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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



PRICE 5 c .

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

March 1975.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular Meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, March 21st, 1975, at 8 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: "The Story of Mosman", prepared by Mr. Rob. Storrock,
of Mosman Historical Society, and presented by Mr. Don McLaren,
President of the Society. Illustrated.

Supper Roster: Mrs McNamara, Captain, Miss Lambert, Miss White, Miss Frost,
Mrs. Marsden, Mrs. Greenlees.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,

President.

Phone 587.4555

Mrs. E. Eardley,

Hon. Secretary.

Phone 59.8078

Mrs. E. Wright,

Hon. Treas. & Social Sec.

Phone 599.4884

Mr. A. Ellis,

Research Officer.

Phone 587.1159

"Let the greater part of the news you hear be the least part of what you believe."

Quarles.

SOCIAL NEWS.

A visit to "Little Hartley Farm" which is on or near the Great Western Highway at the foot of Mt. Victoria. Here you will see things both ancient and modern, you may join in a Hay ride, or even milk a cow, together with many more attractions.

Date: Sunday, April 20th, 1975.

Meeting Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.

Time: 8.00 a.m. (an early start, it is a fair distance).

Cost: \$2.00 (approximately).

Weather permitting, this should be a most enjoyable outing. If you are interested, and we hope you will be, ring Mrs. Wright, phone 599.4884, for details and bookings. Everybody is welcome, please come along and help to make this outing a happy one.

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Donations to "Lydham Hall".

Mr. Harold Grant, 1 large Jelly Mould, made by Fowlers Pottery.
Bexley. (very old)

Mrs. J. McNay, Information Sheet, Service conducted on the occasion
Bexley. of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, June 20, 1897.

Miss M. Cheetham, Miniature Pen Knife.
Bexley. Medal commemorating first visit of Commonwealth
Fleet to Sydney, October 4th, 1913.

Miss Porter, 1 Top Hat, 1 Tin Hat Box, 1 Smokers Cap,
Carlton. Silver Muffin Dish, 2 Frett Work Picture Frames,
Water Color Picture, Invitation to Civic Reception
to the Prince of Wales, 1908.
Picture of Public School Demonstration on the occasion
of the visit of the American Fleet August 26, 1908.

Mr. & Mrs. Munday, Silk Mob Cap, Book named "Work".
Sans Souci.

Mr. Field, Frettwork Box, Enamel Soup Ladle.
Arncliffe.

Further acknowledgments will be made in the April edition.

WHY ARE WE COLLECTING BLUE AND WHITE CHINA?

By Alderman R.W. Rathbone.

Fine porcelain or "China" was produced in Northern China as early as the Ninth Century A.D. and had developed a surprising refinement by the time it was introduced to Europe 700 years later.

Originally the designs on the translucent white glazes were in subdued greens, purples and browns and usually portrayed designs of fish or plants; but because of the high temperatures required for firing, these designs were frequently distorted and blurred.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644), the Imperial factories at Ching-ti-Chen in South East China experimented with a variety of glazes and discovered that the cobalt imported from Persia produced a blue glaze that could withstand the great heat of firing without distortion. As a result, countless millions of pieces of blue and white porcelain, often of exquisite shape, bearing designs of dragons, phoenixes, birds, ducks, fish, waterplants and playing children were exported to other parts of Asia - particularly India.

It was from India that "China" as the porcelain became known, ultimately found its way to Europe and several choice pieces were presented to Elizabeth I of England in 1586 by Thomas Newberry who had visited the Mogul Court the previous year.

So few pieces, however, reached Europe before 1700 that they were mounted in silver and gold and treated as precious objects.

By the beginning of the 17th Century, the Dutch potters of Delft were making plausible imitations of the Chinese blue and white porcelain from painted earthenware but the jealously guarded secret of how to make true porcelain was to baffle the scientists of Europe for another hundred years.

In 1708, a young German alchemist named Böttger discovered the Chinese secret and from 1711 onwards the Meissen factory near Dresden began producing fine porcelain to be followed by the Royal Sevres factory in France from 1734.

The manufacture of porcelain was introduced into England by Huguenot refugees and first produced at Chelsea about 1745. By 1780 the famous Spode, Minton and Davenport factories of Staffordshire had further refined the process by the manufacture of "Bone China".

