

Boomer



MUSIC ON THE
HIGH SEAS

PASSENGERS ARE
GROOVING AWAY
ON HOLIDAY

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CARN THE PIES





ROARING TRADE: Cowley's pie cart on The Parade at Norwood in 1972 and, below, a sign at Norwood Oval in 2002.

Pictures: NEWS LTD ARCHIVE

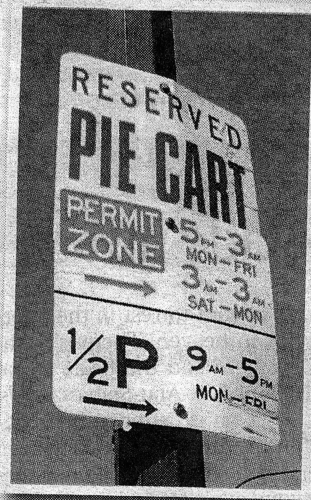
Shift workers and revellers loved a midnight visit to the city's iconic pie carts for a floater, writes Bob Byrne

ON my way to the footy at the new Adelaide Oval a few Friday nights ago, I noticed that Vili's had a pie cart parked just near the Festival Centre.

I had already eaten, otherwise I would have stopped for a pie floater ... just like old times.

Memories flooded back of the pie carts that had stood in some of our city and suburban streets for many years before they all mysteriously disappeared, taking with them some of the more colourful history and memories of "fast food" in Adelaide.

That history can be traced back more than 100 years, when a young former sailor by the name of Gibbs opened his first pie stall in 1864 on what is now known as the Beehive Corner, at the intersection of King William and Rundle



streets. It was a great place for such a business and the venture thrived. More of the carts quickly opened in other city locations.

By 1915, there were nine pie stalls and carts serving their wholesome but inexpensive fare to workers and hungry people walking past.

By the late 1950s, however, just two remained in the city: Cowley's on the GPO corner of King William and Franklin streets, and Balfours, outside the Adelaide Railway Station on North Tce.

The National Trust believes that Cowley's Pie Cart was the longest-serving food venue in the state before it finally closed down in October 2010.

It may also have been the first to serve the pie floater – a square pie, turned upside down and served in green pea soup with a generous dollop of tomato sauce on top.

According to The Pie Cart website, the "floater" may have been conceived in Port Pirie more than 120 years ago by Ern "Shorty" Bradley in the 1890s.

Nobody really knows where the dish originally comes from, but the purists will tell you that the pea gravy must be made with blue boiler peas.

It is, of course, uniquely Australian, and as most people who have visited the pie cart over the years will tell you, is a

delicacy, usually best eaten after a big night out on the town.

In 2003, the pie floater was recognised as a South Australian heritage icon by the National Trust of Australia.

Late-night workers, party revellers, policemen, politicians, taxi drivers, journalists on the night beat, city dwellers, down and outers and hungry insomniacs would stand side by side, shoulder-to-shoulder at the pie cart and scoff down a hot pie and sauce or a floater.

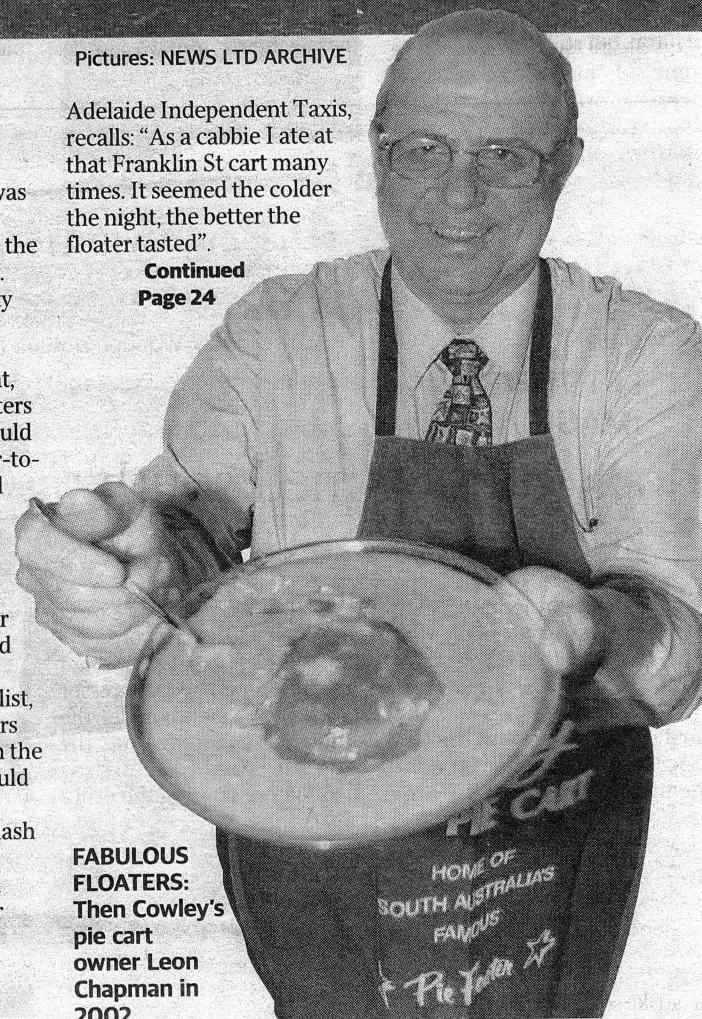
It was the epitome of egalitarian Australia where the rich and the poor could gather for a quick and delicious snack to eat.

