



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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

Dear Friend and Member,

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

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

Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Rockdale.

Guest Speaker: Mr. H. N. Riley of Arncliffe will speak on his collection of "Antiques collected in the St. George Area".

Would lady members please bring a plate.

Supper Roster: Mrs. E. Eardley (Captain), Miss M. Callister,
Mrs. F. Day, Mrs. E. Callister, Mrs. V. Wilson (Crew).

D. H. Sinclair,
President.

R. W. Rathbone,
Hon. Secretary.
58.4813.

DUNBAR PAINTING COMPETITION

Enclosed with this Bulletin is a book of 10 tickets for sale to assist the funds of our Society. It has always been our aim to make as few demands as possible on our members but so popular did our competition for a painting of the "Endeavour" prove last year that we have decided to repeat it again this year.

Because of the interest and close association of this Society with the Wreck of the Dunbar, it has been decided to make this famous ship the subject of our competition for 1967.

All books must be returned by our December meeting on Friday, 15th December.

Remember this beautiful 24" x 20" framed portrait of the sailing ship "Dunbar" painted by artist John McCredie and worth at least \$50 could be yours for as little as 20 cents.

THE FOUNDATION OF SUTHERLAND SHIRE

A research paper, covering the period 1788 to approximately 1860 (to the pre-Holt era), will be given by Mrs. M. Hutton Neve (also a member of St. George Historical Society) at the Sutherland Shire Historical Society on Friday, November 10th, 8 p.m. The meeting will be held in the County Council Auditorium, Eton Street, Sutherland.

Almost 100% proof has been discovered to indicate that the Shire was not originally named after Cook's sailor Forby Sutherland: the whole area was officially founded by Government Order in 1835, and its boundaries established and named. Varied documentary proof will be given (including an 1840 map, the first of the area) to substantiate this claim.

WALTARA HEIGHTS. ARNCLIFFE.

Gifford and Eileen Eardley.

In the early eighteen-nineties the attention of the general public was drawn to the desirability of a housing subdivision, known as Waltara Heights, located on the crest and eastern slopes of an isolated rocky hill immediately west of the present beautiful tree-clad Arncliffe Park. In its pristine state the hill was sparsely covered with angophora trees with a dense undergrowth of tea-tree, and innumerable species of Australian flowers common to the sandstone country, a floral display in Spring for which Arncliffe was, at one time, justly famous. Flannel flowers flourished as late as nineteen thirty at the western end of Duff Street, likewise dillwynia (the eggs and bacon plant of childhood days), native currants, and native fuschia, amongst the host of other gems, whilst the last surviving specimen of

the gynea, or native lily, has only recently been destroyed to make way for a cottage extension.

The angophora and other large trees succumbed very early to the firewood needs of local domestic stoves, and a flock of goats, belonging to Granny Lightly, late of Hirst Street, assisted in clearing the lesser vegetation that had any nutrient value. These sure-footed animals chewed anything chewable, from a goat's point of view, but appear to have drawn the line at tea-tree and certain other aromatic shrubs.

The initial subdivision of the hill was externally bounded by existing thoroughfares, the north being Denison Street, the east Hirst Street, Dowling Street on the south, whilst the base of the steep western slopes of the hill, which, incidentally, were not included in the subdivision, confronted Stanley Street (now known as Dowling Street).

Contained within the estate were several streets formed for the purpose of the subdivision. For clarity of description in this article it may be convenient to explain street names as first bestowed upon them. The southern side of Denison Street was within the estate boundary, and the western side of High Street (now known as Realm St), together with Hillcrest Road which now glories under the prosaic name of Park Street, proved of interest to prospective home builders. It is understood that a number of blocks in Hillcrest Road were sold to employees of Speare's Brickworks at St. Peters.

