



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

August, 1973.

Dear Friend and Member,

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

Date: Friday evening, August 17th, 1973, at 8 p.m.
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. H. J. Andrew of the Public Relations Section of the Main Roads Board will give an Illustrated Address on the "Old Roads of the Illawarra".

Supper Roster: Captain - Miss Dunsmore, & Mesdames McMillan, McDonald, Lee, Misses Cheetham, Callister.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,
President.
Phone: 587.4555

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

Mrs. E. Eardley,
Secretary & Editor.
Phone: 59.8078.

"Enjoy the Road, the Best is Lost to those who hurry "blindly" to the Journey's Close."

The following Officers were elected for the ensuing year - 1973-1974.

<u>Patrons:</u>	<u>Mayor of Rockdale, Alderman G.F. Moore.</u> <u>Alderman R. Rathbone, Mr. R. Stark.</u>
<u>President:</u>	Mr. D. Sinclair.
<u>Senior Vice President:</u>	Mr. W. Napper.
<u>Vice Presidents:</u>	Mr. W. Foster, Miss M. Callister.
<u>Hon. Secretary:</u>	Mrs. E. Eardley.
<u>Assist. Hon. Secretary:</u>	Mrs. B. Williams.
<u>Hon. Treasurer:</u>	Mrs. E. Wright.
<u>Hon. Auditor.</u>	Alderman A. Ford.
<u>Research Officer:</u>	Mr. A. Ellis.
<u>Publicity Officers:</u>	Mr. & Mrs. A.F. Day.
<u>Lydham Hall Fund Raising Committee:</u>	Mesdames Prebble, M. Smith, Otten.
<u>Management Committee:</u>	President, Mr. D. Sinclair, Secretary, Mrs. Eardley, Treasurer, Mrs. Wright & Messrs. Day, Foster, Napper, Hayman, Ellis, Mesdames Prebble, Gash.

Items donated to "Lydham Hall"

Mrs. A. Geeves, Forest Road, Bexley.	Silver Candlestick, more than 100 years old. Silver Epergne, more than 60 years old.
Miss Thomas, Forest Road, Bexley.	Welsh New Testament, 1886.
Mr. & Mrs. A. Curtis, Merritts Wharf.	Copy of "Proclamation", also Copy of "Instrument of Surrender", signed by General Sir Thomas Blamey, GBE., KCB., CMG., D.S.O., Commander in Chief, Australian Military Forces. Dated September, 1945. Copy of "Table Tops", 18/8/1945, issued by A.M. Forces Abroad. (Official Announcement of Surrender.)
Mr. & Mrs. J. Shuttleworth, Lloyd Street, Bexley.	Pewter Teapot & Silver Milk Jug - age unknown. Two complete Clear Glass Kerosene Table Lamps, and Glass Bowl & Burner of another.
Mrs. Gow.	Red Satin Hand Painted Book Mark by Miss Leslie Irwin, Tanta Wanglo, N.S.W. C. 1910. Two Wedding Cards, (Love Cards) C. 1890.

SOCIETY NEWS.

A Film Evening will be held at the home of Miss Karen Wright, 102 Botany Street, Carlton, on Saturday evening, September 8th, 1973, at 8 p.m. (Donation for Lydham Hall).

Supper will be provided.

Please come along and help to make the Evening a Success.

OCTOBER LONG WEEK-END VISIT TO HISTORIC PORT MACQUARIE.

Leaving Rockdale Saturday, September, 19th, 1973.

Spending Saturday & Sunday Nights at Port Macquarie.

Returning Monday October 1st, 1973. (Morning in Taree).

Phone Mrs. E. Wright, 599.4884, for further information.

Note - Deposits Please - and you may make further payments if you wish.

Watch for the September and October Syllabus Items - these you are sure to enjoy.

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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1973.

I am pleased to present the President's Report for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1973, following a year in which our Society pursued a high level of activity.

As in former years eleven business meetings were held. On four occasions members of our Society addressed the meeting whilst on the remaining seven evenings, arrangements were made for a guest speaker to address us. Our December meeting did not have a business session, but presented the opportunity for members to fraternise in a festive atmosphere.

