



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

81 Watkin Street,
BEXLEY. 2207.

10th October, 1969.

Dear Friend and Member,

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

Date. Friday Evening next, 17th October, 1969.
Place. Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
Guest Speaker. Alderman J. Gillroy, Secretary of the Camperdown Cemetery Trust will speak on Historic Camperdown Cemetery - Its History and Its Future.
Business General.

Would lady members please bring a plate.

D. Sinclair,
President

(Miss)J. Noble
Hon. Secretary.

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Supper Roster. Miss McCartney (Capt.) Mrs. Warlow-Davies, Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Amey and Mrs. I. Smith.

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REMINDER FOR OUR OUTINGS.

OCTOBER 26TH - SUNDAY. WINDSOR - RICHMOND.

Ring Mr. Sinclair 587-4555.

Don't forget to bring your own lunch, morning and afternoon teas.
Bus leaving Rockdale Town Hall at 9 a. m. sharp.

NOVEMBER 22ND - SATURDAY. TOUR OF GARDEN ISLAND.

Bus will be leaving Rockdale Town Hall at 1 p. m. sharp.
Bring your own afternoon tea. Cost \$1 per person.
Ring Mr. Sinclair 587.4555.
Avoid disappointment, Book early.

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NOVEMBER MEETING.

For this meeting, we would like members to bring along some of their best slides of historical interest taken on recent outings. It would be appreciated if these slides could be named and indexed to avoid loss.

ST. GEORGE DISTRICT. THE WANT OF GOOD ROADS

Extract from The Echo - 16/10/1890.

Like most of the suburbs around 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 Wolli Creek and Cook's River, and to get to Sydney by way of Canterbury or Enfield, and thence onto 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, etc. 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 that I have 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 the 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 Cook's 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, etc. had to skirt the ridge, and wind in and out among the rocks and scrub for a mile or so until the obstruction was passed in order to gain the cleared track.

The first to cross this ridge with a vehicle is said to have been Mr. Berghofer who went out to take possession of his farm with a German wagon 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 wagon 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.

THE FIRST ROAD TRUST. St. George Area.

Extract from The Echo 16/10/1890.

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 4th, No. 11) Passed in 1835. It provided that trustees might be elected for three years, and that these trustees should have power to erect toll bars, 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 N. S. W. 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 provisions 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 N. S. W. have been found useless when tried. The Parish Roads Act was almost a dead letter.

THE ROCKY POINT ROAD TRUST.

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 the secretary. The first Government vote for the road was dated May 20th 1864, and was for £60. Before this was given, however, a toll had been established by the trustees near the Cook's River Dam, and the money collected had been expended principally in cutting down and levelling the huge rock on the top of Cobbler's Pinch, and in building a bridge over Muddy Creek. This bridge was opened on February 20th 1862. It was composed of large logs with smaller logs or saplings laid across and covered with earth and stones.

KOGARAH ROAD.

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. Matthew Carroll, Patrick Moore and Joseph Clark, and the first Government vote of £35 for making and repairing the road was granted on October 3rd 1860. In 1869 a dispute arose between the Rocky Point Road Trust and the residents along the Forest Road, who claimed £100 from the roll receipts for making their road. The residents on the Muddy Creek Road, not to be out done, 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 Foster (Minister of Lands in the 5th Cowper Ministry) The toll bar was shortly afterwards reopened on the Rocky Point Road south of the Pinch, or near where Spring Street Rockdale 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. Sameul 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 for the southern side of Georges River to Bottle Forest.

Gifford Eardley.

A GUIDE TO OLD HUNTER'S HILL, N. S. W. AUSTRALIA. Prepared by the Hunter's Hill Historical Society.

"Only seven miles from Sydney, Hunter's Hill, with a touch of England in its village atmosphere, is well worth a visit. Instead of the usual

suburban layout of supermarkets, milk bars and the like, we find scattered shops and a sense of time to spare and leisure. Much of Hunter's Hill is a peninsula, a fact which had a distinct bearing on the way of life here over one hundred years ago, and still has to-day. It is somewhat cut off, geographically, from the main streams of suburban growth and alteration and retains much of the nineteenth century in its gracious, well-preserved stone houses and their mellow stone surrounding walls which still front its footpaths. It is famed for the thousands of lovely trees which grace its streets and private grounds and the attendant bird life.

