**Adelaide Ghosts & Ghouls Self-Guided Walking Tour**This is Allen Tiller, paranormal investigator and historian, and you’re listening to the Adelaide Ghosts and Ghouls Self-Guided Walking Tour, presented as a collaboration between myself, audio producer Anthony Frith, and Adelaide City Libraries. The tour explores Adelaide’s alleged hauntings and crimes, while also shedding light on the city’s history. We hope you enjoy it.

**Disclaimer:** The content included in this walking tour contains language and descriptions that some listeners may find disturbing. Parental guidance and supervision is recommended for children. Please take care when walking and crossing roads. All views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the views, policy or position of the City of Adelaide, and the City of Adelaide accepts no responsibility for any such opinions, advice or information.

Whilst historical accuracy was adhered to regarding location, people, time and other elements, it is acknowledged that all alleged ghosts and hauntings are anecdotal stories recounted by members of the public and retold for entertainment purposes. These stories are recounted with respect to the places included, as well as the subjects and their family members, and are part of the folklore that has shaped the narrative fabric of humanity through the ages.

The estimated distance for this tour is 4 kms with 11 stops. Please allow 2 – 2.5 hours of walking and listening time. This tour directs the listener to the outside of each of the included sites. We recommend that you refer to the map provided on our website throughout the tour.

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# **Stop 1: ‘The Ghosts of Rundle Place’**

City Library Level 3 – 77 Rundle Place (access via Francis Street, off Rundle Mall)

We begin our exploration of Adelaide’s ghosts in the heart of the city, at Rundle Place – the site which was once occupied by Harris Scarfe’s city store. During the 1917 construction of this building, an unfortunate accident occurred, in which a concrete worker fell into the foundations as they were poured. He was sucked down into the mix, which simultaneously suffocated and crushed him. It was deemed too difficult and risky to save the worker, as well as too expensive and labour intensive to remove his body after the concrete had set, so his body was left within the foundations.

In 2012, McMahon Services were engaged to demolish the previous building and construct the new one, which you see today. As part of their plan, they decided to recycle as much of the original building material as possible. The old steel, glass and concrete – including the concrete in which the worker died – was stored, crushed or melted, and reused in the construction of the present building. Therefore, the remains of that worker can possibly be found across the entire building today… but perhaps most relevant to the library is a more recent turn of events.

During the 1970s, Harris Scarfe had a sports department on the third level, from which guns were sold. In 1975, a man approached the firearms counter and asked to examine one of the guns. He loaded the weapon with his own bullets, before – in front of staff and customers – placing the barrel to his head and firing. Like the counter at which the customer shot himself dead, City Library now sits on the third level. Is it a coincidence that today, a black shadowy figure is sometimes reported whisking along the hallways towards the elevators, in the same vicinity that a black shadowy figure was seen whisking along Harris Scarfe’s aisles when it stood here previously.

The elevators in Rundle Place are also said to be haunted, just as they were reported to be so in the old Harris Scarfe building. Is it possible that the ghosts which haunted the former building are lingering in the new one?

In an interview with The Advertiser in 2011, a former employee of Harris Scarfe named Rod stated the following:

*"I've been here at two o'clock in the morning, by myself, and the goods lifts would start up and just go by themselves… You'd see them drop to the second floor, you'd hear the door open, you'd hear footsteps and then the lift comes back down to the basement and you're thinking 'well, I know I'm the only one here'."*

City Library sits on Level 3 of Rundle Place, Rundle Mall, in a building constructed on the site of the former Harris Scarfe Department Store. The building features state-of-the-art technology and design, with areas set aside for teaching and learning, history, technology and the arts. Rundle Place was designed by Hansen Yuncken architects and constructed by Pacific Development, with deconstruction of the former building completed by McMahon Services.

City Library was officially opened on the 7th of February 2014.

**From Francis Street, turn right into Rundle Mall and head east to the Adelaide Arcade.**

# **Stop 2: ‘The Ghosts of Adelaide Arcade’**

Adelaide & Gays Arcade

Adelaide Arcade has been named one of South Australia’s most haunted locations for over a century now, allegedly playing host to several lingering spirits, its most famous being that of Mr Francis Cluney.

**Stop 1: Adelaide Arcade** **entrance (Rundle Mall end)**
Our tour, however, takes us first to the Rundle Mall entrance of Adelaide Arcade, which is reported to be haunted by the ghost of a young woman, Mrs Florence Horton, who died in the arcade in 1904. Mrs Horton was visiting Rundle Street with her girlfriends when her estranged husband appeared behind her. In the scuffle that followed, he fired three shots into her back and fled. Florence, mortally wounded, staggered into Solomon’s Tobacconist Shop – currently Clarke the Jeweller – and passed away on the floor only minutes later.

