

The Royal Zoological Society of South Australia developed from the South Australian Acclimatisation Society which was founded on 23 July 1878. Although there had been an earlier attempt to establish an Acclimatisation Society in 1864, this appears to have floundered after only a few months of activity. (1)

The new society was chiefly concerned with introducing and domesticating foreign fauna into the colony, and especially birds from the British Isles 'whether useful or ornamental ... in the hope that they may be permanently established here and impart to our somewhat unmelodious hills and woods the music and harmony of English country life'. (2) The successful establishment of the society owed much to the efforts and encouragement of several prominent public-spirited citizens and liberal patrons - including Samuel Davenport, Sir George Kingston, Sir William Milne and Sir John Morphett - who hoped that it would succeed in 'providing recreation and instruction for the residents of Adelaide'. (3) From the first the affairs of the society were governed by a twelve member Council elected by the members who paid an annual subscription fee of one guinea. (4) S.J. Way, the chief justice, became the society's first President.

In 1881 the society changed its name to the South Australian Zoological and Acclimatisation Society, and in the same year made representations, including two memorials, to the governors of the Botanic Gardens asking for part of their land on which to establish a zoo. Although at first the governors were reluctant to accede to the society's request (partly, it seems, because residents of North Terrace feared that the animals would break out or keep them awake at night), eventually a portion of land on the north side of the River Torrens adjacent to the Albert Bridge was secured. With financial support from the Government, as well as that derived from subscriptions and from generous benefactors, the Adelaide Zoological Gardens were formally opened on 23 May 1883.

It was largely due to the enthusiasm and energy of R.E. Minchin (1831-93), secretary of the society and the first director of the Zoological Gardens, that within a few years the Adelaide Zoo had acquired perhaps the finest and most varied collection of mammals, birds and reptiles in Australia, with over 1000 exhibits from all over the world, including many rare and exotic species. (5) In order to procure new exhibits Minchin travelled widely in Europe and Asia. Although he had practically no professional training he nevertheless proved most effective in organising and managing the gardens which he moulded into one of Adelaide's most impressive landmarks: in the words of one biographer 'his good judgement in collecting specimens was matched [only] by the architectural elegance of the buildings for his animals'. (6)

The association of the Minchin family with the management of the Zoological Gardens was to continue for many years. In 1891 R.E. Minchin was succeeded as director by his son (and former assistant-director) A.C. Minchin (1857-1934) who was responsible for many notable additions and achievements. He in turn was succeeded as director in 1935 by his son R.R. Minchin (1904-1940), to be followed in 1940 by V.D. Haggard who further expanded the gardens' collection and facilities. In 1937 the society dropped the word 'Acclimatisation' from its title, henceforth being known as the Royal Zoological Society of

South Australia with regal endorsement.

In 1963, following legal enquiries by the Department of Customs and Excise into the society's involvement in the export of fauna from Australia, and controversy surrounding the Council's refusal to confirm the appointment of W.R. Gasking as director, the South Australian Government instituted an investigation into the affairs of the society to be carried out by the Director of Lands and the Auditor-General. (7) The report was critical of the general administration of the zoo, particularly the lack of adequate record-keeping procedures, as a result of which 'immediate steps were taken to rectify these matters' by the Council. (8) In April 1964 W.E. Lancaster was appointed as chief executive officer, his title being changed to that of director in March 1967.

#### References

1. Correspondence relative to the formation of the S.A. Acclimitisation Society, Feb. - April 1864. Accession 56.
2. R. Gibbs and D. Whitelock, Heritage Walks. A Guide to Historic Adelaide (Adelaide, 1980) p.24.
3. W.T. Burgess, Cyclopedia of South Australia (vol. 1, Adelaide, 1907) p.359.
4. C.E. Rix, Royal Zoological Society of South Australia 1878-1978 Adelaide, 1978
5. Ibid. p.15.
6. Australian. Dictionary of Biography (vol.5, Melbourne, 1974) p.257.
7. South Australian Parliamentary Debates, 13 Nov. 1963.
8. Rix, p.68.