It is disappointing to note that our meetings were not as well attended this year, our average being 56 people present as against 62 last year and 82 the year before that.

Our membership now totals 244, an increase of 7 in the past twelve months.

Outings were arranged on six occasions, including an evening visit to the A.C.I. Works and attendance for the third year at the Lancer Service at St. Johns Church, Parramatta.

Our Secretary, Miss Noble, relinquished the position in April and our Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Wright, kindly carried out the Secretary's duties for the balance of the year.

I would like to express my appreciation to those members who contributed to the Society's activities - the Office Bearers, the members of the Ladies Fund Raising Committee, the ladies who kindly arranged the supper, and Mr. and Mrs. Eardley for compiling the monthly bulletin.

D. H. Sinclair.
20/7/1973.

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A HISTORY OF CARLTON, N.S.W.

by

R. W. RATHBONEPART 3.THE YEARS OF PROGRESS.

One of the first major construction tasks undertaken by the new Council was the building of a handsome free-stone bridge in Short Street across the creek which cut off the station and the shopping centre from most of the inhabitants. The new brick station which replaced the old wooden platform was built by a Kogarah contractor, George B. Holt, and opened by the Chief Inspector of Railways. Audits at a luncheon held in the waiting room. The structure it replaced has been described thus - "the station consisted of a shed eight feet wide and ten feet long and in wet weather there is an inch of water on the floor. In summer the heat is almost unbearable and in winter there is no protection from the cold, bleak southerly wind." Small wonder that the new station was greeted with such enthusiasm. Its principal entrance remained at the foot of Mill Street although the new building was somewhat nearer Kogarah than the platform it replaced. Most of its commuters made their way down the hill via Webber's Road and Short Street.

Despite the financial difficulties previously mentioned, the early 90's were years of outstanding progress for Carlton. As early as 1889 gas mains had been laid in Webber's Road and between that year and 1892 twelve gas street lights were erected in the area. For many years these were tended by the lamplighter Zebulam Baker, who had succeeded Alexander Young of Mill Street. Young can still be remembered by some of the older residents of Carlton as he climbed his little ladder to light the kerosene lamps which existed before the gas light era.

CARLTON GETS A POST OFFICE.

At a public meeting held on April 17, 1889, the Postal Department was asked to open a Post Office at the Railway Station. Lack of space was given as the official reason for refusal until a local storekeeper, Mr. J.B. Ireland, whose grocery business stood opposite the station at the corner of Short Street and Carlton Parade, offered to conduct the office. Space at the Railway Station miraculously became available but the arrangement did not work satisfactorily and on May 25, 1890, Mr. Ireland's offer was accepted and he was appointed non-official Postmaster with an allowance of £10 per annum.

The history of the Carlton Post Office is an extremely chequered one with the authorities always anxious to close or reduce its services and the local residents' steadfast refusal to surrender their hard-won gains.

In 1891, Mr. Ireland sold his business to Mrs. Amanda Woolley who early in 1894 had the office removed to newly erected premises on the corner of Short and Cumberland Streets. Mrs. Woolley was succeeded briefly by Mr. John Young. In August, 1894, it was decided to raise the status of the non-official post office to that of an Official Post and Telegraph Office connected to the Post Office at Kogarah for the purpose of sending telegrams by phone. When the Kogarah Manual Exchange was opened in 1896 the first

three Carlton subscribers were the Post Office, the Pumping Station and J.G. Griffin of Mill Street.

The same premises rented by Mrs. Woolley from William Broadbridge were selected and Mrs. A. Le Messurier was appointed Postmistress. Mrs. Le Messurier, a native of the Channel Islands, lived for many years in the two storied house on the corner of Bruce and Percival Streets and remained Carlton's Postmistress until 1909, when, despite local protests, the Post Office was moved back to Carlton Parade, reduced in status and placed in charge of Mrs. Lilli Meynink who, with her daughter, Miss Muriel Meynink, conducted the office for the next thirty-three years. It is interesting to note that the first messenger boy employed by Mrs. Meynink was a 14 year old lad who worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. for 10/- per week. His name was Norman Thomas Gilroy. Today he is a Prince of the Church and Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sydney. The appointment of Carlton's first postman occurred in 1910 when Mr. Claude Hallett accepted that position, but the bulk of Carlton's mail continued to be delivered from Kogarah and Hurstville.