A curved street, marked on the auctioneer's blurb as such but not constructed, led north-westwards to the crest of the hill and was labelled as "The Crescent". This contemplated thoroughfare, in theory at least, joined with the southern extremity of High (or Realm) Street, and its intersection with Hirst Street was later incorporated in the survey of Duff Street, thus explaining the "dog's hind leg" alignment of the latter thoroughfare.

Then there was a probing finger of the northern section of Gipps Street which entered, or approached would be the better word, a short declivity of Waltara Hill. There was formerly a small stone cottage situated against the western side of Gipps Street, near the site of the present No. 2 residence, which housed a local dairyman.

Homebuyers of the eighteen-nineties in the Arncliffe area were somewhat chary of purchasing a rocky block of land which "would not feed a billy-goat", hence the delightful views of the surrounding landscape associated with "The Crescent" met with poor response. Level building blocks where "a man could run a few chooks and grow a bit of vegetable" were rapidly sold along the frontages of Denison Street, Hill Crest (now Park Street), Hirst, and Dowling Streets. With one or two exceptions the houses erected were double-fronted weatherboard, this popular design being obtainable on a "Ready-cut" basis from Messrs. Hudson Brothers, of Redfern, and other timber merchants of like ilk.

A further bid to sell the land at the crest of Waltara Heights was made about 1895 under the name of "Hill Top Estate". This particular subdivision resulted in the removal, in theory at least, of "The Crescent" and the formation of the present Duff Street and Hill Street. The former steep graded thoroughfare gained its name from His Excellency Governor Duff who, amongst his Vice-Regal commitments found time to open a flower show at the Rockdale Town Hall, and was honoured at Arncliffe in consequence.

However, few land sales were made, although the Rockdale Council saw fit to quarry large quantities of sandstone, for guttering and roadmaking purposes, from both the upper and lower portions of Duff Street. This work removed a rocky excrescence, which was one of the natural dominating features of the hill, and eventually gave road access of a sort to the unformed Hill Street, via Realm Street, and the middle part of Duff Street.

According to an early resident the Rockdale Council installed a large jib crane near the intersection of Duff and Hill Streets for loading dimension stone on to the horse drawn drays. It is also understood that a small cottage, or hutment, was located near this intersection, but details of its construction and ownership are lacking. Although thus far levels were maintained and graded the Rockdale Council, in its ever present need for stone, made a heavy excavation at the western end of Duff Street, between the intersections of Hill and Gipps Streets, which reduced the road level, at this point, by some eight feet. This vertical quarry face precluded road traffic, although agile pedestrians could climb the barrier by using normal rock-climbing technique. Large quantities of "White" stone, rubble, and road metal were removed, via a steep stony track formed along the northern portion of Gipps Street. In recent years this former track has been replaced by a concrete slab footpath, which is in occasional use by motorists seeking a short cut to the Western Suburbs. Someday, perhaps, the road will be continued from Duff Street into Gipps Street, an event which would be a boon to local residents of this area.

At present the rough terrain afforded by the erstwhile quarry provides a delightful bushy playground for children. About 1964 a scheme was brought forward by the Arncliffe Progress Association to have this former quarry site adapted as a "Look-out Reserve" in memory of the late Alderman Guess, a worthy citizen who often admired the panoramic view of the beautiful valley of the willow-fringed Wolli Creek and the adjacent tree covered slopes of Calpbell's Hill, at Earlwood, from this vantage point. The matter is still being considered, or, perhaps, forgotten.

Apart from rock quarrying and the aforementioned cottage at the intersection of Duff and Hill Streets, little development occurred on the crest of Waltara Heights until about 1900, when Mr. Woodward, of St. Peters, built his home in Realm Street. His block of land extended

westward to Hill Street, and on this latter frontage he erected a two-storied factory for the treatment of animal hair, horses' mains, and tails, and bric-a-brac of like nature, preparatory to this material being supplied to brush manufacturers in the City. Power for the teasing and other machinery was obtained from a horse-operated whin. The poor animal plodded round a circular path harnessed to a long pole, the inner end of which was attached to suitable toothed-gearing, which in turn rotated a shaft from which the pulley wheels of the machine were turned by means of leather belts. The gaunt factory building had its main supports furnished from discarded lengths of telephone poles, and an outer covering of corrugated iron. Purely functional in design, and completely ugly in appearance, this factory building could, perhaps, be regarded as the fore-runner of the Arncliffe industrial era. In recent years the factory premises have been removed and the site is now occupied by a row of pleasant cottages.

