



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

August, 1972.

Dear Friend and Member,

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

Date: Friday Evening, August 18th, 1972, at 8 p.m.

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

Business: General.

At the conclusion of the Business Mr. Walter Freeman will give an illustrated talk on the "SYDNEY FERRIES" past and present.

Supper Roster: Mesdames McCartney, Captain, Gow, Russell, Deacon, Farrar & Day.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,  
President.  
Phone 587 4555.

Miss J. Noble,  
Secretary.  
Phone 599 4884.

The following Officers were elected for the ensuing 12 months:-

Patrons: Mayor of Rockdale, Ald. R. Rathbone,  
Ald. McCarthy, Mr. R. Stark, Mr. J. Stead.

President: Mr. D. Sinclair.

Senior Vice President: Mr. W. Napper.

Vice Presidents: Mr. W. Foster, Mr. F. Hayman, Miss M. Callister.

Hon. Secretary: Miss J. Noble.

Asst. Hon. Secretary: Mrs. E. Wright.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. V. Smith.

Hon. Auditors: Ald. A. Ford, Miss M. Dunsmore.

Research Officer: Mr. A. Ellis.

Publicity Officer: Mr. V. Saunders.

Ladies Fund Raising Committee: Mesdames Prebble, Gash, Eardley, Stead  
& Otton.

Management Committee: President, Mr. Sinclair; Secretary, Miss Noble;  
Treasurer, Mr. V. Smith; & Messrs. Day, Foster,  
Napper, Hayman, Ellis, Mesdames Prebble, Wright.

Lydham Local Committee: Mr. Sinclair, Miss Noble, Miss Otten.

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Dates to Remember:

Ring Mrs. Eardley, Phone 598078

An Outing is being arranged, for your pleasure, to "YARALLA", the Dame Edith Walker Convalescent Hospital, and also the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, subject to the approval of the General Superintendent. For details, please ring Mrs. Eardley, Phone 598078.

Date: Saturday Afternoon - August 26th. 1972.  
Place: Rockdale Town Hall.  
Time: 1 p.m. Sharp.  
Cost: \$1.20 per person (Adult). (Children half fare).  
Tea, etc., will be provided.

ALL MONIES TO BE PAID BEFORE, OR AT THE MEETING, PRIOR TO OUTING PLEASE.

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Peter Sage Presents - "NORTH WEST AUSTRALIA"

"Darwin to Perth" including Darwin, Katherine Gorge, Ord River Scheme, Broome, Hammersley Ranges, Carnarvon, Geraldton and Perth.

Date: Saturday Night - October 7th. 1972.  
Place: Rockdale Town Hall - Film given by Mr. Peter Sage.  
(By courtesy of the Rockdale Council).  
Time: 8 p.m. Sharp.  
Cost: Adults - 45¢, Children - 25¢ each.  
(A light supper will be served at conclusion of films).

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Date: October 28th. 1972. (Saturday)

There have been many requests for a tour of Hunters Hill, so the above date has been chosen, to coincide, we hope, with the beautiful display of color, as the Jackaranda and Illawarra Flame Trees should be in full flower by then.

As these trips are arranged for your pleasure and enjoyment, we sincerely hope you will support our efforts. Thank you.

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Recent Acquisitions - We would like to say "Thank you" for the following recent acquisitions to "Lydham Hall":-

Mr. Noel Stone,  
Orange Street,  
Hurstville.

Australian Federation Flag, 1901

Depicting the then H.R.H. Duke & Duchess of York. Although slightly the worse for wear, this Flag is an Historic Emblem, and a worthwhile addition to add to our collection at "Lydham Hall".

POSTAL FACILITIES IN THE OLD MUNICIPALITY OF BEXLEY, N.S.W.

F. G. Day.

With the advent of a new post office in Bexley, interest is stimulated in early methods of communication and the development of postal facilities in the old Municipality of Bexley.

Records reveal that postal services are of great antiquity, dating back to the ancient Persians, who employed relays of men and horses to carry messages. The Romans used a similar method and in the 13th century, messengers were employed in England to carry the King's correspondence.

The office of Postmaster of England existed during the reign of Henry VIII. Public agitation led to the establishment of a General Post Office in London in the 17th century.

During the 1800's the postal system was changed and modernised. In 1840, a uniform penny rate for letters up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. in weight was introduced and soon afterwards, postage stamps replaced the system of payment in advance. Eventually telegraph and telephone services became part of the British postal services and a Post Office Savings Bank was instituted.

In 1874, an International Postal Union was established at Berne, which guaranteed rights of mail transit through all countries belonging to the Union.

Australia's postal system began in N.S.W. with the establishment in 1809 of the first post office in Sydney.

Postal facilities in the early days of Bexley were provided by a sub post office in a shop in Forest Rd. approximately opposite the present post office. Mrs. Eliza Pearce was storekeeper and post-mistress from 1888 until 1900, when Mrs. Jessie Clune took over. She was succeeded by Miss Alice McBride, who held the position from 1912 to 1928 in conjunction with her newsagency.

