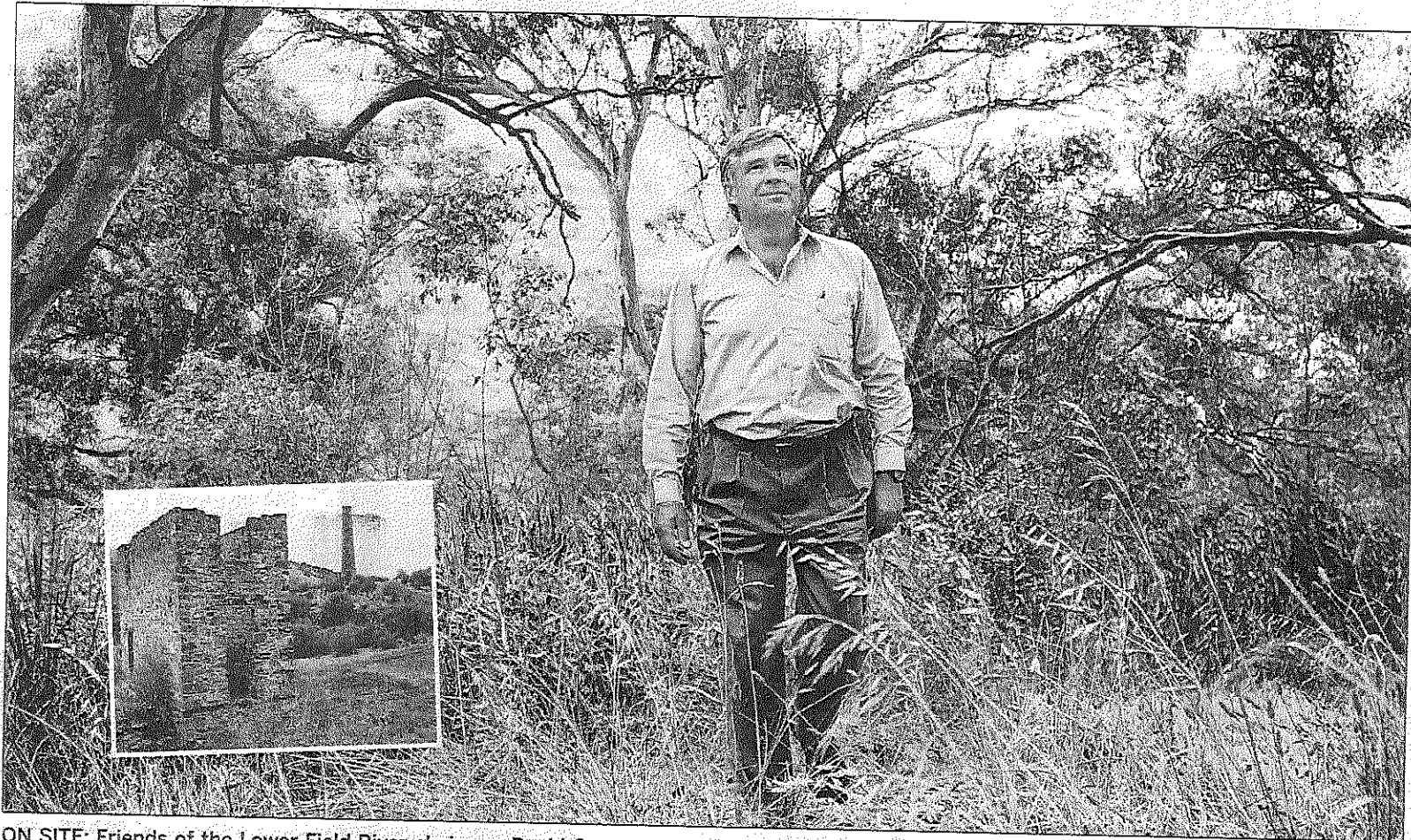


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Field River sell-off



ON SITE: Friends of the Lower Field River chairman David Greenhough.

Picture: Keryn Stevens H0344534

DEVELOPMENT I EMMA ALTSCHWAGER

ENVIRONMENT and history groups are urging the State Government to buy a section of the historic Field River Valley to preserve its biodiversity and heritage.

The valley, which is home to the State Heritage-listed Worthing Mine, has been privately owned by the Sheidow family – descendants of early settler **Alan Sheidow** – for almost 100 years.

The family put the 121 ha of land on the market last month for between \$1.45 million and \$1.65 million.

Friends of the Lower Field River, Friends of Glenthorne Farm and the Marion Historical Society are urging the State Government to buy the land and make it public open space.

AREA HISTORY

- **1847:** Copper is discovered on Worthing land owned by John Hallett.
- **1849:** Worthing Mining Company is established in England by the Hallett family.
- **1850:** 10 cottages for miners and a school are built on the land.
- **1851:** The steam engine house and chimney are built.
- **1857:** The mine is closed when the engine is taken to the Bremer mine near Callington.
- **Early 1900s:** The Sheidow Family purchases the land.

Friends of the Lower Field River chairman **David Greenhough** said public ownership was the best way to preserve the valley's biodiversity and heritage.

"Over the years, sections of land have suffered significant degra-

ation from 4WDs, motor bikes, graffiti and vandalism," he said. "Under public ownership it could be used as part of a linear park project along the Field River – a linkage between the sea and hills from a recreation and environmental point of view."

Friends of Glenthorne Farm secretary **Alan Burns** said the land was the "missing jigsaw piece" joining environmentally sensitive and historic land along the Field River.

"There's far too much heritage to let this opportunity slip," he said.

Marion Historical Society president **Bob Donley** said the group had been pushing for the land to be publicly owned for 25 years.

"It's a little gem right on Adelaide's doorstep . . . (and) we believe it would be far better in public ownership so a walking trail could

be established along there," he said.

"It's about getting public vigilance to deter the kind of activities which have degraded the land and old Cornish pumping house."

A report commissioned by the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board last year said the Field River could become a tourist site with wetlands, mountain bike riding and walking trails if land ownership issues were resolved.

Planning Minister **John Rau** told the *Guardian Messenger* last week the land had great potential and a focus group needed to be formed to discuss its future uses.

His spokesman later ruled out the government buying the land.

A Sheidow family spokeswoman did not return calls from the *Guardian Messenger* last week.