



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

53 Bruce Street,  
BEXLEY.

11th November, 1967.

Dear Friend and Member,

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

Date: Friday Evening next, 17th November, 1967, at 8 p.m.

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

Guest Speaker: Mr. Charles Sweeney - a member of the Bankstown Historical Society will give an illustrated talk entitled.

"Historic Graves of Sydney"

Would lady members please bring a plate.

D. H. Sinclair.  
President.

R. W. Rathbone,  
Hon. Secretary.  
58. 4813.

Supper Roster: Mrs. M. Coghlan (Troop Leader)  
Mrs. B. Perkins, Miss E. McCartney,  
Mrs. M. Piper, Miss B. Binns (Troop).

## DEATH OF MRS. LINDA GUTHRIE.

All members were shocked to learn at the last meeting of the sudden passing of one of the foundation members of the Society, Mrs. Linda Guthrie. A vigorous, forthright and very interested member, she will be greatly missed from both our meetings and our excursions.

The Society was represented at her funeral by Mrs. Sinclair, Mr. C. W. Napper, Senior Vice President, Mr. Arthur Ellis, Vice President, and Mr. Rathbone, Hon. Secretary.

The sympathy of all members has been expressed to Mr. Guthrie and family and a copy of the Mayoral Minute presented to the Council is as under.

### Municipality of Rockdale

Town Hall,  
Rockdale.  
26th October, 1967.

### MAYORAL MINUTE

#### Death of Mrs. Linda Ballantyne Guthrie

It is with deep regret that I record the sudden and untimely death of Mrs. Linda Guthrie at her residence, 12 The Strand, Rockdale, on 19th October, 1967.

Mrs. Guthrie had been a resident of this Municipality for over thirty years, and had engaged herself in many community activities during that period.

Her service with the Red Cross at the Rockdale Branch had recently earned for her the Long Service Medal for over twenty years service. During the past fourteen years she had been Treasurer of the Branch, and had also assisted with the secretarial work in connection with the fund raising activities of the Red Cross. Mrs. Guthrie was also the organiser of the Mobile Blood Donors visits to the Town Hall each quarter, and had been engaged in this activity since its introduction in this Municipality.

Other community services engaged her interest, and for some years she was associated with the Mayoress' Fund, and this year was elected to the position of Assistant Treasurer. She was also interested in aiding the Meals on Wheels as a distributor of meals in this organisation.

Mrs. Guthrie was an active member of the Methodist Church in Bay Street, and worked for several of the women's organisations within the Church since coming to the district.

I know that Council will support me in this Minute in recording its appreciation of the service the late Mrs. Guthrie rendered during her lifetime, and conveying its sympathy to her husband and family in their sad loss.

R. T. Gosling.  
MAYOR.

### THOMAS MASCORD - A Rockdale Pioneer.

Thomas Mascord was born in a village near Banbury, Oxfordshire, England, in the year 1822. He was of French extraction (de la Mascotte), his forefathers having left France to escape conscription for Napoleon's armies. His early years were spent in England and he was at one time engaged in nursery operations on the present site of Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

When he was four, his mother died and in 1847 he decided to emigrate to Australia, spending Christmas Day in the Bay of Biscay and Easter Day in Sydney Harbour where he arrived on April 8th, 1848.

The first years in the Colony were spent on the beautiful Paterson River and in 1851 he came to Sydney. For the next six years he was in service to Captain Johnson of Annandale.

In 1857 he moved to Rockdale settling in Spring Street and a little later purchased property at Kogarah bounded by today's Princes Highway, Regent Street, Gladstone Street and Stanley Street. This he developed as a market garden. When the route of the Illawarra Railway Line was announced he was approached by developers wanting to purchase and he agreed to sell. They would not clinch the sale for months until the site of the Kogarah Railway Station was determined. Its final location almost on the boundary of the property greatly increased the value of the holding but Thomas Mascord would not go back on his word and sold for the previously agreed price.

He then bought 8 acres of land in Beach Street with a frontage of 240-ft. running back to the banks of Muddy Creek. On this he built a house "Banbury Cottage" which stands as No. 23 Chandler Street and is still occupied by his granddaughter. Here he grew vegetables for the city markets.

Thomas Mascord was a member of the Rocky Point Road Trust until its abolition in 1879 and a Trustee of the West Botany Wesleyan Church. The 50th Anniversary Hymn Book of the Rockdale Methodist Church says of this white bearded, kindly old man in 1908 -

- "Mr. Thomas Mascord, over forty years ago the Secretary of the Sunday School and who with almost youthful agility carries the weight of his 85 years, snow of winter on his brow but glowing summer in his soul."

He often prophesied the 1914 - 18 War but died on May 16th, 1913 in his 91st year, the year before it broke out. He was never late at Church and was never known to miss a train and at the time of his death could still read a newspaper without spectacles.

