



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.
November, 1972.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular monthly meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, November 17th, 1972, at 8 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. & Mrs. W. Foster, Members of our Society, have kindly offered to show slides of their recent West Australian Trip. Questions invited at conclusion of showing.

Supper Roster: Mesdames Eardley, Chase, O'Meara, Tilbrook, Gash and Stead.

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.

Editor & Social Secretary,

Mrs. E. Eardley,

Phone 59.8078.

Suggestion? It has been suggested that the Members make a tour of our lovely old Churches and Cathedrals in the City and its environs early in the New Year. A Coach could be chartered if sufficient Members were interested. Does this interest you?

Please let me know soon so that arrangements can be made for a Saturday afternoon.

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

Mrs. Adams, 38 Ercildoune Ave., Kogarah.	Emerald Green Satin Half Petticoat with pleated flounce. More than 100 years old. In excellent condition and originally came from England.
--	--

Mrs. Beale, 20 Ferrier St., Rockdale.	ON LOAN. Cedar Wardrobe with mirror, 120 years old.
---	---

Mrs. Beckinsale, Villiers Street, Rockdale.	Washstand Jug & Basin. Circa 1890.
---	------------------------------------

SOCIETY BOOKS & BADGES MAY BE HAD FROM THE SECRETARY

The third book written by Gifford Eardley, a Past President of our Society, has just been published and deals with the railways and industrial empire of the late John Brown, the "Coal Baron" of Newcastle, New South Wales. The book is profusely illustrated and may be obtained at Swain's Bookshop, No. 330 George Street, Sydney.

APPRECIATION. The Lydham Hall Ladies Committee would like to say "Thankyou" and to express their appreciation, first to the Rockdale Council for making available the Council Chamber, and to Alderman Kibbey and Mr. Ian Walker for their presentation of an Illustrated Address on "Emergency Service and Civil Defence", followed by a graphic film titled: "A Lady Called Camille".

Contrary to the consensus of opinion, this address was, to say the least, topical and most interesting and enlightening, more so in these days when disaster strikes quickly, and in so many different ways, perhaps the most imminent being: Bush Fires, Floods, and the dreaded Air Crashes. "To see would be to believe", the way the Emergency Service and Civil Defence are ready for instant action.

News Items.

I am sorry to say that the President, Mr. Don Sinclair, has been in Hospital, but we sincerely hope that by the time this Bulletin is distributed amongst our Members he will be well on the road to recovery. Best wishes from all Don, and we hope to see you back amongst us soon.

Also our Immediate Past President, Mr. Jack Stead, has been ill, to him we wish a speedy recovery, and hope to see him back again soon.

The Ladies Lydham Hall Fund Raising Committee wish to thank Mr. Peter Sage who kindly presented such excellent slides and commentary on "North Western Australia", and a big "Thank you" to the Members and their Friends who supported - what we hope was to you, a most enjoyable and entertaining evening.

All being well, and by courtesy of the Rockdale Council, Mr. Peter Sage has kindly offered to give another film evening, this time he will take us to Africa. This will be on Saturday Evening, March 3rd, 1973, of which more anon.

For our "Christmas Get-together" there will be a very brief meeting, to be followed by Movie Films with commentary by courtesy of the Rural Bank. A "Christmas Hamper" will be an attractive prize for the Raffle, together with a most unusual attractive "Waste Paper Container" made and kindly donated by Mr. F. Hayman. Thank you Mr. Hayman.

Concerning the Supper Roster. Are there any Ladies who would be prepared to help, but have not given their names to the Social Secretary? and are there any Ladies who would like to be grouped together on the Roster? If so, will you please let me know at our next meeting.

Xmas Hamper. The Lydham Hall Ladies Committee are arranging a Hamper for the December Meeting, and would appreciate donations of inexpensive packed or tinned foods to help stock the Hamper. Thank you Members.

CORRECTION

11 Mimosa Street,
Bexley. 2207.
16th October, 1972.

Dear Mrs. Eardley,

May I respectfully draw your attention to an error which appears in the Society's Newsletter for this month under the Recent Acquisitions for Lydham Hall.

