



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.
November 1973.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular monthly meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, November 16th, 1973, at 8 p.m.
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
Business: General.
Syllabus Item: "A Trip Overseas" with Mr. & Mrs. Day. Illustrated
with Commentary.
Supper Roster: Mrs. McNamara, Captain, Mrs. Marsden, Misses Frost,
Lambert, White.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,
President.
Phone 587.4555.

Mrs. E. Eardley,
Secretary.
Phone 59.8078.

Mrs. E. Wright,
Treasurer & Social Sec.
Phone 599.4884.

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

If people take no care for the future, they will soon have to sorrow for the present.
A Chinese Proverb.

Items donated to "Lydham Hall".

Mr. A. Field, Pillow Sham & Nightgown Sachet, made in Rosettes
Bellevue Street, from "Blue Bags", brought out from England by Great
Arncliffe. Grandmother more than 100 years ago.

Magnifying Glass with brass handle, more than 100
years old.

Prayer Book carried right through 1914-1918 War,
also small Bible.

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Social:

A "Mystery Tour" organised by the Social Secretary, Mrs. E. Wright, will
be held at a time to be announced.

Date: ? ? ?

Time: 9 a.m. Town Hall, Rockdale.

Cost:

Bring your own Eats & Drinks.

Do support your Social Functions, you are sure to enjoy this and many other
Outings which will be arranged for your pleasure.

Ring Mrs. Wright, Phone 599.4884, for further details.

Watch for details of Suggested Long Weekend outing to Canberra and its
Environs - October 1974.

Peter Sage will present: "Songs of Australia", Slides accompanied by such
Singers as Rolf Harris, Lionel Long, Slim Dusty, and others.

March 30th, 1974 (Saturday Evening). Details later.

<p>It is regretted that we record the passing of Miss Mabel Cheetham who has been a member of our Society for a very long time.</p>

VISIT TO HISTORIC PORT MACQUARIE BY MEMBERS OF THE ST. GEORGE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

FROM 29. 9. 73 TO 1. 10. 1973.

..... by D. Hatton.

We left Rockdale Town Hall at 7.30 a.m. after Mrs. Wright had checked to see if all her brood were present and correct. The President, Mr. Don Sinclair and Research Officer, Mr. Arthur Ellis, were members of the party. There was quite a fog in Sydney as we proceeded through the city, a forerunner of hot weather ahead.

The first point of interest was Peat's Island, a very pretty setting with many trim buildings and the early sunlight accentuating the surrounding water, then coral trees and some orange groves en route to Peat's Ridge, where we had morning tea at the "Oak" cafeteria. An old-type post box outside here caught our eye - it was made by W. Taylor, Paragon Foundry, Pyrmont, which has a brass flap and a time-slot into which was inserted the next clearance time. Then we went through Charmhaven, Doyalson and Lake Munmorah District to Swansea, where we had a view of a large expanse of blue water, and here and there in the bushland, tall palm trees. There were extensive buildings on the water side, with the country gradually rising as we made our way through suburbs to Newcastle. A feature here was the very high T.V. antennas. A smorgasbord lunch had been arranged for us at Newcastle Leagues Club.

Some miles further on we passed an Opalfield bus which had broken down and the passengers were seated on the side of the road - we hoped this did not happen to us. There were miles of burnt out trees to Taree, which has a lovely river and park which we visited after some more refreshments. There is a War Memorial in the park and next to it an Aleppo pine tree descended from the Lone Pine and planted in 1965 in memory of fallen comrades. Some of the most interesting buildings in Taree are - the large white Court House, old church, and on a corner the A.M.P. building with statuary and two large wrought iron light surrounds. The "Manning River Times" was established here in 1869. Nearby we passed a beautiful nursery garden which inspired our driver to quote "When you are disturbed and you think Society is against you, there is always a garden". We were to see many more exquisite gardens on this tour. As we proceeded to Port Macquarie we passed miles of young trees which have been planted as a reafforestation programme.

When we reached Port Macquarie we drove past a quaint tavern, the District Hospital, new Civic Centre, site of the old gaol and historic wishing well, and eventually reached the "Beach Front" Motel at 6 p.m. again on time. This motel is rather new and of three stories with all mod cons, including a heated pool, sauna room and barbeque. After being given our room numbers by Mrs. Wright and settling in, we made haste to the dining room.