Not only did the Germans, French, Dutch and English imitate the Chinese process of making porcelain but early examples from all the factories mentioned were invariably in blue and white and always of Chinese scenes and it was nearly a hundred years before European scenes and other colours were substituted.

Many of the Chinese designs were stylised and the conservative English refused to accept porcelain as being genuine unless it had a Chinese design. This led a number of English factories to "invent" their own Chinese designs.

The most famous of these is the WILLOW PATTERN which was invented by Thomas Turner and Herbert Minton and first produced at Caughley in Shropshire about the year 1780. So popular did this design prove that hundreds of millions of articles bearing the familiar blue and white figures, houses, bridge and turtle doves have been manufactured in the last 195 years and it would be quite safe to say no Victorian home after 1850 was complete without its Willow Pattern dinner or tea sets. It is still being produced.

The Japanese - always with an eye to business - also began producing Willow Pattern China from about 1875 and although both the design and the porcelain are usually much coarser than their English counterparts, specific pieces are eagerly sought after by collectors.

And not to be outdone, the wily Chinese began reproducing the "Chinese" designs invented by the English.

At "Lyddham Hall" we have, at present, 104 pieces of fine blue and white porcelain several pieces of which are of considerable value including over fifty pieces of Willow Pattern, the oldest piece of which is 120 years old.

It is our intention to set aside one room devoted entirely to the exhibition of blue and white china. To do this we need at least another hundred pieces.

Can you help us ?

It doesn't have to be Willow Pattern as long as it is blue and white and it doesn't have to be given. We have many pieces on loan.

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THE LEGEND OF THE WILLOW PATTERN PLATE

Koong Shi (sometimes called Li Chi) was the only daughter of a Mandarin. She was deeply in love with Chang, her father's secretary but was forbidden to marry him because she had been promised to a wealthy old merchant. Chang and Koong Shi made plans to elope but were overheard by the Mandarin who pursued them over a bridge as they escaped across the lake in Chang's boat. Ultimately, the furious Mandarin discovered them and burnt Chang's house to the ground. He was just about to kill his daughter and her lover when the ever-merciful gods intervened and changed them into a pair of turtle doves.

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Further to 'The Valley'. A Hamlet of Old Time.

Tempe. (February, 1975)

(Gifford and Eileen Eardley)

The Homestead Named 'Avondale'

As remembered through the eyes of a twelve year old girl who spent many happy times there with the Bucknell family in 1927 and 1928.

Joyce Wentworth Bucknell became my 'best friend' when we were together at Bexley Primary School. When she first took me to 'Avondale' I was transported into another world and the predominant impression that remains is the peaceful beauty which contrasted even then with the busy life on its boundaries. To me, who was used to the rows of houses in Bexley Streets, time spent in this big home, set in its own garden and surrounded by grassy flats stretching to Wolli Creek, was a unique experience.

Reginald Bucknell, the father, seemed a person of importance. I remember a ruddy complexion with fair bristling moustache. He was never too busy to welcome his young daughter's friend or to find her a horse quiet enough to ride. My memories of him are linked with animals, two horses, dogs and the few cows kept for milking.

Mrs. Bucknell, the mother, I remember mostly in the big kitchen with its huge scrubbed table and pantries. She was tall and dark and, I'm sure, a very good cook. When the meal was ready to be served we walked across the stone-flagged covered way to the dining room. The furniture there was of an earlier period and very impressive to me. I remember the large table and beautiful sideboard. This room led into the drawing room and one crossed a hall from this into the main bedroom.

Joyce had a younger brother, another William Wentworth Bucknell. Billy was a terror to me because he delighted in sending the dogs barking around our horses when I was such a timid novice.

We used to ride across the paddocks to the boundary of their land at Wolli Creek. Later we rode further afield - to where Bexley North Station now stands, across the grassy hills of Kingsgrove as far as Dumbleton (Beverly Hills).

Joyce and I slept in the middle room of the three on the top storey and I can remember looking out of the window towards the creek and hearing the birds.

When land for the East Hills Railway was resumed, I remember a fence built right up to the house itself. I lost touch with my friends after this. Reginald Bucknell died, Joyce and her mother left and the house was demolished. The son, William, enlisted in the A.I.F.

R.M. Clark.