In respect to the gift by Mrs. Cuddy of Waratah Street, Bexley, I would advise that the gentleman in question was the Hon. Sir William Elliott Johnson, K.C.M.G., M.P., Speaker of the House of Representatives from 9th July, 1913 to 7th October, 1914, and from 14th June, 1917 to 27th February, 1923. He served as a Member of the House of Representatives from 16th December, 1903 to 17th November, 1928. Only three New South Welshmen have held the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives, Sir Elliott Johnson being the first; the other two, the Hon. J.S. Rosevear, M.P., and the present holder, the Hon. Sir William Aston, K.C.M.G., M.P.

During my term as an Alderman of the Rockdale Council, it was my privilege to present to the Council on behalf of Mrs. Cuddy's Mother, the two sketches for the original Town Hall Backdrops which you mentioned in the article. At the time, I did some research on the career of Sir Elliott Johnson, and discovered that his father was the Senior Scenery Painter for Covent Garden Opera House, and that Sir Elliott served under him for some time, prior to going to sea, where he took out his 1st Engineer's Ticket. It was not long after his decision to settle in Australia that he was approached to stand for Parliament.

There are in the possession of the Federal Parliamentary Library a set of 4 water colours by Sir Elliott Johnson depicting the first surveys and foundation diggings for the present Parliament House. To my knowledge these 4 sketches together with the two held by Rockdale Council are the only specimens of his work in existence.

I trust that this information will be of assistance to your Committee.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) Miss W. Christison.

Editor's note:

I wish to thank Miss Christison for this information and correction.

E. Eardley.

On Saturday October 28th, 1972, a full coach of Members and Friends made a tour of the ever popular and beautiful Hunters Hill. The weather was not what we ordered, nevertheless all enjoyed a very pleasant happy afternoon, even though in the confines of the Coach most of the time.

Our very pleasant and co-operative driver, Bede Daley, as usual, provided afternoon tea which was partaken of in the shelter of Valencia Street Wharf. A fuller account of the tour will appear in a later edition.

SAMUEL SCHOFIELD. A PIONEER OF ROCKDALE. N.S.W.

Gifford and Eileen Eardley.

Joseph Schofield was born in Derbyshire, England, in June 1791, and in due course married Sarah Shaw. This couple had two children, the eldest named Elizabeth, who was born about 1825, and then came Samuel who arrived on September 25th, 1831. By all accounts Samuel was born at Ashton-on-the-Line, a suburb of Manchester. In his very early teens he was chaperoned by a relation and came to Sydney about the eighteen-forties, being provided with a small sum of money for his sustenance. He, amongst thousands of others, was smitten with the desire to make his fortune on the gold fields and to this end he wended his way to New Zealand where he became closely associated with a Maori tribe while fossicking for alluvial gold in the wild mountain valleys of that lovely land. Then came a visit to California to join in the gold rush, where still the yellow wealth eluded him. Apparently law was not respected in the "Far West" because he related how some of the miners, just for fun, would delight in shooting a few "Yellow-bellies", a nickname by which the industrious Chinese on the diggings were known. Samuel Schofield was aghast at such inhumanity, and was instrumental in forming a "Vigilant Committee" to enforce some semblance of law and order amongst the more disorderly members of the mining community. His cultural instincts must have been outstanding as he could recite, so it has been said, "Shakespeare from cover to cover".

A return journey was made to Australia where he became involved in the frantic search for alluvial gold in and around the Victorian diggings at Sandhurst, a town later named Bendigo. Here again the "Goddess Luck" avoided him, a circumstance which brought him to the Central West of New South Wales, where he became interested in the creek beds around Hargreaves, still without any degree of success. It is believed that he had the dubious privilege of being bailed up by bushrangers in the course of a journey across the Blue Mountains.

After all these interesting but somewhat fruitless experiences Samuel Schofield decided to settle at a then newly opened area at Rocky Point, south of Sydney, where he obtained a large rectangular shaped block of arable land located on the south-eastern side of Rocky Point Road, adjacent to and south of Muddy Creek at Skidmore's Bridge. From the meagre evidence available it would appear that he came to what is now known as Rockdale either in the late eighteen-fifties or early eighteen-sixties. The eastern boundary of the property adjoined that which came into the possession of Thomas Mascord, with whom he was on cordial terms, being interested in cricket, and also in Catherine Mascord, the lass from next door, whom he subsequently married.