One of the loveliest ways to travel to this district is by hourly ferry from No. 5 Wharf, Circular Quay. Approaching the ferry terminus at Valentia Street Wharf on the western foreshore, the recently closed Mort's Graving Dock, cut into sandstone, can be seen. A connecting bus meets the ferry and passes the Town Hall. During normal office hours at the Town Hall, where fully illustrated histories may be purchased, the visitor can inspect a small museum of Hunter's Hill objects and documents and view a large map showing the original land grants and owners. The forty photographs displayed will give a view of some of the old stone buildings that may be seen to-day. From this point the many stone-walled streets, marked on the accompanying plan, will show the visitor a cross-section of stone homes built over one hundred years ago. This sandstone was quarried locally - indeed generally from the very land where the building was to be erected.

Visitors who arrive by car, whether by the Parramatta River or Lane Cove River routes, will see some of the bridges, workings and new roadways which will soon form links in Sydney's new Northern Expressway. The three new bridges under construction in this Municipality will help solve Sydney's traffic problems. One of them, Gladesville Bridge, has the world's longest concrete span.

The stone buildings in Hunter's Hill were mostly erected by free workers from Ireland, Scotland and Italy brought from their home countries for this purpose. Many descendants of these people and those of other old families, still live here and help to provide a village atmosphere with its tradition of quiet beauty and permanence. Every year sees the return of more old family names - Bonnefin, Gale - to name two - coming back to the home of their forbears.

In 1834 when John Clarke took up his grant of land for mixed farming, a boat was the only quick way to reach Sydney Town. The rough track was by way of some fourteen miles up the north side of the Parramatta River through Ryde and back into Sydney on the south bank.

Some graves of early Hunter's Hill settlers may be seen at historic St. Anne's Church of England at Ryde, the Field of Mars Cemetery at Ryde (Protestant and Catholic sections) and St. Charles Catholic Church, Ryde. "

HUNTER'S HILL OUTING.

E. Eardley.

A few weeks ago one of our Patrons, Alderman Ron Rathbone, acting in the capacity of guide, accompanied members of the St. George Historical Society on a tour of Hunter's Hill. Although the weather was not favourable the outing was enjoyed by all.

The Coach driver, under Ron's guidance, wound his way along the charming narrow streets, with their uncut stone fence lines, over which we were able to view many of the lovely old houses.

At Huntley's Point we were able to see closely "The Point". This old home, which is in the process of being restored should be well worth a visit in the future. The Villa Maria Church is architecturally beautiful, also St. Joseph's College, where Brother John was waiting to conduct the party on a tour of the grounds, giving a detailed description of the buildings, which was most interesting and informative.

The Chapel was a delight, especially the stained glass windows and excellent woodwork. They alone were well worth the visit.

A brief history of Hunter's Hill, and of the homes and Churches we saw is contained in Alderman Rathbone's article in this bulletin.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF HISTORY OF HUNTER'S HILL.

Ron Rathbone.

The peninsula we now know as Hunter's Hill was originally inhabited by the Wallumdegal Tribe of Aborigines and called Wallumetta. It was also known by the name Moocooboola.

The origin of the name Hunter's Hill is a complete mystery but was used as early as 3rd October, 1794 when one Henry Hacking was given a grant of 30 acres at Hunter's Hill.

The popular story is that it was named after the ancestral house of Thomas Muir one of the Scottish Martyrs, who was transported to Australia but this is now considered most unlikely firstly because Muir did not arrive in Australia until 22 days after the first recorded use of the name and in any case the only land he ever owned was on the eastern side of the Tank Stream.

During Phillip's regime, however, Captain John Hunter, 2nd Captain of the Sirius was given the task of surveying the shores of Port Jackson.

The most prominent geographical feature of the northern side of the harbour was the eminence now known as Gore Hill. It is thought likely that Hunter named this in his own honour for the whole district from present day, North Sydney to Hornsby and as far west as Rydalmere is shown on early maps as Hunter's Hill.

