



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

24 Duff Street,
Arncliffe. 2205.
September 1976.

Dear Friend and Member ,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening , September 17th, 1976.

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

Business: General. Re. Delegates for R.A.H.S. Conference.

Mr. A. Ellis & Mr. Dalziel?

Syllabus Item: A Member of the Police Historical Society will speak on
"The Early Days of the Colonial Police Force".

Supper Roster: Mrs. H. Jones , Captain , & Misses Jean Woods , Helen Turner ,
Celia Murphy, Nancy McDougall.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. D. Sinclair,

President.

Phone 587.4555

Mrs. E. Eardley,

Secretary.

Phone 59.8078

Mrs. B. Perkins,

Publicity Officer.

Phone 587.9164

Mrs. E. Wright,

Treas. & Social Sec.

Phone 599.4884

Mr. A. Ellis,

Research Officer.

Phone 587.1159

"Creativity is the art of taking a fresh look at old knowledge."

Readers Digest.

Social News

October 9th, 1976 - Unique exhibition of Australian antiques - will be held at "Lindesay", 1 Carthona Avenue, Darling Point.

Meeting Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.

Time: 1 p.m. Sharp.

Cost (of bus): \$1.20 per person. (bring your afternoon tea).

This is the first time such a comprehensive collection of Australian antiques has been arranged, and it is very pleasing to know that an exhibit from Lydham Hall, presented by one of our Members, will be shown be request.

November 6th, 1976 - Rhododendron Festival.

Meeting Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.

Time: 8.30 a.m.

Cost: \$2.75 per person.

(Bring your morning tea, lunch, & afternoon tea).

Norfolk Island Trip: A booking has been made as follows:-

Date: June 4th - 11th-12th, 1977.

Cost: 'Plane Fare - Return - Approx. \$222.00

Accommodation - Twin Room, ? Bed & Breakfast - \$13.00

This will be "Bounty Week". A Holiday not to be missed, with Duty Free Shopping.
A wonderful opportunity for all.

If you are interested will you please contact Mrs. Wright - Phone 599.4884.

Mrs. Wright appreciates your response to the social outings which she spares no effort in organising. Remember the "OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND".

DONATED TO LYDHAM HALL.

Mr. L. Nixon, Family Bible 1902.
Bexley.

Mr. G. Richardson, Supper Cloth, Cream Silk Hand-Embroidered.
late Gunnamatta Bay. 1 reel cotton.
1 " linen thread
1 " Glace finish thread
Crumb tray & brush.

Mrs. Tolhurst, Cotton bonnet over 80 years old.
Campsie. 1 hat pin, Scotch Thistle knob.

Mr. Dyer, Metal stud box
Bardwell Park. Glass ink bottle.
Glass bottle stopper

Mrs. D. Samuelson, 2 Silver Dishes)
Sans Souci. 2 " Butter Dishes)
1 " Sugar Bowl) Donated
1 Pair Silver Servers.)
Salt & Pepper Set)
Cedar bookcase - on loan.

Many of our Members are on the sick list. We are sorry to hear this, and trust that you will all be well again soon.

A Special Note to our Members. In case you have forgotten, Annual Subscription - \$2.00 per Member, \$3.00 Family Rate (2 or more Members) - payable now please.

A limited supply of the following books, written and illustrated by the late Gifford Eardley (re-printed by popular request) are now available, cost \$1.00 each, postage extra:

- Book 1. "The Early History of the Wolli Creek Valley"
Book 2. "The Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway"
Book 3. "Thomas Saywell's Tramway. 1887 - 1914. Rockdale to Lady Robinsons Beach" - (Limited Stocks)
Book 4. "The Arncliffe to Bexley Steam Tramway"
Also available are: (By the same Author)
Book 5. "Heritage in Stone" (Limited Stocks)
Book 6. "All Stations to Como" (Limited Stocks)
Book 7. "The Early History. Tempe & The Black Creek Valley"

Contact Secretary 'Phone 59.8078

OR Miss Otton 'Phone 59.4259 (after 8 p.m.)

ALSO Smith's Florist Shop, Tramway Arcade, Rockdale.

Society Badges are available - \$1.00 each.

