



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

53 Bruce Street,
BEXLEY. 2207.

13th December, 1968.

Dear Friend and Member,

You are cordially invited to attend the Christmas Frolic of the above Society to be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening Next, 20th December, 1968, at 8 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Rockdale Town Hall.

A short business meeting, films, historical competitions.
Christmas Supper.

Catering arrangements in the hands of Mrs Eardley. Would lady members please bring a plate. Would gentlemen please supply the liquid refreshments AND A BOTTLE OPENER.

A very happy Christmas to you all !

D.H. Sinclair,
PRESIDENT.

R. W. Rathbone,
HON. SECRETARY.
58.4813.

KOGARAH 1890.

Recently, the St. George Historical Society was presented with a copy of The Sydney Echo dated October 16th, 1890.

The first part is printed below and will be continued in subsequent issues.

A History Of Its Progress.

There can be no doubt that during the short time Captain Cook remained in Botany Bay in April and May 1770, he was active in exploring the various bays and nooks around it, and the Georges and Cooks Rivers, which flow into it from the west; and it is certain that Sir Joseph Banks, Dr. Solander, and the astronomer (Mr. Green) were delighted with the newness and variety of the flowering plants and the gigantic trees as much as with the strange-looking animals then seen for the first time by British-born men. The huge gum trees and dense undergrowth were justly taken by them as indications of the richness of the soil. They were charmed with the picturesque and beautiful scenery, and with the number and variety of the birds and their gay plumage. The land was, to them, a land flowing with milk and honey; and their enthusiastic praises were almost boundless. Captain Phillip and his companions took a much more practical view of the new country in which they were to found a colony. They were

Settlers, Not Visitors.

The enormous trees were not only valueless, but they also entailed heavy labour in connection with the work of clearing the land before it could be made habitable for civilised beings. There was very little esculent grass, as the scrub was so thick that there was only room for it here and there in small patches. The bay was shallow - too shallow for ships even of the moderate tonnage of those days. The Endeavour and the other larger vessels of the fleet lay only just inside the Heads, and were barely sheltered from the rollers of the Pacific Ocean. It is true that there was deeper water in the Georges River, Kogarah Bay, and other places further inland, but these would have to be reached over the "shallows" of Botany Bay; and so the future capital of the new settlement was started in Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, instead of in Kogarah or in some portion of the western or southern shores of Botany Bay. Even if the boat-harbour, named Port Jackson by Captain Cook, had not existed, the settlement would never have been made.

At Botany Bay.

The difficulties, apart from the shallowness of the bay, would have been sufficient to have caused the removal of the settlement which actually took place. The labour of clearing the timber away before the land could be cultivated would, with the small force under his control, have been sufficient to induce Captain Phillip to seek for a spot where the conditions were more favourable. An open or lightly-timbered plain where the grass had room to grow would have been searched for, and the heavily timbered and scrubby lands would have had to wait until the population increased. It may be considered that these reasons combined prevented the first settlement from being formed in some part of the country where the southern suburbs of Sydney now stand. The land was too rich with the

growth of centuries to be used without labour, and the labour of clearing it would have been not only severe, but also unproductive. And thus, instead of Kogarah and Hurstville being, as they perhaps might in other circumstances have been, the parent city, they are now among her youngest suburbs.

The First Grants in Kogarah.

were made by Governor Macquarie of 1950 acres to Dr. John Townson, and 1605 acres to his brother, Captain Robert Townson, R.N. A grant of 100 acres was made to Captain Connell shortly afterwards. Captain Connell had a large ironmonger's shop in Sydney from the corner of Hunter Street along George Street. Dr. Townson built a house, and planted a fine orchard and orangery, but, with this exception, very little work was done in the district. About the year 1816 Dr. Townson sold his estate to Mr. Simeon Lord, and it was afterwards known as Lord's Forest. Some years later this fine estate was purchased by Mr. Michael Gannon, and the name was changed to Gannon's Forest. A part of the Townson grants is in Kogarah, and the remainder in Hurstville. A considerable portion of Mr. James Chandler's Bexley estate of 1200 acres is also in Kogarah, both the Kogarah and Rockdale railway stations being on this estate. This dates only from 1831. Some years afterwards the remainder of the land was surveyed, and opened for purchase by auction.

One of the First Purchasers

was Mr. John B. Carroll, who bought 170 acres between Dr. Townson's land and Kogarah Bay, in 1848. Messrs. William Blake, Patrick English, James Derwent (who purchased land in Gannon's Forest in 1854), William Maher, West, Justice, J.A. South, Biden, Murphy, and others settled there some time after, the diggings broke out, or between 1853 and 1856, and built houses, and formed gardens, orchards, etc., some on Government land and others at Bexley, Gannon's Forest, and other estates, portions of which they purchased.