Originally mail in the area had been delivered by the postman from Hurstville. Resplendent in navy jacket with silver buttons, doeskin leggings and peaked cap with white neck cover in summer and a huge leather bag, all mail was carried on horseback when the area was sparsely settled.

THE PUMPING STATION.

A water pumping station with a gas engine was established in 1891 in a small galvanised iron building on land rented from the Railway Commissioners at the foot of Webber's Road. The engine operated by the local turncock, pumped water from the Petersham Reservoir into a 20,000 gallon cast iron tank erected on brick piers at Penshurst to supply the higher portions of Kogarah and Hurstville. This was amplified and the machinery increased at regular intervals until 1919 when a new pumping station was established at Lakemba. By 1933 the Carlton Pumping Station was being retained for emergency purposes only until in 1939 it was finally superseded. At its peak this station pumped nearly one thousand million gallons of water annually and belched clouds of acrid black smoke over the surrounding community.

After the station's closure, it fell into ruin and was progressively dismantled by local residents, its timbers still forming the framework of many a nearby fernery or poultry run.

Water was laid on in Webber's Road in 1893 and between that date and 1900 its reticulation was spread over the whole area.

THE GRANTHAM ESTATE.

Late in 1892, while all this activity was in progress, Frederick Grant acquired another of Gannon's original lots via many owners from prominent Bexley resident, Henry Kinsela. As the Grantham Estate, Grantham and Henry Street made their appearance but caused scarcely a ripple of interest for early in 1893 the financial bubble burst and Australia was plunged into the depths of financial depression.

Grant was a native of Hampshire who came to Australia in 1852, setting up as an upholsterer in William Street, Sydney, where he settled in Carlton and promoted and supported many Friendly Societies. On the corner of

Argyle and Short Streets he erected a small hall where these societies could meet and for many years Grant's Hall was the focal point of the activities of the U.A.O. Druids, Royal Foresters, Protestant Alliance, Orange Lodge and Rechabites - all of which thrived in the years before the first World War.

One of the very few families to settle on the Grantham Estate were the Tooheys. Cornelius Toohey had moved from Pymont to Carlton in 1892 and was one of the earliest employees of the Hurstville Council. At the corner of Webber's Road and Cameron Street he built himself a solid free-stone cottage from stone quarried at the intersection of Griffin Avenue and Henry Street and carried to the site in a wheelbarrow.

For many years Mrs. Toohey and her eldest son, Patrick, ran a dairy on the Estate which remained covered with a dense secondary growth of ti-tree.

Eventually Grant lost the Estate to the Australian Joint Stock Bank and it was not until 1913 that it again came on the market.

CARLTON IN THE NINETIES.

An excellent description of life in Carlton in the early nineties has been supplied by Mrs. Charles Smith, of Durham Street, who, with his father, Mr. David Smith, settled in Carlton in 1887.

"The district was very bushy with occasional stands of heavy timber - mainly iron bark, stringy bark and huge gum trees. The creek at the bottom of Webber's Road was about 15 feet wide and 8 to 10 feet deep consisting of a series of pretty deep bogey holes abounding in eels, gudgeon and perch which local youngsters tried to catch with dough. At Webber's Road it was crossed by a culvert and at Short Street by an arched bridge of substantial free-stone blocks. Most houses had a cow or goat for milk, a well 12 to 14 feet deep, dome shaped and with a shale bottom (which had to be filled in when the sewerage came) and a large vegetable garden with fruit trees and grape vines most of which were destroyed during an outbreak of phylloxera.

