



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

58 4813.

53 Bruce Street,
BEXLEY.
13th May, 1966.

Dear Friend and Member,

The next meeting of the above Society will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday evening next, 20th May, 1966 at 8 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Rockdale Town Hall,
Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Guest Speaker: Ex-Alderman V.M. Saunders,
Chairman, Rockdale Council Art Committee,
Editor, Arncliffe Progress Association News,
will speak on

"Irish Round Towers and their Association with
Arncliffe."

At the conclusion of this talk, a film produced by the Rockdale Council, entitled "Who Pays the Piper", which has a number of the Historic Homes of the Municipality included on it, will be screened.

New members and friends most welcome.

Would lady members please bring a plate.

GIFFORD EARDLEY,

PRESIDENT.

R.W. RATHBONE,

HON. SECRETARY.

OUTING TO VICTORIA BARRACKS.

An inspection of Historic Victoria Barracks has been arranged for Saturday afternoon, 14th May, leaving the Rockdale Town Hall at 1 p.m. and arriving at the Oxford Street gates of the Barracks at 1.45 p.m. If you are interested, be at the Rockdale Town Hall at 1 p.m.

ROCKDALE COUNCIL'S GENEROUS DONATION.

A donation of £50 (\$100) by the Rockdale Council will assist the Society to go into the Printing Business. Continual requests have been received from the Mitchell National and Fisher Libraries over recent months, to put the very large amount of information we have collected on this district into printed form. Approximately £300 is needed to produce our first volume. If you have any loose change - our Treasurer at 7 Prince Edward Street, Carlton, will be glad to accommodate you.

BADGES SELLING LIKE HOT CAKES.

If you would still like one of the Society's badges - 6/- (60c.) our Treasurer will be pleased to send you one. They are most attractive and have aroused much comment in historical circles.

THE REVEREND JAMES CLARK.

Gifford and Eileen Eardley.

One of the most colourful personalities to be noted at Kogarah as from 1889 until his death, in a road accident, which occurred in 1942, was the Reverend James Clark. This English gentleman, the only son of wealthy parents, was educated at Cambridge University, and became a Barrister at the early age of nineteen. He quickly proved himself to be a most capable lawyer with a brilliant gift of oratory. Coming to New South Wales, he entered the Church of England priesthood, his educational standards being such that he was ordained a Deacon, and, in 1882, he was appointed Curate at St. Paul's, Deniliquin.

Later in the same year he was transferred to Urana and Jerinderie as Curate-in-charge. His next preferment was in 1884 when he was Priested by the then Bishop of Goulburn and, as assistant Priest, attached to St. Saviour's Cathedral at Goulburn. His stay at St. Saviour's was somewhat short as, later in 1884, he undertook the duties of locum tenens at St. Jude's, Randwick, and the following year he took up a similar position at the historic Church of St. Peter's, Richmond. Then in 1886 the more onerous duties of an incumbent were thrust upon him with his appointment to Holy Trinity, at Dulwich Hill, where he laboured until 1889. His next, and last, appointment was to the Parish of St. George, with headquarters at St. Paul's Kogarah.

The Parish of St. George at the period of the Reverend James Clark's ministry was most embracive, as it covered the land district of St. George as well as a large area extending southwards to the region of Heathcote. Kogarah was regarded as the administrative centre of the St. George District at large, both from a civil departmental angle as well as that pertaining to episcopalian matters. In addition to his ecclesiastical duties at St. Paul's, Kogarah, the Reverend James Clark supervised the affairs of the older established St. George's Church, Forest Road, Hurstville, and also Christ Church, Bexley, together with the small brick edifice now known as Old St. David's, Hirst Street, Arncliffe.

His eloquent preaching and sincerity made him extremely popular amongst his parishioners, a circumstance which stood him in good stead in his later years when he sadly needed personal assistance. It is most unfortunate that, through overstudy, this brilliant and much loved clergyman suffered a mental derangement which, amongst other things, affected his marital life which culminated in his wife seeking for a divorce.

He pleaded his own case at the divorce proceedings, and brought the Presiding Judge to the witness box for cross-examination. He walked from the Rectory at Kogarah, to the Supreme Court, with his papers tied up in black crepe, tucked under his arm. The outcome of the divorce proceedings led to him being defrocked, a circumstance against which he appealed in vain, to the local Church authorities. Being a determined man, he then journeyed to England to plead his case before the Archbishop of Canterbury, the presiding authority of the Church of England. But the journey availed him not, and the sadly disillusioned man returned to Kogarah. It has been related that he walked to England where ever walking was possible, a remarkable feat in itself and one that showed him to be a pedestrian of no mean order.