After dinner, we were guests of The Hastings District Historical Society and rejoined the coach to go to the Society's museum, a white double storied building with red geraniums in the window boxes, built in 1835, and used as an early store and guest house. After a quick inspection of some of

the rooms it became evident that we would need a lot of time to inspect the wonderful collection of articles from the past and mementos of local history. Not a bit of the floor space or the walls has been wasted and the rooms are filled with exhibits. One display is based on a museum in York, England, (which I have seen), where a street is set up with a row of shop windows, each displaying different types of articles - china, silver, books, men's shop, apothecary and laces. The shop fronts are bay windows with the typical English small panes of glass. The brickwork below is of old hand-made bricks and each shop shows a different type of bond. At the end shop facing down this street, are displayed dresses, paintings and personal articles which belonged to Annabella Boswell, niece of Major Innes, (a model has been set up dressed in one of her beautiful ball gowns). This display was acquired from her descendants in Scotland, after much research by the Historical Society.

After a welcome by the President, Mr. N.A. Anderson, we were served with a lovely supper by the ladies, and this proved to be only the beginning of a right royal welcome we received from The Hastings District Historical Society. The Society was formed in 1956 and the Museum is open each day and most nights and over 27,000 adults visited last year. The roster consists of 26 members with 6 extra for emergencies. Twelve members look after the archives and cataloguing, and the Society owns the latest equipment for this purpose.

Next day, Sunday, a tour of the district had been arranged and Mr. Howell, Secretary, and Mr. Thompson, were the narrators. Firstly we visited the Historic Cemetery and Gardens. This ground was first used for the growing of cotton. Many very old graves dating from 1824 are set among beautiful gardens, with pebble walls, shrubs and Norfolk pine trees, with lawns sloping down to the river. Among the headstones which could be deciphered were those of Rev. John Cross, (first Rector), Jeremiah Warlters, Horatio Tozer, John Verge (architect), Dr. Henry Taylor, Archibald Clunes Innes (Major 3rd. Reg. Buffs), Major Kemp, Dr. Thomas Parsons, Dr. Fattorini, James Gordon (Royal Navy) and Major James Henry Crummer (Police Magistrate who was stationed first at Newcastle and then from 1836 to 1844 at Port Macquarie). A tablet on his grave says he "fought in many battles from Copenhagen to Waterloo from 1807 to 1815, died in 1867 aged 76 years". At the entrance to this part is a bronze tablet, erected "To commemorate the early settlers and convicts who in harsh and grim conditions worked and died here. This plaque was laid by The Hastings District Historical Society, in May 1963".

On rejoining the coach we were given some of the early history of the founding of Port Macquarie, as we started on our tour of the country. It was following the glowing report by Lieut. John Oxley, Surveyor-General, after his visit in 1818 (all 12 convicts who came with him were given pardons and a grant of land), that Governor Macquarie again sent Oxley in charge of an expedition in 1819. Its purpose was to survey the river and entrance and to report on the nature of the country and its suitability as a penal settlement. A further visit was made by him in 1820 accompanied by Capt. Francis Allman, who selected the site of the proposed convict settlement, which was established in 1821 with Capt. Allman as the First Commandant.

The first property we passed was that of "Clifton" (now a Convalescent Home), one of many properties owned by Major Innes who had a vineyard there and which has lovely river views. Then past Settlement Farm, later known as Allman's Plains. Next through an old settled area which was called Hamilton until about 2½ years ago, but is now known as Hibbard after the owner of a large timber mill here and the man who built "Clifton". This district is richly endowed with valuable timber.

We now joined the Pacific Highway and crossed the Hastings River by the Dennis Bridge, continuing to the small railway town of Telegraph Point, where a new high traffic bridge is under construction over the Wilson River. This area has been extensively flooded in the past and bridges washed away. The gardens at the Telegraph Point railway station have many times won awards and the Post Office has been attended by members of the one family for over 100 years.

Following the Wilson River we reached Rollands Plains, farmlands named after Capt. Rolland, the second Commandant (1824) who is buried in St. Thomas' Church. Ballangarra was next - it was the site of a timber mill in 1914 owned by a German Company, but when war broke out the owners were interned and the mill closed. Nearby was a wharf where droghers loaded timber hauled by bullock teams from Upper Rolland's Plains. Continuing on we came to the old township of Bonnie Doon, now a thing of the past. Here sugar, maize and wheat for the Settlement were grown. Then we passed through Clarefield to Glencoe, the property of Lieut. Geary, a naval officer whose two forbears had been Admirals of the Fleet, and he himself served with Nelson at Trafalgar. A model of this home has been presented to the Museum by Mr. Frank Little the present owner of the property. Here our coach stopped to meet Mr. & Mrs. Little and to view a model of the original old gaol which Mr. Little has constructed and which will be displayed later on when completely finished.