Now came a large family of your Schofields, six boys and four girls, Their birthdays escape us but the eldest was named John, and the youngest was Lucy. Those ranged in between comprised, in no particular order, Oliver, Elizabeth (who married Harry Sydney Mitchell), Samuel, Sarah, Kate, Thomas, Joseph and James. The family were all long lived, but Thomas let the side down by dying at the early age of seventy-six, the others passed away in their eighties and nineties.

Thomas was a master axeman and spent much time in the Comboyne District where he was engaged in sleeper cutting and timber getting in the dense coastal forests. Oliver went to Fiji as an overseer for the Colonial Sugar Company. Samuel had a citrus orchard at Ourimbah for at least twenty years, and then farmed in the Wilberforce area, and later at Pitt Town. Sarah married Ephriam Arnold, a carrier of Mitchell Street, Kogarah (now re-named as Baxter Avenue). Kate married Lyal Edge, a timber cutter, and lived at Taree. The eldest son, John, became a locomotive driver and eventually reached the "Top-link class", when he handled the more important express trains running on the New South Wales Government Railways. He was chosen to instruct the drivers of the electric trains which first came into operation about 1924. Joseph and James were farmers at Wyong Creek, working a property which had been purchased by their father, after the sale of the latter gentleman's vegetable farm at Rockdale. The Wyong Creek farm was planted with citrus trees and the two men found additional employment locally on a seasonal basis. One of their major troubles was the almost constant recurrence of the floodings of the adjacent Wyong Creek. The youngest girl of the Schofield family, Lucy, married Ellis Upton of Gibbes Street, Rockdale.

Reverting to the affairs of the Muddy Creek property of Samuel Schofield (Senior) we find that a large vegetable garden was cultivated in the northern part of the enclosed land, whilst the southern higher portion was devoted to grazing cattle and horses. An area on the eastern side was set with fruit trees, where the stone fruits in particular found high favour with the buyers, and augmented the income so necessary to support the large family of children. Good crops of pears, peaches, nectarines, quinces, and large "Blood" plums were raised and packed for market. One of the attractive features of this pleasant Rockdale farmland was the presence of a number of gaudy peacocks, and their sombre coloured peahens, which made the mornings resound with the sharp toned and somewhat unmelodious screechings. The produce of garden and orchard was taken along the Rocky Point Road by dray to the Sydney markets, the horses being watered en route at the horses pond, now the ornamental water, in Victoria Park at Broadway.

Details of the original residence are not available but it is thought that as the family's fortune increased, a second house, named "Ashtonville" by Samuel Schofield in nostalgic memory of his birthplace in England, was built from locally made bricks, possibly obtained from the old established brickyard which once functioned at the northern end of the adjacent Mascord property. This building, which still stands as No. 646 Princes Highway at July 1970, was double-fronted, with a centrally placed main entrance hall, from which the four main rooms and a parlour were entered. There was a lean-to aside the rear verandah, and by all accounts there was a separate kitchen and a dairy located near and at the rear of the main house. Judging by the cast-iron lace adornment, together with the cast-iron verandah pillars and the alternate red and white painted sheets of galvanised iron forming the roof of the front verandah, the house would possibly date from the late eighteen-seventies. The main roof was of galvanised iron and had end brick gables, which were carried above roof level in the Scottish and Irish building fashion. At the rear of the house a tall Bangalow Palm waved its delicate fronds in every breeze that blew.

It may be mentioned that the now stormwater channelled Muddy Creek, an unbeautified brick drain, was originally deep enough and wide enough to permit the passage of rowing boats along its length to the Skidmore property slightly west of Skidmore's Bridge. The overgrown grassy banks of the stream were the haunt of furtive and numerous water-rats which, strangely enough, although living in the midst of such muddy oozy surroundings, always managed to keep their fur coats in glossy and immaculate condition. There were also Tiger-snakes which had an interest in the small animals and frogs, but an interest which was not conducive to their welfare.

