



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

81 Watkin Street,
BEXLEY. 2207.
14th May, 1971.

Dear Friend and Member,

The May meeting of this Society will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening next, 21st May, 1971, at 8 p.m.

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

Guest Speaker: Mrs. I.E. Currey, Research Officer of the Canterbury & District Historical Society, will present a slide lecture on the "HISTORY OF THE CANTERBURY AREA".

Business: General.

Would lady members please bring a plate and gentlemen kindly donate 20¢ towards the "Lydham Hall Fund Raising Committee".

D.H. Sinclair.

(Miss) J. Noble.

President.

Hon. Secretary.

Phone. 599.4884.

Supper Roster: Mrs. O'Shea (Capt), Mrs. Longhurst, Mrs. Chase, Miss Gillard, Mrs. O'Meara.

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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

THE NORTH SHORE CAVALCADE GROUP

presents

A CAVALCADE OF FASHION & HISTORY

to commemorate

The Centenary of the Rockdale Municipality

ROCKDALE TO N HALL

on Tuesday, 1st JUNE, 1971,

at 7.45 p.m.

Sponsored by the St. George Historical Society to raise funds for
The Restoration of LYDHAM HALL and the Mayoress' Charitable Fund

Tickets \$1.50 Students 80 Cents.

Tickets available from

President: Mrs. E. Wright 599.4884.

Ladies Fund Raising Committee.

A selection of Gowns, many worn by names associated with our Country's history chosen during 1780's through to the early 1900's will be shown from their extensive collection, and paraded in a setting of graciousness and charm that has somewhat disappeared with our modern day of living in the 20th Century.

All funds raised from this evening will be directed towards the Restoration of "LYDHAM HALL" acquired by Rockdale Municipal Council as a period home, and the "Mayoress' Charity Fund".

We assure you of an excellent evening and look forward to your support and co-operation to make this a most successful evening. Parties of more than 20 persons are entitled to 20¢ concession per ticket.

TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE.

Enclosed raffle book of five tickets for \$1.00.

1st Prize. 2 Quality travelling cases.

2nd " Double Electric Blanket.

3rd " Hand crocheted knee rug.

Raffle tickets to be returned no later than 25th May, 1971.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY . . . FUTURE OUTINGS & SOCIAL EVENINGS.

Please ring Mrs. Eardley, Asst. Secretary, for outing bookings. Ph. 59.8078.

We would like the support of all members and their friends on our various Outings and Social Functions.

MAY - 22nd Saturday. Visiting "EVERGLADES" at Leura. Full Day.
Limited 45 persons. Bus leaving Rockdale Town Hall at 9 a.m. SHARP.
Cost \$2.00 Bus Only.

OCTOBER 2, 3 & 4th - LONG WEEKEND OUTING TO BRAIDWOOD & GOULBURN.

Bookings are now being taken, cost of trip all inclusive \$31. Morning and Afternoon Teas and Lunch at Braidwood are not included in this amount. Please contact the Secretary, Phone 599.4884, as soon as possible. Deposits are required by MAY Meeting. \$4.

Limited 45 persons.

JULY 10th - Saturday. Inspection of FORT DENISON.

Limited bookings, please make arrangements early. Details in June Bulletin.

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"LYDHAM HALL FUND RAISING COMMITTEE"

The Ladies Fund Raising Committee hope you will keep in mind the following events, and for bookings or tickets please contact Mrs. E. Wright.
Phone 599.4884.

MAY - 15th. SATURDAY EVENING.

Housie Night: This function will be held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. D. Gow, 33 Gloucester Road, Hurstville. Donation \$1.00

JUNE 1st. TUESDAY EVENING.

Cavalcade of Fashion. Tickets are now available for this Parade. This function is being held in connection with the "Rockdale Centenary Celebrations" and presented by "THE NORTH SHORE CAVALCADE GROUP". Gowns paraded are authentic articles of past fashions from the 1780's period through to the 1900's.
Cost \$1.50.

JULY - 13th. TUESDAY EVENING.

ANNIVERSARY DINNER. To be held at "Ainslee" Lodge, Bexley. Cost \$4.

RAFFLE - Pair of Towels, donated by Mrs. Tournay, won by Mrs. Gow.

RAFFLE - Radiator, donated by Mrs. E. Wright, won by Miss B. Otton.

LYDHAM HALL is now open for inspection, Saturday and Sunday Afternoons.
2 p.m. till 4 p.m. Donations: Adults 20¢. Children 5¢.

Mrs. E. Wright.
President Ladies Committee,
Phone 599.4884.