The First Religious Services

are said to have been held in Mr. Berghofer's house, when the Rev. Messrs. Fletcher, Palmer, Baber, and others connected with St. Peter's officiated. Mr. William Wolfen (Swedish Consul in Sydney), gave two acres of land on the Bexley estate as a site for a church, and another acre was subsequently purchased for a parsonage and a school. The foundation stone of St. Paul's Church, Kogarah, was laid in 1869, and the church was consecrated by Bishop Barker in September of that year. It was at first placed in the charge of the Rev. George King (incumbent of St. Peter's); but very shortly after its opening the Rev. John Done was placed in charge, first as catechist, and afterwards as incumbent. Mr. Done remained in charge until his death in 1877, when he was followed by the Revs. Richard Kelly and W. H. Saunders. The present incumbent (the Rev. James Clarke) was licensed to the parish in July 1889.

St. Luke's

is at present the central church of a very large district, and arrangements have to be made for nine or ten services every Sunday at St. Luke's (Kogarah), St. George's (Hurstville), St. Stephen's (Rockdale), at the

the school church (Mortvale), and the pavilion (Sans Souci), while Christ Church (Bexley) and St. David's (Arncliffe), although under the charge of Rev. C. J. Byng, have not yet been erected into a separate parish. A portion of the churchyard was set apart

For a Cemetery,

and there are a number of tombs there. One of these is that of Mr. David Hannam (67), died September 1872, one of the oldest residents of Arncliffe. The Rev. John Done, first incumbent of the parish of St. George, was buried in 1877 at the age of 60 years, while Jennetta (his wife) lived till 1887. Their daughters, Caroline and Alice, also lie by their sides. Among others who rest here are - Esther, wife of John A. South, 1881; Jane, wife of Joseph Clarke, 1881; George Day, of Forest Lodge, 1884; Joseph Shelton (69), 1887; Eliza, daughter of J. H. Carruthers; Thomas Morse (79), 1886; Thomas Draper (59), 1887; and Susan, his wife (52), 1880; Jane, wife of George Twiss; John Selmon (77), 1873; and Harriet, his wife, 1886; Lewis Griffiths, of Arncliffe (58), 1875; Lucy, wife of John Walker, and two sons; Emily Eleanor Favell, one of the old families of the district, 1884; John William Lawrence, son of an old resident of Rockdale (aged 36), 1886. The inscription -

Boast not to-day,
Nor call tomorrow thine;
Thou might'st be call'd away
By sudden death like mine -

indicates that he died suddenly; Philip Mulhausen (62), 1885; Thomas Wilson, at Torwood, Kogarah, 1881, aged 68. St. Paul's is a plain stone structure, without ornamentation, and is plainly but comfortably fitted up inside. But there are no special features about it calling for notice. In connection with

The Roman Catholic Church

The Rev. Paul Fitzpatrick and the late Rev. Placid Quirk were the first to hold services in the district. They were in the habit of visiting private houses. In 1965 St. Patrick's school-church was erected. It was a plain stone structure about 20-ft. wide and 35-ft. long. Services were at first conducted here in connection with St. Joseph's at Newtown, and afterwards in connection with Sts. Peter and Paul's, Cooks River. The first resident priest was the Rev. Father Berry, who was succeeded by the Rev. Peter Byrne, now at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. The present priest is the Rev. P. M. Ryan. About two years ago

A New St. Patrick's Church

was erected from designs by Messrs. Sheerin and Hennessy, architects. The church, although only about half the proposed size, is the largest and handsomest in the huge original parish of St. George. It is of brick, with stone cornices, pointings, window and door frames, etc., and is in the modern ornamental style of Church architecture, being a mixture of Italian and Gothic. The interior is beautifully fitted and finished. The western end has been merely boarded up to allow of an extension when the design is to be completed. The tower has been built to the height of the walls, but will at some future time be finished with a spire. The old church has been

extended by the addition of about 15-ft. to its length, making it about 50-ft. in all. Over the door is a memorial stone with the inscription "St. Patrick's R.C. school, 1865". It is now used as a day school, and an additional building has been erected a little way off for an infants' school. At the rear is a small piece of ground fenced in, and used as a cemetery.

