



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

October, 1972.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular monthly meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, October 20th, 1972 at 8 p.m.
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
Business: General.
Syllabus Item: Address on Civil Defence by Alderman H. E. Kibbey, to be illustrated by Mr. Dick Slough.

Questions invited at conclusion of address.

Supper Roster: Mrs. Prebble, Captain, and Mesdames Smith, Longhurst, Samuelson, O'Shea, Gillard.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,
President.
Phone 587.4555.

Mr. A. Ellis,
Research Officer.
Phone 587.1159.

Miss J. Noble.
Secretary.
Phone 599.4884.

Editor and Social Secretary.

Mrs. E. Eardley.
Phone 59.8078.

Date: 28th October, 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 "Thank You" for the following recent acquisitions to "Lydham Hall".

Mr. A.K. Chatto, 44 Fleet Street, Carlton.	Old Earthenware Salt Jar. Old Earthenware Bread Crock. Artisans Table made out of Cast Iron.
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Mrs. A. Cuddy, Waratah Street, Bexley.	Personal Effects, and Papers belonging to the late Sir Elliot Lewis, Speaker of the House of Representatives - 1922 - 1928; also local Member for Lang, which covered the greater part of the St. George District - 1903-1928. Sir Elliot Lewis who was a Scene Painter by profession, painted the 'Backdrops' of the original Rockdale Town Hall, of which Council still retain the sketches.
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XMAS HAMPER: The Lydham Hall Ladies Committee are arranging a
Hamper for the December Meeting, and would appreciate
donations of packet or tinned foods (inexpensive) to help
to stock the Hamper. Thank you, Members.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE SCOUTING MOVEMENT AT ROCKDALE.

A. H. Matheson.

The Boy Scout Movement in the Rockdale or Ramsgate District began when three young men decided to form a Patrol independently. Two of the beginners came from Rockdale, and one from Ramsgate, their names being - A. W. Matheson (Bert), and E. W. Hill (Ern) from Rockdale, and C. S. Smith (Claude) from Ramsgate. They started on their own about July or August, 1908, and, as far as I can gather, they were the second earliest Patrol to be formed in New South Wales.

These three young men carried on for a while on their own, then they decided to form the 1st St. George Troop and their meeting place was at the home of Patrol Leader Matheson.

After some discussion it was decided to promote Patrol Leader Matheson to Troop Leader, Scout R. R. (Roy) Springall to Patrol Leader of the "Curlew Patrol", Ern Hill was elected Patrol Leader of the "Wombat Patrol", and Claude Smith Patrol Leader of the "Emu Patrol". All Patrols were given the name of an Australian animal or bird, which enabled them to identify themselves, and on the Totem Staff, together with the base colour they had decided on, was a representation of the bird or animal they had chosen for their Troop Badge.

The first Camp they held was at a place called "The Bonnet" on the Woronora River. The spot they chose was flat, which enabled the Scouts to pitch their tent, and allowed them to carry out their many exercises, such as signalling and tent pitching, amongst others. The lads looked forward to Camp Life, and great was the excitement as they caught the train to Como on the Saturday before "8 Hours Day". Here they detrained, then tramped over the hill to their camping site, pitched the tents, and leaving some of the Scouts to mind their Packs etc., a few of the lads went back to the Store near Como Railway Station to purchase the necessary provisions, mainly bread and tinned foods as, at the time, there were no utensils available for cooking. The Shopkeeper obliged with a couple of empty fruit cases for the goodies, and the boys were very happy as they set off once more for the Camp site.

There were always unrehearsed incidents which caused lots of fun and laughter, and after an enjoyable three days the boys packed up and wended their way home, much the better for the Camp.

In 1909 some City business men, who were interested in the Scout Movement, formed a Committee and they met on the first Wednesday in each month at the Royal Naval House in Grosvenor Street, Sydney. Due to these men, Scouting was put on a business footing, the Metropolitan Area was divided into Districts, the St. George Area was numbered 12, and the Hurstville Area numbered 13.

