



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

53 Bruce Street,
BEXLEY. 2207.

12th July, 1968.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING.

Dear Friend and Member,

The Annual General Meeting of the above Society
will be held as follows:-

DATE:- FRIDAY EVENING NEXT, 19th July, 1968 at 8 pm.

PLACE:- COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROCKDALE TOWN HALL, Princes Hwy. ROCKDALE.

BUSINESS:- Apologies, Minutes of last Annual Meeting.

Correspondence, PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT,
ANNUAL Financial Report.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1968/69.

Patrons

President

Hon. Secretary

Hon. Treasurer

Senior Vice President

2 Vice Presidents

Hon. Auditor.

At the conclusion of the above business, Mr. A. COGHLAN
will screen a number of ancient photographs of Sydney with commentary by
Mrs. COGHLAN.

Would lady members please bring a plate.

D.H.SINCLAIR
President

R.W.RATHBONE
Hon. Secretary
58 4813.

SUPPER ROSTER:- Miss McCartney (O.C.), Mrs. Perkins, Miss Austin, Mrs.
Piper, Miss Binns.

ANNIS AND GEORGE BILLS, AUSTRALIA. HORSE LOVERS.

Last year the St. George Historical Society was offered the sole remaining horse trough in the Kogarah Municipality. After an adventurous removal it now resides in the back yard of Mr. and Mrs. Piper, Stoney Creek Road, Bexley.

- "George Bills was the son of an English naturalist who came with his family to Sydney in the 1880's. In the Sydney Directory of 1888, Henry Bills was a bird dealer at 12 Markets, George Street, Sydney.

Two of his sons, Henry and George, had a wire mattress factory in Kent Street, Sydney. Before residing in Epping, George had lived at Mosman and Randwick. In Epping, he lived in the "Hilliard House" in Essex Street, a weatherboard structure which was situated a little south of where Ormonde Avenue is now. This would be about 1902 or a little later.

Annis Bills died at Brighton in England, June 30th, 1910 and left her estate to her husband. George died December 14th, 1927 and left about £70,000. As they had no children, he left some to friends and servants and his executors were required to convert the remainder into a Trust to construct, erect and pay for horsetroughs wherever they may be of the opinion that such horse troughs were necessary for the relief of horses and other dumb animals, either in Australia, in the British Isles, or in any other part of the world. Since 1930, the Trust has built more than 700 troughs in Australia and about 50 overseas. Six of these are in England, one in Dublin and one in Rumania. One of the troughs was received with such enthusiasm in a mid-western town in the United States that the local authorities proclaimed a half-holiday to mark its erection. Some were erected in Central Australia for the use of camels.

Not many of these troughs are left now owing to the increase of motor vehicles and the few horses left to use them. One was at the intersection of Midson Road and Boronia Avenue, Epping and another was in Beecroft Road where Carlingford Road joins it.

The troughs bear the inscription -

"Donated by Annis and George Bills, Australia".

..... from the "History of Epping" by Walter G. Hazlewood,
Published privately, 1966.

THE RAILWAY CELEBRATIONS AT MOUNT VICTORIA.

Frances Stacy.

Some little time ago members of the St. George Historical Society were invited to attend the Centenary Celebrations, held to commemorate the railway reaching Mount Victoria Station, on the Great Western Railway of New South Wales. It was my pleasure to represent the Society on this occasion and give an eye-witness account of many things which happened on this auspicious day.

My sister drove me to Blackheath Station where we arrived about twenty minutes or so before the arrival of the vintage train. There was absolutely nobody about and the station practically deserted. I spoke to the station master and asked if the Vintage Train had passed ahead of time. He assured me that it hadn't, but was running on time and had left Katoomba. He also seemed puzzled by the lack of people. I waited with my camera at a spot where a good view could be obtained of the line. As the train rounded the bend ten minutes later the adjacent road became lined with cars and the station platform lined with people. I have never seen anything so funny and I couldn't see the curved tracks any more. With a great deal of strident whistling and cock-a-doodle-doo's, the two little engines puffed into the station, so plainly pleased with themselves as they had arrived dead on time. There was a green engine in front, No 1234 of Class "C" and a red painted engine, No 1709, of Class "H" against the train. The former Governor's Carriage was at the leading end of several of the old type American end loading carriages. Being an Official Guest, I was helped onto the former vehicle, an honour which I did not expect, and having not seen this ancient car before I was pleased and charmed by it all.

