



# ROCKDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

## MONTHLY BULLETIN

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VOL. 1. No. 4.

AUGUST, 1962.

GRATIS.

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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ROCKDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY will be held as follows:-

PLACE - Council Chamber, TOWN HALL, ROCKDALE.

DATE - Friday next, 17th AUGUST, 1962 at 8.00 P.M.

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As this is our Annual Meeting we have decided not to invite a Guest Speaker but to throw the meeting open for all members and their friends to give us their ideas on how we can become a more forceful and effective voice in the community.

We have in our ranks many men and women with ideas but unfortunately our meetings are usually rather rushed and this precludes their expression.

If you have any thoughts at all on any subject to do with this society then this will be your opportunity to express them.

BUSINESS: Minutes of Inaugural Meeting  
Apologies.  
Financial Statement.  
President's Report.  
Secretary's Report.  
Election of Officers.  
(i) President.  
(ii) Vice-Presidents (2)  
(iii) Hon. Secretary.  
(iv) Hon. Treasurer.  
(v) Such Committees as the meeting shall think fit.

### THE OBJECTS OF THE ROCKDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARE -

1. To encourage the study of Australian History particularly that relating to the Rockdale Municipality.
2. To promote the compilation of authentic records of Australian History.
3. Undertake the collection of books, records, manuscripts and relics considered to have bearing on the History of the Rockdale Municipality.
4. Use its influence to secure the preservation of places of historic influence.
5. Foster the interchange of information among members of the Society by lectures, readings, discussions and exhibitions of historical interest or value.
6. Print, publish and circulate such journals, periodicals, books and other literary publications and undertakings as may seem conducive to any of the objects of the Society.
7. Establish Branches wherever and whenever considered advisable.

- 8. Affiliate or co-operate with other Societies and institutions having objects similar to those of the Society.
- 9. Conduct excursions to places of historical interest and to promote other Social Functions.
- 10. Carry out such activities as the Society may from time to time determine.

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(vi) Motion of which notice has been given

" That this Society be known as the "St. George Historical Society". Messrs. Geeves and Eardley.

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(vii) Correspondence.

(viii) General Business.

J. I. SWANN.  
President.

R. W. RATHBONE  
Hon. Secretary. (LW4813)



All members and intending members are reminded that their subscription for the year ended June 30th, 1963, will be payable at the Annual Meeting.

Included with this notice you will find a number of MEMBERSHIP FORMS.

HAVE YOU ANY FRIENDS THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN JOINING THIS SOCIETY

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As an added attraction at our Annual Meeting the Secretary has arranged an exhibition of those buildings in the Rockdale Municipality which have been entered or are to be entered in the "HISTORIC HOMES COMPETITION".

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## A SUGGESTED SUNDAY AFTERNOON DRIVE.

Some winter Sunday afternoon when you do not wish to venture too far, why not take a trip around the Rockdale Municipality and have a look at some of our architectural heritage.

Try this one for a start.

Commencing at the new Cooks River Bridge.

On your right you have the lovely 134 year old country retreat of Alexander Brodie Spark. Continue along Princes Highway to Burrows Street then turn left into Eden Street. Again on your right are four very fine old homes, two of them in particularly good repair (Nos. 15 and 27). Turn left into Forest Road past the very ancient Catholic Convent building and continue on across Princes Highway to Wickham Street where you park. Leave your car and walk back along Princes Highway to the pedestrian overhead bridge. On your left is the old sandstone home of W. A. Dettman (rather difficult to see through the trees - No. 166 Princes Highway) and next door, the Arncliffe Public School, the oldest part of which dates back to 1875. (If you are athletic enough you can climb over the fence and inspect the quaint old sandstone structure).

Return to your car and continue down Wickham Street turning right into West Botany Street where there are a number of old homes. Turn right again at Avenal Street and proceed to the top of the hill. At the intersection of Avenal and Segenhoe Streets are some more fine old residences.

