



BARN HISTORY

W.F. Ploenges a German immigrant settled on section 426, Hundred of McDonnell in 1877. With his farming activities expanding, Friedrich built a large barn with stone picked up on the property, possibly the largest building of its type in the South east at the time. Tragically Friedrich fell from the loft of the barn whilst carrying out repairs and died as a result of his injuries.

His eldest daughter had recently married Otto Spehr, farmer of Millicent, younger brother of Carl of neighbouring Carlsruhe. Otto and Agusta Took over the management of the property in 1893, purchased from Ploenges estate. The Barn always popular with district social events, especially during World War 1 raising funds for the war effort.

In 1919 Otto died suddenly and in 1928 Agusta sold the property to her husband's nephew, Adelbert Spehr and he conceived the idea to convert the "Barn" into a Palais after the style he had seen in Germany on a trip to Europe in 1925. Consequently in 1937 it opened with 1000 people from the South east of South Australia and Western district of Victoria flocked to the opening of the "Barn Palais".

Shortly after World War 2 broke out and apart from the occasional function for the war effort, the "Barn" returned to its original purpose where hay and grain were stored. In 1947 with the war over, the venue opened again, a most popular spot for dancing until Adelbert's death in 1958 and after 5 years the property passed out of the possession of the Spehr family.

Sold to P.T. Laslett and in 1960 to A. Clark who immediately leased the "Barn" to Frank Cleves for 5 years, and together with son Dale it became a very popular venue, and in 1965 Dale bought the property which included the "barn" homestead and adjoining land. Dale Cleves is a great nephew of Adelbert Spehr and a great great nephew of Otto Spehr.

Since then in 1973 the "Barn" became a licensed premise and the building was enlarged from 1983 to 1986, to become the largest licensed venue in the State at the time, and remained so until the opening of the Convention Centre in Adelaide.

In 1973 the Restaurant was built at the rear where once there were stables and shearing shed. The restaurant traded as the Adam Lindsay Gordon Restaurant until re launched as The Barn Steakhouse in 1988.

Today the activities of The barn have been expanded with the acquisition of the neighbouring barn accommodation and the development of The Barn Catering business.