



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.
December 1974.

Dear Friend and Member,

Our Christmas Meeting, to be held as usual, on the third Friday in the Month, namely, December 20th, 1974, will take the form of a Social gathering at "Lydham Hall", which is in Lydham Avenue, Rockdale, just off the Forest Road, Bexley. Your Administrative Officers are busily organising something quite different this year, something you are most certain to enjoy. If you have "Period Frocks" it would be appreciated if you would wear them for this occasion. We trust that all who are not otherwise engaged will come along and help to make the evening a success, we cannot do without the other "99", so to speak, it will add to the pleasure and excitement of this, our "Christmas Get-to-gether".

All will be invited to participate in the sumptuous traditional "Christmas Spread", provided and prepared by our wonderful Ladies. So come along, bring yourself and friends, don't forget the "Plate", we are looking forward to meeting you all on this "Festive" occasion.

Usual Time: 8 p. m.
"Lydham Hall".

Supper Roster.

Captain Mrs. Gow, Miss Otten, and as many Ladies as possible to help please.

Mr. Don Sinclair,
President.

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The President & Officers extend the Season's Greetings to all.

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Dates to Remember:

An invitation from the "1788 - 1820 Association".

You are invited to attend "The Rocks Australia Day Celebrations", a gathering of "Descendants of Early Pioneers" on Monday, 27th January, 1975, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; this will be an historic event; never before in our history have descendants of our very early pioneers gathered together to honour our ancestors and to commemorate the landing of Governor Phillip and the First Fleet. (26th January, 1788).

Sunday, February 2nd, 1975.

ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

Annual Pilgrimage to St. Philip's, York Street, Sydney, at 3 p.m. to mark the 187th Anniversary of the first Christian Service in Australia.

R.S.V.P. 20th January, 1975.

"Lydham Hall"

It is with pleasure that we introduce Miss Bet Otten as Curator of "Lydham Hall", phone number 59.4259.

Miss Otten will be pleased to have more ladies or gents if interested, to help on the ROSTER, Saturday, Sunday or Holidays, could you help? If so, please ring.

Visiting Hours: Saturday
Sunday 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Holidays

or ring Miss Otten for Week days when arrangements will be made to fit in with your plans.

Bits & Pieces needed, some of which you may have tucked away for a "Rainy day":

Picture Frames - 12" x 18"

Willow Pattern China -

Period Frocks -

Period Hats - or any things which will help to make "Lydham Hall" more attractive and genuinely authentic.

The Society is indebted to Mrs. Errol Hambley for the acquisition of a Carved Ceremonial Horn for display at "Lydham Hall". This instrument came from a long defunct branch of the "Ancient Order of Foresters", a Friendly Society Lodge, and the following note has been culled from a book entitled "Unknown Hampshire" wherein it was stated - "In olden times in England the laws for the regulation of Crown forests in particular were most strict, and for some infringements the punishment was death. Landowners were allowed to shoot wolves, bears and foxes and Lords both temporal and spiritual were permitted to kill two beasts. Before killing them they were obliged to sound a "Hunting Horn" to show that it was a legal right they exercised and not a poaching theft they were committing."

ITEMS DONATED TO "LYDHAM HALL", FOR WHICH WE SAY "THANKYOU"

Mrs. Hungerford, Preddys Road, Bexley.	Paragon China Tea Service, (complete), white with blue scalloped design on cups, fluted, gold edged. Embossed Fruit Plate.
Mrs. Dyer, 11 Bernard Avenue, Bardwell Park. (On Loan)	Small Embossed Jewellery Chest Vegetable Dish, Gravy Boat & Plate (all hand painted) China Toast Rack Gravy Boat, (blue edge) Vinegar Jug, 2 Egg Cups (Glass) Glass Marble (from drink bottle) Glass Stopper (sauce bottle type) Collection Gold Quartz from Hill End, N. S. W. Clock, Wooden Front. Very old Button Small Ink Bottle
Mrs. Parker, Carlton.	Glass Vase, embossed, (Lily of the Valley & Violets)
Mr. & Mrs. Harris, Stanley Street, Arncliffe.	Late 19th Century Novelty Decanter, Inscription "One last look around" from England by Harris Family.
Miss Thomas, MBE., Forest Road, Bexley.	Glass Cake Dish. Avoca Glass Pickle Jar, in Silver Basket (both of these gifts are more than 70 years old)
Mr. & Mrs. Bowles, Bexley North.	2 Long Baby Gowns, Handmade, 73 years old. 1 Crockery Kettle 1 Ruby Glass Lined Sugar Basin in Silver Basket 1 Willow Pattern Meat Platter (for carving Meat) over 100 years old. 1 Small Letter (Postal) Scales 1 Small Gold Miners Scales 1 Ladies Comb 1 Small Pocket Knife 1 Baby Brooch 1 Pair Small Cuff Links 1 Small Silver Bangle 2 Pictures of Early Sydney.