RESTRICTION: No access, copying, publication of any Series except Series 3 without written authority of Secretary.

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Cuttings books. 1881-1946. 4 volumes and 1 bundle. 4v. [Volume 1 includes items of Director's correspondence 1886-1890.]	<u>1</u>
Papers relating to purchase of giraffe, rhinoceroses and antelopes. 1929. 1 cm.	<u>2</u>
Correspondence relating to the formation of the Acclimatisation Society of South Australia. 1864. 1 cm. Press copies. [Includes letters relating to the reservation of suitable public lands. Formerly accession 56.]	<u>3</u>
Papers relating to the formation of the Australian Zoological Animal Control Board. 1920-1921. 5 cm.	<u>4</u>
Exchange book. Animal exchange accounts with other zoos 1886, 1934-1955. 2 volumes. Blank and handwritten [Volume 1 has not been used.]	<u>5</u>

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Agenda books. 1891-1939. 3 volumes.	<u>6</u>
Council minutes. 1878-1989. 20 volumes. [Published reports of meetings, including reports of donations, have been inserted in volumes 103, 1878-1898. Minutes of the Finance Committee are included with minutes of Council in volumes 1-7, 1878-1935.]	<u>7</u>
Finance Committee minutes. 1958-1984. 6 volumes.	<u>8</u>
Exhibits Committee minutes. 1957-1982. 4 volumes.	<u>9</u>
Grounds Committee minutes. 1958-1982. 3 volumes.	<u>10</u>
Development Committee minutes. 1964-1984. 1 volume and envelope.	<u>11</u>
Ledger 1889-1937. 2 volumes. [Alphabetically indexed by name of account.]	<u>12</u>
Journals. 1906-1961. 2 volumes. [Comprises monthly financial journals.]	<u>13</u>
Cheque journals. 1909-1962. 6 volumes. [Lists details of cheques drawn.]	<u>14</u>
Incoming cash books. 1909-1973. 6 volumes.	<u>15</u>
Receipt Book. 1908-1935. 1 volume.	<u>16</u>
Subscriber lists. 1911-1913, 1927-1939. 1 volume + 1cm loose leaves.	<u>17</u>
<u>Zoo News</u> circulation list. 1947. 15 p. [Includes 5p undated notes and drafts.] [See also Series 46].	<u>18</u>
List of Zoological gardens in North and South America. ca.1938. 2 p.	<u>19</u>

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Annual Reports 1920-1923, 1927-1928, 1931-1932, 1937. 5 cm.	<u>20</u>
President's correspondence relating to fund raising appeal. 1929. 5 cm.	<u>21</u>
Director's Correspondence. 1889, 1929-1938. 1972 5 cm. [See also series 1 volume 1].	<u>22</u>
Copy of will of A.G. Minchin. 1931. 3 p.	<u>23</u>
Photographs. ca.1870, ca.1935. 2 items.	<u>24</u>
Postcards. ca.1907. 2 items.	<u>25</u>
Plate proofs of parrot illustrations. ca.1935. 1cm.	<u>26</u>
Breeding and feeding notes. 1937-1940. 1cm.	<u>27</u>
Educational paper. ca.1937. 6p. [Relates to keeping parrots in captivity.]	<u>28</u>
Educational broadcasts. 1937, 1939. 1cm.	<u>29</u>
Certified copy of Certificate of Incorporation. 1898. 1 item.	<u>30</u>
Plan of Zoological Gardens. 1898. 1 item. [Aviary section marked, possibly for development.]	<u>31</u>
Pay sheet. 1899. 2 items	<u>32</u>
Director's account cheque butts. 1909-1912. 1 volume.	<u>33</u>
Tender for erection of Director's residence. 1888. 2 items + cover. [Item 2 comprises arbitration award for additional works executed.]	<u>34</u>

