



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

24 Duff Street,
Arncliffe. 2205.
March 1973.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular monthly meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, March 16th, 1973, at 8 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Illustrated Address on the "History of Glass", by courtesy
of A.C.I.

Supper Roster: Captain - Mrs. McNamara; Misses Lambert, White, Frost,
Mesdames Marsden, Nelson.

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.

Mrs. E. Eardley,

Editor & Social
Secretary.

Phone 59.8078.

"Wisdom is only found in Truth".

Recent Acquisitions.

Mrs. Florence Watson, Grey Street, Carlton.	Finely Carved Double Sided Cedar Music Stand. Circa 1870. Terra-Cotta Room Heater, fed by a Whale Oil Reservoir.
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SPECIAL NOTICE.

As Good Friday falls this year on our regular meeting night, it is necessary to move the meeting forward to second Friday in April. This will be Friday, April 13th, 1973. The alteration is regretted, but is unavoidable.

NEWS ITEMS.

WALKS AND TALKS ABOUT OUR LOVELY CITY.

The City of Sydney has been aptly described by Sydney Ure Smith, one of our noted landscape artists of yore, as "THE PEARL OF THE PACIFIC". Like London, so few people know of its magnificent environs and the glories of that water-logged valley we call Sydney Harbour. It is our purpose to set out a series of short journeys, using all manner of public transport to gain our objective, and then a walk, not too long, in which we will send you into nooks and beautiful crannies which, although close at hand, are well off the beaten path.

We suggest that for this initial trip we choose a dark night and go to see the scintillating lights of Sydney, North Sydney in particular, Kings Cross and Double Bay, as observed from the vantage point of a Neutral Bay ferry-boat. We would alight at the Kurraba Wharf, climb the tree-covered steps, noting as we go the philosopher's hanging sign on our right which reads "THE WORLD IS FULL OF BEAUTY, BUT ONLY HE WHO SEES TAKES OFF HIS SHOES". At the top of the steps we would turn right and follow Kurraba Road to Spain's Lookout overlooking Neutral Bay and beyond, and from thence onwards to Hodgson Lookout, at the end of Kurraba Point, where the fantastic lighting along the south side of the harbour can be seen to perfection. The walk there and back to the ferry would be about half a mile. We would leave Circular Quay on the 7.50 p.m. ferry trip. If interested please contact the Social Secretary at 59.8078.

OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND VISIT TO HISTORIC PORT MACQUARIE.

Following requests for another weekend trip away, arrangements have been organised to leave Rockdale Saturday, 29th September, 1973, spending Saturday and Sunday nights in Port Macquarie.

The return trip on Monday, 1st October, 1973, will spend the morning in Taree and arriving Rockdale early evening.

The cost including accommodation and meals inclusive \$40. Those interested please contact the Secretary, Miss J. Noble, Phone 599.4884, as soon as possible. Limit of 45 persons. Details later.

AN AFTERNOON OUTING TO PADDINGTON ??

This is a suggestion, and if you are interested, a Coach could be chartered for the occasion. Perhaps this could be arranged for early June, on a Saturday Afternoon??? Could you let me know if you would like to come along and see the lovely old Terrace Homes, amongst others, which have been restored over a period of time?

One of our Members, Miss Karen Wright, has kindly offered her home for a Film Evening, and has suggested that Members show some of their own slides, taken on various outings. The month suggested is September, which gives ample time to get your Historical Slides sorted out for the occasion. Thank you, Mr. & Mrs. Wright, and Karen, for your kind offer.

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PRESERVE THOSE RELICS

(An article appearing in the "Sydney Morning Herald", Sat., October 21, 1972).

MR. IAN GRANT, a pink-cheeked, mutton-chopped English architect and conservationist, is swooping around Australia checking up on our nineteenth-century buildings.

He is about to write a report on them - or what remains of them - for UNESCO in Paris.

Last week he visited the old Stock Exchange building in Charters Towers, north Queensland. In Sydney yesterday, he was listed to lecture architectural students on his pet subject - the conservation of nineteenth century buildings in Britain - and to go to Parramatta to look at Old Government House.

He has already been greatly charmed by the Queen Victoria Building. "I don't think it should be preserved like a fly in aspic", he says. "But I do think it should be restored and put to satisfactory commercial use".

Mr. Grant, a practising architect who spends so much time restoring old buildings that he hasn't built a new one in 10 years, was delighted when approached by the United Nations to do the two month survey in Australia.

He already has a warning for Australians interested in saving their architectural heritage -- "Time is running out".

"Your nineteenth-century buildings are just as important to Australia as the medieval cathedrals are to Europe", he says with the fervour of the true conservationist. "For God's sake preserve them."

"Everyone is very disturbed about what is happening to the environment, except, it would seem, the Government. They do seem to be way behind.

"The law gives no statutory protection to preservation or conservation - it will have to be changed."