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ITEMS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST IN THE ST. GEORGE DISTRICT. (MR. BILL MAPPER.)

1839 - - - - - 1927.

- 1839. Cooks River Dam built: This was a lifeline to St. George District for 50 years. Roads. Lack of roads was the great drawback for many years.
- 1871. Municipality of West Botany formed - Only two wards - ARNCLIFFE with only 221 inhabitants and WEST BOTANY with 543. First Mayor was William Yates; first Town Clerk, Frederick Keen - salary £40.0.0 per annum. Two men were employed in each ward for a week. Council income, £500.0.0 - 1/- in the £. rate, with £250.0.0 Government Endowment - 3 lamps installed at Cook's River Dam.
- 1872. First Council Chambers built on ground purchased for £20.0.0 - sand-stone building erected for £104.0.0.
- 1873. First Council Chambers opened.
- 1874. Seven Mile Beach renamed "Lady Robinson Beach".
- 1876. Government endowment withdrawn causing much financial embarrassment. First Post Office opened at Arncliffe. (erected)
- 1879. First Inspector of Nuisances appointed at £10.0.0 per annum.
- 1881. Working Overseer appointed at £2.2.0 per week, employees paid S.7/6 daily.
- 1883. Enter "Thomas Saywell's tram to Lady Robinsons Beach. COOK PARK. Strip of land 100' wide, from Cook's River to Sandringham.
- 1884. Railway to Hurstville.
- 1886. Australian Gaslight Co: First mains in Rockdale - Council's revenue £1750.0.0.
- 1888. Municipality name changed to ROCKDALE. Rockdale Town Hall built. Cost £2,750.0.0.
- 1889. Sewerage Farm established at North Brighton - (a headache for years) Rockdale Public School opened.
- 1890. First Water Service for Rockdale - land purchased for Post Office. "two deliveries daily" - (now, only one).
- 1892. First Municipal Engineer appointed. Telephone system to Rockdale. Cemetery at Sutherland. Duplicate pan system established for Sanitary Service.
- 1895. Brighton Race Course opened.

ITEMS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST IN THE ST. GEORGE DISTRICT. (MR. BILL NAPPER.)

1897. St. George Cottage Hospital opened at Kogarah. Postal Service at Brighton-le-Sands.
1898. Saywell's tram changed from steam to electricity. Quoiks Paddock changed to Rockdale Park.
1901. Hopetoun Ward created by Rockdale Council.
1906. Banksia station opened.
1908. Arncliffe-Bexley Tram started. Sewerage Farm abolished. Carruther's Drive built. (Doll's Point to Brighton). Skidmore's Bridge re-built,
1909. Sewer extended to Rockdale.
1911. Overhead traffic bridge built at level-crossing in Frederick Street, Rockdale. Brighton Race Course abolished. Land sub-divided for home sites.
1914. First World War started. Saywell's tram taken over by Government.
1918. Pneumonic Influenza outbreak. A dreadful scourge to the community. St. George Bowling Green removed, to new premises in Frederick Street. General Holmes Drive opened - Brighton to Botany.
1920. St. George County Council formed.
1922. Rocky Point Road renamed Princes Highway.
1923. Sub-way at Harrow Road opened.
1924. Railway line electrified.
1925. New Baths at Brighton opened. Shady Nook Pleasure Spot at Brighton closed. Land sold for shop sites. New Fire Station built in Bay Street, Rockdale.
1927. New building alignment in Princes Highway proclaimed for road-widening. Two well-known Nurseries (Iliffe's) and (Vincent's) sub-divided for buildings.