Early records referred to postmen as "letter carriers". Household deliveries were usually made through a small opening in the front door, or pushed under the door, until the Postal Department insisted on letter boxes on front fences or gates. Mail for Bexley Council was left in a box on the back door of the Council Chambers.

In 1909, the postmistress at Carlton was permitted to close at 1 p.m. on Wednesdays for a weekly half-holiday and two years later she was informed that Council would not object if the office was closed at 1 p.m. on Saturdays instead of Wednesdays. Miss McBride then asked if the Bexley office could be closed at 1 p.m. on Saturdays, Council agreed, and post office hours became 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Receptacles for the collection of letters had been placed in some streets, and, to make them more easily identified, uniformity of design was advocated in 1924. These boxes were cleared at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. The Bexley office had an extra clearance at midday.

Complaints were being made to the Postal Department in 1905 about the late delivery of mails and the uncertainty of postal addresses on the Bexley side of the railway line. This culminated in a request either for an extra letter carrier, or that mail be delivered from the Bexley office instead of Rockdale. There were repeated requests for an official Post Office in Bexley, but it was not until 1928 that the building was erected. Council invited the Postmaster General to open the new office, but the Department arranged for him to be represented by Mr. T. J. Ley.

In 1938, when the Department was still using public transport for the movement of mails, the Arncliffe-Bexley bus carried bags of mail, making it necessary for the bus to stop outside the post office at certain times during the day. This custom upset those people who wished to use the space for parking their vehicles and it was the cause of complaints to the Council.

A proposal was made for a right-of-way from Forest Rd. to Albyn St. via the P.M.G. property, but this was not acceded to. In 1935, the Department was asked to put a clock outside the post office, but the request was refused, the reason given being that clocks had not been provided on post offices for many years.

The system of sending outwards telegrams by telephone from Bexley Post Office was changed to Morse in 1930.

As early as 1918, Councils were trying to induce the Government to erect locality signs on post offices. This was done, but for the duration of World War II, all names were removed.

It is recorded that in 1943, a local resident addressed a letter to herself and posted it in a letter box in Bexley. Three weeks later, the letter had not been delivered.

In 1936, the Bexley Citizens League asked for a sub post office at 691 Forest Rd., near Willison Rd. This site was chosen because it was one mile from Bexley Post Office,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Hurstville and  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from Carlton. The P.M.G. agreed to the request and the office was named Bexley South.

A sub post office named "Kingsgrove" was established in 1919 at 175 Stoney Creek Rd. on the Croydon Rd. side of the Kingsgrove Baptist Church. When approval was given in 1940 for an office at Kingsgrove Railway Station, the Postal Department suggested that the name "Kingsgrove" be transferred from the Stoney Creek Rd. office to the proposed office at Kingsgrove. Also that the original Kingsgrove office be renamed "Benhill", other names such as "West Bexley", "Bexley Grove" and "Wolli" having been deemed unsuitable. Two years later this office was transferred to 213 Stoney Creek Rd. and the name was changed from "Benhill" to "Bexley West". The office has since been closed.

In 1941, there was conflict of opinion over the name of the Bexley North Post Office. The Bexley North Progress Association wanted the name changed and suggested "Kyilla" (Aboriginal for north), "Winston" or "Glendale". This brought a request from the Kingsland Rd. - Bexley North P. & C. Association for consideration of a change to be delayed. The P.M.G. was informed by Council that the name would not be changed, but the Department replied that it was opposed to a post office at Bexley North with the name "Bexley" in it. However, two months later, the Department approved the name "Bexley North".

In 1946, the P.M.G. was being urged to expedite the building of a new post office for Carlton.

At the present time, Bexley South, Bexley North and Bardwell Park are satellites of the main Bexley Post Office, but Kingsgrove is a separate office.

The erection of telephone poles took place before the proper alignment of many roads and footpaths. Later on, some of these poles were found to be inconveniently placed. Records of 1903 state that there was a pole in the middle of the footpath in Forest Rd. opposite Harrow Rd., and when Beaconsfield St. was formed as far as Queen Victoria St., a pole in that street was in the centre of the new road.

Although the telephone was not connected to the Bexley office until 1909, there was one in the Council Chambers as early as 1903. About ten years later a request was made for a telephone "bureau" at the corner of Northbrook St. and Queen Victoria St. near the Council Chambers. The P.M.G. consented to the request providing an appropriate person would agree to make up any deficiency in the required revenue, estimated to be 4/9d. (48¢) for the first year.

Fortunately, one of the Aldermen offered to guarantee this sum of money, and in 1915 the bureau was placed in the desired position. After a lapse of many years, a suggestion was made that the phone be moved near a light at the corner of Gladstone St. Council did not object, the phone was moved, and almost immediately a nearby resident complained that its presence caused annoyance and was an invasion of privacy, so back went the phone to its original position.

As early as 1909, local residents were asking for the phone at Carlton Station to be moved to the Carlton post office. Public phones were scarce, but they were gradually being installed in the Municipality, chiefly at the request of Progress Associations.

