



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

September 1972.

Dear Friend and Member,

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

Date: Friday Evening, September 15th, 1972, at 8 p.m.

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

Business: General.

At the conclusion of the business, Mr. & Mrs. F.A. Day, Members of our Society, will take us on a journey through Europe & Asia, per medium of slides taken on their overseas trip.

Supper Roster:

Mesdames Wright, Captain; Tournay, Wilding, I. Smith, Waddington, Johnson.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,

President.

Phone 587.4555.

Miss J. Noble,

Secretary.

Phone 599.4884.

Mr. A. Ellis.

Research Officer.

Phone 587.1159.

Bulletin Editor & Social Secretary,

Mrs. E. Eardley.

Phone 59.8078..

Dates to Remember.

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 (Council Chamber). (By courtesy of the Rockdale Council).
Time. 8 p.m. Sharp.
Cost. Adults - 45¢, Children - 25¢ each.
(A light supper will be served at the conclusion of films).

Date. October 28th, 1972. Please ring Mrs. Eardley - 59.8078.

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 colour, as the Jacaranda and Illawarra Flame Trees should be in full flower at that time.

Place. Rockdale Town Hall.
Time. Leaving 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.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS -

We would like to say "Thankyou" for the following recent acquisitions to "Lydham Hall".

Mrs. N. Ingram, 28 Gladstone St., Bexley.	Glass Case containing Medals, Badges, etc. mementos of First World War, (belonging to her late husband), also souvenir globe from the last Steam Tram to run from Kogarah to Sans Souci, and a piece of coal used as fuel for the trams.
---	--

The late Miss Irene Hart, Walter Street, Arncliffe.	Box of Underwear worn by her mother, Mrs. Hart.
---	--

Mr. Jack Chignell, 15 Walmer Street, Ramsgate.	Small glazed china dish with lid, which belonged to the late Mrs. Smith, of Arncliffe, Great Grandmother of Mr. Jack Chignell.
--	--

FROG HOLLOW

ROCKDALE 70 YEARS AGO.

(Extract from old copy of 'Propeller')

This account of the early history of Rockdale deals with the period over 70 years ago, when a fine orchard flourished where the Town Hall now rears its proportions; from the Grand Hotel to Bay Street was called "Frog Hollow", and the oldest blackfellow at Sans Souci was named Jimmy Lownes.

Our historian, Mr. Joseph Bowmer, is 89 years of age, but has a memory like that of a schoolboy. He is not so old, except in years - his mental outlook is surprisingly modern. He says:

I will start at Wickham Street, Arncliffe, near the Public School, which is on the Terry Estate. On the southern side of what is now called Princes Highway (late Rocky Point Road), stretched the Terry Estate, except for Mrs. Vincent's property at the corner of Spring Street and Rocky Point Road. Opposite Vincent's lived the large Lawrence family, their land finishing at the Free Church. Next was Mr. Lauson's orchard. Mr. Iliffe had a large nursery, followed (as we pass to Rockdale), by Frank's beautiful orchard, where the present Town Hall stands. Another orchard extended to the hotel site, and was owned and worked by Mr. William Bray.

From Bray's Lane to Bay Street was called "Frog Hollow", as it nearly always was full of water and frogs, and eels used to be caught there.

A gentleman named Campbell owned from Chapel Lane to the old fire station; then came John Andrew's property. His wife had the first drapery shop here, while he conducted a denominational school next door.

From there to the stormwater channel was Mr. Sam Schofield's - an orchard and vegetable garden extending as far as the present-day Ashton Street. His brother had an orchard and garden to Beach Street; and a Mr. Podmore owned from this point to the site of Moorefield racecourse.

Mr. Bowmer then gives us details of the properties on the western side of Rocky Point Road.

The hotel at Arncliffe was kept by a Mrs. Clune, and had a large area of land attached. Sheath's land came next, and the next again extended to where Rickett and Thorpe's factory is - a vegetable garden belonging to Mr. Touchell. On the adjoining property the first Rockdale shop was erected - a general store run by Mr. Moss, who had a vegetable garden around it, and looked after both personally. Then came Soden's orchard; and Humphrey's property reached to the corner of Tramway Arcade, and the main road. Here Rockdale's second general store opened by Mr. Yeoman Geeves, who also conducted the post office.

The story then tells how Rockdale came to be so-called (see Mr. Fred Geeves' reminiscences in our last issue).

Continuing, Mr. Bowmer says a Mr. Waltz owned the next block as far as Napper's store; and the ambulance station site belonged to Mr. Fred Barden. This gentleman owned a vegetable garden and slaughterhouse here, and a butcher's shop at Cook's River. Then came Skidmore's land - he and his sons gardened, and also carted wood to the city. The bridge over the watercourse was known as "Skidmore's Bridge".

One of the pioneers, Mr. James Beehag, owned from Rocky Point Road down Bay Street to what is now James Street, where the hospital stands, and his area took in the swamp land, now Draper's nursery. He had four boys and two girls and divided the property between them, reserving portion as a gift to the Methodist Church, in Bay Street.

On the west side of West Botany Street a Mr. Warren had a large market garden, and the next again was Mr. Chas. Napper's; then Wilson's garden; and at the rear of this Mr. John Bowmer, Snr., tilled a market garden. From there on to Bestic Street belonged to Mr. Foulks, who gave portion to the West Botany Methodist Church. Following this was Wilmott's, then Mr. William Beehag's farm, while Mr. James Beehag owned from Bay Street to March Street.

