



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

53 Bruce Street,
BEXLEY.
11th August, 1967.

Dear Friend and Member,

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

DATE. FRIDAY EVENING NEXT, 18th AUGUST, 1967, at 8 p.m.

PLACE. Council Chamber, Town Hall, Rockdale.

BUSINESS. General.

GUEST SPEAKER. Mrs. Marjorie Hutton-Neve - a member of our own Society and the Bulletin Editor of the Sutherland Historical Society, will give an illustrated address on

"The Pioneer Homes of Australia"

Would lady members please bring a plate.

D. H. Sinclair.

President.

R. W. Rathbone.

Hon. Secretary.

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FOR YOUR DIARY.

Sunday, August 20th, 1967, at 3 p.m.

Historic Camperdown Cemetery.
St. Stephen's Church of England.
Church Street, Newtown.

"The Annual Dunbar Memorial Service"

Guest Speaker: Very Rev. Dr. A. W. Morton,
Dean of Sydney.

Official Guest: Sir Kenneth Street, Lt. -Governor of N. S. W.

Oration: Mr. Philip Geeves, Councillor R. A. H. S. and
a former President of this Society.

ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

It was with very deep regret that members learned that the retiring President, Mr. Gifford Eardley, had reluctantly decided not to offer himself for re-election when the Annual Meeting was held last month, owing to continuing ill-health.

The retiring Treasurer, Mr. Don Sinclair, was unanimously elected in his place.

Office Bearers for 1967/68 will be:

Patrons: His Worship the Mayor of Rockdale
Mr. Gifford Eardley.
Mr. T. J. McCarthy.

President: Mr. D. H. Sinclair,
7 Prince Edward Street,
Carlton.

Senior Vice President: Mr. C. W. Napper.

Vice Presidents: Mr. A. Ellis.
Mr. A. Christison.

Hon. Secretary: Ald. R. W. Rathbone,
53 Bruce Street, Bexley.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. R. C. Callister,
2A. Haig St., Bexley.

Hon. Auditor: Mr. A. H. Matheson, M. B. E.

A feature of the Annual Report was the glowing praise expressed by all members to the very small group of ladies who have prepared supper each meeting and contributed so much to the feeling of fellowship which exists within the Society.

TO GIFFORD EARDLEY -

A WORD OF THANKS.

There is a well known saying that any organisation is only as strong as its leader, and in this regard the St. George Historical Society has been singularly fortunate to have had as its President for the last two years, Mr. Gifford Henry Eardley.

We have had as our President men who have been enthusiastic historians, men who have loved this district very deeply and men who are outstanding historical scholars but the man who has really made the history of our district live is the man who has just stepped down as our president.

His presidency has brought to the St. George Historical Society a rare warmth of humanity which has not only resulted in a huge increase in membership but a blending together of those regular attenders at our meetings into one of the most pleasant and affable groups of people with which it has been my privilege to associate.

On behalf of those people who have so enjoyed the meetings, the excellent papers presented and the two books so far published which have done so much to put this Society on the map I would like to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to a dedicated and gifted historian and a warmhearted, very human and particularly likeable man.

R. W. Rathbone.

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. ANNUAL REPORT 1966-67.

It is a great pleasure to present the annual report for the year 1966-67. The past year has been one of excellent progress in which officers and members have worked together willingly, giving their time and energy for the benefit of the Society, and its interests in the life of the community residing in the St. George District, both past and present.

Our membership has continued to increase and has now a total approaching the two hundred mark. The introduction of the monthly meeting, has paid dividends in the way of furthering the Society's activities, and has also brought about a closer association of the members. The meetings have been well attended, and the policy of presenting papers to be read before the Society, dealing with items of local interest, has proved very successful.

The Society's monthly bulletin, apart from being regularly issued to our members, is collectively filed at the National Library in Canberra, the Mitchell and also the Public Libraries at Sydney, and the Fisher Library at the Sydney University. During the year the Society published

its second booklet, entitled "THE KOGARAH TO SANS SOUCI TRAMWAY", of which some six hundred copies have been sold. The first booklet, dealing with "WOLLI CREEK" was also sold out to the extent of 250 copies, and it became necessary to obtain a further fifty copies to meet local demand, and these have also been disposed of. These booklets have served to advertise the St. George Historical Society in no mean manner. The third booklet, dealing with Saywell's Tramway at Rockdale, is in course of preparation and should be issued before Christmas.