There were two ladies in period dress sitting on the armchairs, one on each side of the table and it really looked lovely. I managed to take a photograph of this old world scene, with both ladies standing erect so that their bustles would show to the greatest advantage. It was such a happy little trip to Mount Victoria and the two engines, being on the last lap of their journey, whistled all the way. They were so quiet otherwise and I expect they always get the most loving care. The train was piped into Mount Victoria by the Lithgow Pipe Band, and as we alighted, we were each received by the Secretary of the local historical society, who was beautifully dressed in a black and gold gown.

There was, of course, a Civic Reception where we were welcomed by the President of the Mount York Historical Society, the Mayor of the Blue Mountains City Council and Alderman Coates M.L.A. who represented the Minister for Transport. During his speech Alderman Coates recalled that his grandfather had assisted Mr. Bergopher in the building of the now derelict Bergopher Pass at Mount Victoria. After this

ceremony all ladies who were official visitors, together with the members of local historical societies and the children wearing period dresses were presented with posies, whilst button-hole flowers were given to the men.

After this pleasant ceremony had been completed everyone had lunch. The Mayor, I understand, had a small party at the Hotel Imperial, but the members of the local historical societies were too busy at the station where, I might say now, lovely "Railway" fires were burning in three separate fire-places and lots of chairs placed around them. While I was having my lunch the train crew came in for a similar purpose and I met a man who knew Mr. Eardley well. He said the oldest engine allotted to the Vintage Train was disobliging enough to break down the day before and was unable to attend.

After lunch there was an inspection of the wonderful collection of old family possessions lent by members and residents. They were most generous and one old lady had lent some soldier figures dating from Napoleonic times. I was able to help by keeping watch over the exhibits. Everything was under lock and key and the clothing display was roped off and beautifully arranged.

Later I went down to the Vintage Train again and took some more photographs. I tried to take the ceiling of the Governor's Carriage, it was so pretty. There were crowds of people and everyone spoke to one another. The two engines for all the world made me think of two dear old men who had done it again and were thoroughly enjoying a good snooze in the sun. They gently puffed and one had a funny gurgle inside at regular intervals. I felt they were both enjoying a good cigar each, and did not in the least feel perturbed that small boys were being allowed to pull their whistles.

The dress parade which followed the lunch interval was lovely because those dresses were made by members over a period of many months. The members worked very hard and one old lady wore her mother's satin skirt which was beautifully pleated at the back. Then came a small equestrian parade, three horses ridden by children, one riding side saddle, and then an old buggy over one hundred years old and the harness on the horse looked equally as old.

This was the loveliest of affairs I have been to for years and, although I knew very few people, so many asked who I was, and they were quite interested when I said I belonged to the St. George Historical Society. The organisation was wonderful. Everything arranged proceeded promptly in its correct order and there were no untoward delays. One slight hitch occurred when the little horse harnessed to the buggy must have suffered from a slight inferiority complex and felt his position with such a strange contraption behind him. When he was confronted by the riders turning to go back, he stopped and refused to budge another inch, thus providing those with cameras with an excellent opportunity for a snap shot. All in all the celebration was most enjoyable and I feel sure that both the horses and their opposite numbers, the "iron horses" had a good day.

Gifford Eardley.