Before coming to Australia, Thomas Mascord had married and his wife, Catherine, bore him five sons and two daughters - Catherine (Kate), John, Thomas, twins Owen and Harry, Edwin and Ellen.

Catherine married Samuel Schofield who had a 6 acre property on Princes Highway where the Southside Plaza now stands. He erected a new house "Ashton ville" which stands on the corner of Ashton Street. Near the end of the last century he sold the allotment and moved to an orchard property near Wyong.

John, a staunch teetotaler, was a carpenter; married twice, moved to Corrimal and fathered nine sons - one of whom is now a Methodist Minister. Thomas settled at Catherine Hill Bay where he also married and worked in the coal mines.

Owen was an expert rose gardener. He married Esther Mary Latham of Arncliffe and for many years managed Iliffe's Reserve Nursery in Croydon Road, Hurstville, before moving to Carlton where three of his daughters still live.

Harry married Mary Jane Godfrey and moved first to Waterloo where her family had extensive interests in the suburb's brick pits and later to Homebush where he took a clerical job in a tallow works.

Ellen married one, Eli Sampson, and settled near Newcastle whilst Edwin went into partnership with his father.

Under Edwin Mascord's direction, the holding became an orchard where fine quality peaches, nectarines and plums were grown and also flowers.

Edwin Mascord was born in 1859 and was educated under the direction of the legendary Mr. Andrews at the Wesleyan School in Rocky Point Road. In his youth he was a great cricketer and was especially noted for his fast bowling in which he frequently smashed the stumps. His bowling averages were quite fantastic - 7 or 8 wickets being taken in every match for under 25 runs. Edwin Mascord was Secretary of the West Botany Cricket Club until in 1885 it became the St. George Cricket Club. Meetings were held in the waiting room of the Rockdale Railway Station and those players who failed to score in a match were fined 3d. which bought the trophies at the end of the season.

In 1894 he had married Amelia Gunthorpe whose family had come to Australia in 1890 from Yorkshire. There were seven children. May (Mrs. Finney) died in Queensland in 1960; Clive died at the age of 5; Edward died unmarried at 35; Edna (Mrs. Freeborn) now lives in California U. S. A.; Gladys (Mrs. O'Reilly) still lives in "Banbury Cottage"; Stanley (who carried on the holding) and Ilma (Mrs. Williams) who lives at Lapstone.

When Edwin Mascord married, a flat was added to the old home and Thomas and Catherine Mascord resided there until their deaths.

Edwin Mascord died in 1924 and six blocks of land on the Beach Street frontage were subdivided soon after. In 1927 a further 10 blocks were sold when Chandler Street was continued through the Mascord property.

The remaining 5 acres were worked by Edwin Mascord's son, Stanley until 1961 when in conjunction with the building of the Southside Plaza, it was sold to be used for parking and the Rockdale Ten Pin Bowling Alley erected on it.

- from information contained in The Methodist of June 7, 1913, and supplied by Mr. Stanley Mascord of Caringbah and the Misses Florrie and Isabelle Mascord of Bexley.

R. W. Rathbone.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CARSS FAMILY, AND OF CARSS' BUSH ESTATE.

and a record of the movement initiated by the Blakehurst Progress Association for the acquisition of the Estate and its subsequent purchase by Kogarah Council in 1923.

### 1.

Prior to Kogarah Council acquiring the Carss' Estate it was known as Carss' Bush. The area was originally sold by the Crown on January 22, 1854, to John Croft for £123. On April 7, 1863, it again changed hands, and was eventually owned by the Carss family until the death of Miss May Carss in 1916, when it became the property of the trustees of the Sydney Sailor's Home. Finally, in 1923, the estate was purchased by Kogarah Council, who set aside a portion of the area for a public park and sold the remainder as home site lots.

The head of the Carss family was William Carss who was a cabinet maker by trade. He came from the Old Country to Australia in a sailing ship, working his passage out, as the ship's carpenter. Subsequently he made frequent trips to the Old Land in windjammers and was brought into close personal contact with sailors and thus became their friend. It was always the old man's wish that his property should benefit the Sailor's Home on the decease of the last of the family. William Carss lived at Ashfield before acquiring the property at South Kogarah, and it was in the Western Suburbs that his wife Helen Turnbull Carss died on the 26th day of June, 1853, aged 47 years. Later, when William Carss became established on his Carss' Bush property he had the bodies of his wife and two infant children exhumed and re-interred in the vault, which is still in the Park.