It is again regrettable to mention that the unethical attitude of certain editors of local newspapers in publishing articles from our Society's bulletin still persists. No acknowledgment is given, either to the Society or the author. The question arises as to whether these people should be further provided with bulletins on our free posting list.

Many interesting syllabus papers have been presented at the various meetings throughout the year. At the August 1966 meeting Mr. Arthur Ellis read a paper dealing with "Oswald Scholes, Pioneer". The affairs of "Scarborough Park" were presented by the president in September and Dr. Alfred Thomas, M. B., Ch. M., FRCSE, FRACS, spoke at length on the history of the St. George Hospital. Then, in November, Mrs. M. O'Neill lectured on the early days of the Colony of New South Wales in a style that can only be described as racy and with a wit which was greatly appreciated. A fine display of antiques was one of the main features of the December "Christmas" gathering, whilst Mr. Edward Downs gave an illustrated talk on early forms of illumination. Mr. Donald Sinclair delivered an address prepared by the president entitled "Pat Moore's Swamp" at the February meeting and Mr. Rathbone gave a fascinating description, illustrated by slides, of his then recent experiences in China. We had the privilege of hearing Mr. H. Marshall, a pioneer Australian aviator, relate his early experiences and also seeing his moving pictures, relative to the subject of aviation, at the April meeting. It was unfortunate at the May meeting that the illness of the husband of Mrs. O'Neill prevented her from speaking on the lives of the first ten governors of the State, this lecture still remains as a treat in store for the Society. Mr. Sinclair read the second paper on "Pat Moore's Swamp" on this occasion. Mr. H. Marshall gave a second illustrated lecture on his life as an aviator in New Guinea, mostly relative to the flying of equipment and stores, to the various mining activities being carried on in the area, at the meeting held in June.

In conclusion your executive wishes to thank all the lady members of the organisation who have assisted in supplying and those who have prepared the supper arrangements throughout the year. Their efforts have been greatly appreciated by all of our members and visitors, and this has helped in no small measure to create a friendly and informal atmosphere at our meetings. Our collective thanks must also be extended to the Mayor and Aldermen of the Rockdale Municipal Council, and several members of the Staff for their kind assistance in many ways.

Gifford Eardley.

THE ANNALS OF WAZIR STREET, WEST ARNCLIFFE.

Gifford Eardley.

Perhaps the most fascinating thoroughfare in the old established suburb of Arncliffe is Wazir Street, so called after a local resident Wazier Begg, who, according to local report, owned the adjoining property. Formerly this old street, of great width for Arncliffe, extended in a north-south direction between Dowling Street and John Street. The present extension southwards to East Street being comparatively new. In the early part of the present century, this particular area was a wilderness of non-descript scrub intermixed with prickly bushes of blackthorn. Wazir Street possessed a real old world atmosphere and, until about 1930, was graced by two huge pepperina (or peppercorn) trees which overhung portion of the eastern footpath and the adjacent roadway, confronting a little wooden clap-board cottage now listed as No. 20. These lovely trees have been cut down and the street immediately lost its distinction.

It has been truly said that "the story of houses is the story of the people that made them". Although it is not within the writer's knowledge to list the original owners, or the actual date when the Wazir Street residences were constructed, with any degree of certainty, he is indebted to a former early resident, Mr. Allen, for much of the information detailed in this essay. A door to door description can be thus given of residents of, say, the 1895-1905 period, which may be of general interest. The older houses once betrayed their ancestry in no mean manner, each possessing its own individual character and style. In recent years there has been a tendency to "modernise" many of the cottages, to conform with current trends, a process which, in most cases, has eliminated the individuality of the house concerned. For descriptive convenience it is necessary to follow the present street numbering system, whereby odd numbers are allotted to the northern and even numbers to the southern side of Wazir Street, commencing from the Dowling Street intersection.

At the period under review allotment No. 1 was utilised as a flower garden under the ownership of Mr. Albert Boucher, who resided in the adjoining brick cottage known as No. 3. About 1920 a neat double-fronted brick cottage, owned by Mr. Simpkins, was built on the site, but the former garden is represented by several fine camelia trees, of the double red, pink, and white varieties, together with a sturdy pepper tree.