(MORE TO FOLLOW.)

Gifford Eardley.

The relatively unknown but historic hamlet of Laughtondale, is located on the west bank of the beautiful Trollope Beach portion of the Hawkesbury River some four and a half miles to the south-east of Wiseman's Ferry. Here there were numerous small holdings wedged side by side along the length of the narrow strip of alluvial land lying between the base slopes of the steep-sided ranges following the course of the river and the mangrove-fringed river bank. A narrow access road bisected the farmlets and terminated at Singleton's Tidal Mill further down stream. In addition to this dead-end road from Wiseman's Ferry there is a cross-connecting bush track, known as the Gully Road, which leads from Laughtondale in a general south-westerly direction for about three miles to skirt the western gully slopes of One Tree Hill and gain the upper valley of Cooper's Creek, passing through the dense Maroota Forest by means of abrupt gradients to junction with the original Great North Road at a distance, of about six miles south of Wiseman's Ferry.

Mention is made that portion of the then isolated river-side area was occupied, according to the census of 1841, by John Laughton, who, with his wife, one son (Joseph) and daughter, lived in a small wooden house, presumably of slab-walled construction and cultivated an orchard and were also engaged with small-farming activities for a great many years. In course of time, Joseph became a boatman on one of the trading craft that plied between Sydney and the Hawkesbury River farming settlements and eventually married Adah Ashton, a resident of Parramatta. The bride was tall and somewhat angular in shape and sturdy enough to walk the whole distance from Laughtondale to her home town of Parramatta with her young baby strapped to her back. Her husband, Joseph, was of medium build and in the fashion of the times, distinguished by a large bushy beard. The couple were blessed with three children, the eldest gaining his grandfather's name, John, and the two daughters were named Milba and Thelma.

John Laughton (second) also followed his grandfather's pursuits and cultivated an orchard at Laughtondale and in due course married Dorothy Macrae, the resulting family consisted of four sons and one daughter. The sons, when of age, did not stay in the area, the eldest named Ronald and the third son, Leonard, joined the New South Wales Police Force, both being very tall men, their stature being attributed, according to their mother, Dorothy, to their climbing the hill at the south of the property in order to gain a little sunlight. The second boy was named Maxwell and the youngest boy Oscar, but information is not available as to their every-day employment. The daughter and youngest of the family was named milba, after her aunt.

Reverting to Milba and Thelma, the two daughters of Joseph Laughton, we find that Milba married Edward Greentree, a scion of a very old Hawkesbury family and a very handsome young man who possessed an orchard property on the east bank of the Hawkesbury River, opposite to Laughtondale. They had a family of three children, the eldest, a girl named Rita, died at the early age of nine years, whilst the second, Clarice, married Aenor Enberg, a Swedish gentleman and went to live at Kingsgrove, whilst the son, Ashton, became a chemist in the Australian Air Force and in due time

THE HAMLET OF LAUGHTONDALE.HAWKESBURY RIVER.N.S.W.

married a Miss Cornwell of the "vinegar-making" family. The second daughter of Joseph Laughton, named Thelma, married Thomas Hood, a clever professional musician of Sydney, and they had a daughter named Janice. The aforementioned Edward Greentree eventually sold their orchard and came to live in Sydney where Edward found employment with the Dairy Farmers' Milk Depot at Petersham.

There was another member of the pioneering Laughton family who bore the name of Cecil, of whom little is known, apart from having a farmstead at Laughtondale. Then came Morse Laughton and his good wife, Eliza, who conducted the local Laughtondale Post-Office and telephone in a back room of their residence. Morse was a cousin of John and was also interested in orchard cultivation.

John Laughton's homestead had weather-board walls and a roof covering of galvanised-iron, set out on the "hip" pattern. The front verandah overlooked the river and had its outer edge protected by a balustrade. The orchard supplied quantities of Alberta peaches, apples, nectarines, guavas, pears and water-melons, and several citrus trees provided fruit for jams and domestic use. Fruit was consigned to the Sydney market in packing cases and placed aboard the "CADWALLERDA" or the "ERINGHA" at the small Laughtondale wharf. The property ran a few cows to provide milk and butter, together with a ferocious bull which roamed the country-side more or less at leisure and was far from popular when he saw fit to put his head down, bellow and charge, just to see how fast human beings could run under such circumstances. By and large, the Laughton households were self-supporting, making their own bread and damper, etc., which was just as well, as only small, if any, financial return was gained from their marketed produce. Poultry, ducks and also pigs, wandered at will amongst the orchard trees and augmented the food supply for the household.

