



May 2024 HISTORY FESTIVAL REPORT



Written by
Sarah Pollard
Hello Mount Torrens

**“LIGHT UP
& GROW:
Electrifying
tales
shaping
community
life in
Mount
Torrens”**

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INTRODUCTION

Every year the Mount Torrens & Districts Community Association with the History Centre participate in the South Australian History Festival in May. This year the theme was POWER and the group Hello Mount Torrens curated the exhibition.

SUMMARY



Background

In 2022, Hello Mount Torrens was created to advocate for undergrounding the powerlines in the State Heritage Area of Mount Torrens. This inspired the electricity theme for our exhibition for South Australia's History Festival 2024, which centered on the theme of POWER.

The exhibition, "LIGHT UP & GROW: Electrifying Tales Shaping Community Life in Mount Torrens," was held at The Coach House.

Exhibition Overview

The exhibition explored the history of Mount Torrens before and after electricity arrived in June 1926. It showcased how electricity transformed the town and its daily life.



Key Points

Life Before Electricity: Displays showed the challenges of living in Mount Torrens before electricity.

Arrival of Electricity: Focused on the significant change when electricity was first supplied in June 1926.

Post-Electric Changes: Highlighted how electricity improved life and spurred growth in the town.

Community Stories: Featured personal stories and items from residents about the impact of electricity.



Kerry Clark, Matthew Trinkle, Rebekha Sharkie, MP, Member for Mayo and Sarah Pollard

Event Schedule

The exhibition started with a community preview sausage sizzle a week before History Month. It was then open every Saturday and Sunday for the month of May from 10am to 3pm.

Impact

The exhibition celebrated the role of electricity in the town and districts' history, fostering community pride and encouraging ongoing improvements in infrastructure. It aligned well with the POWER theme of the History Festival, highlighting how electricity shaped Mount Torrens.



THE EXHIBITS

Mount Torrens Christian School Display

Mount Torrens Christian School (MTCS) presented an amazing interactive display showcasing various methods of electricity generation. The display featured captivating demonstrations of hydroelectricity, magnet and coil, wind power, solar energy, and hydrogen electricity. Accompanied by an insightful video presentation by student, Joel, visitors received a simple but engaging explanation of the concepts behind these technologies.

Principal Matthew Trinkle and school assistant Maddy were instrumental in the success of the display, dedicating a significant amount of time to set up and provide detailed explanations. Their expertise and enthusiasm made the display not only educational but truly fascinating for all who visited.

During the first week of the exhibition, students from MTCS had the opportunity to attend a lesson with Matthew and explore the rest of the exhibition. The experience was both educational and enjoyable, with the children taking great delight in the vintage working telephones on display.

We thank Matthew, Maddy, Joel and the students and teachers for their time and enthusiasm.



Mount Torrens Christian School Principal Matthew Trinkle giving a lesson on electricity generation to his students.





Claudine and Zoe Clark from Aldgate enjoying the exhibition.

Historical Tools

The exhibition narrated the transformation of tools before and after electricity, showcasing hand tools such as wooden rakes, shovels, crosscut saws, and hand drills alongside mid-century electric devices like a hedge trimmer, drill, and circular saw. This display highlighted the significant shift from manual labor to electrically powered devices, offering a fascinating glimpse into technological advancements that reshaped daily life in Mount Torrens. A particular highlight was the beautiful collection of wooden tools on loan from Ross Leckie, which captivated attendees with their craftsmanship and historical value.

Domestic Life

Domestic life was showcased, from hand-powered mixers to electric appliances, washtubs to washing machines, and from candlelight to electric bulbs, vividly illustrating the profound impact electricity had on household chores. This transformation highlighted not just technological advancement, but also the dramatic changes in daily life and efficiency brought about by electrical innovation. Locals reminisced about visiting their grandparents, who still used kerosene lamps, and these memories underscored the exhibition's nostalgic value.





The hands-on experience of winding the handles and making the phones ring brought a sense of joy and nostalgia, allowing everyone to appreciate the charm and simplicity of these vintage devices while having lots of fun.

Vintage Telecommunications

The two working Bakelite telephones, connected for the exhibition, captivated both older and younger visitors alike, showcasing the remarkable evolution of communication technology over the years.



Andy Bennett with his electric steel guitar

Many items were generously loaned to us by local residents which added a personal touch to the exhibition.

Local Andy Bennett kindly lent us his late father's handcrafted solid red gum electric steel guitar and amplifier, both made in the 1940s. This remarkable exhibit captivated visitors, showcasing the artistry and history embedded in the meticulously crafted guitar.



Sarah Pollard and Councillor
Malcolm Herrmann,
Adelaide Hills Council



Visitors enjoying the exhibits



Volunteer Chris Barry
explaining electricity to
Lesley Wynter of Myrtle Bank

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

The exhibition attracted a diverse audience including the forty children and teachers from the Mount Torrens Christian School, local residents, people who had seen the History Festival brochure, and some driving past or cycling down from the Amy Gillett Bikeway. The interactive elements, especially those from the Mount Torrens Christian School, were particularly popular, engaging visitors in hands-on learning experiences. The vintage telephones were a significant highlight, drawing fascination from attendees of all ages.

We were thrilled to have visitors from the History Trust pop in as well as Rebekha Sharkie, MP, Member for Mayo and Councillor Malcolm Herrmann, Adelaide Hills Council who lent us their support with their visits.

Visitors for History Festival May 2024

BBQ			Sun	30	30
Week 1	Sat	40	Sun	30	70
Week 2	Sat	20	Sun	20	40
Week 3	Sat	25	Sun	20	45
Week 4	Sat	20	Sun	20	40
School				40	40
		105		160	265

Conclusion

The Mount Torrens "LIGHT UP & GROW" Electricity Exhibition not only showcased the transformative impact of electricity on the town but also offered an educational experience that connected the past with the present.

To build on this success, future exhibitions should continue to focus on Mount Torrens's history with a contemporary approach. Increasing community engagement through interactive displays and open days can further enhance the educational value. Additionally, expanding marketing efforts and partnerships with local organizations can help increase visitor numbers and engage the wider community.

By preserving and sharing our local history in this dynamic way, we can foster community pride and inspire future generations to appreciate and contribute to Mount Torrens and districts ongoing story.