The other side of March Street was a bullock paddock owned by Mr. McGuinness, who also conducted the hotel at Cooks River. The next settler was Mr. Lankom; then Mr. Terry, as far as Spring Street; from here to Tabrett Street was William Beehag's; to Bestic Street, Mr. Godfrey's; to Bryant Street, Mr. Foulks'; and from Bryant Street to Bay Street, Mr. James Quirk. All were market gardens and orchards.

Rockdale Park is part of the old Quirk's Estate.

The only outlet from the beach was Bay Street. At Rocky Point Road end, a cliff of rocks blocked the way, so a track was used through private land. Mr. Saywell cut through this cliff for his tram line.

The only private property on the beach was where the Brighton Hotel stands, and it was owned by Mr. Hook, who had slaughter-houses at Marrickville, a slaughter-house where Sydenham station now is; and butcheries in the city.

The bush from Cook's River to Ramsgate was called "No-man's land" and firewood could be cut without licence, and sold. Barton Park was a swamp, partly covered with ti-tree and swamp oak.

It was a great place for snakes, and there were ducks, snipe, plovers, and curlews for the sportsman. A colony of flying-foxes lived here.

The largest tree in Rockdale was blackbutt, on Godfrey's property, known as Avenal Estate. It was 200 feet high. Mr. Godfrey had it felled, used the top as firewood for his boiling-down works, and had the barrel blasted asunder with "black-jack" for posts and rails. A photo of the old stump may be seen at Mr. F. Beehag's office.

In these days there was no gas, and no laid-on water this side of Cooks River.

Blacks' camps existed at Blakehurst and Sans Souci. They were later moved to La Perouse. Jimmy Lownes was the oldest aborigine at Sans Souci, and the boys of the village used to enjoy visiting him.

Mr. Joe Bowmer's father came to Australia from England in 1853. He was in the formation of West Botany Municipal district, and was elected alderman in 1875. He was Mayor for 1877, and the six years following. In 1885 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace. At the Wesleyan Church was a frequent preacher. He had 10 children.

A LISTING OF THE PIONEERS OF THE WEST BOTANY AREA.

Compiled by James Beehag, Junior. C. 1870.

Through the courtesy of the late Mrs. Beaman of Bexley, we have been given access to a diary compiled by her brother, the late James Beehag, about the 1890 period, in which is a listing of the pioneer families associated with the early rural settlement of the arable lands bordering Muddy Creek and Pat Moore's Swamp. It may be noticed that the list has been compiled more or less at random as there are several notable omissions. However, the nomenclature relating to the early residential families is of great interest and should prove invaluable to the members of the St. George Historical Society who are carrying out local research of the Rockdale area at large.

The list is as follows:- Messrs. Beehag, Tatler (Senior), Humphrey, Francks, Jane. Warren, Moid. C. Napper (Senior), J. Bowmer, Pittman, Quirk, Hindmarsh, Lambert, Wilmot, Cunningham, Trigger, Godfrey, Henneman, Spring, Oxley, Flecks, Eve Sutton, Beehag, Langhorn, Bray, Sturgeon. Witton. Goode (Senior). Vincent. Lawrence. Malhausen. Herman Iliffe, Francks (Senior), Schofield, Twiss, Mascord, Ritter, Winter, Canham, Cooke, Bergopher, Clarke, Heinbuckle, Martin, Campbell, Perigo, Morse, Wilson, Andrews, Slinn, Frances.

(The occupation of these pioneers consisted of market gardeners, nurserymen, poultry farmers, orchardists, and wood carters.)

STREET NAMES IN THE OLD MUNICIPALITY OF BEXLEY, N.S.W.

Many changes of name occurred during the life of Bexley as a separate Municipality (1900-1948). The following is believed to be a complete list.

<u>Present Name</u>	<u>Original Name</u>	<u>Approx. year of change.</u>
Paine Street	Gladstone St. (W. Kogarah)	1903
Godwin Street	Bayview Road	1904
Progress Avenue	Seaforth Street North	1912
Watkin Street	Bay Street (Bexley)	1912
Park Avenue	Progress Avenue	1913
Kitchener Street	Bismarck Street	1914
Willison Road	Webber's Road	1915
Verdun Street	Ocean Street	1916
Kitchener Street	Derby Street	1916
Edgehill Street	West Street	1916
Haig Street	Victoria Street	1917
Donnan Street	Park Road	1918
Seaforth Street	Seaforth Street South	1920
Paine Street	Kitchener St. (Paine St. -Q. Victoria St.)	1926
Wood Street	Forest St.	1929
Kookooburra Street	Elsie Street	1929
Kingsgrove Avenue	Kookooburra Street	1929
*Preddey's Road	New Illawarra Road (Part)	1932
Bexley Road	Lloyd Street (Part)	1932
Kingsgrove Road	Croydon Road (Part)	1941
Bexley Road	Kingsland Road (Part)	1941
Bexley Road	New Illawarra Road (Part)	1941
Slade Road	Tempe Road	1942
Kenyon Road	Berryman Road	1942
Nairn Street	Wolli Street (Part)	1947
Beaumont Street	Staples Street (Part)	1947
Bennett Street	Elizabeth Lane	1947

* Preddeys' Road was numbered years earlier than New Illawarra Road and inadvertently included the first section of the latter on the other side of Stoney Creek Road. When New Illawarra Road was numbered, it was found to be more logical to change the name of the already numbered part.

References: Minutes of the Borough Council of Bexley 1900-1906
 Minutes of the Council of Municipality of Bexley 1907-1948.
 A.F. Day..