The double-fronted brick cottage occupied by Mr. Boucher and listed as No. 3, was of the splendid "Scotch" side-gabled type and roofed with imported slates. In recent years this covering has been replaced by one of locally made "Marseilles" tiles, which appear to be out of keeping with the character of the building. Beneath the end enclosed front verandah was the centrally placed main entrance door, of ornate wooden construction, and fitted with an unusual pattern of cast-iron knocker. French windows, protected with wooden louvred shutters, serve the rooms flanking the central entrance hall. Side encased front steps of

cemented brick lead upwards from the footpath to the higher verandah level and are flanked by a pair of cast-iron columns which assist in supporting the verandah roof. It is likely that these columns carried ornate corner brackets of fan design. The once chaste appearance of the cottage has been eliminated by a most liberal application of brilliant coloured red paint upon which each brick has been faithfully outlined with white paint. It should be mentioned that the original owner, Mr. Boucher, was a chemist whose business was on Forest Road, opposite to the present Roman Catholic Church. This gentleman moved with his family to the North Shore about 1900.

In the name "IONA", bestowed in letters of cement placed high up in the front gable of the small single-fronted cottage labelled No. 5, one can, to quote H. V. Morton in "Scotland Again", hear the wild sea wind, the chanting of the first Christians in Scotland (or Caledonia), and the sound of a Bronze Bell. However, the "IONA" of Wazir Street has no such pretensions as this cottage was originally constructed throughout in weatherboard, with the exception of the front wall and gable, which were of expanded metal covered with plaster. During a storm the metal attracted a lightning flash and the plaster disintegrated to the discomfort of Mr. Griffith, the occupant. A brick extension was subsequently added to the front of the building, incorporating a bow window, with three apertures, and a recessed doorway on the southern side. The facade of this residence is elaborately ornamented in cement mouldings, and is similar to a series of small cottages above the cutting at the western end of Done Street, Arncliffe.

The small double-fronted weatherboard cottage, set well back from Wazir Street and listed as No. 7, was occupied by James Brennan, a sand carter, who gave his name to Brennans Road, a rough old thoroughfare in East Arncliffe, which led to his sand-pit off Niblick Street. No. 9 is reputed to be the oldest house in Wazir Street, and is of double-fronted brick construction with a good style of entrance doorway and ornamental ledges to the two front windows. The roof is of corrugated iron. In recent years the place gained a "face lift" which has greatly improved its appearance. Mr. William Allen, a bricklayer, was the occupier. Mr. William Handley, an artist, lived during 1887 at No. 11, which at the time was a small single fronted cottage surrounded by a grove of oleander trees. He was succeeded by Mr. G. Fieldhouse, and later by Mr. C. Warwick. The house was subsequently demolished and a new double-fronted brick cottage of standard type erected on the property. It is of interest to note that Mr. Warwick went to Victoria where he established the "OLDE CURIOSITY SHOPPE" at Ballarat.

Mr. Urry resided at No. 13, a neat double-fronted brick residence, with an out-jutting gabled extension on the southern side, and distinguished by a small wooden louvre let into the apex of the hip roof. This house has also been remodelled to a certain extent. George Tuckwell, another old identity of the district, lived at No. 15, a double-fronted weatherboard building, with a high pitched roof, with side gables which are now painted green. The construction materials of this house are reputed to have been recovered from the demolition

of the former "Sands" Hotel adjacent to the north-western corner at the intersection of Wollongong Road and Kelsey Street, Arncliffe. The house is mentioned in the 1887 Postal Directory, and today is occupied by members of the family and kept in first class condition. It has been given one of the loveliest titles in the English language, viz - "HOME".

No. 17, known as "CARINYA" was the home of Mr. J. W. Smith, a bricklayer by trade. This single-fronted residence has side gables and walls of brick, whilst the facade is unusual in having a wide central window, flanked at either side by a round-topped niche as it was the intention to accommodate small statues. The entrance doorway was placed against the southern wall. Mr. & Mrs. Stubbs formed a partnership in which the former was a builder and the latter a grocer, with matrimonial headquarters at No. 19, a neat double-fronted weatherboard cottage with a high-pitched roof and side gables, broken by a front chimney and decorated by tall and slender turned wood finials above each gable. This property was later occupied by Mr. Peake, and is still in excellent order.

