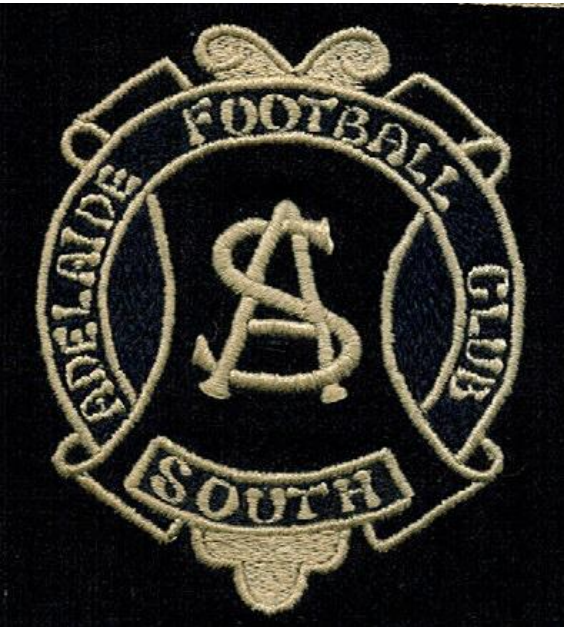


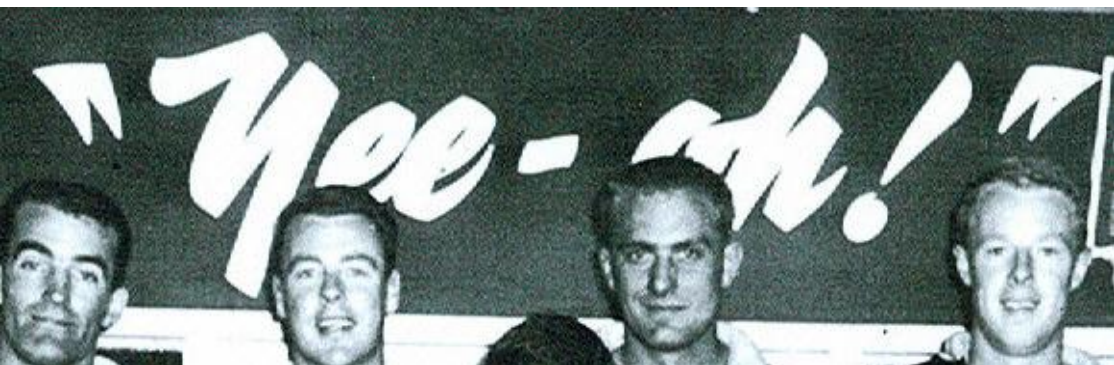


SOUTH ADELAIDE FOOTBALL CLUB

A Perspective on the Past

Yee-Oh!

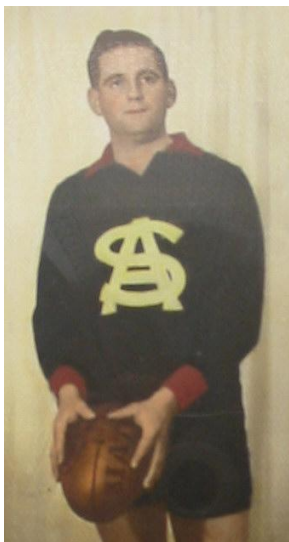
Those who followed the fortunes of the South Adelaide Football Club last century were familiar both with a dearth of premierships, and with an old and odd shout of encouragement that was often used at matches, particularly up to the 1960's; in many of those games the stands at the old Exhibition Oval (in what is now the Adelaide University grounds), Kensington Oval, Adelaide Oval and elsewhere echoed to the cry of *Yee-Oh!* whenever South were playing. The term became so closely associated with the South Adelaide club, that in some press reports in the 1920's, the same term was even used to describe the team itself – *the Old Yee-Ohs*. It even appeared on the wall behind the 1965 team photo (below).



Since I became club historian a number of years ago, the most common question I have been asked by a whole range of people has been about the origin of that saying. Many can recall it from attending matches with their parents; some can remember yelling it out themselves, only later wondering about its origin.

Others enquiring have been past players, members of the press, and some who have come across the term in articles they have read. To all of these enquiries I have had to admit that I had been unable to find an explanation, either from press reports and other material from the early 1900's, from talking to old supporters and committeemen, or in interviews with players from the 1930's and 1940's.

Then, in 2006, I spent some time interviewing an 80 year old who had played



one season for South Adelaide in the 1940's, and who is doing the coin toss for today's match. In the interview, Peter Ardill talked about his childhood at Henley Beach, his association with the Henley Football Club which he helped to found after WW2, his premierships with that club, and the many positions he had held there. It was the sort of record that led to life membership of the seaside club, and the current title of patron. He also talked of his infatuation with South as a child, when he was taken by his father (who himself played for South between 1910 – 1919), to see their two premierships in the 1930's, and his hero worship of players from that era like the Dawes brothers and Jack Cockburn.