As a young 5DN journalist, Craig Middleton remembers doing the overnight shift in the newsroom, and says: "I would read the midnight news, jump in the news car and dash into town to get the first edition copies of the 'Tiser, grab a takeaway pie floater and a Coke and head back to work."

Kenny Peplow, who worked as a driver for

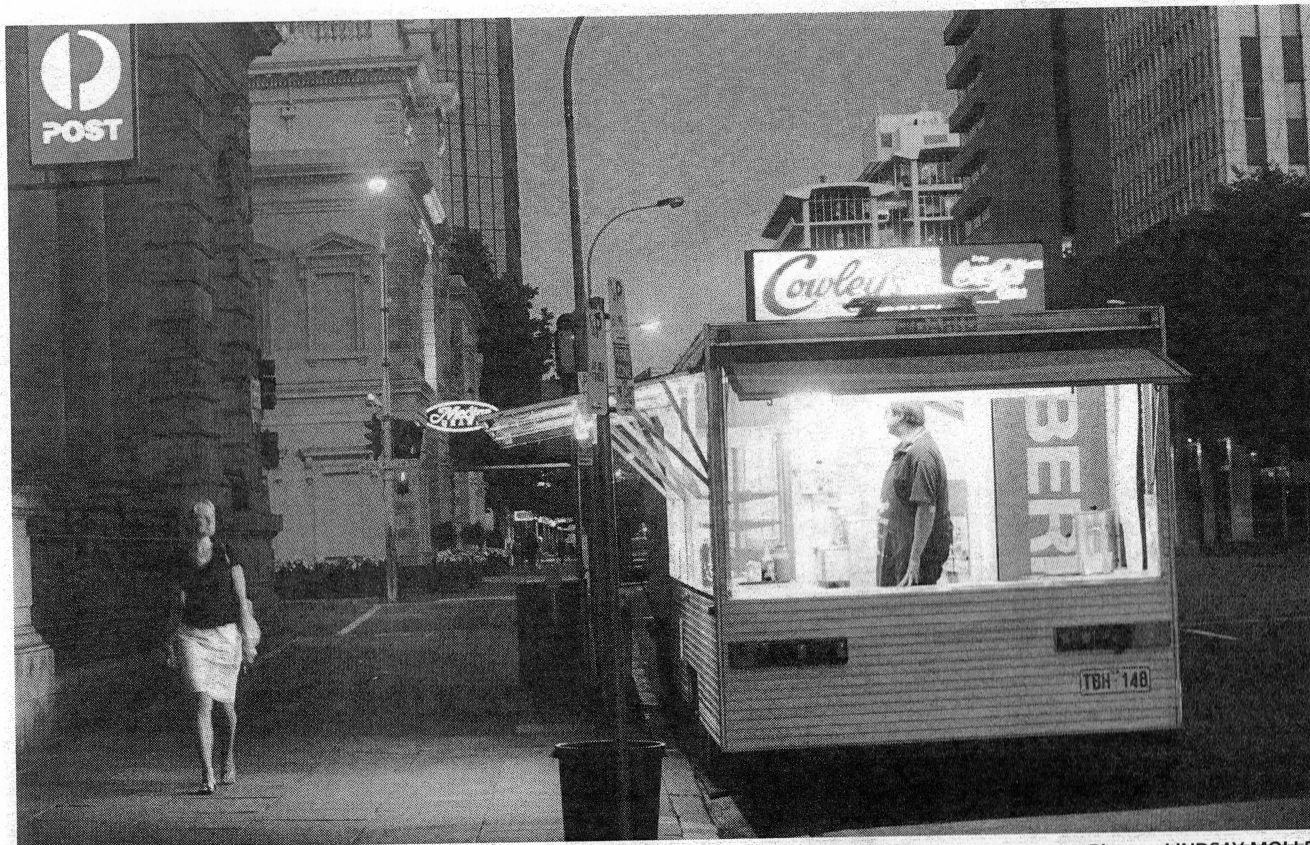
Adelaide Independent Taxis, recalls: "As a cabbie I ate at that Franklin St cart many times. It seemed the colder the night, the better the floater tasted".