When N. S. W. was divided into counties, the eastern part of the district of Hunter's Hill was incorporated as the Parish of Willoughby, the remainder being left as the Parish of Hunter's Hill.

In 1848, St. Anne's Church at Ryde was known as "The Church of St. Anne, Hunter's Hill."

The original peninsula was covered with Penus Callitris, Bottle Brush, Blackbut and Honeysuckle and inhabited by gill birds, wattle birds, bronzewing pigeons, ducks, wallabies, parrots, nature bears and opossums.

In 1834 the area was thrown open for purchase and its first recorded inhabitant was William Morgan - better known as "Billy the Bull" who bought 30 acres in July, 1834 for £26. 5. 0 and another 32 acres in December, 1834 for £24. 16. 0. He was followed by John Clarke, Samuel Onions, Thomas Edwards, James Chisholm and Frederick Augustus but the two best remembered of these early purchasers were Mrs. Mary Reiley who bought 30 acres in July 1835 and John Glade after whom the suburb of Gladesville is named.

A second burst of purchasers in 1836 attracted Thomas Stubbs. Susanna Nash - the noted haberdasher and John Tawell the apothecary and quaker who was the first man apprehended by the use of telegraph and subsequently hanged for the crime of murder.

Of all these only the memory of Mary Reily has endured. Mary Reily established herself at Figtree - a kindly old matriach who befriended

both freeman and convict alike and frequently sheltered escaped criminals and desperadoes who inhabited the peninsula in considerable number.

About the same time as Mrs. Reily was dispensing hospitality to the Colony's anti social elite a young Frenchman named Didier Numa Joubert left Bordeaux for Sydney en route to the Bay of Islands in New Zealand where there was a French settlement.

Eight years later his younger brother Jules Joubert also set sail for this part of the world.

He was joined in Sydney by Didier Numa who had now acquired a wife and child.

1842-43 was a period of great financial difficulty in the Colony of N. S. W. and among those people seriously embarrassed was Mrs. Mary Reily. The wealthy French brothers acquired the greater part of her holding along with huge other tracts of real estate in the Colony.

The only other development at Hunter's Hill up to this point of time, except Mrs. Reily's modest abode, was the Tarban Creek Asylum, selected because of its remoteness and commenced by Governor Sir Richard Bourke in 1835. This shocking establishment was first occupied in 1838 by patients from the Liverpool Asylum and all inmates were kept in chains and leg irons to prevent their escape.

It was not until the early 1850's that the Joubert brothers made any attempt to develop their now sizeable holding at Hunter's Hill.

In these years Jules Joubert floated a property development company comprised of most of the prominent French Citizens of Sydney and proceeded to turn Hunter's Hill into a French settlement similar to the one at the Bay of Islands in New Zealand.

Using craftsmen imported from Italy and labour provided by the Cockatoo Island Penal Settlement and the ready supply of local sandstone available work commenced on the attractive collection of sandstone cottages for which the suburb of Hunter's Hill is now so celebrated.

Prominent amongst those who took up residence in the 1850's were the Counte Gabriel de Milhau, Charles Edward Jeanneret, M. Bordier and the French Consul General in Sydney M. Sentis.

To cater for the spiritual needs of the settlement Father Rocher began work on the Villa Maria Church and by 1861 the peninsula had 198 houses and 1146 inhabitants.

In 1859 a petition from the French community prayed that the peninsular of Hunter's Hill should be incorporated as a Municipality. This was immediately countered by another petition from the Non-French section praying that it should not. Petitions for and against flowed freely for the next twelve months until the Municipalists won the day and the Municipality of Hunter's Hill came into being in January 5th, 1861 and is now the fourth oldest in Sydney.

At the ensuing election the "French ticket" swept the poll and it was not surprising that Jules Joubert was elected the first Mayor.

Joubert is also credited with being responsible for the Municipality retaining the name Hunter's Hill when the local populace wanted it called Moocooboola and officialdom favoured the name Tarban.