All the tradespeople called; McBean the butcher from Hurstville chopping up his meat on the back of his cart. Palme's had the bakery near the station and aborigines from La Perouse brought fresh fish several times a week, while turbaned Syrian hawkers carrying enormous bundles of women's and children's clothing and household goods on their heads and backs also visited the area.

Nearly all the entertainment was in the home around the piano or harmonium. On very rare occasions a travelling circus visited the district though concerts and 'benefits' were common. The highlight of the year was the bonfire on Queen Victoria's Birthday.

The large numbers of children amused themselves with games in the bush - hares and hounds being a general favourite. Those children who attended Hurstville School frequently found their footsteps pointed in the direction of Wolli Creek where blackberries abounded, while those who went to Kogarah spent many a happy day truanting to Saywell's Wharf at Lady Robinson's Beach."

THE DEPRESSION OF THE NINETIES.

It is hard to describe the effects of the financial depression on the people of Carlton, so many of whom were builders, labourers and skilled artisans who depended for their livelihood on the buoyancy of the money market. A number of the families which had first settled in the area moved away in search of work but those who remained kept dairy cattle, goats, pigs and poultry and took to gardening to tide them over the difficult times. In the process, Carlton became famous as a garden of roses and chrysanthemums both of which flourished in its heavy clay soil. Most families were almost self-supporting and an odd job here and there or a few shillings made from cutting firewood which abounded in the vicinity helped to buy those necessities which could not be grown or bartered.

But times were hard and were not made any easier by outbreaks of diphtheria and typhoid fever which took heavy toll of the neighbourhood's children during 1895 and '96. The unsanitary conditions of the area which resulted in the pollution of most of the creeks and water-holes led to urgent and persistent agitation during these years for the concreting of the creek between Short Street and Webber's Road and the filling in of Dominey's now-disused brick pit.

OF MEDICAL MATTERS.

Although Dr. Swayne was the first medical man in the district it was Dr. McLeod from Hurstville and Dr. Lamrock from Kogarah who ministered to the needs of the inhabitants of Carlton during these days and because of the primitive state of the newly established St. George Cottage Hospital, all but the most serious cases were treated in the home. Mr. Edward King, whose father, Eleazer (Alec) King settled in the district in 1886, has very vivid recollections of his father being operated upon by Dr. Lamrock on the table in the front room of the cottage which once stood in the middle of Barwell Park, the light being supplied by a number of kerosene lamps.

In those days too, it was unheard of for an expectant mother to go to hospital for the arrival of her baby, and whilst Carlton boasted many a capable midwife, no persons services were more sought after than "Old Granny" Coleman who, with her small black patent leather bag could be seen striding through the ti-tree scrub at all hours of the night and day to bring yet another lusty infant into the world - and judging by the age to which many of the products of her handiwork have lived, she not only carried out her task successfully but also extremely well.

MRS. RATE'S SHOE FACTORY.

Typical of the enterprise shown by Carlton people during this difficult period was that of Mrs. Mary Rate. Thomas and Mary Rate had come to Australia from Leicester, England, where they had worked in the shoe trade, and settled in Mill Street on the Carlton Estate some time after 1887. In 1895 in the dining room of their home, Mrs. Rate began making hand-made infants' soft soled shoes on a small treadle machine to supplement the meagre family income. These were sold to Anthony Hordens where they proved so popular that Mrs. Rate soon had to employ additional labour and move to more commodious quarters in the disused

bakery almost opposite. Later the factory was moved briefly to the city but finally it returned to Carlton to premises in Short Street where it remained for many years. This was the first building in Carlton lit by electricity and during the First World War power from Mrs. Rate's shoe factory illuminated many of the fairs and concerts held to raise money for the war effort.

When Mrs. Rate died in 1928 she was recognised as one of Australia's most prominent industrial figures.

A CHURCH IS BUILT.