"Tilbuster" was the next property, which was a grant to Miss Margaret Macleay, daughter of the Colonial Secretary, and who married Major Innes. Then on to Cogo, also an Innes grant. We now crossed the river to "Glenesk" another grant to the Major (Dorothea Mackellar lived here for a time later on). Many convict relics were found on these old properties. Major Archibald Clunes Innes was one of the most colourful of the early settlers and practically everywhere we went we were travelling through property once owned by him. His properties extended to the town of Glen Innes, but he lived mostly at Lake Cottage, a mansion which he built soon after he received the grant of this land in 1831. One of the best descriptions of the home has been given by Annabella Boswell, niece of the Major, giving it a veritable picture of Colonial splendour. Visitors entered through two white gates, the second one being about a mile from the house. The first thing noticed was the observatory towering among Norfolk pines. The drawing room was 20ft. by 24ft., with French windows opening on to wide verandahs. Chairs upholstered in yellow satin, and large bedrooms including those for guests as the Major entertained many leading citizens including Governor Fitzroy and his wife. A butler opened the door and one got a view of a spacious hall hung with paintings. There was also a large library and schoolroom and running water in the bathrooms, and with accommodation for the staff including 2 footmen, the homestead was quite a village. The house today is a crumbling ruin.

A lunch basket of chicken and ham sandwiches, and boxes of cake had been prepared by our motel, and we stopped by the river to meet once again the committee of the Society, who with their usual warmth and friendliness had boiling water waiting for us to make tea, so we all had lunch together under the trees, picnic style. While chatting with Mrs. Laurie, Vice President, the name of Phillip Charley came up and we discovered he also owned land in this district. Members will remember visiting the "St. John of God Hospital" at North Richmond, a lovely residence built by Mr. Charley, and Mr. Sinclair has given us an address on how he was one of 7 people who formed the original Broken Hill Mining Company.

We returned by a different route through a forestry area which had been cleared and replanted with blackbutt. We crossed the Hastings River by Bain Bridge (named after a pioneer settler), then on to Wauchope, a timber town. This town was named after Capt. Robert Wauch who settled here in 1836. The Plywood Mills here have supplied most of the material for the interior of the Opera House at Bennelong Point. Wauchope, we were told, has a sister town in America called "Canisteo". As the airbrakes on our coach had been playing up, our driver decided to take it back to Port Macquarie for servicing and later he returned with a local bus for us to continue our journey for the day.

While we were waiting we visited the home of Mr. & Mrs. S. Phillips. At the 1973 Floral Festival they won 9 first, 7 second and 1 champion award, and have 5 gold plaques from "Sydney Morning Herald" competitions and dozens of pennants and awards from previous years. From the footpath, under a colourful archway of flowers and on front, side and back of the house the gardens were a mass of about 50 different varieties of flowers, shrubs, vines and trees, plus a vegetable garden and fern house. Mr. & Mrs. Phillips supplied us with afternoon tea on the front lawn while we waited for the return of the driver. It was a very pleasant and wonderful interlude in our journey.

We then drove through a suburb noted for its lovely gardens, some of which had been featured in the "Women's Weekly". On the way back to Port Macquarie whenever the driver got into low gear the doors of the bus would close much to the merriment of the passengers who thought it might be a case of "getting through the window". We passed a large house of Thrumster (named after the birthplace of Major Innes in Scotland) and now owned by a local lady who makes pottery which she fashions from clay on her property. Near here in 1821 the first race track was formed. On "Douglas Vale" farm good grapes were grown and the wine is reputed to have won prizes in Paris.

After dinner, we were once more taken to the Museum where we had been invited to view slides of past and present scenes shown by Dr. McLaren, whose great-great-grandmother was born in the Barracks. He is a descendant of Corp. Michael Fahy who was supervisor of convicts at Rollands Plains in 1827. These films proved to be of great interest to us and after another delightful supper the President, Mr. N.A. Anderson, said among other things that they had enjoyed our visit and hoped we would come again to visit them.

