village was in a good position to grow; it was bounded by two major thoroughfares, Burnside (now Glynburn) and Greenhill Roads, and had the advantage of lying on Second Creek. The village was soon attracting residents; some of whom were wealthy Adelaide folk building an estate in the foothills, and others who were more concerned with working the land. The village was described in advertisements by Hailes in 1850 as "Burnside the Beautiful" with advantages of "perpetual running water, extensive and diversified view, rich garden soil and good building stone ..." with a "... direct, newly-opened and unblemished route to Adelaide".

Originally, all the villages in what was to become the Burnside District Council were in the then District Council of East Torrens of 159 km<sup>2</sup> (61 sq mi). East Torrens bordered the River Torrens in the north, the Adelaide Hills to the east, Mount Barker Road to the south, and the Adelaide Parklands to the west. East Torrens was gazetted in 1853 by the District Councils Act 1852; the Act stipulated that there be five elected members to the council, each representing a ward. Dr David Wark (St Bernards), James Cobbledick (Uraidla), Charles Bonney (Norwood), Daniel Ferguson (Glenunga) and George Müller (Stepney) were the council's first representatives. Bonney, in addition to being a councillor, was the Commissioner of Crown Lands. The councillors met for the first time at World's End Hotel in Magill on 12 June 1853. Initial plans were put in place to first survey and evaluate the council area and to collect licence fees and taxes as provided for by the Councils Act.

TB Penfold of Magill, a former captain, was to become the first District Clerk and Collector on 1 January 1854. On 4 January 1854 there was a vote in which ratepayers decided on how much they would pay to the council (one shilling to a pound); it was also decided at this point to exempt charitable organisations, schools and churches from rates. In 1855 the population of the council area was 3,705, higher by a thousand than the adjacent Corporate Town of Kensington and Norwood. The huge East Torrens was not to prove as stable as Kensington and Norwood. Ratepayers were frustrated as to where their money was going; councillors did not have the administration or funds to operate effectively and the interests of the area were hugely varied. The area was split into three on 14 August 1856. The District Council of Payneham separated in the north-west of East Torrens, and the District Council of Burnside was formed by separation in a 15.9 km<sup>2</sup> (6.1 sq mi) south-western portion of East Torrens. East Torrens council was further divided in 1858 with the secession of the District Council of Crafers.

After shedding the burden of less profitable and unwieldy land with its angry residents, Burnside was on its own. The new Burnside District Council held its first meeting at the Greengate Inn, Tusmore on 19 August 1856. Due to the time it took to elect new councillors, it was not until 29 December that the council met again. Dr Christopher Penfold, chairman, met the rest of the representatives there: Daniel Ferguson of Glenunga, Alexander Ferguson of Monreith, John Townsend of Magill and James Grylls of Belle Vue. It was during this time that Kent Town decided against becoming a part of Burnside and instead applied to enter the Corporate Town of Kensington and Norwood. The council was to meet at the Inn or at Ferguson's home right up until December 1869, when the first council chambers were built. However, it was still able to operate and fulfill its obligations under the Local Government Act 1852. These included the management of minor roads, the administration of abattoir licences and public houses, and the prevention of the spread of the noxious Scotch thistle. The council was also obliged, under a different act of 1851, to encourage education. Much road and

bridgework activity happened after the council had been formed—early residents were amazed at the influx of development and construction that occurred. At the same time, the council was almost overwhelmed by the amount of work requested, and was forced to ask individual ratepayers for monetary assistance when building bridges in their area.

Much of Burnside's history has been observed and documented by institutions that have remained an important part of the lives of its residents: the school and the church. The first school to open in the area was in Magill during 1846, preceding a proper state-wide education system. Magill Primary School was enlarged in November 1855, when 38 boys and 29 girls enrolled; they were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, drawing and singing by a sole teacher. By 1865 there were two teachers. Glen Osmond Primary School was established in October 1858, preceding the Glen Osmond Institute, a centre for community debate and learning.] Burnside Primary School was built in 1872, taking over from a small private institution. These primary schools, in the absence of proper libraries and similar institutions, received large collections of books and writings from the town's residents. Residents also took advantage of schools for frequent and heated debates on the future of the state and region, and these discussions often drew large crowds. However, even with this intellectual spirit, the adult population was still relatively disadvantaged in the sphere of education. The drive for learning continued until the Boer War placed more emphasis on physical activity and merit within society. Somewhat strangely, this development of learned activity was not replicated in Burnside's traditional centre near Tusmore, where the present Council Chambers, Community Centre and Library are located.

By 1871 Burnside had grown significantly; it was now a mix of villages supporting a modest population of 1,557. By comparison, Kensington-Norwood, though smaller in area, had grown to 5,132 persons. Glen Osmond, still affected by its immense growth following the expansion of mining, was the largest single population centre with 343 residents. The District Council had also constructed its first council chambers in December 1869, finally concluding the haphazard meeting agreement. Two villages, Beulah Park (North Kensington) and Eastwood experienced booms in population growth and development between 1870 and 1880, providing both housing to new immigrants and investments for the wealthy Adelaide Establishment. Parkside Hospital (now Glenside), a mental health asylum was constructed in 1866 to replace a crowded building in the Parklands. Built on beautifully tended grounds and with an elaborate façade, it was an early Burnside architectural monument. In 1881 Thomas Cooper started brewing South Australia's first branded beer, 'Coopers', at Leabrook. During this era, Stonyfell saw economic expansion as well; its large quarry changed hands in 1867 and the Stonyfell Olive Co was founded in 1873. The late 19th century was a significant time of development in Burnside. This development, however, was brought to an abrupt end in the last decade, the 1890s, when depression stuck the economies of Australasia after decades of expansion.

#### **Sources:**

*The First Hundred Years – A History of Burnside in SA*, 1956 Coleman, D. (ed).

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