In the early sixties of last century Samuel Schofield was responsible, in a round about way, of instigating a movement for the erection of St. Paul's Church of England, and its adjoining cemetery, at Kogarah. It appears that a young boy died suddenly and the nearest cemetery at the time was at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church at Kogarah. Discussing the matter locally with his friends, Mr. William Bergopher became interested in the project and in due course the nave of the present and now century old church building at St. Paul's was erected. Another public facility which Samuel Schofield became interested in was the location of the Public School at Kogarah. When the school was first mooted it was thought that a site on a low-lying piece of land near the Rocky Point Road would be most suitable. Samuel Schofield objected strongly to this wet unhealthy suggested location and was instrumental in having the school established on the high land of the ridge where it is now situated.

According to report Samuel Schofield had a step-brother named John Schofield, known to his intimate associates as "Ike", who prevailed on Samuel to make him a gift of the southern grazing portion of the "Ashtonville" estate. This wish was granted and in due course a poor type of two-roomed cottage, suitable for the residence of a bachelor, was built of sandstone and liberally coated with white-wash to prevent the inroads of damp. The building was sited in a central position between the present Ashton Street and Chandler Street. After a few years John Schofield's portion of the property was sold to the Sydney firm of Grace Brothers, who had a large parcel distribution shed for the St. George District erected. The stables for their cart-horses were built near the now abandoned cottage, but the little edifice came into further use for the storage of chaff and the provision of coverage for harness and other equipment. When Grace Brothers vacated the ground the sheds were removed and the land subdivided into housing allotments. John Schofield was last seen by the members of the Schofield family about 1924 but his subsequent movements are unknown.

Samuel Schofield (Senior) also acquired another property on the western side of Rocky Point Road, opposite "Ashtonville", which extended westward to the alignment of Harrow Road, or its vicinity, being bounded on the north by the Skidmore Estate. Two allotments of the property were given to his daughter Elizabeth (then Mrs. Harry Mitchell) about 1910. On the block with its frontage to Rocky Point Road a weatherboard cottage, named "ERICA", was built, in which the Mitchell family lived until 1913. Then a move was made to "OLDHAM", a large house then placed at the western end of Riley Street, Kogarah. About 1923 a single-fronted brick cottage, named "REMOH", was built on the second block given to Elizabeth Mitchell, which faced Harrow

Road. When completed the Mitchell family moved in, and at 1970 it is still occupied by a younger member of the Mitchell family. The rest of this second property formerly in the possession of Samuel Schofield has long been sold for housing requirements.

It is thought that the year 1898 saw the sale of the market garden at "ASHTONVILLE", together with the fine brick house, to Mr. Reuter, who farmed the land for many years before it was taken over by Chinese, but it is believed that the house still continued to be occupied by European families. Before the sale was made Samuel Schofield took over a property near Yarramalong, in the Wyong district, and often made the journey by train from Rockdale to Wyong, worked on his new property all day, and then returned to Rockdale the same night. With the development of the Wyong farm, named "THE GROVE", Samuel Schofield took up permanent residence and immediately became, as was his wont, in local affairs. He always took a keen interest in church work and regularly attended the monthly services held at Wyong Creek, when it was customary for him to bring the preacher home for Sunday's dinner.

It was a sad day when his good wife Catherine died on October 13th, 1924. She was buried in Woronora Cemetery, near Sutherland. Four years later, in 1928, Samuel Schofield passed away at Wyong Creek, aged 97 years and 10 months. The grand old man was buried in the cemetery in the little bush village of Jilliby. It may be mentioned that at a meeting of the Kogarah Municipal Council, the Mayor informed the Aldermen of the death of a very old resident of Kogarah, in the person of Samuel Schofield.

Sad to relate is the fact that in recent years the once lovely market garden has been replaced by the Rockdale Plaza shopping centre. The house "Ashtonville" is still standing at July 1972, and has recently been renovated. The author's thanks are expressed to Mr. Harry Mitchell, and also to his younger brother, Ray Mitchell, both sons of Elizabeth, a daughter of Samuel Schofield, for kindly supplying much of the information relative to the affairs of Samuel Schofield on which this essay is based.

* * * * *