

# Cliffs gave Merbein fame across the world

By Sam Murdoch

SUNRAYSA residents will get a chance to go on a walk with a spectacular view today as a part of Merbein's centenary celebrations.

Bert Curtis will lead the historic walk, which will be focused on the Merbein cliffs.

"This is where the region's history comes together," Mr Curtis said.

"It's the most scenic spot in Sunraysia and apparently it is the highest spot as well.

"In the cliffs you can see 200 million years of strata and then

white man's influence as well."

Mr Curtis grew up in Sunraysia, living here for 20 years before he moved away, travelling all over the country in a variety of jobs before retiring back to the district.

"I was always a bit of a history buff.

"For years I was an active member of the Mid-Murray Field Naturalists, and while I am still a member I don't do as much."

Mr Curtis will also be focusing on the historic Blandowski expedition, which saw the German naturalist, William Blandowski, camped

underneath the cliffs.

"That's another thing of historical significance.

"They camped just below the cliffs and of course their scientific expedition was a benchmark for the naturalists in the area."

On December 2, 1856, the government appointed Blandowski

leader of an expedition to investigate the natural history of the region at the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers, with a view to collecting specimens for the National Museum.

Aided by a German naturalist,

Gerard Krefft, and overcoming many personal and physical setbacks, Blandowski accomplished his task, arriving in Adelaide in August 1857 with 28 boxes containing 17,400 specimens.

"I'll also talk about the geology of the cliffs and the Aboriginal association with the area.

"This area became significant from the white man's point of view because this is the high point.

"When Merbein started the cliffs were a part of the site to run the irrigation channels out.

"It was a commanding site – all

that country, the channels run for 30 miles (nearly 50km) out here."

The Merbein Clifftop Walk will begin at 9.45am today and run until noon.

For planning purposes, book at the Merbein Centenary Office, which can be found at 91 Commercial Street.

Tomorrow there will be the Chaffey Aged Care tours, Winery tours at 10am and 1.30pm, the CSIRO open day and the fruit block tours.

For more information, contact the Merbein Centenary Office.



SCENIC SPOT: Bert Curtis will lead today's historic walk focused on the spectacular Merbein cliffs, and (inset) naturalist, William Blandowski.

Picture: Sarah Simmons