A manhunt ensued. Eventually Thomas was captured, tried, and hung in Adelaide Gaol for his crimes. Florence has been seen as a ghost by staff and visitors on occasion, near the Rundle Mall entrance of the arcade – particularly around the anniversary of her death, on 30th January.

Other recorded spirits include a shadowy grey form seen on the second level, thought to be a woman. Many people report being physically touched by unseen hands in the arcade, as well as hearing voices calling their name in the early hours, before the arcade opens to the public.

**Continue through Adelaide Arcade to the Corner of Adelaide and Gays Arcade (on the left, about half way down the arcade).

Stop 2: Corner of Adelaide and Gay’s Arcade**And now to perhaps the most famous of Adelaide Arcade’s ghosts: Francis Cluney. Mr Cluney was the resident “beadle” – a term used to describe the gentleman who acted as a cross between a concierge and a security guard. Cluney, who was born in 1828, had served Britain in the Crimean and Boer Wars and earned himself the position of ‘London Commissionaire’*,* within the Corps of Commissionaires.
This was a title given by Queen Victoria to ex-servicemen of the Crimean War who were still willing to work. The position still stands today, with Queen Elizabeth II now the head of the security company.[[1]](#footnote-1) Employed in Adelaide from December 1885, Francis was often seen in the Arcade wearing his distinctive red English military uniform. All accounts of his service and demeanour point to a warm and caring gentleman, spoken of highly by staff and visitors.

Cluney famously lost his life in 1887, when he fell (or was possibly pushed) into the gas-powered electric generator housed in Shop Number 9, now used by Manhattan Dry Cleaners. The former beadle has been seen in spirit consistently ever since the year of his death. He is often seen, felt, and heard in the Manhattan Dry Cleaners shop, but also on the roof and on the internal balcony. Perhaps he is patrolling his former workplace as he did in life, or maybe he is trapped in the arcade after his sudden and horrendous death.

The following sighting of Francis Cluney was first reported to Allen Tiller by witness, Neroli Akers, during the third week of the “Haunted Buildings in Adelaide” project at the City of Adelaide Libraries:

In 1976, Neroli worked at Decorations Gallery on the corner of Adelaide Arcade and Gay’s Arcade – located on the opposite corner to the Battery Bar. In 1976, access to the upstairs levels of the arcade was limited, so very few people would ever be seen up there. One day, Neroli found herself in Gay’s Arcade and noticed a man leaning on the upstairs railing, watching her intently. She knew instantly that he was the arcade ghost she had heard so much about. While most descriptions of Francis have him wearing his distinctive red British Military coat, on this occasion, Francis was dressed in a dark blue casual suit, which Neroli estimates to be from the late 1870s. This would make sense, as Francis passed away in 1887 and most likely could not have afforded an expensive suit with the salary he was earning. As quickly as he had appeared, the man in blue vanished from Neroli’s sight, never to be seen by her again.

**Continue south through the Arcade to shops 9 and 11, The Manhattan Dry Cleaners.**

**Stop 3: Manhattan Dry Cleaners**Another two spirits thought to haunt the arcade are from the same family – the Kennedys. Madame and Professor Kennedy, *“Clairvoyants, Phrenologists and Palmists”,* had their business in Shop Number 11 – now one half of Manhattan Drycleaners. Their real names were Bridget Lauretta Kennedy Byron and Professor Michael Kennedy Byron, and the two had a young son named Sydney. Although their relationship appeared strong from the outside, the couple were not seeing eye to eye. Michael left Bridget, taking their one-year-old son to live in Tasmania. While there, he met another woman with whom he began a relationship.

Grief-stricken over her broken relationship and unsure of the whereabouts of her husband and son, Bridget hired a private detective to track them down. To cope with the emotional turmoil while awaiting news of her family, Bridget turned to alcohol and pills to quell her grief. The detective returned just before Christmas in 1901, and with him was Sydney. Bridget was overjoyed – this time taking to alcohol in celebration.

On the 12th of January 1902, newspapers reported the tragic discovery of a 3-year-old boy, found dead under peculiar circumstances. Mrs Kennedy was arrested and charged with murder. The story broke nationally.

During the trial, evidence was submitted that Mrs Kennedy had left Sydney asleep in the upstairs dining room of Shop 11. Mrs Kennedy, who was lying next to the boy and not in her bedroom, was awoken by her housemaid and the child’s nanny at 7am, both of whom complained that there was an unusual smell of gas in the residence. They began to open windows. The nanny then tried to rouse the 3-year-old boy, only to find that he was cold, and very much dead.

The trial proceeded for many days, with national press coverage, but eventually, because of her doctor’s evidence of substance abuse, Mrs Kennedy was not charged. However, in her mind she was guilty. She fell into a pit of despair and gloom, sinking even harder into the bottle. Mrs Kennedy was found dead only a few months later in August, her body recovered in the west parklands.