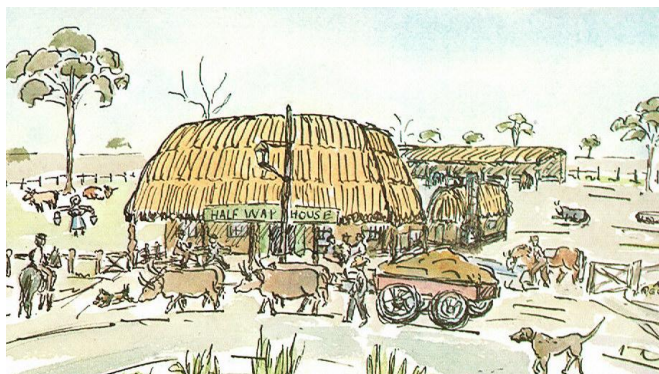
Right at the end of our talk, he happened to mention



an old aunt, his dad's sister Gertrude, whose husband Claude Halifax had run the Flinders Hotel at Port Augusta between 1945 -1961. 'She used to write to me and tell me about when my dad's team used to play against Port Adelaide. They used to have a yell then, and even when I was still playing – it was *Yee Oh – Come on South!* One day I got a letter and in it she said that dad's team in the early 1900's used to have a horse and cart to take them down the Port Road to play at Alberton. Half way down there, the horses had to call in for water and hay – it must have left early for them to get there on time! The name of the man who owned the place was a mister Yeo, and it was right next to the hotel, so when they got close they would all yell out *Yeo!* And they would get out too for a rest and a pint. Those sisters of my dad, they used to go down too to watch him play, and that's how they knew. Once my aunt cut an article out of the paper and sent me stating all of this too, but I can't find it now.'

Well, *Yee-Oh!* My ears were back, and I was thinking ahead to what I could do to authenticate Peter's information. If there was a grain store run by a Yeo next to a pub halfway down the Port Road in the years when his dad was playing footy for South, then for me that would be the clincher. A good starting point would be to check out some Sands and McDougall directories from the early years of last century, which are organised in council districts and subdivisions. Knowing the Woodville area from a childhood spent there, I initially looked at the area surrounding the Halfway House Hotel at Beverley. No luck – there had been no grain or chaff store in that neighbourhood at all. The only other hotel I could think of in the locality was the Woodville Hotel – a quick look at a copy of Susan Marsden's *History of Woodville*, and bingo!

The Woodville Hotel (located in the subdivision or village of Tenterden, just west of Woodville road) had also originally been called the Old Halfway House. It had opened in 1839 and was located near an old



and significant well that was not only the main source of water for Port Adelaide, but also an important watering stop for horse drawn wagons using the Port Road. A logical place for a chaff store, and there it was in Sands and McDougalls in the subdivision of Tenterden, a wood and chaff store run by an Ernest Isaac Yeo. Isaac, born in 1878, and his family were involved in the lime, wood and timber business, with an interest in yards at Semaphore, Largs and Glanville over those years. His business at Woodville covered the years 1907 – 1912, which overlapped with the earlier years (1910 – 1912) of Jack Ardill's time with South.

So this was the spot where the cry of *Yee - Oh!* was first used by the men from South to remind the driver to stop whenever they approached the chaff store and watering hole. And in all likelihood the same thing happened on the trip home too, as it was only the southern side of the Port Road (on which both the hotel and chaff store were located) that was used by vehicular traffic at the time – the northern side (nowadays the up road to Adelaide) was unmade, and cattle and sheep were driven along it.

The day after I found this out, I was at the match at Encounter Bay against West Adelaide, standing on the far side of the ground with past player and past general manager Haydn Cutting, and telling him Peter Ardill's story about the origin of *Yee-Oh!* Just along from us, sitting in their chairs on the fence in the best picnic atmosphere, were Marg Bawden and her daughter Dorothy. Margaret has been a long time supporter of the club, the wife of our late life member Ron Bawden, who had a 40 year involvement with the club as a junior coach, trainer, sprigger, and timekeeper. When I had finished the story, Dorothy said that she couldn't help overhearing it, and went on to tell us that in the 1970's she had played for a netball side called the Yeeos made up of women who were closely associated with the South Adelaide Football Club. At some stage she could remember being told (by one of the women who was involved with them) basically the same story of the South team calling out *Yee-Oh* on their trip down to Alberton. In her account, however, based on the reminiscences of someone who had played for South in the earlier part of the century, the only difference was that the horse team had been replaced by a bus; the tradition of the mid way refreshment stop on the trip to the Port obviously outlived the need for resting the horses!

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June 2006