One of the most outstanding clergymen associated with St. Paul's Church of England at Kogarah was the late Reverend Harry Reginald Arthur Wilson who was the incumbent of the Parish of St. George between the years 1906 and 1921. The Reverend Wilson was a staunch and extremely patriotic Englishman who was devoted to his calling and one who had studied the beautiful ritualism associated with its pre-Reformation practices. As a devout Anglo-Catholic he had leanings to introduce this form of worship at St. Paul's Kogarah. However, his personal enthusiasms in this direction did not endear him, unfortunately, to several influential parishioners who either did not appreciate his earnestness or choose to follow the simple service which has been somewhat pithily described as Anglo-Metho. In fact, in certain quarters he was regarded as being a Jesuit in disguise but there were other people who knew him as an Orangeman and a Freemason.

As a young man, Harry Wilson became a soldier at Aldershot, England where he obtained the highest marks in his signalling examinations and later saw service at the Sudan War in North-east Africa. He came to Australia as a young man and eventually entered Moore College in preparation for the sacred ministry, being ordained in 1896. He then fulfilled the duties of a curate at St. Mary's Balmain and later took over similar duties at Castle Hill. With the advent of the Boer War he enlisted as Chaplain with the N.S.W. Mounted Rifles. After the cessation of hostilities he returned from South Africa to become rector of St. Mary's at Rooty Hill remaining there until 1906 when he became rector of St. Paul's Kogarah.

To some members of his congregation at Kogarah he was affectionately known as Father Wilson and he certainly proved himself to be a father to his flock in the true Christian meaning of the word, creating an atmosphere of kindness and fatherly love in all his dealings with the people of the parish. To the not so devout he was fondly known as "Cocky Wilson" and to certain ribald youngsters as "Atless Arry" owing to his leadership in dispensing with the wearing of any form of head gear, quite an innovation in the 1910's. However, he was addicted to wearing a square shaped biretta when appearing in his ceremonial cassock at church functions, an ecclesiastical form of head covering not regarded as being particularly acceptable or fashionable by the more orthodox Low Church Anglicans.

In the early days of his ministry at Kogarah the Reverend Wilson became the proud possessor of a Brush motor-car, a four-wheeled open topped affair fitted, so it has been said with chain drive and wooden rear axle. This vehicle, to the wonderment of the human, equine and canine inhabitants of Kogarah was of great use when making visits to the homes of his parishioners. A speed of at least six miles per hour was attained over the bumps and lumps of rock which formed the hard surface of suburban streets, each bump and lump being faithfully communicated to the driver and his passengers. The car itself was a

source of great interest to the youth of the district who clamoured aboard with or without invitation, those who could not be accommodated on any part of the car ran alongside or at the rear, the latter group in particular being ready to depart elsewhere at full speed should any backfiring of the single cylindered motor eventuate. The little girls had pride of place sitting on the front seat with the clerical driver, all prim and proper paying not the slightest attention to the hobble - de - hoys and bare footed throng which surrounded them on three sides. Great days for the kids and their doting Father Wilson.

The fervid patriotism for England and its patron saint St. George, which was so marked a trait in the character of the Reverend Wilson led to the inauguration at Kogarah of the great annual celebration connected with the Festival of St. George, which fell on April 23rd. On these occasions school children wearing large red and white ribbon rosettes, led by brass bands and also the fife and drum band of the Kogarah Superior Public School paraded through the principal streets of Kogarah. The procession was led by St. George or his representative to be correct, mounted on a sturdy white horse, carrying aloft the emblematic flag of this particular saint, a red cross on a white ground. Unfortunately the terrible dragon which the saint so bravely subdued was not represented in any way on this special occasion. The afternoon was given over to typical English running races and May-pole dancing whilst the evening of the great day was devoted to a banquet and speech making by the rector and leading officers of the Royal Society of St. George. On one occasion after his return to England the Reverend Wilson stated that "had he stayed in Australia he would have taken these celebrations to the Show Grounds in Sydney and felt that they might have eclipsed in grandeur the celebrations of St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and the great Highland Gatherings of the First of January". Knowing the full worth of the man as an organiser one feels sure that this prediction would have been fully implemented.