Miss Otton, Curator of "Lydham Hall", is in need of Ladies and/or Gentlemen to assist with the weekend roster. Visitors come from far and wide to see this lovely old Home, and your presence would greatly facilitate inspections. Ring Miss Otton, Phone 59.4259, your call will be appreciated.

<p><u>NOTE TO MEMBERS</u></p>

<p><u>Please advise Secretary</u> <u>(phone 59.8078) of any change</u> <u>of address - this will save</u> <u>disappointment when your</u> <u>Bulletin is posted to you.</u></p>

Mr J. Bruce,
Mosman.

The First Edition, The Bulletin.
Sydney, January 31, 1880.

Mrs E. Wright,
Bexley.

Duchess Set, Cream with red edging

"ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE"

How was your particular street named?

When was it named?

Is the present name, the original one?

Has your street always come under its present Municipality?

What do you know or remember about the person or place, after which your particular street is named?

How long have you lived in your street?

For example - Bruce Street, Bexley Who was Bruce?

Fontainebleau St. - Isn't there an old home by this name?
What is the story?

Prince Edward St. - Was this really named in honour of
Queen Victoria's son - away there at Carlton?

A paper is under way concerning "On the street where you live" and members are asked to submit whatever information is available.

- Bronwyn Perkins
Publicity Officer.

ST. GEORGE POTTERS' GROUP.

(Extract from N S W Board of Adult Education Newsletter, August 1976.)

The St. George Studio Potters' Group is a non-profit making organisation whose aim is to further the knowledge of and to promote the growth of ceramics as a craft in the community. Adult classes are conducted at the Group's workshop in Old St. David's, Hirst Street, Arncliffe, three mornings and three evenings a week. Workshop members are entitled to use workshop facilities when there are no classes in progress, and to participate in group kiln firings twice a month. A meeting and workshop activity is conducted each month, and the Group holds exhibitions of members' work from time to time.

Further details are available from the workshop supervisor, Mrs. F. Roe,
phone 587 7370

THE LATE ALEXANDER BELFORD CHRISTISON, M.B.E.

The death of Alexander Belford Christison, M.B.E., removes yet another of those vigorous, public spirited men who have given the St. George District a character all its own.

Born at Kogarah where his mother was the gatekeeper at the Willison Road level crossing, he undertook a number of jobs before he joined the Postmaster General's Department and remained there for over forty years.

As a teenager he joined the Rockdale Fire Brigade Band (the forerunner of the Rockdale Municipal Band) and married the daughter of the bandmaster, the legendary J.C. Walker.

It was as Secretary of the Band that he commenced the St. George Eisteddfod and held the position of Secretary of the Eisteddfod for 53 years.

Alex Christison was a practising freemason all his adult life and was greatly honoured for his services to that organisation. He was a Past Master of Lodge Illawarra-St. George.

For more than 70 years his name was associated with almost every worthwhile movement in the St. George District and even in his old age he worked for the Comforts Fund, the Rockdale Youth Community Centre and the Mobile Nursing Service.

He was a foundation member of the St. George Historical Society and was Vice-President for four years.

In 1958 Alex Christison was awarded the M.B.E. by the Queen for his services to the community.

Blunt in his opinion on all subjects; he was never able to suffer fools, he was also a devoted husband and father and one of the truest friends any person could possibly have had.

Alderman R.W. Rathbone.

THE DISTINGUISHED ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL & ST. GEORGE.

- M.L.C News - August 1973.

We are all proud that our General Manager, Mr. A.F. Deer, has been honoured by Her Majesty the Queen, who has created him a Companion of the Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George.

Because of our new interest we went hunting to find out all we could about the Order and the two saints. Imagine our surprise to discover that St. Michael is not a saint in the accepted sense of that word. Churches are dedicated to St. Michael; Britain's most modern cathedral at Coventry which was rebuilt after being bombed into ruins in the Battle of Britain, is named for St. Michael. But Michael is the name of one of the archangels of heaven. He is named in the Old Testament in the Book of Daniel and then in the New Testament in three different books. In each incident related about him, he is pictured as *the* great military leader who is victorious in the battle. Michael, the name means, "Who is like God", is a Heavenly Prince, and as such Milton made him a prominent character in *Paradise Lost*.