The second resident to settle in Waltara Heights was the late John Carter, who lived with his mother in a small double-fronted four roomed "half-house" cottage at the south-western corner of Realm Street and Duff Street. In the early days of the present century this house, No. 2 Realm Street, was often afflicted with the presence of black snakes which wriggled across the dining-room floor, making small headway across the polished slippery surface. John Carter was an extremely clever modeller and many of the elaborate plaster decorations in the various old-time theatres of Sydney were the product of his skilled handiwork. He loved trees and the feathered inhabitants thereof. The little cottage was subsequently finished by the addition of a large front verandah and gained the name "Halcyon", denoting a happy and peaceful residence.

About 1930 the rocky escarpment which divided the length of Duff Street was removed and a steep graded road came into being. This section is graced by a sturdy Port Jackson fig-tree, which commenced its life sprouting from the top of a cottage chimney in the Waterloo area. When the above cottage was being demolished the root of this little tree, which extended the full height of the chimney and into the ground beneath, was carefully wound into a coil, and planted as such at the southern side of Duff Street, where it had a proper start in life. There is another tree of note against the alignment of Duff Street which was planted by the late Mr. Bridges. This has developed into a fine specimen of the somewhat rare White Kurrajong (*Brachychiton Discolor*) which, in Spring time, is a mass of large pink bell-shaped flowers. Unfortunately the tree has been maltreated in recent years, by new owners of the property, in the interests of a rotary clothes hoist.

It was not until about 1912 that houses were built facing to the southern side of Duff Street, many being occupied by English migrants who arrived about this time. The hill is exposed to every wind that blows and, in consequence much fine dust enters between the interstices of the Marseilles roofing tiles. One aged gentleman, blessed with a very house-proud wife, climbed through the roof-access man-

hole of his cottage and was amazed at the quantity of dust and leaves which had accumulated over the years and found an undisturbed resting place on the plaster ceilings above each of the rooms. His wife happened to be on some mission or another and the time was opportune to do a bit of Dutch cleaning up aloft. He procured a stiff millet broom and swept and swept. The only obvious place to discharge the aforesaid dust and debris was down the manhole where it cluttered the entrance hall and wafted through the house, settling on beds and furniture as well as upon the wall to wall carpets. He was quite oblivious of the havoc he had created and was just putting the finishing touches to a wonderfully clean roof space when the good wife arrived on the scene. Need we say more?

Many years ago, at the north-western corner of Duff and Hill Streets, was a barbed wire entanglement surrounding an eighty foot frontage of vacant land. At the western end of this enclosed area the escarpment of the hill was hollowed out into a large natural cave, from which a fine view was afforded of the Wolli Creek Valley which lay far below. The owner of this land came each weekend to survey the scene and gradually enclosed the cave so as to form a primitive residence, complete with fireplace and bedstead, where he usually chose to spend Saturday night. All around him was a wilderness of native plants, including dozens of flannel-flowers, dillwynia bushes, sallow-wattles, and native fuchsia plants, intermixed with other floral glories of the Hawkesbury Sandstone country. Perhaps this little plot represented the last stand of wild-flowers for which Arncliffe was so well noted in times of yore. The owner also planted several coral trees which still remain, much to the pleasure of the birds, especially the silver-eyes and honey-eaters who arrive for the spring flowering season. Last year, 1966, for the first time, we were amazed, and also delighted to hear an English Blackbird singing his heart out on one of the higher branches of these same coral trees. In the course of time the owner sold the property, the inevitable house appeared, but the blackbird still sings his spring-song and, no doubt, will continue to do so as long as the trees remain to beautify the crest of the hill.