On September 2nd, they held a United Parade at Earlwood on the Cook's River where there was sufficient ground to accommodate them. About 200 Scouts turned up for the day, and a very full programme was extremely well carried out, the Scouts entering with a true Scouting Spirit.

I might make mention that some of the Scouts formed a Bicycle Patrol. As the numbers increased it became necessary to find a suitable

Meeting Place, and for the princely sum of 2/6d. (25 cents) - (a lot of money in those days), we rented a loft at the back of the Civil Service Stores in Bay Street, Rockdale.

We were fortunate in getting suitable timber at a cut rate from W. Burns, a local Timber Merchant, and with several "Saturday Afternoon Working Bees", tables and forms were constructed. These were necessary when the Scouts were attending Lectures kindly given by people whom we were able to "persuade" to help the cause by Lecturing on:- First Aid, Signalling, Knot-tying, Splicing, and other matters which would prove useful as the boys grew up.

As boys in the district found that their mates had joined the Scouts they too joined, and the Troop grew out of all proportions. At this time some of our older friends offered to help, and this they did by becoming Scout Masters. Mr. Wilcox, The Glen Road, Arncliffe, offered to form a Troop to be known as 1st Arncliffe, and Mr. Walters of Bexley, a returned man from the South African War, formed the 1st Bexley Troop. This took eight Patrols away from the 1st St. George Troop. In 1911 the headquarters of the Scout Movement decided to hold a Monster Parade in Centennial Park on a Saturday afternoon, - Markers to come from all Districts, to report at 1.30 p.m., the main body of Scouts to be on parade at 1.45 p.m. Approximately 1,500 Scouts turned out on Parade. It was a fine day, and, supported by their Parents and Friends, it looked good.

The President of Headquarters took the Salute as all Districts, led by Buglers and the Mouth Organ Band, marched past.

This was the biggest Parade in the history of "The Boy Scouts."

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Addendum to "Postal Facilities in the Old Municipality of Bexley, N.S.W."

July, 1972 Bulletin.

The new Post Office in Forest Road, Bexley, was officially opened by Sir Alan Hulme, Postmaster General, in the afternoon of Monday, 11th September, 1972.

F.G.D.

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Addenda to "Street Names in the Old Municipality of Bexley, N.S.W."

September, 1972 Bulletin.

- (1) The heading "Present Name" applies to Progress Avenue only from 1912 to 1913, when the name of the street was finally changed to Park Avenue.
- (2) Under the three headings add as follows:-

<u>Present Name.</u>	<u>Original Name.</u>	<u>Approx. year of change.</u>
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* Valda Street	* Minorca St.	+ 1936
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* Information supplied by Mr. J. Faulkner (Member).

+ From Gregory's Guides & Maps Pty. Ltd.

A.F.D. 22.9.1972.

BUSH CRAFT. BARK HUT CONSTRUCTION.

Gifford and Eileen Eardley.

In the early days of the settlement of New South Wales, especially in remote country districts, it was customary for the pioneer settlers to erect temporary residences, and even shops and schools, from local bush timber, the roof and walls being covered with sections of bark cut in large pieces from the trunks of stringy-bark gum-trees. The segment was marked on the tree for length, and then cuts were made with a sharp axe around the trunk at the top and bottom levels of the required sheet. The vertical splitting cut was then made in a series of criss-cross cuts, an axe blade in width, hacked along the centre line. The bark sheet was then pushed away from the trunk, where it resumed its former circular pattern. The loose bark from the sheet was scraped off and used to light a small fire, over which the curled sheet was placed in a vertical fashion to serve as a chimney, a process which dried the sap out of the bark. In its heated condition the bark tube was carefully unrolled and laid along the ground, being kept flat by logs and heavy stones used as weights. It was thus kept flat for several weeks and was then ready for use.

