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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



PRICE 5 c .

# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

24 Duff Street,  
Arncliffe. 2205.  
October 1974.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, October 18th, 1974, at 8 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Rockdale.

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. & Mrs. Coghlan have just returned from a trip overseas, and have kindly consented, per medium of Colour Slides, to share their many and varied experiences with us.

Supper Roster: Captain: Mrs. McNamara, & Misses Frost, Lambert, White, Mrs. Marsden.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,

President.

Phone 587.4555.

Mrs. E. Eardley,

Hon. Secretary.

Phone 59.8078

Mrs. E. Wright,

Treasurer & Social Sec.

Phone 599.4884.

Mr. A. Ellis,

Research Officer.

Phone 587.1159.

Indecision and Delay are the Parents of Failure.

DATES TO REMEMBER.

The following Social Outing has been arranged for your pleasure;  
Our Social Secretary, Mrs. Wright will appreciate your support,  
there are still a few seats available on the Coach, if you have a  
favourite Friend or Friends, please feel free to invite them too.

Date: Saturday, ~~October~~ 26th. 1974.

Meeting Place: Town Hall , Rockdale.

Time: 9 O'clock a.m.

Cost: \$ 2.00 per person.

The Coach will return via the " Macquarie Towns." This should  
make the day very interesting and enjoyable.  
Bring your own eats; tea, (if required) will be available on Coach.

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Further details at October Meeting, also Mrs. Wright will be pleased  
to collect the necessary money. Thankyou all. Phone 599.4884

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We take pleasure in announcing that Book number "7", published by  
the St.George Historical Society, entitled:"Early History, Tempe  
and the Black Creek Valley", written and illustrated by Mr. Gifford  
Eardley, is now available at a cost of \$1.00 - plus 20¢ postage.  
Copies may be purchased from the Hon.Sec., phone 59.8078, or from  
Miss Otten at "Lydham Hall" at weekends.

Books number 5 & 6 are still available, reprints of Books number -  
1-2-3-&4 will be available at an early date.

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Mr. F. Hayman has been a patient in Hospital, also Mr. G. Eardley.  
We wish them both a speedy recovery, and trust that they will soon  
be well and back home again.

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Returning to the southern portion of Bathurst Street we find, on the eastern side, a tiny single-fronted shop which spreads its narrow verandah awning over the grassy verge which serves as a footpath. This emporium, when open, catered for the repair of wireless sets. The main road to Maroota and onwards to Wiseman's Ferry leaves Bathurst Street to follow the short length of Wellesley Street before turning eastward into Eldon Street which street is followed to the junction of Wiseman's Ferry Road. Immediately beyond the Wellesley Street intersection, facing towards Bathurst Street, stands the former "BIRD IN HAND" Inn, which by all accounts, commenced to function in 1825 under the guidance of mine host Daniel Smallwood. About the late eighteen-forties, the hostelry was renamed, presumably by Richard Mawson, as "THE MAID OF AUSTRALIA" and as such continued in business until 1896, when as before mentioned, the license was transferred to the "AUSTRALIAN" Hotel at Mc Grath's Hill. According to a water-colour sketch in the Mitchell Library this two-storied inn was flanked on either side by single storied annexes and a couple of magnificent shade-trees. It has been stated that the drinking parlour was furnished with seats around the walls and a wide-hearthed fire-place where logs burned merrily, gave comfort to patrons during the cold and frosty winter months. The foaming tankards were filled in the adjoining tap-room by the publican and served through a small opening in the partition wall. No doubt this old inn was the central meeting place of the rural community, their convivial club where much good fellowship was expressed and received. Later than 1896 much of the interior arrangement of the old inn was dismantled to house the fitting arrangements necessary for a general store which is now in the capable hands of Mr. P. Miller. It is regrettable that the two beautiful shade-trees flanking the place have been destroyed for reasons not particularly apparent.

