

LONELY GRAVES

The North of South Australia has many lonely graves in remote areas. There are two headstones in the little cemetery at Prince Alfred Mine near the deserted settlement of Belton. One is the grave of George Albert Whitlock, 25/4/1854 to 5/8/1872. He was 18 when he died at Prince Alfred. The other is the grave of Mary Treloar, wife of Bennett Treloar, born 30/10/1837, died 3/5/1873.

The headstones are made from local slate and, although carefully made, are obviously not professionally carved. Each has a rather touching verse.

George Whitlock, miner from Cornwall, and his wife Martha came to South Australia on the "NABOB" in 1856. They were only 23 and 22 respectively. They brought two children, George aged one and baby Esther. George senior worked at his trade as a miner and held a lease next to the main Prince Alfred mine. It was worked by his family for some time and was known locally as the "Whitlock Shaft". The Mines Department knew surprisingly little about the history of the mine. But how did George die? I suspected a mine accident, however, the District Council at Carrieton had no records that early.

I was fortunate to meet Mr. Lin Clarke who is the owner of "Pine Grove" Station, on which the mines are located. He had been told a lot about the mine by his father. The Whitlocks were well known in the district and young George Whitlock died of appendicitis and Mary Treloar's death was thought to have been due to complications at childbirth. So there were two tragedies which a doctor may have been able to prevent, but remote mining fields did not have doctors in the pioneering days.

Source: (REF299) condensed from the South Australian Genealogist, Vol.15,#2, April 1988 (Note: our records indicate George Whitlock was from Bedminster, near Bristol, not Cornwall as mentioned in the article. Ed.)