Mr. Grant says the laws are all in favour of redevelopment, demolition and "what is mistakenly called progress.

"So many people say that the preservation of old buildings is a waste of time, but it is in fact an investment in the future", he says. "Tourists don't visit a country to look at factories but at the early relics. That's something they are very aware of in Russia.

"It's time Australian tourism progressed from the stage of 'You either swim in it or shoot it and eat it' to something a little more thoughtful.

"Australia has so many wonderful things that are quite specially Australian. You won't see anywhere else in the world those little corrugated-iron roof farm houses of the last century or the terrace houses of Paddington. Preserve them! "

ROCKDALE POST OFFICE

(By Courtesy of Public Relations Officer, G.P.O., Sydney.)

A post office was opened at Rockdale on 15th April, 1882, in charge of Yeoman Geeves, his remuneration being £10 per annum.

Little is known about the early post office, or where it was located. There is evidence that it was at the railway station in 1886.

On 9th April, 1886, telephone communication was extended to the office, mainly for telephoning telegrams. (A public telephone was not provided until 1898.)

Geeves was succeeded by H. J. Addison on 15th December, 1884, and by S. York on 27th October, 1887.

York was in charge of the railway station, and had an assistant named Frank F. Bancroft, who assisted with postal and telegraph duties.

By 1889, the staff included a postman who received 15/- a week, and a messenger on 10/- per week. York and Bancroft each were paid 15/- a week by the Postal Department.

During 1889, arrangements were made with the Railway Department for the erection of an 18' x 20' room, at the station, for use as a post office. This cost the Postal Department £100.

B.H. Harrison became post and telegraph master with a salary of £100 per annum, on 11th February, 1890. He was a permanent officer of the Department.

Government Savings Bank.

About May 1890, a branch of the Government Savings Bank was opened at the office.

On 16th February, 1893, A.E. Greatrex took charge of the office. He exchanged positions with William Layton of West Wyalong, on 16th February, 1894.

The next postmaster was Alf. W. Plumley, who took charge on 10th November, 1896.

By this time three postmen (they were then called letter carriers) were employed at Rockdale. They delivered letters to the streets running off Forest Road to the west, to Godfrey Street and Spring Street on the north, to Queen Victoria Street and Northbrook Street on the south, and in an easterly direction to Lady Robinson's Beach.

The whole revenue of the Rockdale office, in 1896, was only £595, whilst the salaries of the staff alone amounted to more than that amount.

The three postmen, Pearce, Grieves and Metham, were each given an allowance of £36.10.0 for the use of their horses.

A messenger named Fowler, and a telegraph operator, Green, were at the office in 1896.

In January 1896, some changes in the interests of economy were made to the staffing etc. Two of the postmen were placed on foot, leaving only one mounted; and the letter receiver at Lady Robinson's Beach was removed.

Tramway Receiver.

In the place of the letter receiver, a box was placed on each of the two trams Mr. Saywell had running between Rockdale and the Beach. The Department provided the letter boxes, but as Mr. Saywell had to arrange to change them from one end of the tram to the other on the return journey, he was paid an allowance of £4 per annum. This money was paid to Mr. J.E. Leng, Manager of the tramway line, who distributed it to the tram conductors as a gratuity.

Other economies effected were to remove the telegraph operator and have his duties carried out by the postmaster; and close the office for one hour at lunch time, and at 6 p.m. instead of 8.30 p.m.

The telegraph messenger, who was also mounted had two horses and received an allowance for them. Instead he was granted a reduced allowance to buy a bicycle. (It was not long before this that a few bicycles were first used in the Department.)

The messenger was also given the task of delivering letters in the Beach district. This he did before the first telegrams came along soon after 9 a.m.

With all these economies the Department was just about able to balance the budget, so far as Rockdale Post Office was concerned.

Strangely enough, the post office was still open on Saturday nights until 9 p.m., but only for Savings Bank business as was the case then with most post offices.

Later in 1896, it was decided to retain the late closing of the office, following protests made by the Council.

The telegraph messenger also delivered telegrams in the Arncliffe area, after that office closed at 6 p.m.

Long Hours. In February 1897, the messenger, aged about 17 years, complained to the Department of his hours of duty. He commenced duty at 8 a.m., swept and cleaned the office, sorted up the mail for the Lady Robinson's Beach area, and delivered it. Then, he delivered telegrams until all telegraph business was completed, which usually was about 8 or 9 p.m. He did this for six days weekly. His remuneration for the 78 hours duty was 10/- per week, plus 12/- per week as an allowance to feed his two horses, and provide for their replacement in due course. Apparently the earlier proposal to use a bicycle has not been put into effect, or the decision had been reversed.

Further changes in the mail delivery arrangements were made during 1897, on account of the increasing population.

H. J. Chapman succeeded Plumley as postmaster on 9th September, 1908.

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