On the western side of Bathurst Street, in the vicinity of the general store, were the milking sheds of a dairy farm, the low non-descript buildings being chiefly distinguished by a pair of squat brick chimneys arranged side by side. The ramshackle edifice was noted as being abandoned in 1954 and has since been demolished.

At the northern end of the "MAID OF AUSTRALIA" (lovely name for an old pub) is the dual section (inter) of Eldon Street and Grenville Street. Just beyond this junction, facing a grassy sward, is an ancient lock-up barn painted from head to toe with aluminium based paint. The picturesque portion of Pitt Town is now entered where many large trees lend their umbrageous charm to the several old established buildings in the immediate vicinity. On the eastern side of Bathurst Street once lay the weatherboard cottage of Robert Maxwell, its steel galvanised iron roof having its gabled ends turned downwards for a short distance in "Snug-dutch" fashion. The cottage was set off by a wide front verandah, which had a sharply sloping roof and almost hidden by a wealth of shrubbery, whilst at the rear of the premises was a backing of lofty trees. Then came the neat sandstone Presbyterian Church, which was dedicated on May 25th, 1862, located at the intersection of Buckingham Street and also surrounded by beautiful trees.

On the left or western side of this particular section of Bathurst Street stands the old "Colonial" type building formerly known as the Macquarie Arms, said to have been built about 1829. William Johnston is recorded as being the first licensee and the inn functioned as such until about 1840 since when, so it is presumed, the premises became residential and gained the name "Mulgrave Place". The house is a story and a half in height and its upper rooms have their windows peeping out beneath the eaves of the end gables, one at each side of the dumpy

PITT TOWN (Part 2)

Gifford & Eileen Eardley.

bonneted chimneys. "Mulgrave Place" is solid honest-to-goodness architecture at its best, relative to the period of its construction and it is obvious that its steep roof, now covered with corrugated iron, was once over-layed with wooden shingles cut from the local casuarina trees. The rear premises are attractive in their simplicity and the kitchen has a hipped-roof and white-washed walls. Next door, almost on the same property, is a long part-brick, part-weatherboard barn-like structure with a "Snug-dutch" roof of corrugated iron (formerly of shingles) which, according to report was once in use either as a winery or a beer shanty, operating under the name of the "BRIGHTON HOTEL". When the place was inspected by the writer in 1954, the interior was a shambles where baulks of rough-hewn cedar planks, remnants of the bar-room panelling, cluttered the floor and came in handy as perches for a host of barn-yard poultry. Luxuriant trees front the premises and at times, house a choir of magpies, who, in addition to uttering their beautiful piping flute-like calls, are not above carrying out "dive-bombing" exercises with the unsuspecting way-farer's head as a target. The old building was externally intact at 1974.

At the northern side of the erstwhile "BRIGHTON HOTEL" was an unkempt laneway, little more than a cart-track, which wended its way down-hill to give gated access to the properties occupying the eastern portion of the Pitt Town Bottoms and its shallow fresh-water lagoon. In recent years this lane has been closed and is now occupied by a modern bungalow.

Adjoining the laneway is the tree-girt fenced enclosure associated with St. James's Church of England, wherein was situated a long low brick-walled building, covered by a gable-ended iron roof and flanked by a full length verandah on one side and a lean-to skillion, complete with fire-place and chimney, on the other. It is understood that the school and services of the church were held in this edifice, built according to one source of information, about 1820, but definite proof of this date has been difficult to obtain. The Parish of Pitt Town was formed in 1825 and the first incumbent rented a parsonage at Pitt Town and conducted weekly services at Wilberforce and also, on alternate Sundays, at Pitt Town and Sackville Reach. It is unfortunate that this ancient building was dismantled about 1973 and replaced by a modern structure of no particular merit.