It is thought that Bridget Kennedy haunts the Arcade, and on occasion she has been seen floating about in the Manhattan Drycleaners store and on the interior balcony landings. Sydney Kennedy, on the other hand, has been seen many times in the Arcade. During the filming of television show Haunting: Australia, paranormal historian, Allen Tiller and psychic Ian Lawman had an experience with a young spirit child in Arcade Lane – between Regent and Adelaide Arcades – running past them and into a now bricked up doorway of Regent Arcade.

Adelaide Arcade (and later Gays Arcade) were built on land that was originally owned and used by Mr Gay’s Furniture Warehouse, and Barker and Chambers Horse Bazaar. In November 1884 [[2]](#footnote-2), a fire started in Mr Gay’s Furniture Warehouse basement, which would burn down not only his own premises, but also that of the adjoining stores.

Adelaide Arcade was designed by Messrs. Whithall and Wells of Register Chambers, Grenfell Street, while Gays Arcade was designed by architect James Cumming. The original design included Carrara Marble flooring, as well as Adelaide’s first electric lighting and a gas lamp in each shop, which supplemented the natural light that came through the large glass panels in the ceiling. As electricity was new to South Australia, the arcade had to be fitted with its own gas-powered electricity generator, which was switched on by engineer Henry Harcourt every evening at 5pm. The large engine was housed within Shop 9, where Manhattan Drycleaners operates from today. It took five months to complete the building, using 50,000 square feet of glass and over 2 million bricks. The owners also offered a year of free rent to entice business into their arcade.

The arcade was officially opened on the 12th of December 1885 by Governor Sir William Robinson, causing quite a stir in the city streets. 60,000 pounds – equivalent to roughly 7.5 million Australian dollars – had been spent on building the arcade, in a time of high unemployment. Blue collar workers and the unemployed were unhappy about the extraordinary expenditure and planned to protest the opening ceremony. The Rundle and Grenfell Street entrance gates were locked to help protect the dignitaries and officials in attendance. Meanwhile, outside, the hungry and unemployed lined the gates, watching the officials dine and drink champagne. Anger was beginning to stir through the crowd, but before a riot could begin, 70 officers from the Adelaide Police Force arrived and moved the potential rioters on. This, however, did not prevent the Governor’s car from being pelted with stones as he drove away after the function.

Adelaide Arcade was extensively remodelled in 1935, with new electric cables and lighting, as well as new shop fronts to 20 of its interior facades and the installation of interior phone booths. Shop fronts were extended into the promenade, with the original glass brought forward. The styling was changed to a *“rich jet black, chromium and silver grey*” colour scheme.

In the 1960s it was decided that the upstairs section of the arcade could be better utilised. A design was drawn up to install a balcony and create more business space, thus garnering the arcade 50 new shops on a brand-new second level. In the 1990’s the arcade owners upgraded the facades of all the shops, installing wood panelling and other improvements, with some of the cost absorbed by the tenants. This gave Adelaide Arcade a much broader and classier appeal than the chrome look of the previous era.

**Continue through the arcade to the Grenfell Street exit and turn right, walking towards King William Street. Turn right on King William Street and use the pedestrian crossing to get onto the northern side of North Terrace.**

# **Stop 3: “Murder in Government House”**

Government House, North Terrace

Death has visited the walls of Government House on many occasions: from the 1923 suicide of kitchen hand Len O’Callaghan to the tragic death of Governor Musgrave’s 3-year-old daughter, who fell into a scalding hot bath.

Perhaps the most notable is the 1862 murder that shocked Government House. Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, former Governor of South Australia, had decided to leave the colony for a holiday in Ireland, before taking on the job of Governor of Nova Scotia. MacDonnell had far too much furniture to relocate, so decided to sell much of it through public tender at Government House.

On the day of the sale, recently appointed Police Inspector Mr Richard Palmer Pettinger was present to oversee security. At the conclusion of sales in the ballroom, as the auctioneer and buying crowd were making their way to the bedrooms, a shot rang out. Some of the crowd ran in the direction of the noise, and found Inspector Pettinger laid out on the ground – the side of his face shattered and a large pool of blood beginning to form on the floor around his head. Constable Badman, also on duty, noticed John Seaver – a former soldier and recently discharged police officer – leave the hall via a back passage. Seaver had previously been stationed at Government House and had applied for the position of Constable, only to be rejected by Inspector Pettinger, who reported him for drunkenness and neglect of duty.

After being discharged from the police service, Seaver waived his right to a pension, instead taking a parcel of land in Tasmania. He had since lost the land and returned to England for some time, before re-emerging in South Australia to exact his revenge at the age of fifty.