Contact with the City of Sydney was quite an event with the residents of Laughtondale and was generally made by catching the return trip of the mail launch plying daily between Brooklyn and Wiseman's Ferry and then by train from Hawkesbury River railway station to Sydney. This meant an overnight stay in the metropolis, but the return journey from Sydney to Laughtondale, using the same method of transport, could be accomplished in the space of one morning.

The fortnightly appearance of the "STORE-BOAT" at Laughtondale wharf, which plied up-stream from Brooklyn, was always an exciting experience and of great interest to the local community, who were notified of the approach of the wide-beamed launch by long toots from her whistle and also by the echoed chug-chug of the engine as she wended her slow way along the reaches of the otherwise silent mountain-enclosed river. The "STORE BOAT" was loaded to the gunwhales with every conceivable commodity necessary for house-hold, personal and, or, cultivation useage. Aboard were four-gallon tins of kerosene, packets of wax candles, hurricane lamps, oil lamps of diverse sorts and shapes, tin and also enamel candle holders and sconces, lamp globes - all necessary for night illumination purposes. Stacks of ready-made clothing in assorted sizes for both sexes, together with boots and shoes, inter-mixed with shovels, spades, picks and hoes and a wide range of groceries. If meat had been previously ordered, it came wrapped

THE HAMLET OF LAUGHTONDALE. HAWKESBURY RIVER N.S.W.

up in newspaper parcels, a somewhat risky procedure in the days when domestic refrigeration was unknown. There were fishing lines and hooks, pins, needles, cottons and so forth, whilst large glass jars, with screw tops, contained highly coloured but sticky unwrapped lollies for the impecunious children to gaze upon, although cheaply retailed at four-a-penny, whilst pink and white striped "bulls-eyes" were only a half-penny each. For the girls, there were fancy purses and hand-bags and colourful hair-ribbons and flower-be-decked hats and bonnets, but these, for the most part, were only purchased for State occasions. Amongst those foregathered at the launch to inspect its treasures were the school-children and their assorted range of dogs, who inspected each other, as is their wont. It was certainly an important event in the otherwise tranquil existence of the community.

At Laughtondale there was a single-roomed school building built of weather-board where two class divisions were taught by one teacher. This gentleman was maintained by the Education Department if a stated number of children were enrolled. To overcome the latter difficulty, the local farmers housed State children and reared them as their own until such time as they were old enough to face the world on their own account.

The highlight of the immediate area of Laughtondale was the annual Tea-meeting held in the grounds of the little Methodist Chapel on the opposite bank of the Hawkesbury River. Here a rough framework of sappling trunks was erected, to the top of which were fastened boughs of ti-tree to form a temporary roof for the occasion. Beneath its shade were placed trestle tables and back-less forms, also fabricated from bush timber. Local residents came from far and near, mostly by rowing boats, but a relative few came by motor launch from riverside farms, whilst others came in horse-drawn vehicles from properties scattered along the river road between Wiseman's Ferry and Spencer; they came, irrespective of denomination, from as far afield as Freeman's Reach, the Colo River, the Macdonald River and from farms in the vicinity of Wiseman's Ferry and the adjoining Webb's Creek valley.

For this important occasion, John Laughton baked a huge slab of fruit cake, mixed with home-made butter and plenty of eggs. Each family contributed its best provender and there were baked sucking pigs and all manner of poultry especially prepared, together with lashings of home-made bread for sandwiches, jams, apple-pies and fancy cakes, galore. It was a real feast held at mid-day and continued at afternoon tea at about 3 o'clock. Then came the cleaning and washing-up, followed by the slow journey homeward to beat the setting sun and attend to the feeding of those fortunate fowls and ducks which managed to escape the slaughter.

The author is indebted to Milba Chignell who, as a young girl, participated in the community life of Laughtondale and has supplied the basic information contained in the above essay dealing with the Laughton family and its everyday life at Laughtondale.