The beautiful stone church, designed by Blacket, was opened on September 2nd., 1858, and consecrated by Bishop Barker on April 11th, 1859. This edifice built by Thomas Collison, is of a straight-forward but pleasing design of ashlar stone-work obtained from a quarry at Longneck. Beneath the foundation stone there was deposited "a bottle containing a copy of the daily papers, "The Church of England Chronicle", certain coins and a scroll setting forth proceedings of the day." The "PEACE" (1914-18) War Memorial Windows were installed during 1920. There are two graves outside the eastern end of the chancel, hard against the street alignment, one being that of Mary Anne Eliza Palmer (wife of the Reverend H. A. Palmer) who died on December 1st., 1864 and a double grave in which the Reverend William Woods (deceased February 24th, 1886) and his wife, Mary Wood, who predeceased him on October 31st., 1885, were interred.

The present rectory of St. James Church is a modern building built in 1973, which has replaced a squat single-storied structure which, according to its trim style, may have been built between 1830 and 1840. Considerable alterations were made during recent years to adapt the rear portion of the old cottage to conform with the living requirements of various rectors. The facade had small sized out-shut rooms at each end of the front verandah and located in a surround of



PITT TOWN (Part 2)

Gifford & Eileen Eardley.

splendid trees were the old-time stables and a carriage shed massively constructed of wooden slabs raised in vertical fashion and covered with corrugated iron sheeting.

Beyond the St. Jame's Rectory and the intersection of Buckingham Street, we find that Bathurst Street turns northward and that its extension becomes known as Punt Road, leading to the former punt-crossing of the Hawkesbury River at York Reach and onwards to the Macquarie Town of Wilberforce. The site of the former Pitt Town Post-Office is located on the western side of Punt Road where, once upon a time, two small weatherboard structures of the single-roomed variety catered for the postal needs of the immediate district. One building had a side lean-to and the other was distinguished by a small front awning. Local information states that these facilities were established about 1859. The Post-Mistress in more recent times, was a charming lady named Miss Owen who lived in the immediately adjacent two-storied weather-board house confronted by a splendid large specimen of an American Magnolia tree. The upper floor of Miss Owen's house was sub-divided by walls of calico suspended from a light scantling framework, the doorways being formed of the same flimsy material.

With the establishment of another Post-Office, contained within the front portion of a modern cottage and placed nearly opposite to the former "Maid of Australia Inn" in Bathurst Street, the original office was vacated, although the two-storied house still remains in occupation although its front verandah has been removed in recent times, being replaced by a small portico at the entrance doorway. Alterations to the front windows have also been made, possibly during the 1969 period.

A short distance further to the north and on the western side of Punt Road is a tree-clad single-storied double-fronted cottage of ancient vintage, complete with a roof of galvanised iron which was so essential to collect rainwater for the household tanks, which gloried in the name of "EMOH RUO", said name being somewhat of a mystery to visitors from New Zealand who are unacquainted with the fact that the name should be read backwards. The facade of the cottage was plastered and lined to represent bricks but the side walls were of weatherboard sadly in need of paint. A medium-sized "Weeping Willow" tree spread its shade over the front wired fence whilst a dense mass of shrubbery occupied both the side and back-yard. It is understood that Mr. Samuel Bootle resided there for many years but the cottage was more or less in a derelict state when sketched in December 1969. On the opposite side of Punt Road, the scene is brightened by a long row of Pinis Insignus trees which were planted many years ago to form a wind-break to protect an orchard of citrus trees from the cold "westerlies" which constantly sweep over the adjacent flat lands known as the Pitt Town Bottoms.

Returning to the western side of Punt Road, we reach a dairy farm where contented cows browse on the rich pastures and are milked within the confines of a shed placed on higher ground. The place is marked by a typical "Hawkesbury Barn" of mammoth proportions which has a lean-to on its western side, the walls being made of vertically placed timber slabs whilst weatherboards line the upper portion of the end gables. Throughout the normal working week-days, an atmosphere of rural peace settles over the immediate area, broken only at times by the drowsy lowing of cattle, the occasional barking of dogs, or the clarion crow of high-stepping roosters, but at week-ends the local residents are made angry by the devilish noise created by innumerable speed-boats and the water-ski

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enthusiasts racing along the normally placid reaches of the adjacent Hawkesbury River.