"A CENTURY OF PROGRESS"

Copies of this publication are now available, and have been prepared to
celebrate the Centenary of the Rockdale Municipality. Cost \$1.00.

SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS.

A limited supply is still available of publications. These copies are
obtainable from the Secretary.

The attention of our members is drawn to two excellent booklets entitled
"Captain Cook in the South Seas", and "The Opening up of the Pacific".
Priced at 50¢ each, and obtainable at the Public Library, Sydney, Room 24.

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(By courtesy from item appearing in "The Challenge", St. Georges Church of England, Hurstville.)

PIONEER CHURCHMEN ... RICHARD JOHNSON (1753-1827).....

The celebration of the Captain Cook Bi-Centenary this year is a reminder that only 18 years later Australia's first clergyman, the Rev. Richard Johnson, of the Church of England, arrived at Sydney Cove as chaplain with the First Fleet. He was then 33 and single-handed for six years until the arrival of the Rev. Samuel Marsden, he ministered to the spiritual needs of the infant settlement.

A tablet in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, summarises his pioneering ministry thus: "In grateful memory of Rev. Richard Johnson, B.A., Magd. Coll., Cambr., who came as Chaplain to the settlement in N.S.W. in the First Fleet, reaching Sydney 26th January, 1788. Erected first church 1793. Laboured with earnest self-devotion amid great difficulties for 12 years. Returned to England 1800, where he died 1827."

A better known memorial stands in Richard Johnson Square itself at the intersections of Hunter, Bligh and Castlereagh Streets in downtown Sydney, where a tall monument, surmounted by a cross, commemorates the first Christian service in Australia on Sunday, February 3rd, 1788, when Johnson preached in the open under some trees from the text: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116, verse 12). The monument also marks the site of the first church in Australia, which was opened on August 25th, 1793.

Johnson was born in Yorkshire in 1753 and after leaving the grammar school at Kingston-upon-Hull, he was engaged in farming and teaching until 1780, when he went to Cambridge. After graduating with a good reputation as a scholar he was ordained by the Bishop of London in 1786. On October 24th, 1786, the year before the First Fleet sailed, Johnson received a royal warrant, appointing him chaplain to the settlement of N.S.W. Johnson is said to have owed his nomination to the Ecclectic Society, a group of Evangelical clergy and laymen interested, among other things, in missions and prison reform.

Johnson himself was a fervent Evangelical. But as Chaplain to the convict settlement he had little encouragement from Governor Arthur Phillip or his successor, Lieutenant-Governor Francis Grose. For the first five years he had no church, being what he himself called a "field preacher", who held services under trees, beside the quiet waters of Sydney Cove or in an open-ended boatshed in Parramatta. Then Johnson set to work with his own hands and built a church big enough to hold 500 people on the site now known as Richard Johnson Square. Johnson was repaid the cost of building the church when the more sympathetic Governor John Hunter arrived in the colony. Johnson also opened a school there for 200 children.

But, even with the encouragement of Hunter, Johnson felt he could not sustain the work. His spirit was broken when "some wicked and dis-

affected persons took advantage of a dark and windy night and set fire to the church". This was on October 1st, 1798, when the church was burned down. In 1800, at the age of 45, Johnson went back to England, leaving the spiritual welfare of the colony to Marsden, who had arrived in 1794 and was stationed at Parramatta. Later Johnson obtained a living in London. He died in England in 1827.

Professor Colin Roderick, in a broadcast talk several years ago, said: "When we look back over the years at the figure of Richard Johnson, preaching manfully, teaching in his school, marrying, baptising and burying, visiting the convicts in their rough huts, digging in his garden, riding his horse along the bush road from Sydney to his farm at Canterbury Vale, he comes to life as a man. And he lives in our minds, in the words of his friend William Wilberforce, as 'one of the worthiest men breathing, the most active and most humble'."

TO THE RIVER - TO THE FOREST - TO KING'S GROVE.

Vincent Saunders.

With the deviation of the route of the original Rocky Point Road at Arncliffe when the present highway came into being in the early eighties, and the Forest Road was extended eastward a short distance from the crest of Cobbler's Pinch (now marked by the intersection of Somerville Street) to link with the new route, it was thought necessary to install a marker stone as a guide to travellers. This historic stone, which unfortunately disappeared in recent years, was inscribed on the side nearest Rocky Point Road: "TO THE RIVER", meaning Georges River at Tom Ugly's Point, whilst the side facing Forest Road was inscribed "TO THE FOREST" (now Hurstville) and "TO KING'S GROVE". It will be noted that the settlement at King's Grove appears to be the only one worthy of notice at this particular period.