Badman didn’t take long to realise Seaver was the man he was looking for, and dutifully arrested both him and his wife. The evidence was plentiful that John Seaver had carried out the deed, and during the court hearing which followed, his plan was laid out to the jury:

Mr and Mrs Seaver had been sitting on a lounge in the ballroom, a black cloth covering Mr Seaver’s hand. He had risen at the end of the sales and walked down the hall, revealing his gun to Pettinger and fatally shooting him as the black cloth dropped to the floor. A witness saw Seaver step over the body and leave through a door.

Mrs Seaver had been seen in the same vicinity just before the shooting and had stopped a Mr Selway (who would later be called upon as a witness in court) from entering the hallway where the shooting was about to occur. She was also one of the first, and the loudest, to scream: “Someone has been killed!”. Her husband, who knew the house well, having been previously employed there, used internal passages to circumvent the crowd and reappear near the rear of the group, thus making it appear that he was not involved. The Seavers faced court together in February, with Caroline being found not guilty and free to go. John Seaver, however, was found guilty and sentenced to hang at Adelaide Gaol.

Staff often joke about a spirit in Government House, affectionately known as George. The spirit likes to move small objects around the house. Sometimes he can be heard walking through the hallways, and on other occasions, wispy shadows have been seen. Reports of cold spots on the floor are also common, as well as peoples’ descriptions of a “presence” in the room with them. George, or another unnamed spirit, has been felt as “rushes of air” that pass staff in the ballroom or hallways.

Another presence sighted in the house is that of a “grey lady”, who has been seen by night watchmen and security guards. She wears long flowing clothing – possibly a gown – and has been witnessed sweeping down the main staircase, but disappearing before she reaches the bottom.

The first Government house was built on the River Torrens and was nothing more than a simple hut constructed of timber, thought to have sat roughly where the Adelaide Railway Station is located today. It was destroyed by a fire in 1841.

The current building was completed in 1840, featuring two main wings – one facing south and one facing east. The east wing is thought to be the earliest built part of the house, completed and occupied in May 1840. It featured a Boudoir, Drawing Room, Morning Room, East Hall and Cloak Room. The Servants’ Quarters, which featured kitchens, staff quarters and cleaning rooms, were also constructed adjacent to the house,

The southern wing was completed in 1855 and featured a Grand Ballroom, State Dining Room, the “Adelaide” Room, the South Hall and the Governor’s Study. An addition in 1878 saw the completion of a Strong Room, Billiard Room, Porter’s Hall and Private Secretary’s Office.

Cottages were added in 1928 for the Butler, and in 1945 for the Chauffer. In 1973, work was undertaken in the upstairs section of the east wing to modernise the bedrooms and bathrooms for the Royal visit of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh.

**Continue north along King William Road to the Torrens Parade Grounds, located on the corner of Victoria Drive.**

# **Stop 4: Fiendish Murder**

Torrens Parade Ground, Victoria Drive

On the morning of the 8th of October 1943, Adelaide awoke to read in the local newspapers about the death of 25-year-old railway employee. The man concerned was in South Australia working on the construction of the Sydney to Perth railway line, and was taking a short break in Adelaide.

The newspapers deemed it “one of the most fiendish murders committed in this state!”. The victim had been discovered at 7.25am, brutally savaged in the gardens near the Torrens Parade Grounds. He had been badly beaten and slashed with a sharp instrument across his face, body and sexual organs. His clothing, which had been torn from him, was covered with his blood. An ambulance was called and the victim was taken to the nearby Adelaide Hospital, but succumbed to the violence of his wounds just three hours later.

Police inspected the man’s clothing and found a train ticket. He had only arrived in Adelaide the day before, and had recently been in New South Wales visiting friends. There was nothing else that identified why he was in Adelaide, where he was staying, or who his attacker might be. The only clue the Police had was that an attack, almost identical to this one, had taken place upon a 22-year-old man on the banks of the River Torrens in recent months.

The victim of this horrendous crime was later cremated. His ashes were placed into a bronze casket and handed to his workmates at Loongana, on the east-west train line, where he was interred somewhere along the train tracks.

His attacker was never found, and no motive was ever brought forward. Possibly, Adelaide had a serial killer wandering its streets in the 1940s, who was never caught…

**Use the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Victoria Drive and King William Road to cross to the western side of King William Road. Turn right, continuing north towards St Peter’s Cathedral (located on the corner of King William Road and Pennington Terrace).**

# **Stop 5: “A Ghost is Born!”**

**St. Peter’s Anglican Cathedral, 27 King William Road, North Adelaide**

Where, how, when and why do ghost stories and urban legends begin?

A very good starting point for answering this question could be a 2017 story by Mitch Mott in Adelaide’s Advertiser newspaper, titled “Without a Shadow of a Doubt: Crucifix gives emergency services the run around”.