Allotment No. 21 lay vacant for many years before a brick cottage of the 1920 period was erected thereon. Formerly a weatherboard shop, occupied by Mrs. Ryland, and later by Miss White, functioned at No. 23. This building was subsequently demolished, and a fibro and weatherboard cottage, designated as "OAKHILL", erected in its stead. No. 25 is an old established residence which is mentioned in 1887 as being under the occupancy of James Solanders, a grocer. The building is a double-fronted weatherboard type with the outer edge of the front verandah protected by an ornate slatted wooden railing. Mr. Hugh B. Wilkins, the proud owner of a ginger-coloured beard and a shop at the corner of Mitchell Street and Wollongong Road, delighted in rearing prize poultry at No. 27 Wazir Street. This brick house is listed under his ownership in 1900.

Allotments Nos. 29, 31 and 33, appear to have been vacant prior to the present houses being built thereon. To hazard a guess their construction period, in that order, would be about 1920, 1909 and 1920, as they set the pattern, or fashion, adopted around these years for brick edifices. No. 35 is a single-fronted cottage with a high front gable and ornamental fascia boards and other facade decorations most pleasing to the discerning eye. The entrance is at the south of the front verandah, the latter being enclosed at each end with panelled framing and windows of coloured glass.

It is said that a shop, kept by Mr. Ellis, was located as No. 37, at the corner of John Street and Wazir Street, entrance to this emporium being gained from John Street. The site is now occupied by a brick residence with all the ear-marks of the 1930 period. As before mentioned the intersection of John Street marked the beginning of the scrub covered wilderness insofar as the beginning of the present century was concerned. The Postal Directory for 1887 shows six houses, Nos. 3, 9, 11, 15, 19 and 25, as being situated on the northern side of Wazir St., and, from this publication it is evident that at this year the southern side of the street was devoid of any housing settlement. The houses on the northern side had their allotments extended through to a back

lane, now designated as Gipps Street, which gave access to the neighbouring rocky eminence known as Wilcox's Hill, where goats browsed at leisure, and poultry found their pleasure. It has been claimed that a post office functioned at one time in Wazir Street but its whereabouts have so far escaped detection.

Retracing our steps to the Dowling Street intersection, preparatory to inspecting the even numbered houses along the southern side of Wazir Street, we find that the allotments numbered 2 to 8 were vacant paddocks, although the four blocks were later built upon at dates which can, perhaps, be guessed. No. 2 is a double-fronted brick residence of probably the 1925 period, whilst the other three are weatherboard of a standard double-fronted type popular in suburban housing of the pre-1914 war period, No. 4 has a very fine cast-iron frieze and brackets to the verandah posts, whilst No. 8 is distinguished by having a hanging fringe to the front verandah composed of a great number of short length turned wooden spindles. Mr. Cecil Wilcox, a railway employee, lived at No. 10, a natty weatherboard structure with gabled extension at the front, which possesses most interesting scrolled fascia boards. An unusual stepped pane sash window design has been adopted for the upper portions of the openings, which are arranged in pairs, whilst no less than three high-pitched roofs, with gabled sides, are ranged, one behind the other, the full length of this interesting house. One can surmise that these additions were added from time to time to cater for the accommodation of an increasing family commitment.

No. 12 is a small weatherboard double-fronted cottage with a gabled roof of corrugated iron, above which extends a brick chimney that sports a goodly design of earthenware chimney pot. A carpenter, named John Teasdale, lived here, likewise his sagacious dog who took advantage of every opportunity to raid Mr. Stone's butcher shop at the corner of Kembala Street and Wollongong Road, where it was unfavourably known. David Lunn and his good wife resided at No. 14, a single-fronted brick dwelling with interesting fascia and ornamental timber work against the side of the front gable. An ogee shaped plastered brick extension led as a fence from the southern wall to the front fence alignment, a device common to the 1890 building era.

Mr. Robert Gibson, a builder by trade, his wife and their talented daughter Lilian, lived at No. 16, their house being of double-fronted brick design with a hipped slate roof and an iron-roofed verandah, the latter being supported on its frontal alignment by wooden posts which are each fitted with an interesting design of cast-iron bracket. Madam Lilian Gibson became a famous singer, and was personally tutored by Dame Nellie Melba.