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FABULOUS FLOATERS: Then Cowley's pie cart owner Leon Chapman in 2002.

Putting the cart before the sauce



WAITING: Cowley's Pie Cart at Victoria Square, near the GPO, in more recent times.

Picture: LINDSAY MOLLER

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Todd Geisler recalls: "When I first started working in the city about 15 years ago, the Cowley's GPO cart was about the only place in the centre of Adelaide where you could grab

a floater from Cowley's Pie Cart. And Dean Osborn reminisces: "Used to get off the afternoon shift at Hoadley's in Carrington St at 11.30pm, drive over to the GPO and pick up a takeaway floater, with peas in a

musician at the Arkaba in the mid '60s."

The Norwood Pie Cart had been in operation for more than 80 years on The Parade. It was adjacent to the Norwood Town Hall and was originally

Adelaide's city streets in the not too distant future.

According to The Pie Cart website, the current owners are in negotiations with the Adelaide City Council and plans are progressing for a new



BOOMER LETTERS

Dad's daring dive at pool opening

READING *Boomer* (*The Advertiser*, July 14), the list of "vanishing" icons of our state caught my attention.

Item three was that the Adelaide City Baths had an Olympic-size swimming pool and high-diving facilities added in 1940. The inaugural opening dive was performed by my father, J.J. Williams. He performed a swan dive from the new high-diving platform, with his body soused in denatured methylated spirits and set on fire for effect.

He was chosen for this "honour" in light of his dedication to the Rosewater Swimming Club, being an active participant and leader among its membership at the time.

His untimely death at the end of 1951 left my mother with a collection of trophies and medals that have passed to me.

A small sample of his achievements are the fastest time record and trophy from the 1934 Swim Through Adelaide race, and fastest time at the 1935 Rosewater Long Swim.

In my youth, it was not uncommon for people to stop me in the street and share their memories of a man they considered a true gentleman.

Words used described this stevedore with considerable praise, but never "hero" - a word not used indiscriminately then.

My mother and I had to live with her parents. Things were

from O'Connells bookshop in the Bowman building.

I struck up a friendship with the owner. I can't remember his name but I still have a dictionary which I purchased from his shop.

What I especially remember of the building itself was the lovely stained glass. The second-hand book business later moved to Leigh St, and then to the present Hindley St location.

L. Miller
Adelaide

Wonderful time in Bowman building

I ALWAYS read Bob Byrne's features every week, as I can relate to them and enjoy them, plus all the letters.

He performed a swan dive from the new high-diving platform, with his body... set on fire for effect

Regarding the *Boomer* article with the photo of Bowman's building: I actually worked in this building in a finance company, Electrical Investments Ltd, from

1963-65, before we moved to Gawler Place near Pirie St. This building has fond memories for me. We had offices on the first floor and ground floor.

I can remember going into the cake shop in the arcade for cakes and sandwiches daily, and being out on the balcony - waving and screaming - when The Beatles' motorcade went down King William St. It was just so exciting for all us office girls. And at lunchtime, going down to the town hall and waiting for them to come out on to the balcony and not being able to get back to the office because we were all jammed in by thousands of people.

WAITING: Cowley's Pie Cart at Victoria Square, near the GPO, in more recent times.

Picture: LINDSAY MOLLER

From Page 23

Todd Geisler recalls: "When I first started working in the city about 15 years ago, the Cowley's GPO cart was about the only place in the centre of Adelaide where you could grab something to eat if you were working back late."

And Annie Leciestor says: "Where else could you go for a late-night snack after the theatre, all dressed up to the nines and eating a pie floater?"

"I'm so glad some of us have those memories."