Our President responded by thanking them all for the great welcome they had given to our members. He then spoke of a relation of his, Mr. James Butler, a cabinet maker, auctioneer and mortician of Port Macquarie, who in 1856 replaced the ceiling of St. Thomas' Church with 6,500 ft. of cedar boards. Mr. Sinclair then read out a letter which had been written to his great-great-great grandmother by her son Mr. Butler, and Mr. Sinclair presented Mr. Anderson with a copy for their museum. He also gave him some of the St. George Historical Society badges to commemorate our visit. Mrs. Wright also has historical connections with this area.

Next morning, after loading up the coach with our luggage we proceeded again to the Museum where Mrs. M. Monck joined us as hostess for a short tour of the town. We drove around the waterfront first and continued on through the town to view the rest of the 20 named historical sites. These are more fully listed in the appendix, which is attached.

We spent some time viewing the most impressive St. Thomas the Apostle Church, which stands serene on a hill, the site having been chosen by Governor Macquarie on his visit in 1821, just before he left Australia. This is worth a special mention as it was in connection with the restoration of the Church and its classification by the National Trust, that Sir Roden and Lady Cutler attended a ceremony here and unveiled a memorial in the grounds on 1st April, 1967. Glorious large Norfolk pine trees, over 100 years old, surround the Church, one having a girth of about 15ft. The foundation stone was laid in 1824 and the Church opened in 1828.

Inside the Church is buried Capt. Rollands, aged 37, who died from "sunstroke". There is only one stained glass window in the Church, that of St. Thomas, just behind the altar. The Rev. John Cross was the first Rector; he officiated for 30 years and came from the historic Church of St. Matthew at Windsor and prior to that he relieved the Rev. Samuel Marsden at Parramatta. In all there have been 21 Ministers at St. Thomas' and for a period of nearly two years when there was a vacancy, Major Innes filled the position. The enclosed pews, made of solid cedar, are square and oblong in shape, about 5ft. high, and it is understood that this type of pew exists in only 4 churches in the world. Rent from these pews at St. Thomas' were supposed to form the basis of income for the Church. Convicts under guard were accommodated at the western end where there is a floor of hand made bricks, which because of their soft nature have had to be turned over as they became worn. At first the whole floor of the Church was composed of several feet of red soil, well stamped down. A Barrel organ arrived in 1857 (believed to be the only one still in use in a church). This took the place of a seraphim; prior to this a violin and clarionet provided the church music. A Wurlitzer organ was installed in 1962. A circular staircase, beautifully carved, leads up to the Tower from which magnificent views can be obtained. With regard to the restoration, a plaque in the Church reads - "To the Greater Glory of God this Church Tower, restored by the people of Port Macquarie and their Donor Friends, under the auspices of the National Trust of Australia, (N.S.W.), was opened by His Excellency, The Right Honourable Lord Casey, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, on Tuesday, 8th October, 1968".

In the grounds was built a Hospital Dispensary in 1821/22; it later had various uses until it was renovated and in 1966 opened as the Colonial Chapel of Christ the Healer. A fine house, originally the residence of Government Surgeon Dr. James McIntyre, (he married the younger daughter of Rev. John Cross), is now the Rectory, and still contains cellars and bread-baking ovens.

Mrs. Monck left the coach shortly after this and said "we wish you a safe journey home. We have thoroughly enjoyed your visit and hope you will come again, and perhaps some day we may be able to come to visit you."

We then began our journey back to Rockdale, but had not made much progress, (about 10 miles) when the airbrakes again started to give trouble, so the driver alighted to get some tools to adjust them through panels in the floor of the coach. We then continued on our way, and after we had travelled quite a distance, one of the passengers noticed that the luggage door on the side was flapping and the driver then realised he had left his tool box back on the road where we had stopped. He was about to turn around when a car drove up with the tools, for which we, and especially the driver, were very thankful. After this, when going down steep hills he used the gears as a brake which slowed us down considerably. We reached Taree at 12.30 p.m. where we had a nice lunch and during the afternoon we all had a bit of a sleep. It was clouding up and light rain fell as we stopped at a cafeteria at Hexham for tea. In the grounds, housed under a covered pavilion, is an old type Rescue boat named "Victoria" and a horse-drawn rescue rocket cart with fire hose attached to a separate vehicle.

On this trip Mr. Ellis continued his research work, reconnoitring for Comfort Stations and various other necessary requirements on a long journey such as this. When we arrived back at Rockdale Town Hall at about 11 p.m. he was also instrumental in getting a fleet of taxis to arrive within a few minutes for which we were very thankful; and so home to bed after a very interesting, eventful, but slightly tiring long weekend.