The flat sheets were fastened by fencing wire to the wall joists and roof purlins, but often the roof sheets were held in place by a cross arrangement of poles suspended from the roof-tree, the weight and rigidity of the poles usually being sufficient to keep the bark sheets in tight water-proof layers. Window openings, often without glazing, were closed with hinged, or sometimes sliding, shutters. The doorway invariably reached upwards to the roof timber supporting the eaves, a leather hinged door keeping out intruders, particularly the pigs, and the night air. All in all the bark-built buildings, with their hard-packed earthen floor, looked attractive and homely.

The "outside" chimney, sometimes built of random stone rubble, but, quite often, with bark sheets placed within an outer framework of poles which tapered inwards towards the top smoke outlet. It was always necessary to take precautions against the latter type catching fire from embers of the open grate. The blazing fire was often the only means of illumination of a night and also gave warmth to the household when the outside world was freezingly cold. The "Loo" was also constructed of bark sheets and, in one particular instance, the gabled roof was formed from a single sheet, bent over the ridge-pole, and tied with the ever useful wire at the eaves. A delightful piece of functional architecture.

Household furniture was, with few exceptions, of primitive but robust design, and sometimes a single sheet of bark, supported at the ends by short poles sunk into the ground, served as a table. Shelves were likewise provided by narrow sheets of bark resting on pegs driven into the wall uprights. The ever handy bark-sheets were also utilised to form beds for the household, the sheets being supported by a framework of side and end poles resting above four short formed poles sunk firmly into the ground to give stability.

With the arrival of the inevitable four-gallon capacity kerosene tins and the installation of oil and hurricane lamps, a new and handy building material came to hand. The tins were cut open and flattened to provide an inner "fire-proof" lining to the hearth fire-side, or to

provide, in bent fashion, a semi-circular shaped "bonnet" at the top of the chimney flue to keep out the rain. The tins, cut in half, provided the ever needful bucket for washing and carrying household water supplies either from the nearby well or the adjacent creek.

The authors are indebted to Mr. V. (Mac) Armstrong of Bowral, for kindly supplying much of the information relating to the preparation of the bark sheets for household and other purposes.

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THE DERIVATION OF THE PLACENAME "HURST".

Gifford Eardley.

It is of interest to note the prevalence of the word "Hurst" in place names relating to suburbs, streets and residences, of the St. George District. Hurst is derived from the old English Hyrst, meaning simply a wooded hill, and the word is often found in the nomenclature of south-east England, particularly in the beauteous county of Kent.

In the southern part of St. George we have the suburbs of Blakehurst, Hurstville, Peakhurst and Penshurst. According to the late Mr. Wenholm, one time editor of the local newspaper named as "THE PROPELLOR" this suburban nomenclature was bestowed, by whom we know not, to mark the name of the regular visiting clergyman, the Reverend Hurst, from the Wesleyan Church at Tempe Park, to the bushland outposts of his circuit. It is obvious that Blakehurst and Peakhurst were incorporated, insofar as Hurst was concerned, with the surnames of early residents of these particular districts.

Then come Planthurst Road at Allawah, Brocklehurst Lane at Kingsgrove, and Parkhurst Avenue at Revesby, with Hawkhurst Street in Marrickville. Further afield, possibly well away from the influence of the Reverend Hurst, we find Darlinghurst and Normanhurst as suburbs, with Buckhurst Avenue at Point Piper, and Fernhurst Avenue at Cremorne. Amongst the housenames in our local St. George area are to be found "Lyndhurst", "Burrenhurst", and Wakehurst". It will be noticed that some names relate either to plants or animals of the "wooded hill", the word "brock", for instance, relates to the old-time name for the English badger, and of course "buck" is the common name for a male deer. The spelling of Hirst Street, at Arncliffe, substitutes the letter "i" for the original English "y", but otherwise the name is apt, as it too, was tucked away beneath the eastern lee of a once densely wooded hill which later became known, according to the estate agents at least, as Waltara Heights.

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