The intersection of the west-east extension of Pitt Town Bottoms Road is met, a side thoroughfare that passes for the mile or so of its length through fenced cultivation and grazing paddocks, without a building structure of any kind against its grassy verges. From this intersection of the area, the Punt Road continues to the former punt crossing of York Reach. On its western side, is a homestead latterly occupied by Sydney Johnston, which, as the original Presbyterian Manse, is said to date back to 1826. The adjoining property was acquired by John Davison Junior from Henry Fleming and during 1821 the former gentleman established the aforesaid punt service, the vessel being constructed by John Grono, a local farmer and boat-builder. Pit-sawn timber, cut from trees growing in the Pitt Town Bottoms, was used for the construction of the ferry. The Government took over the running of all ferry services in the State as from 1832, but prior to this year it is evident that the York Reach Punt service was one of the perquisites of the farm and its Presbyterian Minister. The ferry ceased running about 1920 and with the passing of the years, its landing appurtenances have been washed away.

Reverting to the intersection of Punt Road with Pitt Town Bottoms Road, the latter secondary thoroughfare continued north-eastwards to serve several outlying farms located against Canning Reach, the non-descript farm-steads being placed on higher land to avoid normal floodings of the Hawkesbury River.

There were several short-length streets lying to the east of the main thoroughfare of Pitt Town, as represented by Bathurst Street, where the solitary general store, the post-office and the two churches are located. Perhaps the principal of these off-shoots would be Buckingham Street, where the public school is situated on its northern side, whilst a few early built cottages are ranged at intervals along the southern alignment, all of architectural interest.

There were two old cottages of interest in Grenville Street and there are two more, together with a fascinating but sadly dilapidated barn in Chatham Street; Wellesley Street was confronted by the former police station, occupied in more recent times by Janie Wearne, but now demolished.

This slab hut, its separate kitchen and surround of fowl runs, a most picturesque assembly, was good to look upon by those who like to observe these simple but homely ancient dwellings of yesteryear.

## THE SYDNEY HARBOUR FERRY-BOATS OF YESTERYEAR.

Cyril Singleton.

The ferry-boats, each with a distinctive personality, plying their lawful occasions on the waters of Sydney Harbour at or about the 1905 period form a most interesting fleet and the following is a list of the various vessels concerned, together with their respective companies.

The little boats present an historical subject which has yet to be fully written, therefore these reminiscences, made on an "off the cuff" basis, may prove of value.

The following record was compiled by Gifford Eardley from many discussions made with the late Cyril Singleton concerning his association with the ferry-boats when in the employ, as a draughtsman, of Mort's Dock and Engineering Company, of Waterview Bay, Balmain.

The listing may, or may not, be entirely complete, but at least it is well-worth detailing for the benefit of those amongst us who like these nautical things. As "Rat said to Mole:- There is nothing like messing about with boats." It is pleasing to note that a few of the ferry-boats mentioned, still remain in daily service and glide smoothly along between their landing wharves, as they traverse the beauteous reaches of that wonderland known as "Port Jackson".

## THE FERRY-BOATS ASSOCIATED WITH SYDNEY HARBOUR.

### MANLY CO-OPERATIVE FERRY COMPANY.

"CYGNET" An iron screw-driven ferry boat from Tasmania  
"FEARLESS" A tugboat) both used as  
"CONQUEROR" A tugboat) passenger boats  
"COBAR" Passenger ferry  
"MANLY" A hardwood double-ender.  
This Company went broke and the Port Jackson Company took over the "MANLY" and sold the other vessels, the "FEARLESS" and the "CONQUEROR" to Brisbane as tug-boats and the "CYGNET" to Tasmania.