The stone cottage on Carss' Point was the residence of the old man, his daughter, Mary, and son, James. This building was erected by Scottish masons, who were previously employed in the construction of the Sydney University buildings. Most of the stone used in the construction of the cottage was quarried from a huge boulder near where the building was erected and a tall Norfolk Island pine tree, about 60-ft. from the house, now marks the spot where the stone was quarried. As evidence of the quality of the stone and the craftsmanship of the Scottish masons employed, this cottage is still in an excellent state of preservation, despite the elements and its close proximity to the sea. The cottage is about 88 years old; its outer walls are 18 inches thick, and it should endure for many years to come. It is of historic interest and a landmark in the district.

In the original layout of the homestead there were two out-buildings, one of stone on the western side of the cottage, which served as a laundry, and the other on the north-eastern side of the residence, which was used as stables. These outbuildings have since been demolished.

Near the main entrance to the Carss' Estate on the old Kogarah Road, now named the Princes Highway, there once stood a weatherboard cottage on a stone foundation. In this cottage lived the married daughter

of William Carss. She and her husband, Mr. Stewart, resided there for some years, but on the death of Mr. Stewart the cottage was vacated and converted into a chapel. Divine service was held therein once every month. However, the chapel was eventually allowed to fall into disrepair. When the Kogarah Council took over the estate all that was left of the chapel were the foundation stones. About one acre of land surrounding the chapel was bequeathed to the Presbyterian Church of N. S. W., which sold it only a few years ago.

William Carss died on the 26th May, 1878, aged 78 years. His remains were interred in the vault on the Park alongside those of his wife and two infant children.

Miss Mary Carss, her brother, and a housekeeper continued to live in the stone cottage on the Point. Miss Carss used to allow people access to her property provided its natural beauties were not despoiled. The Carss family took a pride in keeping their property in its virgin state and a secluded pathway overhanging with foliage was known by many courting couples of other days as Lovers' Walk. Mary Carss died in 1916 and the estate passed to the Trustees of the Sailors' Home in accordance with her father's wish.

With the money obtained from the sale of the Carss' Bush Estate to the Kogarah Council, the Trustees of the Sailors' Home erected an additional wing to its main building and named it the Carss' Wing. In the vestibule of the said Home there is erected a tablet with this inscription: "This extension, erected 1926, is named Carss' Wing in memory of Miss Mary Carss, Benefactress." The tablet was unveiled by the then Governor of N. S. W., Sir Dudley de Chair.

Carss' Bush in its virgin state was a densely timbered area with a variety of eucalyptus and other native trees, shrubs and flowers. Trees such as Red gum, White gum, Blackbutt, Bloodwood, Swamp Mahogany, Bangalay, Forest Oak, Swamp Oak, Banksia and other species were plentiful. Native shrubs and flowers such as native currants, "five corner", Christmas Bush, Bottle Brush, Native Rose, Boronia, Wattle, Flannel flowers, Christmas Bells, and many other varieties of native flora were in great profusion.

There is, and always has been, a perpetual running stream of fresh water, passing through the western portion of the park. This water comes from a spring just across the Princes Highway at Blakehurst.

Shell fish such as mussels, cockles, oysters, etc., were in abundance on the foreshores and in the waters surrounding the estate right up to the time Kogarah Council took over the estate. Surely then the area now known as Carss' Park must have been, in the years of long ago, one of the places the Botany Bay tribe of aboriginals called ALLAWAH, a native place name meaning "camp" or "make your abode here".



## THE ACQUISITION OF CARSS' BUSH ESTATE.

The movement for the acquisition of Carss' Bush Estate was initiated by the Blakehurst Progress Association in 1921. The writer was the founder and first honorary secretary of this Association. Several attempts were made by the Progress Association to secure Carss' Bush for a Public Park; firstly, by an approach to the Government of the day, and then to the Kogarah Council under the Mayoralty of the late Alderman F. Wheeler. These attempts by the Progress Association, however, proved unsuccessful.

Finally, the Association joined forces with the Kogarah Reform League, a newly-formed organisation consisting of a number of Progress Associations and kindred bodies within the Municipality of Kogarah. This Reform League promised its wholehearted support to the Blakehurst Association's objective. Nine new candidates were nominated by the Reform League to contest the triennial elections in 1922, with the result that the entire nine candidates were elected to the Kogarah Council. The new Council, with the late Ald. P. Tanner as Mayor, immediately opened negotiations with the Trustees of the Sydney Sailors' Home for the purchase of the estate, and within a few months the deal was clinched - the Council putting down a substantial deposit on the land. And so, from these beginnings, a Park was secured for the people for all time.

The total amount paid by the Kogarah Council for the estate of 119 acres was £12,000. It should be mentioned here that, just prior to the Council acquiring Carss' Bush, there were quite a number of private syndicates seeking to acquire the estate, but as the Kogarah Council proposed to set aside portion of the estate as a public park, and since the trustees of the Sailors' Home were desirous of perpetuating the name of Carss, they decided to sell the estate to Kogarah Council on two conditions. First, that the name of the proposed Park was to be known as Carss' Park; second, that the family tomb on the Park was to be preserved and maintained by the Council.