The south-eastern escarpment of Waltara Heights is precipitous and this vertical cliff face forms a natural boundary between the houses ranged along the southern alignment of Duff Street and those, far below, which have their frontages against the western side of Hirst Street. At the base of the cliff is a mass of verdure which is most pleasing to the eye and, fortunately, little if any attempt has been made to improve the natural growth in the best accepted traditions of saw and axe. This leafy area is the home of everything that flies insofar as its territorial rights in Arncliffe are concerned. Yellow-breasted robins are only one of the avian delights, and of course the imported bul-bul, the dapper blue-wrens, and silver-eyes, find the remnant of bushland very much to their liking.

The escarpment continues westwards at the rear of several old established cottages in Dowling Street to Gipps Street, where, on a rocky ridge, now more or less quarried flat, once stood a small stone house occupied by a local dairyman. The site is now occupied by four brick cottages which date from about the 1920 period. The continuation of Dowling Street to Hannam Street skirts the western tea-tree covered slopes of Waltara Heights, and again the steep terrain has been left in a state of nature, marked here and there by jacaranda trees and other exotics planted by various householders. In the hands of a capable landscape gardener the suburb of Arncliffe, old established as it may be, could rapidly become the show-place of the St. George area.

THE JUBILEE OF THE KOGARAH MASONIC LODGE.

Contributed to the Society.

Each of the numerous Friendly Societies and fraternal organisations operating within the boundaries of St. George has an interesting historical background and that apertaining to local Free-masonry conforms to this general rule. According to the definition given by Webster's Dictionary a Free-mason is "one of an ancient and secret association, or fraternity, said to have been at first composed of masons or builders in stone, but now consisting of persons who are united for social enjoyment and mutual assistance".

A quotation taken from an American source entitled "Why Masonry Survives" gives a splendid insight into masonic principles and is written as follows. "Institutions do not survive through the ages; they live only through the possession and operation of everlasting principles. When an organisation runs back beyond historic records, and relies upon tradition for the story of its origin, its career during a known period either justifies or falsifies the tradition. An ancestry of virtue and good works is a liberal education. The power of the accumulated wisdom of the past is a resistless impelling force upon the present. The architects, the decorators, the draftsmen, the woodcarvers, the workers of precious metals, and the masons who were building the famous Temple of Solomon came from every nation in the then known world. Their union of mutual help, protection, society and improvement was the marvel of an age when all navies were pirates and all nations enemies. Masonry, marching under the leadership of God and the banner that bears the motto "Love thy neighbour as theyself", with the peasant and the prince, the mechanic and the merchant, the learned and the unlearned, following in equal rank and common step, knows neither race nor nationality, neither cast nor condition, as it proudly and beneficially moves down the centuries".

It is not out of text to quote H. V. Morton in this fascinating book entitled "In the footsteps of the Master" where there is mentioned that about 1850 a huge cavern was discovered (re-discovered would

be a better word) beneath the walls of Jerusalem, near the Damascus Gate." Investigation disclosed "a snow-white cavern, so large that its extremity was hidden in the darkness. One glance at the stone walls told them that it had been artificially made. It was soon realised that they had discovered Solomon's Quarries - called by Josephus the "Royal Quarries", the quarries which, lost for nearly two centuries, had provided the stone for Solomon's Temple, about nine hundred years before Christ". Mr. Morton thought that these quarries were one of the most interesting sights in Jerusalem, and further stated "They are neglected by the average sightseer, although every Free-mason who visits Jerusalem is aware of them. Masons from all parts of the world hold lodge meetings there at night, because they hold the theory that the builders of the Temple were the first Freemasons".

During the Centenary year of the Colony of New South Wales a Charter was first granted to form a Masonic Lodge in Kogarah, in response to a petition presented to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland. It may be mentioned that in August 1888, the Grand Lodge of New South Wales was formed, and the Charter granted to Lodge Kogarah was the last but one to be granted in New South Wales by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland.