It would not be fitting to close this account without acknowledging the marvellous information we received from members of The Hastings District Historical Society, together with brochures, maps and literature from the Museum, all of which has enabled this report to be compiled. Those who did not participate in this trip would be well advised to do so if another one to Port Macquarie should be planned in the future.

APPENDIX:

The 20 marked historic sites at Port Macquarie are briefly as follows:-

1. Tacking Point where on 22nd July 1802, Captain Matthew Flinders in the "Investigator" came in close by and named this headland. A light house was established here in 1879.
2. Oxley's Camp Site: Lieut. John Oxley, Surveyor-General, made camp here on 8th October, 1818, when he reached Port Macquarie on his expedition across country from the New England tablelands. He named the river Hastings after the Governor-General of India, and following it

- down to the entrance named the port after Governor Macquarie, on 8.10.1818. All 12 convicts who came with him were given pardons and grants of land (Sydney Gazette 12.12.1818).
3. In 1819 Governor Macquarie sent Lieut. John Oxley on a second expedition to survey the entrance and river further. The report was so satisfactory that it was decided to form a penal settlement at Port Macquarie.
 4. In 1821 Capt. Allman and party arrived with the first batch of convicts. The prisoners had been selected from the best behaved gangs and were carpenters, pit sawyers, a tailor, a shoemaker etc. and 50 good strong convict labourers, who were informed that after 18 months of good conduct they could obtain a ticket of leave or conditional pardon according to their sentences.
 5. The Stockade: A large compound was built and used as a place of refuge against attacks by aboriginals. A residence for the Commandant was also erected.
 6. Government Gardens: The gardens included the Government Cemetery, wherein cotton was grown. Also in this area in the year 1823 it is claimed the first sugar cane plantation stood, and was developed from eight joints by the Antigua convict, James Williams. The first sugar was produced on the site of Mr. James Blair's saddler's shop. Vegetable gardens were on the western bank of the creek, pineapples and coffee being grown there also.
 7. Tombstone Hill: Capt. Allman hoisted the British ensign on this hill on his arrival. 28 burials were made in this first cemetery.
 8. St. Thomas' Church: This Church was designed by Francis Greenaway and the plans were prepared by Lieut. T. H. Owen. When Governor Macquarie visited the settlement in 1821, he ordered that a brick church be built and he chose the site on the hill. The Rev. John Cross was the first Rector.
 9. First Gaol and Female Factory: The Gaol stood in Government Paddock which extended for a distance and was built in the early 1820's. The female convicts were given the task of making nails for the church and other government structures. Although the gaol has been demolished, one of the old wells is still in existence.
 10. Government House: Erected by Capt. Gillman about 1823-34. It was built before the town was laid out in 1830. When it was demolished it was found that all the bricks were marked with a convict arrow.
 11. Government Hospital: Was used for invalids unable to do laborious work. The Dispensary, which is still in existence is in the grounds of St. Thomas' Church, and was used for many years as a Parish Hall. The Government Surgeon's quarters were built further back and is the present day Rectory.

12. Government Cemetery: Many old pioneers and convicts are buried here. The first burial was in 1824.
13. Military Barracks: Built to house 150 men - foundations can still be seen. In 1852 it was the first Public School and teacher's residence.
14. Royal Oak Inn: Believed to be the first Public House on this northern part of the coast.
15. The Mill: Erected by Major Innes and used to grind all the corn for the Government contracts - hominy for the prisoners, wheat for the free people. Major Innes was a most enterprising man and connected with many ventures in the colony.
16. Court House: The first Court House and lock-up had the Post Office attached. The constable's quarters were where the Court House now stands.
17. Boat Harbour: A boat house was constructed here and a large mass of rock blasted in order to make a safe landing place. Large and substantial jetties and a crane were erected and a metal road formed leading down to the beach.
18. Bridge and Block House: A bridge was built here about 1831 and connected east and west Port Macquarie. A Guard House was used to check all traffic outward and inward. No persons were allowed to leave without permission and curfew regulations confined all persons to their homes at a certain time, whether bond or free.
19. Gaol: Remains of the brick foundations of this gaol can still be seen and there is an old well nearby. Construction began in 1837 and in 1840 transportation of convicts to N.S.W. ceased. The building was demolished by local Council in 1917.
20. Gaol Point: This was a built-out area overlooking the entrance to the river and was originally guarded by two cannons. The "Wanderer" was wrecked off this point in 1851 and some of its relics may be seen at the Museum.

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