



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

53 Bruce Street,  
Bexley.  
13th January, 1967.

Dear Friend and Member,

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

Date: Friday Evening next, 20th January, 1967, at 8 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Rockdale Town Hall.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Edward A. Downs (Member)  
who will present a paper on Illumination in its various  
phases, past and present.

Society members are invited to display any antique items  
relative to lighting such as candlesticks, (either metal,  
glass, or china) lamps, particularly the old fashioned oil  
variety, gaslight fittings including the oftentimes beautiful  
glass shades for same, and items of a like nature. Great  
care will be taken of all objects.

New members and friends most welcome. Would lady members  
please bring a plate.

Gifford Eardley.  
President.  
59.8078.

Donald Sinclair.  
Acting Secretary.  
58.4555.

## THE VILLAGE OF ARNCLIFFE.

The following article written by the Editor of this Bulletin (Mr. V. M. Saunders) was published some months ago in the Arncliffe Progress Association News and may be of interest to our readers.

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So far in this series we have covered stories mainly concerning the early road developments in Arncliffe and we are now in a position to describe the focal point of its early settlement.

But first it is necessary to be aware of an historic Plan of Subdivision for most of the area covered by present-day Turrella and Arncliffe which was executed in the year 1861 and was only recently recovered for historical inquiry after lying in obscurity for about 90 years.

This comparatively large area was described in the Plan as the "Town of Wincanton-Parish of St. George" and covered the original grant of 100 acres to Mr. Reuben Hannam (indicated on the Plan as the village of Arncliffe - now mostly Turrella) and the 66 acres to his son, David (now the region radiating from about Arncliffe railway station).

### The Town of Wincanton.

This blue-print for the future town of Wincanton was surveyed for David Hannam who was not only the leading landowner in the area about this time but was widely regarded as its leading citizen. Mr. Hannam died in 1872.

But the plans of Mr. Hannam, Governmentally approved, for his vast domain to find a place in local history as the Town of Wincanton did not come to pass. Whilst the area covered by his own original grant was known in the district as Wincanton for over a decade, by a curious turn of events, the whole of his two estates later came to be called after the village portion of his scheme - ARNCLIFFE.

At this distance in time, although the exact details have yet to be fully established, it is probable that the failure of Hannam's venture to have been handed down to posterity as the Town of Wincanton, was attributable to the passing of the Municipalities Act in 1858.

At all events, towards the end of 1870, a Committee of prominent district identities, had been charged with the task of establishing boundaries in connection with the formation of the new Municipality of West Botany, and, after consulting the wishes of the majority of the residents, the Arncliffe Ward and West Botany Ward were named and defined.

The first election in the new Municipality was held in 1871 and from that time onwards, it would appear, that the name of Arncliffe became popularly established. And so apparently the political strength of the villagers of Arncliffe (and Tempe, their Arncliffe Street neighbours) won the day in deciding the future name of their domain.

Why this area developed ahead of Wincanton (proper), until the advent of the Illawarra railway, we shall see.

The early settlement developed mainly adjacent to the watercourses of Wolli Creek and to a lesser extent, to the creek which once flowed through Kelsey Street. These provided an adequate water supply so necessary to the early settlers engaged in such rural pursuits as market gardening, fruit growing and dairy farming.

In an age when churches were the focal point of community life, it was indicative of the trend of the early development that the first local church came to be erected at Arncliffe village (about 1865) on a site now indicated as the corner of Hirst and Edward Streets, and thus in close proximity to the early settlement.

There is evidence that the building was also used as a public school about this time and was the forerunner of the present Arncliffe Public School, the original building of which was opened in 1880.

The present church on the site (old St. David's Church of England) was built in 1879 and, following the population trends, the new St. David's was built on Forest Road in 1914.

(Another chapel was built at Arncliffe village in the early 1870's and was known as the West Botany Primitive Methodist Church).

#### Historic Arncliffe Street.

The main roadway of this early settlement was Arncliffe Street (shown in maps as early as 1857) which was developed adjacent to Wolli Creek and ran from immediately at the rear of "Tempe House". Avoiding the rocky prominences it found its way to the Favell property. "Hillside" at the foot of Hannam Street (this historic property (about 1842) has lately been subdivided for home sites).

Parts of the original Arncliffe Street have disappeared over the years mainly through the construction of the Illawarra and East Hills railways and the sewer-carrier but in its heyday acted as a thoroughfare for the horse-drawn vehicles which carried the produce of the rural industries to the markets of Sydney town. It was augmented as an alternative "way out of the valley" when Dowling and Loftus Streets were opened up about the 1880's.

Several historic homes were built adjacent to the old Arncliffe Street (now divided into Turrella and Lusty Street) such as "Avondale", "Wolliville", "Valencia", and "Kirnbank". Of these only the latter remains as a relic of its age.

#### Arncliffe's Non-rural Industry.

Fronting Hannam Street, several historic homes are still extant including Nos. 57 and 67, the former having been built by one of the pioneers of the area, a Mr. Sam Jeeves, whilst the latter was the homestead associated with a Woolwash which stood adjacent to the creek nearby decades before the turn of the century.

Another early industry in the area was McNamara's boiling-down works which also provided employment for the local populace and once stood adjacent to the junction of the original Hannam and Arncliffe Streets.



And so from this brief outline something may be gleaned of the character of the early Arncliffe settlement prior to and about the time of the advent of the Illawarra railway (1884) which stimulated a much larger development and population about the area whose name had once been known as Wincanton.

An interesting aspect of this story is that at the time of the naming of the railway station (now Turrella - formerly the village of Arncliffe) it too came near to being named Wincanton - 70 years after David Hannam's plan had launched the same name, but the reasons for its application on the local scene at such widely different periods have not yet been established.

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