As the heavenly warrior, alert to guard against attack by enemies, by plague, drought, famine and tempest, St. Michael is invoked in the names of Mont. St. Michael and St. Michael's Mount. These two are small high isles off the coasts of France and England, and as such vantage points for this superhuman defence.

From among the many legends about St. George, these seem to be the facts: The son of wealthy Christian parents in Lydda (now Israel), George was born in A.D. 260, and it was there on the beautiful plain of Sharon that he spent his boyhood. His father, an officer in the Army of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian, died when the boy was ten.

The Emperor took a personal interest in George and later placed him in charge of 5,000 soldiers. He became a military tribune of the Imperial Guard. After serving for two years in the Persian Campaign, George took up residence at Beirut, where the bay is today called the Bay of St. George. His army service also took him to Britain where he visited both York and Glastonbury. Here, too, he met Constantine, later called "The Great".

While in Britain in A.D. 298 Diocletian issued his famous, or infamous, edicts against the Christians, George returned to Lydda, freed his slaves, sold his possessions, and with his body-servant Passicrates went to plead with the Emperor. Diocletian's decree had made it obligatory for all soldiers to take part in sacrificial rites.

Coptic texts tell of the alarm which St. George's friends viewed his proposed visit to the Emperor. Alas, George's appeal to Diocletian was in vain. He was arraigned before 70 judges in the Roman Empire's Eastern capital, Nocomedia, where he boldly declared his faith. Despite cajoling and threats he refused to recant and was finally judged obdurate, thrown into prison, tortured and sentenced to death. He was beheaded on 23 April A.D. 304.

That date has been observed as St. George's Day, down through the centuries, Eusebius, the contemporary historian, reports that St. George was "the first at that time to distinguish himself as a Christian". He has been honoured ever since as the "Champion Knight of Christendom".

Soon after his death the decrees were rescinded and Christians were given the right to worship freely.

What of the pictorial representations of St. George? He is always shown on horseback slaying the dragon, presumably rescuing a fairytale princess. *St. George rescued the King's daughter, the church, from the dragon of persecution.*

The Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George is just more than 150 years old. The story behind this order relates to the year 1814, when the sovereignty of the Island of Malta was ceded to the King of Great Britain, and seven Ionian islands were formed into an independent state under the King's protection. To Sir Thomas Maitland, Governor of Malta, was given the responsibility of organising the new government, and it was at his suggestion that the Order was created. It was a means of bestowing a sign of the Royal Favour on co-operative nationals in these two Mediterranean dependencies.

The Prince Regent, later George IV, made the decision to name the new Order of Knighthood after both St. Michael and St. George. As St. George was tutelary saint of England and patron saint of the Order of the Garter, a second saint was sought for the new Order. He needed to be a saint revered by Protestant, Roman Catholic and Greek Christians. St. Michael was this and was most suitable since he is always described in the Bible in a military situation, i.e., by St. John as leading the Lord's hosts against the troops of the Dragon.

When the most Distinguished Order was created and instituted by George III on 27 April, 1818, three classes of Knights were named: *Knights Grand Cross, Knights Commanders and Knights* (now referred to as Companions). The numbers of these knights was very limited in the early years of the Order.

The Statutes of the Order, provided "that the Knights of this Most Distinguished Order shall wear the badge of the small Cross of the Order pendant from a narrow Ribband of the Order at the Buttonhole". The small cross was described as a "gold Cross of 14 points enamelled, argent, edged and having on one side thereof in the centre, within a circle azure whereon is inscribed the motto *Auspicium Melioris Aevi* in letters of gold, a representation of St. Michael the Archangel holding in his dexter hand a flaming sword and encountering Satan, all proper, and on the reverse, within the said circle and motto, a representation of St. George, armed on horseback with a spear

encountering a dragon, also proper, which badge shall be ensigned by Our Royal and Imperial Crown, gold".

It was Queen Victoria, in 1839, who increased the number of knights in the Order and made provision for gentlemen to be knighted in this Order, without their necessarily being natives of or stationed in the Mediterranean area.