One recalls the tremendous work carried out amongst the people of Kogarah during the period of the First World War, especially when it became necessary for the Reverend Wilson to carry messages to bereaved families who lost sons and relatives in the "War to end all Wars". Then again he gave yeoman service during the dread period of the influenza epidemic which afflicted the Australian continent about 1919. His untiring ministry to the sick and dying and his carrying of Bovril and other foodstuffs to the needy and sadly distressed of the local community will never be forgotten by people who resided at Kogarah in those now far off terrible days. Almost daily he would be on the funeral train leaving Kogarah for the Woromora Cemetery to bury some victim or victims of the awful scourge.

In an effort to combat the spread of the influenza germ or virus the authorities issued stringent regulations prohibiting public gatherings in halls, churches, theatres and such-like enclosed places. People had to wear face masks when they appeared in public and these masks were often dipped in some most remarkable concoctions of witch-craft potion ingredients in an endeavour to obtain immunity from the dread and often fatal disease.

However, the faith of the Reverend Harry Wilson forbade him to close his beloved St. Pauls Church insofar as its services were concerned. To keep within the letter of the law he decided to hold his church meetings in the open air and to this end he brought a number of seats from the Sunday School Hall and arranged them beneath the beautiful and aromatic pine trees which lined the footpath at the approach to the western end of the church. No music was provided for the impromptu and greatly fore-shortened even-song which was attended by a small and very subdued congregation. The rector appeared dressed in his full canonicals and the writer acted as assistant on these occasions. His preaching and common-sense attitude towards the community at this time was greatly appreciated. Although there were some who considered him to be slightly eccentric, his was a personality which will ever be remembered with affection and esteem by those who really knew his work and worth.

The desire to return to his beloved England led to a triangular exchange of parishes, an unusual event which occurred about 1921 where- by the rector of Ketley Church near Wellington in Shropshire, England came to St. Mary's Church at Balmain, N.S.W. whilst the rector of this latter church, the Reverend Stanley G. Best transferred to St. Paul's Kogarah. The Reverend Wilson proceeded to Ketley where he became Vicar of Ketley in the Diocese of Lichfield. Here he laboured for many years until his death after a long illness in March, 1939.

The writer had the pleasure of meeting and saying farewell to the Reverend Wilson at Adelaide during the course of the latter gentleman's return voyage to his homeland. At Adelaide he evinced a wish to have a photographic portrait made at a good studio so I guided him to the premises of Mr. Stump. Here it was a delightful experience to witness the posings and the posturising of the rector coupled with the fussiness and terseness of the photographer in disagreeing with such posings without injury to the self esteem of either party. This episode was really most entertaining and leaves one with a very pleasant memory of the Reverend Harry Reginald Arthur Wilson, a most loyal and worthy son of England.

In conclusion the author wishes to express his appreciation to Mr. Jack Gray of West Kogarah and Archdeacon Leslie Walker of the Bush Brotherhood at Dubbo for supplying relevant information. Archdeacon Walker entered the ministry from St. Paul's Kogarah in the early 1920's and kindly undertook the parochial duties at Ketley during his holiday period in England in order to relieve the Reverend Harry Wilson when his health was failing.

PAT MOORE'S SWAMP. THE BEEHAG GRANT AT KOGARAH.

Gifford Eardley.

This third essay relative to Pat Moore's Swamp deals specifically with the former agricultural and pastoral area bordered on the west by the alignment of Rocky Point Road, on the north by Marshall Street, and extending southwards to a boundary set about midway between Austral Street and Wilson Street. The watery marshland of Pat Moore's Swamp provides the eastern border of this particular rectangular shaped block of 54 acres granted to James Beehag. With the construction of the Sans Souci Tramway in 1887, suburban housing gradually encroached on the Beehag Grant in particular and several access streets were formed to serve these subdivisions.