Messrs. Quin and Beck, two elderly bachelors, had their headquarters at No. 18, a double-fronted weatherboard cottage with double front windows and an entrance doorway set well back on the southern side, an unusual arrangement. These gentlemen were partners in a business that encompassed the gathering of firewood, the digging out of tree stumps, and the collecting of horse manure, the results of these enterprises being sold to neighbouring house-

holders, and delivered per medium of a wheel-barrow. A most interesting and industrious pair of gentlemen who kept themselves free from the vicissitudes associated with female companionship.

An intriguing little cottage is listed as No. 20 wherein dwelt Mr. A. T. Frakes, a bricklayer by trade, and latterly in the employ of the Education Department as a handy-man who specialised in the repairing of desks, stools, blackboards, and suchlike bric-a-brac. As before mentioned this was the house graced by the two large pepperina trees which did so much to lift Wazir Street out of the hum-drum appearance of so many of the other streets of the Municipality. The house is built very close to the footpath alignment, and is very low and cosy withal. It has an atmosphere redolent of nice old ladies in poke-bonnets, watering cans, and aspidistra plants growing in green glazed pots. The roof was of corrugated iron and there is a narrow front gabled extension, with hooded window, projected even nearer to the footpath alignment. In recent years, later than the destruction of the beautiful trees, a facelifting of the facade has taken place, together with the red-tiling of the roof, to bring the ensemble more in line with modern day requirements.

A grocer named James Gallagher lived at No. 22, but the house has been either rebuilt, or replaced, by a new fibro cottage, the alterations, if any, being such that detail of its early design is difficult to envisage. The house next door, No. 24, has a hip roof which runs parallel to the depth of the allotment, an unusual arrangement. The cottage, reputed to be very old, is single-fronted and provided with a pair of windows to the front room, and an entrance door at the southern end of the small front verandah. Its early occupancy is unknown to the writer. No. 26 represents a double-fronted cottage of a type that found favour amongst market gardeners around the Muddy Creek and Pat Moore's Swamp area at Kogarah. There is a high parapet at the front, plaster panelled in rectangular fashion above the verandah, from which a long flat roof slopes gradually to the back premises. The small front verandah has brick enclosed ends and a roof of iron. Mr. and Mrs. Denis O'Keefe were early occupants and their daughter is still in residence.

No. 28 is another representative of the Scotch side-gabled design in brick, the high roof being pierced by two robust chimneys, which obviously serve the four main rooms of the house insofar as their fireplaces are concerned. Mr. Adcock, a prominent member of the Baptist Church, conducted a private school on these premises.

A fascinating conglomeration of rooms, annexes, porches, false fronts, etc., all nicely painted and kept in immaculate condition, is to be found at No. 30, once under the ownership of Mr. Harris, a railway employee. This gentleman was conductor on the State Governor's train, and other important special trains. The house came later into the possession of a Mr. Larbalaster. This residence is unique and most interesting to observe. It obviously grew in size to accommodate family additions and one would like to trace the

details of its growth. Mrs. England lived in No. 32, which is a small double-fronted brick cottage with side gables and two chimneys projecting above the ridge capping, that on the north being graced with two large earthenware pots and that on the south by a single pot. This cottage eventually came into the possession of Oscar Carlson, a Swedish gentleman of the old school, who, with his wife and family, lived in it for many years. The red-tiled double-fronted brick cottage, No. 34, belongs to the 1920-30 period of bungalow architecture. No. 36 is a small version of the Scotch brick side-gabled design, and is now covered with a red-tiled roof. Additions to the northern side have been made and, at the turn of the century, it housed Mr. W. R. Webster, a tailor by trade.

The third house to be built in Wazir Street is No. 38, a four-square shaped weatherboard of the double-fronted type, the iron roof of which rises from all sides to a central apex. Mr. Joseph List, a carpenter, was an occupier in its earliest years. No. 40 once bore the name "PRETORIA" and was occupied by Mr. Walter Halverson, and is at present undergoing extensive modifications. As built the house was quite large and has a hipped roof of corrugated iron, above which sprang two chimneys, one at either side of the hip, each capped with two small earthenware pots. The original iron-roofed verandah has been removed and is now replaced with one that follows the modern trend. Unfortunately it was deemed necessary to destroy a particularly fine cypress tree that rose from the small front garden enclosure and served as a beautiful landmark at the southern end of this quaint, picturesque, and old established thoroughfare of Wazir Street.