On the 26th day of January, 1924, (Anniversary Day) the portion of Carss' Park reserved for park purposes, was opened and dedicated to the people by T. J. Ley, M. L. A. On the same afternoon, the other portion of the estate not included in the Park reserve, was submitted for sale by public auction, and no fewer than 150 lots were sold by the auctioneer in fifty minutes. In all, 245 lots out of a total of 350 blocks were disposed of that afternoon, the total sales realising £32,000. The remaining lots were subsequently sold at good prices.

Up till 1924, there was no parallel in the annals of Local Government in N. S. W., where a park the size of Carss' Park was obtained free of cost to the ratepayers; and, in addition, a profit of approximately £17,000 was shown on the undertaking. The highest price paid for a home site lot at the original sale was £7.15.0 per foot; and the highest price paid for a business site in Carwar Avenue, near Princes Highway, was £15.15.0 per foot. Incidentally, that site was subsequently resumed by the Main Roads Board for the purpose

of widening Princes Highway at that point. Various regulations were laid down concerning the type of dwelling to be erected; all were to be of brick or stone, with slate or tiled roofs, no quarries or sand pits to be dug, and no shops to be built on the estate other than on lots specially set aside for that purpose.

The Kogarah Council decided to give all the streets of Carss' Bush Estate native names, and to select names as nearly applicable as possible to the street position. Thus the following place names of the Botany Bay tribe of aboriginals were given to the streets of the estate. Gnarbo Avenue means "fine view", Bunyala Avenue "A hill", Dewrang Avenue "a high place", Borgah Avenue "a rough way", Benwerrin Avenue "a long hill", Goo-ara Avenue "swamp oak", Erang Avenue "a valley or low spot", Carwar Avenue "river view", Girroma Avenue "hilly", Allawah Avenue "camp" or "make your abode here". The name Kogarah, by the way, means a place of rushes.

Currawang Street, which forms the Northern boundary of the Carss' Bush Park Estate was in the original surveyed route of the old Kogarah Road, but was never made a thoroughfare and it was not until some time after the subdivision of the Carss' Bush Park Estate that the name, Currawang, was given this street by the Kogarah Council. Currawang is an aboriginal name meaning, "The Spearwood". The Spearwood is a native shrub of the Acacia species.

Some of the older residents of Carss' Park doubt the correct spelling of the name Carwar. It is a fact that on the original subdivision map of the Carss' Bush Estate, the name Garwar Avenue appeared. This was later altered by Kogarah Council to Carwar Avenue. After perusing various books on Aboriginal place names at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, I find the name Carwar as it is now spelt is correct.

The original area of Carss' Park Reserve was 43 acres. Today, with reclamations and resumptions it is 66 acres, including the bathing pool area which comprises  $5\frac{3}{4}$  acres. The original boundary of Carss' Bush, on the western side of the estate, was defined by a watercourse which extended from the market gardens at Blakehurst to a point near where the children's swings area now; then finding its outlet in the nearby bay. Later, this boundary at its southern end, was extended by the Kogarah Council, upon the resumption of the adjoining Blinkbonnie Estate, so as to give access to the Park from the Torrens Street end, as well as to diverting the watercourse mentioned. The stormwater channel was constructed by the Public Works' Department.

Up to the year 1935, persons who bathed in the area, did so without any protection from sharks. It was in the depression years of the early thirties that the work of constructing a sharkproof fence and sea wall was undertaken by the Kogarah Council with relief labour, financially assisted by the State Government. During the building of the wall, an aboriginal relic in the form of a stone axe was discovered, about three feet deep on the foreshore, immediately in front of the bathing pool.



In the past thirty years, the eastern and southern portions of Carss' Park have been transformed immensely; and the only portion of the Park which closely resembles its virgin state is on the western side. Nature lovers will always hope that the Kogarah Council will never allow this portion to be despoiled so that future generations may get a glimpse of how the district looked in the early days.

It may be of interest to know that in the making of the film "Bush Christmas", which was screened throughout the World, the western section of Carss' Park was chosen for the shooting of part of the film. The cast, which incidentally, acted later in the film "The Overlanders", headed by Chips Rafferty, were in the Park for one week.

Such is my account of the origin and history of Carss' Park.

In conclusion, may I draw attention to the debt of gratitude which we, and those who come after us in the future, owe to the Blakehurst Progress Association and kindred bodies, and to the bold and businesslike way in which the Kogarah Council, under its then Mayor, Alderman P. Tanner, handled the project.

Thanks must go to all concerned for providing us with our beautiful Park.

Late J. Harold Coxhead. 1954.