The Reverend A. Kilworth succeeded James Clark as Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of St. George, consequently, in due course, the latter gentleman was required to vacate St. Paul's Rectory. His eccentricity appears to have become more marked and, so it is stated, he lived in a cave at Oatley for a while, let his hair grow to shoulder length, and carried a heavy walking stick of such robust dimensions that it was more in the nature of a club. This so-called stick was usually held in a horizontal position and unhesitatingly used to clear a passage through the midst of any group of people who unwittingly stood in his path, much to their consternation. In addition to wearing short leather gaiters, he wore an almost brimless pot-shaped felt hat, of 1890 fashion, which also served to distinguish him from his fellow men.

It has been said, but not confirmed, that at this period he was instrumental in either building, or utilising, a large brick structure which still stands, in a half occupied condition, in Pitt Street, Rockdale, as a Free Church of England, under the name of St. Stephens. In the writers' memory, this building was spoken of as the Oddfellows' Hall, but whether James Clark rented the building for the purpose of his Church, or was its owner, is a circumstance that still requires elucidation. It is understood that for a time he used the place for a domicile and it has been mentioned that St. Stephen's Church was in a more or less abandoned condition at about this time.

About 1908 it was his custom to sleep at the foot of the sandhills ranged along the shore of Lady Robinson's Beach, near the junction of President Avenue and The Grand Parade. At times he would leave his few personal belongings in a cache on the beach whilst he took a constitutional run to Ramsgate and back. One sunny morning, whilst fast asleep at the base of his favourite sand-cliff, he was most rudely awakened, and more than half smothered by tons of sand toppling down on to his recumbent form. The writer, then a young lad, with his mate Roy Hastings, were responsible for this outrage on his privacy. We were completely unaware of his presence and had a fine time jumping along the cliff edge sending the crest of sand down the slopes. However, his shrieking bellow, coupled with a peep over the edge to see who was thus annoyed, made us quickly depart for the safety and the cover afforded by the nearby Patmores Swamp.

James Clark did not have another home after leaving St. Paul's Rectory, and relied on the charity and good grace of many of his former parishioners. He was always welcome at the Mascord, Twiss and Whitehall homes, amongst others, whilst David Keep of butchering and veterinary fame of Regent Street, Kogarah, was always most kind to him. Police Sergeant Langsworthy of Kogarah Station, was also a friend in his need, whilst he was always welcome at the St. Paul's Rectory, where, in the Reverend Stanley G. Best's ministry, he had the use of both bathroom and library. He retained his clever brain and could match his wits against those of any intelligent person who cared to converse with him. On being questioned as to how many birthdays he had experienced, he tartly replied "Only one, the rest were anniversaries."

Like most similarly afflicted persons, he was always in a hurry to get somewhere for no apparent reason, or so it appeared to discreet onlookers. He was the bogie-man of small children, and the butt of teenagers, who delivered

cheek from a safe distance, ready to run at a turn of his head. "Old Jimmy Clark, go and get your hair cut, you are robbing the barber" was the usual formula on such occasions, and never failed to bring forth a series of threatening gestures from that awful looking waddy which invariably accompanied him on his peregrinations. A group of girls and women from the local Girls' Friendly Society were standing on the footpath having the usual natter after the meeting, along came James Clark out of St. Paul's Churchyard, and waving his stick in mid-air, scattered scared females right and left, yelling at the same time: "Go home and stop your scandal monging." They all left for home at speed.

I was told that he was loth to accept money as a gift, so one Sunday morning as I came face to face with him, I said "If you saw two shilling on the footpath, would you pick it up?" He snapped back "Of course I would". Thereupon I placed a florin on the ground and he promptly picked it up, and with a twinkle in his eye, passed on his way. After this episode, as a Churchwarden of St. Paul's Kogarah, I wrote a personal letter to His Grace, the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Wright, explaining the sore straits which had befallen the former clergyman, James Clark. His Grace kindly forwarded a cheque to the Reverend Stanley G. Best, then Rector of St. Paul's to be disbursed at his discretion so as to give the greatest benefit to the sorely afflicted man.