It is recorded that a small group of timber-getters in search of timber and firewood in the St. George District (once known as Botany Bay) spread out from Canterbury, and as the more lush areas were cleared a close settlement of agriculturists and brick-makers came into being. This rural area gained the name "King's Grove" after the property so named which was granted by Governor King to Mrs. Hannah Laycock. The best barometer to gauge the progress of any early village is the number of churches, chapels, and inns serving the populace in the area concerned.

In 1841, Thomas Reid advertised for tenders for clearing 200 acres of the original 700 acres belonging to Hannah Laycock. At this time the 200 acres was owned by the trustees of Simeon Lord Estate and was subdivided into forty farms which had much heavy and valuable timber on the estate. The sale was successful, the property selling for £6,000. Thus just preceding the depression of 1842 a whole new class of settlers came to King's Grove, augmenting the congregation attending church services, and swelling the numbers patronising numerous inns in the immediate area. It

may be mentioned that a group of Methodist people had lived about the Moorefield Chapel for many years and that William Lee, one of the leading spirits in the Methodist community, had a grant there as early as 1823. Around Moorefield there were many land grantees.

The earliest church service of which there is any record was conducted in 1841 at Canterbury village by the Methodists (and or Wesleyans) in a temporary chapel in Minter Street, Canterbury, on a half-acre of land purchased from the Sugar Company for £30. It is not certain how long these services were continued.

Moorefield was reported as a preaching place in 1848 or 1849. Services were said to have been held in the residence of Mr. Chard adjoining Evan's "MAN OF KENT" inn. John Chard gave half an acre for a church site in 1850. The conference minutes for 1851 report that a chapel was being built at Moorefield. Mr. Chard provided the bricks and also helped to build the chapel. In 1851 the chapel was a brick structure 18 feet by 25 feet standing in Moorefield Road. The bricks were made on the adjoining land and the timber for the roof and fence cut at the saw-pit of John Lees. The stone for the window-sills and for the stone name-plate was cut by Mr. Sly, a stone-mason of Newtown who was a brother-in-law of Thomas Chard. In 1851 Reverend John Eggleston reported the chapel was in course of erection. In 1860 the building was enlarged, catering for the new settlers to the district.

We find that at least three taverns carried on business in the King's Grove area during the early days of its progress. It is recorded that in 1852 the "ROBIN HOOD AND LITTLE JOHN" was owned by Mr. Stephen Bown at Dumbleton (now Beverly Hills) and in 1854 Mr. Evan Evans established the "MAN OF KENT", a hostelry which adjoined "MOOREFIELD COTTAGE", the Sharp Street residence of Thomas Chard. A third licence was held by Peter Shannon who in 1858 opened the "CURRENCY LASS" at King's Grove. The only other tavern trading in the St. George District at about this period was at Wincanton, the early name for Arncliffe, where "THE BOLD FORESTER" alias "THE YORKSHIREMAN'S COAT OF ARMS", alias "THE SANDS", located at the north-west corner of Wollongong Road and the present Kelsey Street. There was another tavern, known as "Prendergast's", located at the junction apex of Rocky Point Road and Kogarah Road at Kogarah, but unfortunately, precise details of its ownership, or establishment, have so far proved elusive. It is possible that one licensee was named Emerson, a gentleman who subsequently became "mine host" at the "Sea Breeze" Hotel at Tom Ugly's Point.

Apropos publicans, it is interesting to point out that Thomas Kelsey who pioneered the "Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms" in Arncliffe to satisfy timber getters at the time of the economic depression about 1841-42 had previously been a publican of a sort at "Snugborough Park" King's Grove, a property belonging to T. Oakey. After leaving the "Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms" Kelsey took out a publican's licence for the "Canterbury Arms" in 1847 at Canterbury village. Stephen Bown left the Robin Hood Hotel when Cobbler's Pinch had been conquered on Arncliffe Hill in 1865, with the opening up of the new road to Tom Ugly's Point, and took up residence as licensee of the "Gardener's Arms" sited at the junction of Rocky Point Road and Kogarah Road.

So we may see from the above summary that King's Grove was a very important part of the St. George District from the earliest times and we would be forfeiting our trust as writers of local history if we did not pay recognition to Thomas and John Chard, William Lee, the Hancock's, and other early settlers in this short essay. Thomas Chard was a member of the Forest Road Trust, together with Michael Gannon, P.A. Thompson, F. Unwin, amongst others, when Stoney Creek Road joined Forest Road in the route from King's Grove to Bexley in 1849.

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