There are not many graves, but those that are there are well looked after, as indeed are the whole of the grounds, a number of trees and shrubs having been recently planted. Among those buried there may be mentioned - Abraham Williams, a native of Sydney (34), 1875; Ellen Norah Bieger (62), 1878; James English (69), 1871, a very old resident, and Bridget his wife (60) 1885; Annie, wife of John B. Carroll (34), 1880; Mathew Carroll (88), 1876; Bridget, wife of William Minnett (56), 1886. Some 25 years ago the late Mr. William Ridley held services, as a lay preacher of

The Congregational Church,

in the house of Mr. Carss, of Kogarah. Mr. Ridley every Sunday for years travelled by omnibus from Sydney to Cooks River, and walked thence a distance of about four miles to Mr. Carss' house to preach. Those who know what the roads were like round Sydney, and especially the roads between Cooks and Georges Rivers, will be able to appreciate his perseverance and energy in a good cause. After his death the services were carried on in a desultory manner, and then ceased. But since the opening of the railway line a very pretty little church has been erected near the Kogarah railway station. There are two memorial stones side by side, the front one laid by the Rev. Alexander Hannay, and the other by Mr. Henry Lee on the 24th November, 1888. The inscription shows that the building is known as the Kogarah Centenary Congregational Church. The architect was Mr. H.C. Kent, and the pastor is the Rev. E. Moore. In early times the members of

The Wesleyan Church

were accustomed to drive to Newtown until the church was built in Rockdale in 1858. Some five years ago a Wesleyan Church was erected at Kogarah, a short distance from the railway station. It is served by the Rev. J. Monahan, assisted by lay-helpers. The strict Baptist Mission Hall was erected at Kogarah in 1889. The Presbyterians hold services regularly in the Kogarah School of Arts.

The Oldest Hotel

in the district was Prendergast's Inn, on the Rocky Point Road. It has been closed for some 27 years. About the same time the Gardeners' Arms was opened by Mr. Charles Brown. It has been conducted for many years by the present proprietor, Mr. Thomas Beavers. The Kogarah Hotel was built about 11 years ago on land purchased by Mr. Edmund English some 40 years ago from Mr. McNab. It has been conducted up to the present time by Mr. James English. The Sea Breeze Hotel was built by the late Mr. John Emerson at Tom Ugly's Point (Woniora), some 14 or 15 years ago, and was conducted by him up to the time of his death. It was afterwards kept by Mr. Nat Thompson, the well known cricketer. The present proprietor is Mr. William S. Matterson (the father of Neil Matterson, the well known sculler).

Tom Ugly's Point was named, it is said, from an aboriginal called Tommy, who had only one leg, and who in the aboriginal nomenclature was called "Waggerly" Tom (waggerly being the native name for a lame animal. Later on he was called Tom Waggerly which was finally changed to 'Tom Ugly'. Tom Ugly's has for many years been a favourite place of resort on holidays. It is from this point that the punt crosses the Georges River, so that it is on the main road to the South Coast districts. The only other hotel in Kogarah was erected some five years ago by Mr. J. Parker. The Railway Parade Hotel was purchased by Mr. William Stroud before it was finished; and it was opened shortly afterwards. It occupies a good position close to the Kogarah railway station, and, with the exception of an interval of about six months, has been conducted up to the present time by Mr. Stroud, who with his family landed in Australia, from London, only a few months before he opened the hotel. Like most of the suburbs round Sydney, Kogarah and Rockdale have suffered severely from

The Want of Good Roads,

and the consequent want of means of communication with the city. In early times the residents were compelled to head Woolli Creek and Cooks River, and to get to Sydney by way of Canterbury or Enfield, and thence on to the Parramatta or Liverpool Roads. Even by taking this roundabout way it was very difficult to get through the bush with vehicles, and most of the carriage was done by means of pack-horses. An occupant of Sans Souci or Rocky Point House who established a still, carried the liquor he manufactured in kegs slung one on each side of a pack-horse, and covered with bags, rushes, &c. The Rocky Point Road is said to have been first cleared by order of Governor Gipps. Sir George seems to have taken a deep interest in the morals of the settlers. He frequently attended service at St. Peter's Church, and one day, when he met Mr. Robert Cooper, of Rocky Point House, he said, "How is it I've not seen you at church recently?" Mr. Cooper explained that it was almost impossible to get through the scrub. "Pooh," returned Sir George, "that is no excuse. Here, take this order and get some men from the stockade to clear a track; and don't let me have to complain of your absence again." The consequence of this action on the part of his Excellency was that a track was cleared from the Cooks River Dam to Rocky Point to enable Mr. Cooper and his family to go to church. For many years the road was a mere bush track, and in some places it was impassable for vehicles. At the ridge known as Cobbler's Pinch, carts, gigs, &c., had to skirt the ridge, and wind in and out among the rocks and scrub for a mile or two until the obstruction was passed.