The members of Lodge Kogarah met in the Kogarah School of Arts, situated on the eastern corner of Bowns Road and Queens Avenue. The room used for lodge purposes had to be prepared for each meeting and the necessary fitments removed to a place of safety after the closure. At this time settlement in the immediate area was sparse, and the lodge passed through many vicissitudes, and it is not surprising to learn that its life was comparatively short. The bank failures of the early eighteen-nineties, followed by consequent depression resulting in widespread unemployment, no doubt caused the lodge to surrender its Charter during September 1894.

It is understood that later than the closure of Lodge Kogarah, Masonic Meetings were held privately in a house situated in Verdun Street, West Kogarah, where the upper room of an embattlement tower was used as a lodge temple. The parapet of this particular tower is decorated with masonic emblems but little information is available as to the exact period of these meetings or of their membership.

Some twenty-two years after the closure of Lodge Kogarah it was suggested that a second Lodge Kogarah be formed. Meanwhile a lodge had been established at Hurstville where, it was noticed, that amongst the visiting brethren there were many from in and around the Kogarah district. Discussion followed and Worshipful Brother E. Jarrett, Past Master of Lodge Balmain No. 23, and Worshipful Brother W. T. Anderson (then headmaster of Kogarah Superior Public School) of Lodge Resurgo, No. 223, of Parramatta, decided to call a meeting wherein it was resolved to petition for a Charter, which was granted on January 23rd, 1917.

The new Lodge Kogarah was consecrated by Most Worshipful Brother William Thompson, Grand Master, in Bretts Hall, situated in Derby Street, Kogarah. There were twenty-seven foundation members at the first meeting and twenty propositions for affiliation were received, also five applications for membership.

Lodge Kogarah was by now firmly established, but, owing to the preparation necessary for each meeting, and the inconveniences created thereby, it was decided to meet at the Hurstville Temple as from November 11th, 1919. However, after the meeting held on January 12th, 1920, arrangements were made to meet in the then newly erected Temple at Rockdale.

At a special meeting held at Rockdale on December 14th, 1921, it was decided to acquire the large two-storied house, named "Lyndhurst", in Montgomery Street, Kogarah. The house was subsequently adapted for the purposes of a Masonic Lodge Temple, the ground floor being made available for public hiring for functions and other purposes. The necessary modifications and alterations were admirably carried out by Mr. Robins, a builder, then residing in Gray Street, Kogarah.

The first meeting of Lodge Kogarah, in its new Temple, took place on June 14th, 1922, and at the meeting held on July 22nd, 1922, the Dedication ceremony was ably carried out by the Deputy Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother J. Goulston. At this meeting a petition was presented to form a Lodge at Sans Souci and in November 1922, a further petition was presented for form Lodge Langlea, whilst a ~~petition of August 1924 brought~~ Lodge Allawah into being.

On ~~September~~ 5th, 1934, it is recorded that Worshipful Brother W. T. Anderson passed away. In 1917 this learned gentleman was foundation master of Lodge Kogarah, and in 1922 he became Charter Master of Lodge Sans Souci.

It was stated in March 1943, that the Department of Education had taken over the Masonic Building at Montgomery Street, and that arrangements had been finalised to hold future meetings at the Hurstville Masonic Temple. Here the lodge remained until July 1967 when a move was made to again meet in the Masonic Temple at Rockdale.

Lodge Kogarah has had five meeting places in the fifty years of its existence, and it is quite apparent from the records that many happy and instructive nights have been spent ~~throughout the~~ intervening years in association with sister lodges ~~and its daughter lodges~~ of Sans Souci, Langlea and Allawah. In its Jubilee Year there ~~has been~~ mention that Lodge Kogarah has more than justified its Charter and that there is no doubt that in the future it will continue to maintain the dignity of its ceremonies and the high Masonic standards which have hitherto characterised its meetings.

* * *