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| **The** Nincompoops  **according to Mary Lee** |

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| John Hindmarsh | |
| 1785 - 1860 | |
| John Hindmarsh[[1]](#footnote-1)  \\SLSAPROD01\home$\slsapatrickb\Desktop\B11165.jpg**Famous because:**  Hindmarsh was the first Governor of South Australia (28 Dec 1836-16 July 1838)  **Behind the scenes:**  The administration of the colony did not progress at all under the governorship of Hindmarsh. The only progress that was made was the surveying of land by Light and his staff.[[2]](#footnote-2)  Reasons for the lack of progress include:   * Joint authority between Hindmarsh and the powerful and influential resident commissioner, James Hurtle Fischer caused enormous conflict making the administration of the province impossible. Even the most trivial differences between them were elevated to trials of strength.[[3]](#footnote-3) * Fischer had arbitrary power over the sale of land, was the emigration officer, and the colonial treasurer, enabling him to ignore Hindmarsh.[[4]](#footnote-4) * Hindmarsh’s authority was continually disputed by mostly disrespectful, inexperienced and/or inefficient officers. * When it came to appointment of senior staff, preference would be given to those able and willing to buy 5000 acres for every 100 pounds salary they were to receive. Thus ‘commercial and official pursuits in the colony would be not merely tolerated but encouraged’. [[5]](#footnote-5) * Delays in surveying the land meant possession of land and cultivation was slow. * Land speculation also absorbed by the early colonist interests and often their funds. Land purchasers would wait for property values to rise and walk away with the profits. [[6]](#footnote-6) * Hindmarsh also had a tendency to tamper with Light’s instructions and plans for the colony. * Lack of funds. Hindmarsh’s financial power was limited to Crown revenue which was non –existent from the outset. * Lack of support from the colonial office. * Hindmarsh was impatient of opposition and would swear at his officers if his opinions were questioned. * As a naval officer, Hindmarsh was unsure of particulars of civil/colonial administration * His actions were also often hasty and ill advised.   In 1838, Hindmarsh recalled to London and Fisher was dismissed.  **Why he came to South Australia:**   * Hindmarsh applied for, and secured the job of Governor. He was considered a naval officer ‘of merit and character’[[7]](#footnote-7) and ‘colonial governorships were regarded as suitable rewards for service in the army or navy’.[[8]](#footnote-8) | |
| Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide (approximately 1929) [[9]](#footnote-9) Hindmarsh Square (approximately 1860)[[10]](#footnote-10) | **Commemoration:**   * Hindmarsh Square Adelaide * Adelaide suburb Hindmarsh * Hindmarsh Island * Division of Hindmarsh (electoral division) |

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2. Radbone & Robbins (1986), p 449 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hartwell (1955), p75. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pike (1967) p105 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Pike (1967), p 98; Redbone & Robbins (1986), p 448 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Shute (2010), p 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Price (1928, 1978) p 92; Bull (1884) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Price (1928; 1978), p 92 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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