The First to Cross The Ridge.

with a vehicle is said to have been Mr. Berghofer, who went out to take possession of his farm with a German waggon and four horses about 28 years ago. It was impossible to follow the winding of the track round the ridge with such a team, and therefore Mr. Berghofer boldly attacked the ridge, and crossed it successfully, only to capsize his waggon in a hole in the road further on. From this it would appear that the much dreaded pinch was not much worse than the road. It was about this time that

The First Road Trust

was formed under the Parish Roads Act (4 Victoria, No. 12), passed by the Governor-in-Council in 1840. This Act was an improvement on the original Act (6, William IV., No. 11) passed in 1835. It provided that trustees might be elected for three years, and that these trustees should have power to erect tollbars, and levy tolls. It also provided that a rate not exceeding 6d. per acre might be struck on all lands within three miles of the road. The permissive principle appears to have been the bane of legislation in New South Wales from the first establishment of local government in the colony. The Parish Roads Act might have formed a good basis for a more complete local government measure, but for the fact that all its provision depended on the word "may" instead of "shall". The legislators do not appear to have realised that laws should be made to be enforced, there being otherwise a danger of them proving useless; and too many of the laws of New South Wales have been found useless when tried. The Parish Roads Act was almost a dead-letter.

The Rocky Point Road Trust,

which was almost the only one in the colony which attempted to carry out the provisions of the Act, found that the rate of 6d. per acre could not be enforced, as the Act provided no means to compel defaulters to pay. The want of roads in the district, however, was so great that the majority of the residents in Kogarah and Rockdale did not raise any dispute against the rate which they might have done had they taken legal opinion as to the wording of the Act; and, therefore, this Act remained in force in this district long after the levy of rates by similar trusts elsewhere had been abandoned. The first road trust consisted of Messrs. J. B. Carroll (chairman), Patrick Moore, J. Morse, William Beehag, and James Beehag, with Mr. J. A. South as secretary. The first Government vote for the road was dated May 20, 1864, and was for £60. Before this was given, however, a toll had been established by the trustees near the Cooks River Dam, and the money collected had been expended principally in cutting down and levelling the huge rocks on the top of Cobbler's Pinch, and in building a bridge over Muddy Creek. This bridge was opened on February 20, 1862. It was composed of large logs with smaller logs or saplings laid across and covered with earth and stones. A road committee had also been formed in connection with

Kogarah Road

which branched off the Rocky Point Road near Prendergast's Inn, and ran to the punt at Tom Ugly's Point. The Committee consisted of Messrs. Mathew Carroll, Patrick Moore, and Joseph Clark, and the first Government vote of £35 for making and repairing the road was granted on October 3, 1860. In 1869 a dispute arose between the Rocky Point Road trust and the residents along the Forest Road, who claimed £100 from the toll receipts for making their road. The residents on the Muddy Creek Road, not to be outdone, claimed £50 for their road, and, as the trustees could not see their way to divert these large sums of money from the use for which they had been collected, the dispute waxed warm, and resulted in the toll being closed by Mr. William Forster (Minister of Lands in the fifth Cowper Ministry). The toll bar was shortly afterwards reopened on the Rocky Point Road, south of the Pinch, or near where Spring Street, Rockdale, now joins the main road. The trust was abolished in 1876, the last trustees having been Messrs. J. B.

Carroll, Joseph Twiss, Thomas Mascord, James Hickey, and William Bush. Mr. Samuel Schofield served three years on the trust, and other gentlemen were elected and served for longer or shorter terms. Mr. J.B. Carroll was also one of the trustees for the road from the southern side of Georges River to Bottle Forest.

The First Punt

over Georges River was a miserable affair, worked by a coir rope, the passengers having frequently to wind themselves over. There was plenty of traffic, as Mr. Thomas Holt had some hundreds of men at work on his private property, which is now known as the Holt-Sutherland estate. These men were employed in building the house, clearing and laying out the grounds, forming oyster beds along the Georges River, and doing other work. It is said that Mr. Holt expended something like £64,000 in improving the estate. A log bridge in connection with the oyster beds may still be seen stretching across the mouth of Gawler's Bay, which is now part of the private property of Mr. F.S.E. Holt, J.P., and is on the south side of Georges River. The men from these works frequently crossed over the punt, and spent their money freely in Kogarah. After a time the coir rope was replaced by a wire one, and then the old punt gave way to