Midst all this enterprise and misery, Carlton experienced its first religious awakenings. Until the mid-nineties people had been content to attend the church of their denomination either at Kogarah or at Hurstville. In 1893 the Presbyterian Minister at Kogarah rented a four-roomed cottage in Wallace Street, removed the partitions and held Sunday afternoon services. This venture did not receive the support of his own church and eventually it was placed in the hands of a committee - the services being chiefly carried on by Baptist and Brethren lay preachers. Baptist mission services had previously commenced on July 17, 1893, in Cooper's Hall, Fleet Street, under the direction of the Rev. Charles Boyall of the Kingsgrove Baptist Church. The mission hall in Wallace Street proved neither adequate nor convenient and in 1895 the foundation stones were laid of a permanent building on land donated by Mr. William White, Snr., President of the Baptist Union, at the corner of Webber's Road and Durham Street. On January 12, 1896, the weatherboard building was opened amid great rejoicing with the Rev. Charles Palmer as its first pastor. This building continued to be used until 1920 when it was replaced by a fine brick church still in use, and after many years service as a Sunday School Hall, was finally demolished in 1962 to make way for a new Christian Education Centre. The late Rev. W. Prebert Phillips who was appointed to the church in 1912 and ministered in Carlton for over forty years, is undoubtedly the best remembered of its pastors.

GOATS.

The nineties for Carlton finished with a mixture of humour and personal tragedy. As work became more plentiful many people who had acquired livestock to tide them over the difficult years now wished to dispose of them. There was, however, very little market for the large numbers of goats which inhabited the area. Many were turned loose in the bush to fend for themselves and those which were retained were indifferently looked after. Whether through spite, neglect, curiosity or a genuine desire to vary their limited fare, these goats soon became a pernicious evil.

Not only did they continually interrupt the Sunday Services at the Mission Hall by getting under the building and bumping the floorboards or bleating plaintively through the open door, but they stripped every edible piece of vegetation from around the building. They then commenced to denude the gardens of their former owners and are reported to have become particularly adept at opening gates into kitchen gardens erected for the express purpose of keeping them out.

In a letter to the Hurstville Council dated August 11, 1898, Mr. Joseph

Bibby complained bitterly about the damage being done to his shrubs and trees by straying goats and demanded something to be done to stop the menace.

The final straw came in April, 1899, when it was reported that all the trees planted by the Council to celebrate the record reign of Queen Victoria had been eaten. In a fit of patriotic outrage the Council resolved: "That all stray goats be destroyed by shooting or otherwise and that all owners of straying cows, horses etc. shall be summoned."

It was, however, many years before these ubiquitous animals ceased to be a nuisance.

DOMINEY'S BRICKPIT.

The tragedies centred around Dominey's Brickpit.

As mentioned previously, the brickpit worked by Solomon Dominey so profitably in the 60's and 70's had, after his death in 1885, fallen into disuse, become filled with water and provided a popular though hazardous swimming home for local youngsters. The first recorded drowning occurred in 1895 when the infant son of Jacob Derham, a resident of Bruce Street, disappeared in the 60 feet deep pit one Sunday afternoon. Local residents resolved that the pit should be filled in. During the diphtheria and typhoid epidemics of 1896 and 1897, Hurstville Council discontinued its use as a tip and for some time it remained half-filled and forgotten.

Then in 1898 tragedy struck again when the two small daughters of William Parks who lived in Webber's Road were gathering maidenhair fern, dog violets and apple blossoms which with wild flowers, buttercups and everlasting daisies abounded near the waterhole. While reaching over to pick a particularly attractive clump, they slipped on the wet clay and fell in. Little Annie Parks was rescued and although desperately ill for months, recovered, but her younger sister sank beneath the murky waters leaving only a pitiful ring of apple-blossom to mark where she had been.

Renewed efforts were made to fill in the hole but not before it had claimed two more victims.

On February 4, 1899, Thomas Rate, noticing a horse which had obviously been immersed in water, coming from the direction of the water-hole, discovered on investigation, the body of Frederick Bush, aged 21, a resident of Bruce Street, caught in some hoop iron. He had become entangled on being thrown from his horse as it lost its footing while pausing for a drink at the water-hole.

Again, on March 22, 1903, Bertrand Hoare, aged 10, from Mimosa Street was dragged out of the hole, lifeless, by William Dominey.

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