Continue on down Avenal Street to the Highway where you turn left until you reach Hattersley Street on your right. Proceed along Hattersley Street which has a number of old homes in it to the Banksia Subway through which you pass making two sharp left hand turns to bring you into Roach Street. Continue along Roach Street and Somerville Street to Forest Road at the junction of which is another old home, now the Catholic Presbytery.

Again turn left and proceed along Forest Road. Rosslyn Hospital is yet another old home and just past St. David's Church on your right is "The Towers" set well back from the road. As you proceed along Forest Road note Nos. 134/136, the enormous two storied semi-detached building near the corner of Bayview Street. This building is unique in Sydney and its ironwork quite outstanding. "Coburra" on your left and "Wilga" also on your left are also lovely old homes.

At Pile Street and Wolli Creek Road, turn right and right again to bring you into Wollongong Road back along which you proceed to Arncliffe. On your left are the twin "Milsop" Residences one in good repair, one not, but both quite distinctive. At the next cross street, stop - for here is one of Rockdale's if not Sydney's real glories, The Salvation Army Girls' Home, a magnificent old mansion with a wealth of iron work unrivalled in the Metropolitan Area.

But to continue .....

Proceed down Wollongong Road to Kembbla Street where you turn left. Spare a look at No. 15 on the left (Ald. Earle's old home) and then turn right into Hirst Street (more old houses) until passing Arncliffe Park, you come to Old St. David's Church. Turn left up Edward Street, right into Wellington Street and sharp right into Loftus Street. On your right is the Loftus Street Special School (J. G. Farleigh's home complete with stables). If you complete your journey via Kelsey Street, Wollongong Road, Done Street and Firth Street to Forest Road you pass a wealth of old houses, a milk bar where you may quench your thirst and a telephone where you may ring the Secretary (LW. 4813) who planned this trip and abuse him if you got lost.

81 Jubilee Avenue,  
Kogarah.  
14th July, 1962.

Alderman R. W. Rathbone,  
Secretary,  
Rockdale Historical Society.

Dear Mr. Rathbone,

Noticing in the "Herald" recently that you are Secretary of the above Historical Society, I am prompted to write you regarding the beginnings of Local Government in Rockdale. Please bear with me if I tire you with some personal history. My parents and grandparents were among the very early settlers at Arncliffe (early 1850, though I cannot give any exact date). I was born in Arncliffe in 1871 nearly 91 years ago. Grandfather took up a block of land in what was long known as Arncliffe Street though now shown as Lusty Street. Father settled almost adjoining grandfather's cottage, claimed to be the first brick cottage south of Cooks River still stands close to the railway line which took half of his land. The cottage is still occupied but is in an awfully mutilated condition.

Re. the formation of the first Municipal Council (known as West Botany Council), father has often given me this version of its first meeting. I assume that following the usual custom the members of the first Council were appointed by the Government and consisted of six of the prominent residents. Father's version is that when they were appointed there was no hall or other suitable meeting place in Arncliffe, and in order to meet that difficulty he offered them the use of his home for their first meeting. Realising that the first business would be the election of a Mayor, father said that he bought a new chair for the first Mayor to sit in. From that date he appropriated that chair for his own use and as far back as I can remember that chair always stood at head of our table and was daily occupied by him until his death in 1940 at the age of 96. Since then this chair was handed on to me, and is still in daily use in my own home.

There is no intrinsic value in the chair, but it is the only evidence I have of the correctness of father's version of this first meeting. I have of course no documentary evidence to support this version, but have no doubt whatever that it is true to fact, and I thought you might be interested in what will probably be to you a new version of that first Council meeting.

May I add a personal note -- with my parents I left Arncliffe for Bankstown, at the age of 6, but have always retained a keen interest in the St. George District, was a very frequent visitor during my boyhood and on reaching the age of 20, settled permanently in the Hurstville district. Have been actively associated with Church and Local Government activities, have been a member of both Hurstville and Kogarah Councils (Mayor of Hurstville 1902). Have recently been honoured by Hurstville Council as the oldest ex-Mayor or Alderman still living and it has just occurred to me that I must also be one of the oldest residents born in the St. George District and still living in the district.

Thank you for reading this.

Yours sincerely,

E. F. Fripp.