### THE PORT JACKSON STEAMSHIP CO.

"BRIGHTON" Paddle-wheeler.  
"FAIRLIGHT" Paddle-wheeler.  
"EMU"- later re-named "BRIGHTSIDE"  
"BEN-BOLT" A cargo boat.  
"NARRABEEN" Paddle-wheeler, also used as a cargo boat on occasion.

### SYDNEY FERRY COMPANY.

"KUBU" Screw double-ender.  
"KOREE" " " "  
"KULGOA" " " "  
"KURRABA" " " "  
"KIA-KIA" " " "  
"KANIMBLA" " " "  
"KANANORA" "  
"KUTTABUL" Lavender Bay Services, 2000 passengers.  
"KOOMPARTOO" As above.  
"KALANG" Vehicle boat. Converted to Show-boat.  
"KARRA-KARRA" To Stockton  
"KAMIRI"

### PARRAMATTA FERRY COMPANY.

"SWAN" Paddle-wheeler  
"ALATHEA" Screw boat  
"HALCYON" " "  
"GANNET" Screw. Single cylinder. Owned by Fenwick's.  
"CYGNET" Screw. Single-cylinder.

THE PORT JACKSON STEAMSHIP CO. (Contd.)

"COMMODORE." Paddle-wheel tug-boat.  
Also used on holiday passenger traffic.  
"MYSTERY" Paddle-wheeler tugboat.  
"IRRESISTIBLE". Paddle-wheeler tug-boat  
"SOUTH STEYNE"  
"BARRANJOEY" Renamed "NORTH-HEAD"  
"MANLY" First screw boat  
"KURINGIN" Screw - built at Mort's Dock  
"BURRABRA"  
"BALGOWLAH"  
"BINGARRA"  
"BARRAGOOOLA"  
"BELLUBRA"  
"DEE-WHY"  
"BARRENJOEY"  
"CURL CURL"

BALMAIN FERRY COMPANY.

"TELEPHONE" Paddle-wheeler  
"MEMEL" Paddle-wheeler  
"PYRMONT" Paddle-wheeler

NORTH SHORE FERRY COMPANY. (to Sydney Ferry Co.)

"BUNYA-BUNYA" Paddle-wheeler.  
"ST. LEONARDS." " "  
"BENELON" Paddle horse-ferry  
"WALLABY" Screw. Double-ended.  
First on the harbour

LANE COVE FERRY COMPANY.

"PEARL"  
"DAPHNE"  
"KIRRIBILLI"  
"LOBELIA" (delete)  
"SHAMROCK" Screw. Built 1902.  
"EGERIA"

PARRAMATTA FERRY COMPANY. (Contd.)

"PHEASANT" First triple-cylinder expansion ferry-boat.  
"BRONZEWING."  
"KANGOOOLA" Cargo-boat.  
"The small "TARBAN CREEK" ferry-boat named "?".

WATSONS BAY AND SOUTH SHORE STEAM FERRY COMPANY.

"COURIER" Screw  
"KING EDWARD" "  
"VAUCLUSE" "  
"GREYCLIFFE" "

GLEBE AND ANNANDALE FERRY COMPANY.

"GUTHRIE" Screw.

LEICHHARDT & DRUMMOYNE FERRY COMPANY

"BIRKENHEAD" Screw.

BALMAIN NEW FERRY COMPANY. (to Sydney Ferry Co.)

"LADY RAWSON" Screw  
"LADY CHELMSFORD" "  
"LADY NEILSON" "  
"LADY DENMAN" "  
"LADY SCOTT" "  
"LADY EDELINE" "  
"KARINGAL" "  
"KARABEE" "

"ROSE" (First)  
"WOMERAH"  
"LOBELIA" Screw, a "Puffer"  
"ROSE" (Second)  
"THISTLE"