Although Kogarah Telephone Exchange was converted to semi-automatic in 1926, Council's phone was not changed to automatic until 1935.

The annual review published in 1947, revealed excessive damage to P.M.G. property, causing the Department to request Council to seek the co-operation of the public in reducing this vandalism.

References: Ency. Brittanica; Sands Directories; Minutes of the Borough Council of Bexley, 1900-1906; Minutes of the Council of the Municipality of Bexley, 1907-1948.

THE FAMILY OF THE LATE JOHN AND MARGARETTA CROSBY

16 Ann Street, Arncliffe

Margaretta Crosby was the daughter of a German family who settled at Kangaloon after coming to Australia. John Crosby was born in England and was a carpenter by trade. Six weeks after meeting, Margaretta and John were married and settled at Marrickville. Here, their first daughter, Margaret Louisa, was born in 1886. When she was very young their home was flooded; accordingly, their weatherboard house was moved to 16 Ann Street, Arncliffe. Subsequently, the front portion of the house was covered with stone-work and the rear portion with brick. The house is still occupied and has in recent years been modernised.

John Crosby became a member of the Volunteer Fire Brigade whose headquarters were at Rockdale. In the event of a fire, a bell would be rung at Rockdale and the volunteers would have to make their way there and push the hand reel to the scene of the fire.

About 1888 a second daughter, Violet Isabel, was born at 16 Ann Street, and in 1890 a third daughter, Beatrice Rebecca. Beatrice was baptised at St. Peter's, Cooks River, and probably the two elder girls were also. In 1895 John Crosby died. His widow worked to rear her three young daughters and was successful in paying off the home and also purchasing the next door block (No. 18) and building a house on it. Mrs. Crosby died in 1907.

The three daughters were educated at Arncliffe Public School, as were Margaret's two daughters, Louisa Mildred and Lillian Madge Tattler, also the third generation in Malcolm Thomson, son of Lillian Madge. Miss Bingham, a well-known Arncliffe identity taught the three Crosby girls, as well as Mildred and Lillian Madge Tattler. Miss Bingham had a withered hand which she concealed under an apron she always wore.

The eldest Crosby daughter, Margaret Louisa, married Alfred Tattler, son of Samuel and Margaret Tattler (nee Margaret Beehag). The Alfred Tattlers lived on at 16 Ann Street after Mrs. Crosby's death. It was from here that Mildred became Mrs. George Dagg of the South Coast and Lillian Madge, Mrs. Thomson of Rockdale. Mr. Alfred Tattler was at one time employed at Napper's Produce Store, Rockdale, and also at Draper's Nursery (Mrs. Draper being his sister, the former Eliza Tattler). Mr. Alfred Tattler died in 1946 and his wife in 1957 while still living at 16 Ann Street.

The second daughter, Violet Crosby, became Mrs. Frederick Ohlback of Frederick Street, Rockdale. Their son, Noel Ohlback, lives at Kingsgrove, and their daughter, Patricia, now Mrs. William Sedgewick, at Lilli Pilli. Violet Ohlback died in 1957.

Beatrice Crosby married Mr. Norman B. Gordon in 1911 at the Hurstville Presbyterian Manse, then situated in Belmore Road (now King George's Road) opposite Arrowsmith Park. Mr. Gordon was a railway employee and met his future wife when he opened the gates at the pedestrian crossing at Arncliffe, she being then 15 and he 17. There are two daughters of this marriage, Sylvia (now Mrs. Sidney Pickard, Kogarah) and Jean (now Mrs. John Dettman, Pymble).



(Sylvia Pickard (nee Gordon) was one of the first pupils at Carlton South Public School when it opened in 1923 and became the first dux of that school).

Mr. Gordon was born at Bourke, the son of a jackeroo, but came to the St. George district at an early age and attended Dumbleton School (now Kingsgrove) and Kogarah School. He was a fellow pupil at Kogarah of Mr. Peter Depena who was later an alderman of Rockdale Council for many years. After being stationed at Arncliffe, Rockdale and Hurstville stations, Mr. Gordon graduated to head office and at the time of his death in 1952, after almost fifty years' service, was Assistant Revenue Auditor in the Statistical Section.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon first lived at Taunton Road, Hurstville, then at Hampton Court Road, Carlton, where their two daughters, Sylvia and Jean, were born. In 1939, they moved to Hillpine Avenue, Kogarah, where Mrs. Gordon resided until her death on August 4th 1970. Mr. Gordon died in 1952 and a few years later, Mrs. Gordon remarried a Mr. John Carse who predeceased her.

(Mr. and Mrs. Gordon and family were well-known members of the Kogarah Presbyterian Church, Mr. Gordon being treasurer at the time of his death and Mrs. Carse (Gordon) a member for fifty years).

This information has been supplied to Mrs. F. Hayman by Mrs. S. Pickard, with the assistance of descendants of John and Margaretta Crosby's two elder daughters.