In the story, a concerned member of the public phoned the emergency services after witnessing what they thought was a man on the Cathedral roof at 9:30pm on 24th of January 2017. First response police officers arrived and searched the grounds, but could not find anyone, nor see any movement on the roof. Not long after, an officer reported seeing the silhouette of a man on the roof, fitting the witness description.

An Advertiser photographer used her high-powered camera to zoom in on the alleged person on the roof, only to find it was a stone crucifix! Fire services were called, and a cherry picker was used to lift an officer on to the roof to confirm that there was no person present. As it turns out, the silhouette seen from the ground by both witnesses was a trick of shadow and light, making a crucifix appear as a man sitting on the cathedral roof.

In paranormal research, this is what is known as “simulacrum”, defined as: “an image or representation of someone or something, or a slight, unreal, or superficial likeness or semblance or an effigy, image, or representation”

In coming years, I have no doubt that this story will be the starting point for an explosion of ghost stories surrounding the building, and a ghost seen on the roof!

If it hadn’t been for a landmark court case in 1849, St Peter’s Cathedral would have been built in Victoria Square instead of North Adelaide. Trinity Church on North Terrace had already been constructed by local Anglicans who wanted a cathedral in their city. The first Bishop of Adelaide, Augustus Short, sought a land grant from the Governor in Victoria Square, which had been set aside for public use.

A court case ensued when it was argued that as the land was considered a public reserve, the Governor did not have the right to make it available to anyone. This led to Bishop Short taking the matter to the Supreme Court, who held up the ruling, and declared the construction of the cathedral could not proceed.

In 1862, the Bishop acquired a portion of land on the corner of King William Road and Pennington Terrace in North Adelaide. It took until 1868 to raise enough money to begin construction. The building was based upon the designs of English architect William Butterfield. On the 1st of January 1878, the newly-built church was consecrated as St Peter’s Cathedral.

The Cathedral has been progressively added to over the years with its nave completed in 1901, the towers in 1902, the Lady Chapel and crypt in 1904, and the front steps in 1911. The structure was later partially restored in the 1990s.

**Continue north on King William Road, turn left on Kermode Street, continue west.**

**Stop 6: “The Audacious Robbery”**

Queen’s Head Hotel, 117 Kermode St

In 1839, The Queen’s Head Hotel was the victim of a robbery, when William Smith entered the bar and asked for a glass of porter. As Mr Abbott, the barman, turned to get the man his drink, Smith reached over the bar and took the tin box Abbott kept the pub’s takings in.

Abbott didn’t notice the missing tin right away, and instead sat talking to Smith, the only person in the bar that morning. Smith finished his drink and promptly left the hotel. As he began cleaning the bar, Abbott noticed the money tin had gone. Thinking it must’ve fallen to the floor, he looked under the bar, and yet still could not find it. It suddenly dawned on him, so he called out for his brother and both men chased Smith down.

When they reached Smith, they asked him who else had been in the bar that morning, not mentioning the tin box. Without thinking, Smith said: “If you think I have robbed you, search me!” They searched Smith, only to find nothing. They allowed him to continue on his way.

One of Abbott’s sons, who had come inside the hotel when he heard his father shouting, had noticed Smith leaving the hotel. He had watched the thief lean down and place something into a tree. Thinking this a very odd thing to do, Abbott’s son approached the tree, where he found his father’s cash box.
In the meantime, Abbott had begun walking back towards his younger son, when he realised what the boy was holding. Abbott spotted Constable Jones working in his garden, and as he passed in pursuit of Smith, told him what had happened. Both men chased Smith down and arrested him.

During his trial, Jones was called as a witness. He described seeing Smith walk past empty-handed, then later with a bottle in one hand and a tin in the other. Smith, in self-defence, was allowed to cross-examine the witnesses. He did so in an impudent and arrogant manner, before following up with a confusing statement that admitted his guilt.

William Smith was found guilty of his crime and sentenced to transportation for life. He was sent to New South Wales on the ship “Kate” Birkenshaw, and served out his days on a chain gang in Sydney.

The Queen’s Head hotel opened in Kermode Street, North Adelaide in 1839 and is considered one of the oldest buildings in Adelaide. Historian Bob Hoad once wrote that it is *“'reputed, but unconfirmed, to be the oldest hotel in South Australia partly in original building'.* The hotel was built for Henry G. Hewett and Giles Abbott, and became the most popular drinking and entertainment venue in North Adelaide at the time.

The hotel was also used as a meeting place for the Church of Christ, of which Abbott was a member. Abbot also donated land in North Adelaide for a Wesleyan Church to be built in Kermode Street.
The Independent Order of Oddfellows of the Albert Lodge also utilised the hotel as their principle meeting venue in the early 1850s.

