

**ADDRESS TO SONG OF AUSTRALIA -  
AUSTRALIA DAY COMMEMORATION  
WEST TERRACE CEMETERY, 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2006  
By Dr Bruce Eastick, former Premier of South Australia**

When asked to nominate a simple title I had no hesitation in suggesting "Partnership", albeit that the invitation to participate was to concentrate on Caroline Carleton, the less well known of the Linger/Carleton partnership. That will be the continuing thrust of my address.

Partnership from the dictionary has a number of definitions and I draw attention in particular to -

- the state of being a partner
- joint interests or ownership
- fellowship

Caroline Carleton was involved in many partnerships, some of her choosing, some by chance, and others in appreciation of her contribution to the community.

Our lady of interest was born in England, the grand-child of two people, Count and Countess de La Mere, who had escaped from France following the French Revolution and after Louis XVI lost his head in 1793. Their daughter married a William Baynes, and on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1819 Caroline was born as the result of their partnership.

In turn Caroline at age 17 in 1836 married Charles James Carleton, a young medical student. From this partnership were born two children who accompanied their parents when they sailed for Australia in 1839 on the ship "Regent". Both children perished during the 6 months' journey, an event which took considerable toll on the parents, particularly the father. It is said that this loss turned his mind from returning to England to continue his medical studies. Had he done so we would not be honouring Caroline today.

Charles became a medical dispenser, an assayer in the Kapunda mines, and a participant during the Victorian gold rush before returning to Adelaide as the curator of the West Terrace Cemetery. Due to his health problem his wife and working partner - Caroline - became the de facto curator (a new form of co-operative partnership) and on his death at age 47 on July 20, 1861 Caroline was recommended by a number of the Adelaide clergy to be appointed curator. This did not occur. It might be said the glass ceiling existed even then.

While living on site Caroline entered a competition initiated by the fledgling Gawler Institute Committee to write the words of a song for their, the Institute's, second anniversary. Caroline submitted the words which were accepted from 96 entries and for which she was paid 10 guineas (£10-10-0). It

is said that she wrote the verses while she sat on a bench in the cemetery watching her children (all Aussies) play. It is said she signed her entry "Nil Desperandum" to disguise the fact that she was a woman.

This successful partnership with the Gawler community led to the chance partnership which exists to this day - "The Song of Australia" by Caroline Carleton and Carl Linger. It is reported that she had invited Carl Linger to write the music.

It is worthy of note that she also wrote poetry in the 1860's, two being "On Recovering from Illness" and "Fragmentary Lines written in a Cemetery".

After leaving the cemetery, Caroline opened a number of schools, one at Kadina, in partnership with two of her daughters. By this time she had 5 surviving children. After she died in 1874 and was buried at Wallaroo, the community was so pleased with the partnership she had forged with them that in 1923 they built a red granite obelisk at the Wallaroo cemetery, and as we meet here this morning on the site of her "song partner's" memorial a commemorative service is being conducted at Wallaroo. This ceremony and that one, even so far apart, are "partners" in remembering and commemorating with appreciation the contribution by Caroline and Carl.

The inscription on her memorial reads

IN MEMORY OF  
Mrs CAROLINE  
CARLETON  
the authoress of the  
"Song of Australia"  
who was interred in this  
cemetery on July 12<sup>th</sup> 1874  
aged 54 years.  
Erected by her admirers  
November 1923

Followed by the first verse.

In respect of this site it is well to remember that it was a partnership with school children in 1936 that raised more than £100 to erect this memorial. It has remained as a partnership with the Adelaide Liedertafel, and in the 1950's volunteer workers from Germany, and the memorial has continued to be the focus of an event such as we witness today.

It is of further interest to note that the Caroline Carleton/Carl Linger partnership song, resulting from the partnership with the Gawler Institute Committee in 1859, in essence had a partnership with the State Education Department which decreed in 1880 that it "shall be sung by all schools." It is rewarding to know that the current management is fortifying its commitment by concentrating on primary school children.

While many of us have always considered the "Song of Australia" worthy of being the National Anthem, in 1974 an opinion poll conducted by the Australian Electoral Office anointed "Advance Australia Fair".

In recent days none other than Barry Humphries aka Dame Edna Everage has talked of a new National Anthem. Will Caroline's endeavours yet be better recognised - a lasting partnership with Australia?