

*Taken from 'Relative Thoughts' July 2001*

Talk by Nancy Sortini

At Meeting held June 16<sup>th</sup> 2001

By Maggie Woodroffe

Attendance numbers were down a little but we enjoyed a talk by Nancy Sortini about the early settlement of South Australia which briefly covered the first sightings of the Dutch and French in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, then William Dampier, who was not impressed by what he saw in 1688/9, right through to Proclamation of SA on Dec 28<sup>th</sup> 1836.

Nancy explained the social and economical problems that England was experiencing which led to the government needing a new destination for convicts and what sort of conditions those people endured on board ship.

When the first passengers came to SA as free settlers it was to take up land they had purchased. Those who had travelled with Governor Hindmarsh on the Buffalo would have been very relieved to reach land after being expected to give up their valuable water ration so that the animals on board could be given more. He was not popular by all accounts. In those early days , numbers of Aboriginal people decreased quite rapidly due to the European illnesses which came with the people.

Colonel Light was well liked by everyone. He was born in Penang in 1786 where his father had been both a founder and governor; he was educated in England and at 13 years old was recruited into the Navy. He was not in the best of health, suffering from TB and gout, but had a vision for Adelaide despite what his critics were saying. When he died he left a letter saying that he would be praised or criticised for the city's design.

Nancy told us a little of her own family history, about how her parents were born in a small Italian village and her father had emigrated at 27 years old to make a better life for himself and his family but his wife and two children had to wait for 7 years to join him in the Adelaide hills near where Crafers is today.