Eventually James Clark, through exposure and neglect, became a very sick man, and a staunch friend, Miss Elizabeth Whitehall, managed to have him accommodated on a small sheltered verandah of a house opposite his old Church at Kogarah. He was nursed back to a semblance of his former self, and in the process it was found that his heavy clothing was weighted with banknotes sewn carefully into the lining. At last he was sufficiently recovered, to once again walk the centre of the King's Highway, a no man's land on which everybody had equal rights, according to his legal theory on the subject. That same night he was knocked down by a careless motorist and rushed to St. George Hospital. Here he refused to have his coat removed, for now obvious reasons, and he was transferred to the "Warren", at Tempe, where said coat was removed. It was the beginning of the end, and so passed from our midst a once talented man, who, through force of circumstances, became an outcast of society and an object of wonderment to all unaware of his tragic background.

In conclusion, the authors wish to thank Miss Elizabeth Whitehall, Mrs. Nancy Wakefield, Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchell, and Mr. Phillip Geeves, amongst many other friends, for contributing material which has been incorporated in this short biography of the late James Clark.

JOHN LUCAS, M.P.

Of all the members who represented the Canterbury Electorate or its predecessors, which covered the St. George District until 1893, none proved as energetic, capable, effective or painstaking as John Lucas. Broad shouldered and inclined to be both assertive and bombastic, he had a great fighting heart and a vision and an intellect which made him one of the outstanding figures of the Legislative Assembly. Born in Newtown in 1818, he was the grandson of an officer of the N.S.W. Corps. At 16 he was apprenticed as a carpenter and subsequently became a builder and contractor. For many years he lived in Bridge Road, Camperdown.

From his election in 1860 he waged an unrelenting war against the Government, whatever its composition or political complexion. His abhorrence of waste made him many enemies by constantly seeking economies in the Public Service and curtailment of its perquisites. He had a morbid interest in the acquisition of land for cemeteries and a detestation of dancing and music in public houses but perhaps his strangest request occurred on 5th March, 1861, when he formally and understandably unsuccessfully moved that the plush green leather seating in the Legislative Assembly be changed from stuffed cushions to cane.

It was to his credit that for the next twenty years as an unapologetic protectionist, he held one of the safest Free Trade seats in the Colony.

Perhaps his success was due to the fact that he never lost touch with his electors, shrewdly avoided committing himself on unpopular issues and during his first term secured huge concessions from the Government to repair the Cooks River Dam and bridges in the southern part of his electorate.

It is not generally known that it was largely due to Lucas's efforts that the Jenolan Caves were opened up and proclaimed as a public reserve - one of the caves today bearing his name, but it was his one man crusade during 1860 and 1861 to have restrictions placed on the entry of Chinese Immigrants to Australia which first brought him into prominence.

Lucas was one of the first members of Parliament to realise the danger of unrestricted Oriental immigration and against bitter opposition, he persisted in his efforts to have a poll tax placed on each new arrival. After the serious Lambing Flat Riots of 1861 in which one white man got himself shot in the knee and a number of Orientals lost their pig tails and very nearly their lives, the Government adopted his proposals - the fore-runner and foundation of today's White Australia Policy.

In May 1860, Lucas caused a sensation by demanding the removal of Judge Cary from the District Court Bench when the learned Judge told his jury he felt like sending them to do hard labour on Cockatoo Island Penal Settlement as well as the prisoner they had just convicted, remarks, Lucas claimed to have been occasioned entirely because Cary's son had been the prisoner's defence attorney.

At the election of 1865, Lucas was opposed by Alderman James Oatley, the popular Gouldburn Street Publican who was Mayor of Sydney in 1862, and whose father had been keeper of the Town Clock. He was also opposed by two quite delightful characters named John Beer who, despite his name, was a most ardent and uncompromising temperance advocate and Tertius Thomas Rider, whose vocabulary rivalled that of a Bullock driver and who delighted the electors of Canterbury by proclaiming from the hustings that he stood for "free land, free trade, free education, in fact every bloody thing that was free."

This same year Lucas gave evidence before the Select Committee which investigated the problem of Sydney's ever dwindling water supplies. The Botany or Lachlan Swamps which had supplied Sydney for many years were becoming inadequate, polluted and filled with drifting sand.

Former Canterbury member, Edward Flood argued strongly in favour of using the waters of Cooks River and its tributary Shea's Creek which drained the heavily populated and largely unsewered suburbs of Redfern, Alexandria and Waterloo with their many slaughterhouses, knackeries and boiling down works was heavily polluted even at that stage. John B. Carroll of Kogarah and Hon. Thomas Holt propounded the quite fantastic scheme of damming the Georges River at Rocky Point, Tom Ugly's Point or Kangaroo Point. This was also ruled out by the Commissioners because of the unreliability of its tributaries and the high mineral content of the Georges River basin - though it was admitted that in spite of certain additives from the Paper Works and Wool wash, the inhabitants of Liverpool appeared to thrive on the aqua pura from this river.