The hotel received a facelift in the 1880s under the supervision of architect R.B. Lucas, who added its distinctive Italianate look. Today, the Queen’s Head Hotel is still a popular dining and drinking venue in North Adelaide, and sits in pride of place – central in Kermode Street.

**Continue west on Kermode Street towards Palmer Place. Walk along the path directly ahead that crosses the park diagonally. Honeywill House (51 – 54 Palmer Place) is located on the right at the end of the park.**

# **Stop 7: “The Ghost on the Stairs”**

Honeywill House, 51 - 54 Palmer Place

Once the residence of the Honeywill family, tragedy struck in the December of 1908 with the suicide of Mrs. Emily Honeywill. Mr. Honeywill reported to Sergeant O’Connor of the metropolitan police that he had found his wife dead. The Sergeant reported to the house and found Mrs. Honeywill sprawled across the bedroom floor in a pool of blood, her throat slashed, and in her hand an open cut razor. She was 47 years old.

It is thought that Emily Honeywill still haunts the home where she took her own life. There have been sightings of her spectral image at the top of a stairwell. She is said to have a sad demeanour and is wearing what has been described as white, blood soaked nightclothes. There are also reports of frequent poltergeist activity in this building, and even today, staff (who wish not to be identified) have reported phantom footsteps, cold spots on the floors and objects moving of their own accord.

The original house was built for W. Honeywill in 1901. Mr Honeywill worked for Charles Birk & Co. Drapers which operated from 44-58 Rundle Street, Adelaide. Mr. Honeywill sold the house two years later, and from 1910 until 1932 the house was owned by F.W. Bullock, a notable man of politics who was a counselor, alderman and the Mayor of the Adelaide City Council. He also ran his own business, F.W. Bullock and Co. – Auctioneers Land and Estate Agents. Mr. Bullock was a notable member of the Adelaide Freemasons.

The house is now used as offices and a business premises for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

**Continue west on Palmer Place and walk through the laneway at the Anglican Church of Australia (Christchurch Lane). Go to the end of the laneway and turn left on Jeffcott Street, before turning right on Downs Court. At the end of Downs Court, turn right onto Strangways Terrace, stopping almost immediately at the corner where the road turns west.**

**Stop 8:“Hangman’s Corner”**Strangways Terrace

For over a century, there have been rumours of a black, misty form breezing through this corner of the Adelaide parklands. Some think that the black shadow is the ghost of a former hangman, and that he haunts the area as eternal punishment for ending the lives of criminals. Others believe that the shadow is the accumulation of the despair and misery of those dying men – that their darkest thoughts and emotions stained the land and returned from death in ethereal form. There is even legend of a tree in the park near here that no bird will sit in, and which no other plant life will grow near.

Whatever the case, those that have been unfortunate enough to cross the path of the Hangman’s Ghost have reported sheer terror upon seeing the shadow, and all have run for lives and not turned back…

In 1838, a large crowd gathered in the parklands for the public execution of Michael Magee. Magee had been found guilty of the attempted murder of the colony Sheriff, Samuel Smart.

The State at the time did not have an executioner, and it was soon realised that Samuel Smart may have to be the one that executed Magee. This was considered unseemly, so the position of “Jack Ketch” – an English term for a public executioner – was advertised in the colony. No no-one wanted the job. The wages were increased, and still no-one came forward for the position.

On the 2nd of May 1838, as the crowd awaited eagerly at the advertised site of the execution, a horse and cart was seen approaching a large tree. On the back of the cart sat a coffin, and atop the coffin was the Hangman – a local man, instantly recognisable, even with his face covered.

Magee was forced to stand on the back of the cart as the noose was fashioned around his neck and over a tree limb. His crime was read aloud to him and the gathered crowd. When offered a chance to speak, Magee proclaimed that while he had performed some of the deeds he was accused of, he did not agree with all of the allegations.

Magee – now with the noose around his neck, hands tied behind his back and a sack over his head – stood waiting for his end on the cart’s platform. The executioner whipped his horses, which drove the cart forward, leaving Magee hanging from the tree.

But somehow, Magee’s noose had slipped from under his ear to underneath his chin, and in front of the large audience – which included women and children – Magee flailed about in agony, still hanging from the tree. In his struggle, Magee’s hands were freed from the ropes. He pulled himself up on the hanging rope to relieve the pressure on his throat, but the hangman returned, grabbing Magee’s flailing body and using his own weight to pull down on Magee. The noose tightened, snapping his neck and killing him.

From then on, the tree upon which Michael Magee was hung was pointed out to new visitors to the city, as a morbid tourist attraction.