Richard Adams recalls that he and his wife spent their wedding night at the Adelaide Hilton, but still found time for

a floater from Cowley's Pie Cart. And Dean Osborn reminisces: "Used to get off the afternoon shift at Hoadley's in Carrington St at 11.30pm, drive over to the GPO and pick up a takeaway floater, with peas in a cup, and to eat it in bed, much to my wife's disgust. Oh, and don't forget not only sauce but vinegar."

Frank Sebastyan suggested that the best suburban pie cart was on The Parade at Norwood: "Best pies. Great floaters. Also, they had Hall's Stonie Ginger Beer on tap."

"Simply the best. I often called in with band mates on the way home from working as

a musician at the Arkaba in the mid '60s."

The Norwood Pie Cart had been in operation for more than 80 years on The Parade. It was adjacent to the Norwood Town Hall and was originally operated by Cowley's. I've lost the exact date of its closure, but I recall at the time that its then owner, Price's Bakery, decided to close the landmark because they believed it was no longer viable. There were suburban pie carts at Glenelg and Port Adelaide, now also gone.

But there is good news for those who remember those good old days of the floater: a pie cart may regularly return to

Adelaide's city streets in the not too distant future.

According to The Pie Cart website, the current owners are in negotiations with the Adelaide City Council and plans are progressing for a new location and a new style pie cart.

It states: "It will possibly return late 2014 or early 2015. The location is yet unknown."

TELL US YOUR MEMORIES AT BOOMER, GPO BOX 339, ADELAIDE 5001, OR EMAIL BOOMER@NEWS.COM.AU. BOB BYRNE RUNS THE ADELAIDE REMEMBERS WHEN FACEBOOK PAGE

Long swim. In my youth, it was not uncommon for people to stop me in the street and share their memories of a man they considered a true gentleman.

Words used described this stevedore with considerable praise, but never "hero" – a word not used indiscriminately then.

My mother and I had to live with her parents. Things were indeed different then – the gardens had vegetables and fruit trees. There were no money trees.

**Mike Williams
Marino**

Fond memories of buying books

I REMEMBER the Bowman building (*Boomer*, July 14). When I was a student in the city in 1972, I was buying second-hand books

out on the balcony – waving and screaming – when The Beatles' motorcade went down King William St. It was just so exciting for all us office girls. And at lunchtime, going down to the town hall and waiting for them to come out on to the balcony and not being able to get back to the office because we were all jammed in by thousands of people.

Next door to Bowman's building at the time, was the ANZ bank, where my father worked.

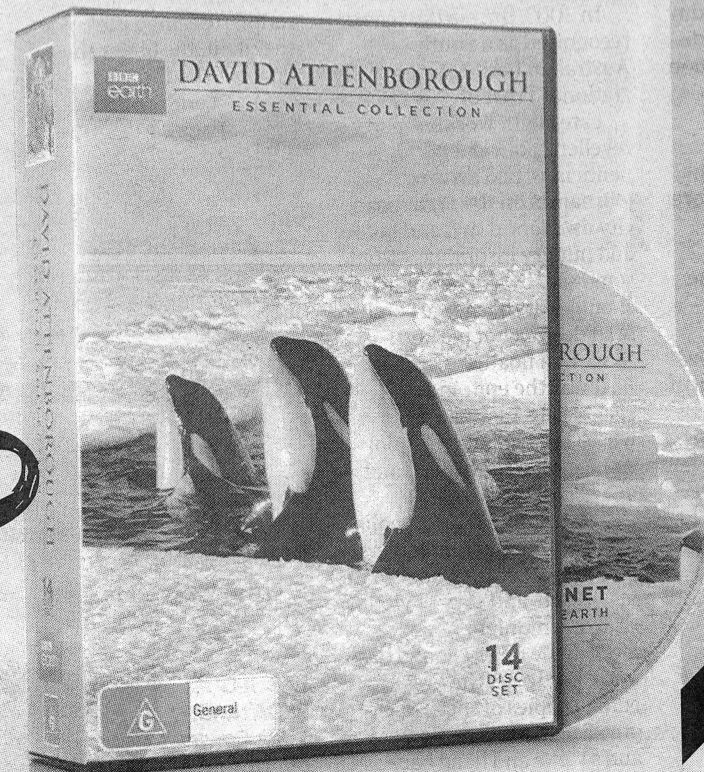
And I still have a Christmas office party photo taken inside our first floor office, so it adds to my memories of this lovely old building.

Thank you for publishing those great old photos and rekindling my memories.

**Gail Alexander
Clarence Gardens**

LET THEIR
IMAGINATION

**RUN
WILD**



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The Advertiser **Sunday Mail**



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