Lucas poured scorn on both schemes and proposed a system of dams on the Woronora, Upper Nepean and Warragamba Rivers. 50 years later this scheme was adopted in its entirety and almost 90 years later the might Warragamba Dam was completed.

In 1868, Lucas encountered his first serious opposition in the Canterbury Electorate when William Henson, lawyer, temperance advocate and Methodist lay preacher, nominated against him.

Henson was enthusiastically embraced in the St. George section of the electorate which at this time had the highest proportion of Methodists of any part of the Colony. Such prominent local families as the Peakes, the Bowmers and Beehags flocked to his cause. Henson was a particularly bitriolic individual and taunted the retiring member with being a hypocrite and insincere. He accused Lucas with having the toll bar moved to the far side of a property he owned at Punchbowl so he didn't have to contribute towards the toll and of keeping £120 worth of toll money from the Punch Bowl Salt Pan Creek Road which as a trustee he was responsible for spending. Henson went on to accuse Lucas of having his sons promoted in the Public Service at a time when the Public Service was being retrenched and of having their salaries increased whilst others were having theirs reduced as a part of the Government's economy measures. In the closing stages of the campaign Lucas's horse bolted and his sociable overturned rendering him insensible and a large sympathy vote ensured his return.

In 1873 Lucas was appointed Secretary for Mines and it was largely due to his persistent representations that the Government ultimately agreed to the construction of the long projected Illawarra Railway Line. This measure was enthusiastically received by the people of St. George who on June 8th, 1876, drew up a petition "noting with extreme satisfaction the fact that the government had placed on the loan estimates for the year a sum of money for constructing a railway from the deep waters of Sydney Harbour to Wollongong to bring to the doors of the city an unlimited supply of cheap coals and an abundance of fresh pure cheap milk and other products from the want of which much illness and unnecessary suffering is inflicted on the rising generation of the city".

The whole question of the Illawarra Railway was bitterly opposed in another very largely signed petition from the inhabitants of Newcastle.

In June 1875 Lucas officially opened the first government school at Hurstville which at that time was the show place of the State. It was described as "an excellent building of hewn freestone lacking only a bell, two chairs, a lavatory for the boys and the inscription 'Public School' ".

But perhaps the outstanding event of Lucas's term as Secretary for Mines was his securing of an area of crown land in every town in N.S.W. for dedication as a public park.

At last, in 1880, Lucas decided to call it a day but was immediately appointed to the Legislative Council where he remained a much valued member until his death at the age of 84 in 1902.

The following election saw the persistent William Henson elected to the Legislative Assembly although he refused to address his electors outside a public house because of the unrighteous traffic in alcoholic liquors.

And for the next three years the Legislative Assembly was in constant uproar.

In October 1881, during the bitter anti chinese debates he seriously questioned whether china tea was fit for human consumption and in January 1882 vehemently opposed the purchase of a billiard table for members of parliament on the grounds "that the expenditure of public money on such an implement of pleasure, delight and diversion was unwarranted and unjustifiable and calculated to absorb in idle amusement many hours of members' time which should more patriotically be devoted to affairs of state".

Two months later he failed to get a seconder when he moved to have the parliamentary refreshment rooms delicensed and was equally unsuccessful in attempts to have boxing banned, private bars in hotels abolished and to prevent the use of public houses as polling booths.

During 1883 he conducted the Royal Commission on Noxious and Offensive Trades on an extensive visit to his electorate. In their report Mr. Barden's boiling down works and slaughter house at Kogarah were described as passably clean; D. Chaplow's poultry farm was not very so, whilst Henry Latham's piggery adjacent to the Illawarra Railway Works near the Cooks River Dam was described as being in a filthy state. The Commissioners encountered more pigeons than they had seen anywhere else in the Colony at Solomon Dominey's Pig Farm near Gannon's Forest but it was at Godfrey and Moon's Boiling Down Works and slaughter house between Rocky Point Road and Seven Mile Beach that their journey to the district really became worthwhile.

This dreadful establishment which processed the offal from some 50 of Sydney's butcher's shops produced 5 tons of tallow and 1000 tons of bone dust a week. It also boiled down on instructions from the police most of Sydney's unwanted dogs, goats and other discarded domestic animals their skins going to the nearby tanneries at Botany whilst their fat was used to dress leather and to make candles. The stench from this enterprise was described as "abominable and foul beyond description".

Henson was still member for Canterbury when the Illawarra Railway Line was opened as far as Hurstville in 1884.

R. W. Rathbone.