**Continue west following Strangways Terrace to the corner of Strangways terrace and Ward Street.**

# **Stop 9: ‘Adelaide’s First Ghost’**

Calvary Hospital, 89 Strangways Terrace

The property on which the Calvary Hospital now sits was originally purchased by Robert Cock in the first land sales held in Adelaide in 1837. It was only a short time later that Cock sold the land to Robert Gouger, who was the first colonial secretary of the province of South Australia. Gouger had bought the property based on the belief that the elevated position of the land would benefit the health of his wife, who suffered from tuberculosis. His small wooden hut was barely adequate for their needs, and unfortunately the elevated position offered no health benefits. Both Mrs Gouger and their small baby died.

Mr Gouger buried their bodies onsite, however they were later moved to West Terrace Cemetery. The property was eventually sold to William Younghusband in 1846. Having made his fortune investing in the Burra Mines, Younghusband set about building his family home, which was described as “large and commodious”. The rumours about North Adelaide’s “Grey Lady” ghost first surfaced not long after the 1847 building of the Younghusband Mansion. In a document found in the Calvary Archives, the building is described as containing a large basement, which became the nursing sister’s quarters, as well as a room that had been sealed up. This sealed section was later opened to reveal a room that was unfinished during the time of the Younghusband families’ occupation of the house; it was full of rubble and construction leftovers. However, a legend was born from that sealed room – one that continues to this very day: the legend of “The Grey Lady of Younghusband Mansion”. The story grew when in 1869, a newspaper published that the spirit of a “grey lady” had been seen sitting in a chair in the mansion’s basement. She was described as having a morose look upon her face, as if in mourning. She never once spoke or looked up; instead she sat, crying, looking in to the distance.

Another possible origin for the tale of the “grey lady” is the unconfirmed story that a young woman was shot to death, either within the building or on the land before the house was built. It is suggested that it is her ghost which could be seen in the basement of the mansion. In addition to this, it was common knowledge that Mrs Gouger and her son had died on the property previously and were buried there. These two facts, combined with the spooky appearance of the house on the hill, led to talk of the house being haunted. This is considered one of the first two hauntings reported in South Australia – the other being that of “Graham’s Castle”, which once stood at Prospect.

This isn’t the only spirit or report of paranormal phenomena taking place at the land now occupied by Calvary Hospital. As in many hospitals worldwide, there are reports of “grey nurses” – spectral beings either Angelic in origin, or the spirits of women so devoted in life to the cause of healing the sick, that they continue their work after their physical deaths.

The Younghusband Mansion was once described as the “*finest in Adelaide*”, containing many underground rooms and passages, a ballroom on the ground floor, cedar fittings to every doorway, window, skirting and architrave plus cedar floors throughout the building. The property was surrounded by beautifully designed gardens and a distinctive iron fence. With no other buildings close by, it stood out on the hill as the most prominent home of its time.

After William Younghusband’s death, the house was left to his daughter Louisa. After she was widowed, she relocated to Europe and the house remained empty for a time. In 1883, the lease for the house fell to Miss Isabella Baker, with intention for the large mansion to become a private hospital. The property was sold to Miss Baker in 1889, after the remaining trustee, Frederick Sanderson, decided to relinquish the property. The mansion was eventually torn down to make way for new buildings.

The Sisters of the Little Company of Mary took over the running of the hospital in 1900, with their first patient admitted on the 1st of April 1st that year. A new hospital wing was completed in 1906, standing next to the former mansion, followed by more additions in 1917. These included a new wing for nurses’ sleeping quarters. Over time, many additions have been made to the hospital, including the Mary Potter Hospice. Calvary Hospital is still an active medical centre.

**When safe to do so, cross the road and continue west on Strangways Terrace, turn north on to Hill street, Then east on Barnard Street to the corner of Barnard Street and Wellington Square.**

# **Stop 10: ‘My Father! My Father!’ – The Blackhouse Suicide**

Corner of Jeffcott Street and Barnard Street

It’s a sorry state of affairs when a young boy loses his father… and even sorrier when the boy is the one to find his father’s body. And so goes the story of the awful day in 1886 when young Arthur Blackhouse, playing detective, stumbled upon a ghastly find.

Joseph Vivian Blackhouse, a former storeman at Hausen & Catchlove’s brewery, lived with his large family on Archer Street in North Adelaide. Joseph had suffered from mental illness for most his adult life, and in 1880, at the age of 42, had found himself inside a lunatic asylum for a short time. As he grew older, he also became deaf, and because of this, lost his job at the brewery. He survived by taking odd jobs, supported by a small allowance from his family in England.

The people of North Adelaide thought Joseph a strange man. He was often seen walking around the township with his head down, muttering to himself. He also had begun to drink very heavily and suffered severe bouts of depression.

One day, Joseph told his family that he and Constable Watts, a local police officer, had made a gentleman’s pact to travel to Sydney together. This trip entailed going into partnership with a business, which, he explained, would solve the families’ financial woes. Joseph sold a few items to pay for his journey, and on Thursday the 18th of March 1886, kissed his family goodbye, intimating that he was bound for Sydney as promised.