Tucked away at the extreme south-western corner of Patrick Moore's 60 acre grant, a gift from Governor Macquarie on August 28th, 1812 with their frontages of about 40 feet each to Rocky Point Road, are three old established cottages which date back to the turn of the century. The northernmost, No 2 was occupied by Sgt. Langworthy, a popular officer of the Kogarah Police Force for a great many years. Next door at No 4 is an ancient weatherboard building set well back from the road alignment amidst a mass of shrubbery which was the home of John Foley and later the O'Meara family. The third cottage, No 6 at the corner of Marshall Street was in occupation for a long time by the Probert family. It is understood that these three properties are to be taken over by the Education Department for the extension of the grounds of the Moorefield Girl's High School.

Marshall Street was, for many years, a dead end access way which extended eastwards from Rocky Point Road to the western verge of Pat Moore's Swamp. The southern boundary of the Moorefield Racecourse followed the northern alignment of Marshall Street and was marked by a ten feet high sawn paling fence which protected the field against trespass and visibility from the roadway on race days. In the 1930's and greatly to the annoyance of the racecourse authorities a certain broadcasting firm had a small covered platform or lookout erected on top of the roof of a cottage No 27 in Marshall Street whereby an unrestricted view of the course could be obtained free from noise and untoward interference as well as expensive broadcasting fees.

With the closure of the racecourse and the subsequent subdivision of the enclosed land, the area was taken over in part by the Education Department for the establishment of the James Cook High School. The remainder of Pat Moore's Moorefield Estate was given over to housing allotments and new thoroughfares.

According to tradition the old established hostelry known as Prendergasts Inn was placed at the apex of the vee shaped corner block at the junction of Rocky Point Road and Kogarah Road, presumably during the 1840's. Evidence concerning this old inn is scant to say

the least but as the corner block was originally granted to a Mr. Emerson there is a possibility that this gentleman, as the licensee of the later built Sea View Hotel at Tom Ugly's Point may have been concerned with the earlier affairs of Prendergast's Inn. This is a matter which requires further elucidation. Whilst on the subject of early inns it should be mentioned that the hostelry known as the Gardener's Arms (closed when the Local Option Act of 1911 was passed) was located at the western corner of this particular road junction.

The lower arable land of the Beehag Grant in the vicinity of Pat Moore's Swamp was, and still is, intensely cultivated as a market garden. At an undetermined date a small two roomed weatherboard cottage with a sloping flat roof of corrugated galvanised iron was erected on this property. The kitchen of the edifice was at the eastern-most end, where, against the eastern wall a squat rectangular brick chimney bulged outwardly at its lower end to accommodate the stove and its cooking recess. A lean-to annexe was placed against the southern wall of the kitchen, presumably for use as a wash-house. At a subsequent date a brick construction of two rooms was built against the northern side of the original building, the two separate flat roofs being brought together so as to form a shallow "Span" roof, the ridge capping following in an east-west direction, the centre line of the completed building. According to local report Mr. Michael O'Meara was responsible for the erection of a large "Lean-to" shed, constructed of timber and sheathed with corrugated iron against the northern wall of the farm house. This shed covered the packing place for the bundling and preparation of the vegetables for market and afforded shelter for the marketing vehicles. An additional extension to the housing arrangement in the form of a corrugated iron out-building has been placed at the southern corner of the western wall of the cottage, which, incidentally is still occupied.

The numerous rectangular-shaped vegetable beds, always carefully tended and weeded are a pleasure to look upon, but the deterioration of the iron roofing and walls of the packing shed has brought about a great amount of haphazard patching of this unlovely building material which, together with the workaday sprawling heap of wooden crates, creates a pattern more of interest to an artist than a house and land agent. The garden, as cultivated today, is under the control of Mrs. Lee and extends from the eastern boundary of the isolated northern part of Scarborough Park.