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Loan agreement by J.H. Angas. 1888. 1 item.	<u>35</u>
Application for Government inscribed stock. 1898. 2 items + cover.	<u>36</u>
Papers relating to sealholders and name change. 1935-42. 1cm.	<u>37</u>
Sewage farm lease. 1938. 1 item.	<u>38</u>
Petrol pump lease. 1938. 1 item.	<u>39</u>
Storage licence for inflammable oils. 1938. 1 item.	<u>40</u>
Flora and Fauna Committee meeting minutes. 1946. 2 items.	<u>41</u>
Director's diaries. 1903-1908, 1910, 1915-1917, 1920, 1928-1964. 13 volumes.	<u>42</u>
Turnstile and ticket readings. 1949, 1957-1964. 2 volumes.	<u>43</u>
Animal ledger duplicates. 1883-1981. 2 volumes.	<u>44</u>
Financial reports and balance sheets. 1983-1984. 5cm.	<u>45</u>
Zoo News master typescripts. 1939-1952. 5cm. [See also Series 18].	<u>46</u>
Gifts to the Zoological Gardens, Adelaide S.A. 1882-1897, 1897-1931, 2 volumes.	<u>47</u>
Record book of births, South Australian Zoological and Acclimatization Society. 1893-1931. 1 volume.	<u>48</u>
Metal printer's block - map of Zoological Gardens. 1939. 1 item.	<u>49</u>
Public Relations Committee. 1979-1984. 1 volume.	<u>50</u>

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Interior Zoo Management Committee. 1984-1985. 1 volume.	<u>51</u>
Assets Register 'Costs of Buildings and Works etc.' 1935-1962. 1 volume.	<u>52</u>
Membership records Records of Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Board Members, Life Members and Ordinary Members 1964. 1 volume.	<u>53</u>
Application Application for approval of Industrial Agreement Persuant to Section 108a of the Industrial Relations Act relating to Royal Zoological Society Staff 1993. 1 cm. Typescript	<u>54</u>
Ledger Receipts and payments for animals received for slaughter and/or food 1895-1955. 2 cm. Handwritten	<u>55</u>
Letters Letters relating to the lease of land from the City Corporation 1898, 1912-1914. 1 cm. Typescript [Includes 1898 Lease of Adelaide Oval, a 1913 lease for the Zoological Gardens and a map of the City of Adelaide]	<u>56</u>
Rules Rules of the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia Inc. with amendments 1952-1956. 1 cm Typescript and handwritten	<u>57</u>
Report Copy of report proposing the appointment of Mr. W.R. Gasking as Director for a probationary period of six months. Not dated [1963] 0.5 cm Typescript	<u>58</u>
Copies of Last Will and Testament of John Harrison Cattermole 1969, 1975. 0.5 cm Typescript (photocopies)	<u>59</u>
Order of Service Funeral service booklet for William Edward Lancaster 2003. 0.5 cm Typescript	<u>60</u>

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Report on Review of Systems and Organisation Report by Touché Ross and Co. 1984. 1 cm Typescript (photocopy)	<u>61</u>
Plan of the Zoological Gardens Map with annotations including 'As appearing at end of Annual Report for 1882-3' and 'Proclaimed a Quarantine Area in Govt. Gazette of 24 <sup>th</sup> September, 1885, page 898.' 1883. 0.5 cm Published	<u>62</u>
Proclamation Government Gazette Proclamation of April 12 <sup>th</sup> 1883 of zoo boundaries & July 24 <sup>th</sup> 1958 1883. 0.5 cm	<u>63</u>
Map Map of survey plan of area covered by the Zoological Gardens 1958. 0.5 cm	<u>64</u>
Papers relating to insurance Schedule of Fire Insurance and Specifications along with map of buildings 1962, 1965. 0.5 cm Typescript	<u>65</u>