During the following week, members of the family learned that Constable Watts had made no such pact with Blackhouse, and so a mystery had opened. One of Blackhouse’s young sons, Arthur, took it upon himself to solve the case. Arthur began to ask around town if anyone had seen or heard from his father in the past week.

Elizabeth Nimmo rented a house to Joseph Blackhouse, on the corner of Barnard Street North Adelaide. She told Arthur that his father had agreed to rent the house on the 16th of March but had never arrived to collect the keys.

In a sprint, young Arthur made his way along Tynte Street and across Wellington Square, to the old cottages on the corner of Barnard Street. Arthur found the house, and peered through the window. With the sudden realisation of what he was seeing, he burst into tears and began screaming: *“My Father! My Father!”*

A group of locals heard the young boy’s cry and alerted a passing constable, who could not believe what he saw through the window. The entrance to the front of the house was blocked, however after progressing to the back of the house, the constable found the door wide open. He made his way through the house, covering his mouth and nose to avoid the putrid smell. The constable then came across the horrifying sight that both he and young Arthur had glanced at through the window. Lying against the front door, covered in dried, blackened blood and in an already decomposed state, was the body of Joseph Blackhouse.

The story unravelled upon an inquest. Inside Joseph’s pockets were two letters: one addressed to his wife “Lotti”, and the other to “Mr Watts”. The envelope marked “Watts” contained a cheque. The one marked “Lotti”, however, contained a brief suicide note in which Joseph implied that his loving wife had brought about his demise, influencing him to commit the act due to her “inquisitiveness and interference”. He went on to state: “Out of work, out of pocket, I feel that I can live no longer!”. It was found that Joseph Blackhouse, being of unsound mind, had committed suicide by drinking a bottle of laudanum, or narcotic poison.

Today there is no sign of the small cottage where Joseph Blackhouse decided to end his life. The house once stood on the corner of Barnard St and Wellington Square, and is currently a block of units.

**Walk across Wellington Square, use the pedestrian crossing to the northern side of Tynte Street.**

# **Stop 11: ‘The Mayor’s Ghost’**

North Adelaide Community Centre and Library, 176 Tynte Street

The North Adelaide Library and Community Centre was built in 1883 after being first proposed a year earlier. It was designed by notable Adelaide architect Mr R.C. Rees. On September 10th, 1883, Governor Robinson laid the foundation stone, beneath which is buried a parchment containing the names of all the trustees, the builders and the reasons for the building’s construction.

Only six years later, William Bundey, a former Grand Master of the Order of Oddfellows and Lord Mayor of Adelaide from 1883 until 1886, was attending the wedding reception of a family friend’s daughter, in the hall at the rear of this building. The event was attended by over 100 people.

Mr Bundey was invited to the podium to speak. He stood proudly at the podium and delivered a heartfelt speech about the newlywed couple and the happiness their marriage would bring to them and their families. His daughter, who had accompanied him to the wedding, escorted him back to his place at the wedding party table, beside the bride.

Bundey sat down and began to turn very pale. Several guests rushed to his aid, carrying him into a back room of the institute where only a few minutes later, Bundey died in the arms of his eldest daughter.

In the past few years, staff have reported odd goings-on in the library after hours, and on Saturday mornings when the library is very quiet. They hear heavy footsteps coming from the hall at the rear when they know no-one is present, and on some occasions, they hear the same footsteps walking up the staircase, accompanied by the sound of chains rattling.

One of the staff was describing her experience of this very phenomena when Allen Tiller asked if she had considered that William Bundey, as a former Lord Mayor, could possibly be wearing attire from his former employment – his Mayoral gold chains. Perhaps it is these chains that the staff hear rattling as he climbs the stairs.

The building of the North Adelaide Community Centre and Library was funded by public conscription over a number of years from 1880, when the idea was first proposed. It wasn’t until 1882 that residents of the area rallied their support. During a public meeting, it was decided that a post office would be erected on Tynte Street, as well as an institute. The townsfolk fully supported the proposal and a building committee was formed.

By 1883, enough money had been raised and a suitable architect and builder was found via tender. Mr R.C. Rees accepted the job after submitting his tender at 3470 pounds – the modern equivalent of which is over 400,000 Australian dollars.

**Thank you for listening to the Adelaide Ghosts and Ghouls Self-Guided Walking Tour, which was designed and developed based on research from my world-first history residency at the libraries in 2016, along with newly found ghost stories brought forward via public consultation sessions.

I hope you have enjoyed this exploration of the city’s history and its stories, which aims to share with future generations to learn of our important city heritage and of the lives of people who made this great city what it is today.**

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)