The James Beehag Grant at Kogarah was subdivided about 1883 into nine allotments of varying frontages towards Rocky Point Road. These several blocks were of great depth, extending eastwards for some 37 chains, to what may be regarded as the centre line of Pat Moore's Swamp. According to Higinbotham Robinson and Harrison's Map of the Parish of St. George corrected to November 1884, the northernmost block of the subdivision was in the possession of Peter Herman, a German, who resided in a small double fronted cottage built of sandstone which has long been demolished. Then came two 140 feet blocks occupied by Peter Ritter and James Turnbull respectively and one at 90 feet in the possession of Mr. M. A. Owen. James Millgate, John Hollahan and Rudolph Krochert were listed in this order for the next three blocks averaging 140 feet frontages whilst

James Barford had 190 feet and the southernmost block of 240 feet or thereabouts was under the ownership of Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Peter Herman was a gentleman of large physique and the proud owner of a bushy grey beard. According to early postal directories he followed the occupation of a miner but in later years he became an auctioneer and estate agent with premises at the corner of Bellevue Street and Railway Parade at Kogarah. At this time he had moved from the small double-fronted stone cottage previously mentioned and resided in a two storied mansion adjacent to the fire station in Gray Street, Kogarah. His portion of the former Beehag Grant served as a cattle agistment paddock for many years before its subdivision into housing allotments. A new thoroughfare came into existence with this last subdivision and gained the distinctive Irish name of Toomevarra Street evidently bestowed in nostalgic memory of some obscure village or farmstead tucked away in the far western portion of County Clare. At the eastern end of Toomevarra Street an area of land was later occupied by Messrs Ranier Brothers manufacturers of ironing boards stools and such like wooden bric-a-brac.

In the normal course of events the various subdivisional blocks of the former Beehag Grant changed ownership frequently. Sited at the northern corner of Toomevarra Street and Rocky Point Road a fine residence No 20 gained the name "Tipperary" and was occupied in its later years by Mr. O'Meara. It is now known as the "Anthony Convalescent Home". Near the southern corner of Toomevarra Street with its verandah across the footpath of Rocky Point Road stood the old established weatherboard store owned for a great many years by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ellard. This tiny shop served the needs of the community residing in East Kogarah and the Sans Souci Peninsula. Mr. Ellard, a man of small stature was a valued member of St. Paul's Church of England Choir at Kogarah. South of and adjacent to his shop was the stone cottage of Mr. Bisby, the proprietor of a dairy farm the grounds of which bordered by luxuriant coral trees extended eastward to the boundary fence of the previously mentioned market garden. With the later subdivision of the dairy farm property both the shop and the stone cottage were razed to make way for the construction of a dead end street which is named Scott Street.

The main subdivisional thoroughfare of the former Beehag Grant was originally named Herman Street and was opened for housing purposes about the early 1880 period. In a burst of patriotic fervour which swept through the St. George District in the early days of the First World War the place and street names associated with the pioneers of German descent were discarded. To this end Herman Street was renamed Barton Street after a Mayor of Rockdale Council. The name barten, incidentally appertains to a cattle shed or barn in the English County of Kent.

A small water course with an intermittent flow descended eastwards from the shallow depression in Kogarah Hill passing about midway between Gray Street and Ocean Street. With the denudation of the natural bush vegetation the channel of the stream became filled with mullock and its course through the back yards of the houses confronting the abovementioned streets is no longer obvious. This streamlet after crossing Rocky Point Road continued its eastern course through an old established orchard property the owner of which had planted its banks with quince trees.

The eating of the unripe fruit often caused the plundering youth of the immediate district many unhappy moments created by stomach upsets and the succeeding dose of castor oil which was taken by the table spoonful from the dainty little cobalt blue bottles so tall and sleek.

Postal directories suggest that a market gardener named James Marks farmed this orchard which was in an abandoned condition at the turn of the century. Austral Street is located at the southern alignment of the former orchard and dates back to the 1880 decade when eight householders were listed as living on the northern side of the street.

The affairs relating to the neighbouring land grant of 77 acres allotted to Alfred Kennerly, which also bordered the western margin of Pat Moore's Swamp will appear in a later issue of the Bulletin of the St. George Historical Society.