A Steam Punt,

which is still at work. A great deal of work was done in the district. The majority of the landowners had market gardens or fruit orchards and orangeries. The timber trade, too, was extensive, and many loads of ships' knees and ribs were carted into Sydney from the Kogarah bush. The trade in firewood was also very large. Some 30 years ago Mr. Callaghan built two schooners on the shores of Townson's Bay. One of them was 60 tons burden, and the other 30 tons. Messrs. Kyle and Merriman also built several craft on their land, and Mr. Thompson constructed some vessels on the Townson estate. Some years ago Mr. F.W. Hudson erected a saw-mill, but the Government refused to allow Mr. J.B. Carroll to cut a canal through the low-lying portion of his land and the mud flats skirting the head of Kogarah Bay, and the works are at a standstill. The reason of the refusal is believed to be that the Government did not wish to alienate the foreshores; but it is urged that all public rights ought to have been conserved without preventing the works. The Illawarra and South Coast railway was opened through the district in October 1884, and on the 28th of the same month a petition signed by 52 of the residents, praying that their

Locality Might be Incorporated

under the name of the Borough of Kogarah, was gazetted. The boundaries were from Georges River along the railway line to where the line crosses the Forest Road between the Rockdale and Arncliffe railway stations, and thence by the boundary of West Botany to Lady Robinson's Beach, and by the shores of Botany Bay and Georges River, to the point of commencement. The population was estimated at 1100, and the area at six miles. A supplementary petition, signed by 66 residents was published on January 20, 1885, and on the same day a counter petition was gazetted, signed by 159 persons, who were of opinion that the population had been considerably

over-estimated, and the boundaries not fairly or equitably adjusted, and who said that at a public meeting held at Mr. Beaver's Gardeners' Arms, a resolution had been affirmed that it would be advisable to wait for the passing of the Local Government Act before incorporating the district. On the 15th July, 1885, a new petition, signed by 300 persons, praying for the incorporation of the district, was gazetted; but in the meantime all that portion of land lying east of the Rocky Point Road, and including the Rockdale railway station, had been united to West Botany, and the name of the municipality changed to Rockdale.

The Incorporation of Kogarah

was gazetted on 22nd December, 1885, and Mr. Henry Wise was appointed the first returning officer. The first election took place on the 27th February, 1886, at the Gardeners' Arms Hotel, when the following aldermen were elected:- Messrs. John Bartholomew Carroll, Patrick English, Daniel Joseph Treacy, Edward Hogben, Myles McRae, John Murphy, John Abraham South, Frederick William Biden, and Edward Blake. Mr. Hogben was elected first Mayor, and at the following meeting Mr. Carroll handed in his resignation, his place being filled by Mr. F.W. Hudson. The council held its first meetings at the Gardeners' Arms, and then found accommodation at the Kogarah railway station until the School of Arts building was finished, when rooms were rented there. The area is estimated at $5\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. The population at the date of the incorporation was about 1000, the number of houses 175, and the revenue for the first year about £1500. For the current year the population is estimated at 3500, the number of houses at 650, and the revenue at about £5000. There are in the borough about 10 miles of roads made and ballasted, and about 37 miles unmade. Near the railway station, where the houses are built closely together, the foot-paths have been kerbed and guttered, and in some places asphalted. Owing to the gravelly nature of the ground the roads generally are in good order for traffic.

There Are in the Borough

the Anglican, the Roman Catholic, the Congregational, the Wesleyan, and the Strict Baptist Church; three Public schools (at Kogarah, Blakehurst, and Sans Souci), the Roman Catholic school, and Mrs. Payn's ladies' college at Kogarah, Mrs. Richards' ladies' school, Montgomery Street, and Mrs. Wilson's ladies' school at Carlton, besides some smaller schools. The hotels are the Railway Parade, the Kogarah, the Gardeners' Arms, and the Sea Breeze. The number of business places is about 40. One of

The Principal Industries

is the Hurstville Brick Company's works, with three machines, a 40 h.p. boiler and other machinery, valued altogether at about £5000, five kilns, which turn out at the present time about 20,000 bricks daily, while the capacity is about double that number. The directors are Messrs. E. Godfrey, Doust, Judd, and Edwards. There are about 25 market gardeners, 1 nursery, 1 timber-yard and sawmill, 1 brass foundry, 14 dairies, and 1 ironwork, besides the usual smaller works. There is a livery stable, whence coaches are run daily to Port Hacking, via the punt at Tom Ugly's.

The present council consists of Aldermen Peter Herrmann (Mayor), Hunter Macpherson, Charles H. Halstead, John B. Carroll, James Hatfield, A.O. Butler, J. Lacey, J.S. South, and J.T. Treacy. The first council-clerk was Mr. F. F. Vogel, and the present one is Mr. E.T. Sayers.

"Kogarah" is an aboriginal word, meaning "a place of rushes".

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