

From the FPFHG newsletter Volume 1 number 3 June 1997

Alexander Hay left Scotland via an assisted passage, arriving in Pt. Adelaide, South Australia in 1839. He sold implements to the Australian gold diggers from his hardware and grocery business in Rundle Street, Adelaide. In later years he became a Pastoralist and Parliamentarian. His first wife Agnes had eight children, four survived. She died of Bright's disease in 1871. In 1872 he married his second wife Agnes who gave him four children. The second Agnes was twenty years younger than Alexander.

Alexander Hay commissioned a young architect Sir William McMinn to design a stately holiday home consisting of twenty two rooms with an eighty foot tower above the entrance. Work began in July 1879, the home was built for £25,000 (approximately \$4 million in today's value), and was called Mount Breckan (Scottish for the Breckan Fern that covered the hill.) McMinn also built the Adelaide GPO, University, Supreme Court Buildings, Marble Hill and Prince Alfred College.

From 1881 the family and thirty two servants travelled from their stately home in Burnside, Adelaide to spend the summer months at Mount Breckan. Alexander Hay died in 1898 aged 78 years after returning to Mount Breckan from Adelaide during a heat wave. A fire destroyed Mount Breckan in February 1909. That was the end of Hay's association with Victor Harbor. In August 1909 Mrs Agnes Hay and her daughter were lost at sea from the new luxury liner the "Waratah".

In 1912 Mr Fred Connell, an Irish emigrant bought Mount Breckan for £5,600. In 1913 he rebuilt Mount Breckan as a Country Club. The refurbished home contained thirty eight guest rooms and a golf course. Fifty seven housing blocks were sold on £20 deposit, average cost for a block of land was £120. Further additions were completed in 1920 and the large estate was gradually subdivided.

In 1940 the Commonwealth Government acquired Mount Breckan for an Air Force training camp, and then a Rehabilitation Centre. 5,595 young men graduated from The Number Four Initial Training School during the war. By August 1945 the RAAF and WAAF became part of the Victor Harbor sports and social scene. In 1962 The Bible College became involved with Mount Breckan, with an annual intake of one hundred students, closing in 1978. In December 1978 Greg Francis renovated Mount Breckan into a Recreation Centre for Schools and Clubs.

In 1988 Merrill Properties bought Mount Breckan for \$1.2 million for a Hotel and Country Club, going into receivership in 1992. Mark Taplin purchased the site from the liquidators for \$600,000 in 1995 and set up the Mount Breckan Preservation Society. Mount Breckan is being renovated by Freshstart Training Services with funding from the Department of Employment, Education and Training.

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