BIRTHDAY OF ST. GEORGE.

District is 102 Years Old.

- *The Propeller*, May 13, 1937.

Right back in the heart of the pioneer times of the building of Sydney, on the 16th May 1835, Governor Bourke issued a proclamation originating the destiny of one of New South Wales' most important and progressive districts - the Parish of St. George. Next Sunday is the 102nd. anniversary of St. George's foundation, and it marks a milestone from which we might well look back over the many years through which it has steadily and firmly advanced. We might also with no uncertain amount of pride, remember that our great district was given the signal honour of being named after England's patron saint.

In its infancy, 102 years ago, the Parish of St. George embraced an extensive stretch of almost virgin heavily timbered and scrubby country between Botany Bay, George's River, Cook's River and the old original road or track, to Bankstown from Sydney. Across its many square miles of area one or two timber getters' tracks marked the only penetration by white settlers. Here and there in odd scattered places, hardy pioneer settlers lived in their slab and bark huts, endeavouring to "tame" the land they had taken up. Land for a farm could be had pretty well for the asking in those times, Crown Land being granted for a meagre "pepper-corn" rental of a few shillings a year. In 1835 there could not have been more than fifty people living in the whole of St. George. Within the next thirteen years the population had increased to over 600, so old records tell.

Since those historic days our district has witnessed the gradual opening up of its bushland, more especially after the construction of the Illawarra suburban railway line, and also that to Bankstown on the west. With the rapid expansion of Sydney, people came to settle in their thousands throughout St. George. Today, in 1937, with suburban settlement becoming so packed, our local parish district holds more than 120,000 persons. It should be remembered that, in addition to the municipalities of Hurstville, Rockdale, Kogarah and Bexley, St. George also includes a big portion of the Municipality of Canterbury on the west.

From a few shillings an acre, land in these parts has risen to several hundreds of pounds a foot within the course of a century. Over the whole area, the unimproved capital value probably amounts to over 8 million pounds, that of Hurstville alone being nearly 2 millions.

This astounding growth in population and values during one hundred years is something to be marvelled at by even we of a generation which is steadily carrying on the spirit of progress displayed by its predecessors. St. George occupies a leading position in the dominant importance of Sydney as the Mother City of Australia, and may its future destiny be marked by milestones of economic virility, growth, good fortune and public well being.

MISS YOUNG'S SCHOOL.

- Miss Brenda Stacy.

In Gibb's Street Rockdale many years ago, was a delightful school for children. The cottage was a double-fronted weatherboard with a large piece of land or paddock on the Bryant Street side on which stood the schoolroom and a large spreading tree.

To the schoolroom we had to climb a few steps and, at the top of these, on entering the room we were taught to stop and curtsy, the little boys to bow gracefully and say "Good Morning, Miss Young!"

I was taken to school by a very nice girl named Florence Jeremy, who lived a few doors away up the Rocky Point Road and attended another school nearby. I do not remember anything about lessons-only running round the playground and being under the big tree. One day I was taken to see Miss Young's brother who had been attacked by a shark, as he was swimming in the George's River at Como. His foot had been badly bitten. It was a moment of great awe!

Another girl who attended that school was Kathleen Llewelyn. She was always kind to the little ones and her eyes always seemed to be twinkling. There were three sisters named Leila, Nita and Essie Mutton who lived at the Beach. Also a little boy named Ira Symonds or Simons, who, with my brother danced the Sailors' Hornpipe and the Irish Jig, at the school concert.

I am sorry that the date when Miss Young's School was opened, is unknown to me, but think that it must have been closed about 1903.

THE MISSES OAKES.

- Miss Brenda Stacy.

This school was situated at "Bodiam" in Harrow Road, Bexley, just a few doors down from Monomeith Street.

There was, what seemed to me, a long narrow piece of land with a school room on one side of it, behind the house. We also climbed a few steps to this room, but did not have to curtsey and say "Good Morning, Miss Oakes!" Here we were well grounded in Arithmetic, Composition, Writing in copy books and Spelling. Also we were taught elocution.

Some of the children I remember were Alice Forscutt, Tom Kenwood, Gwen Swyney, Nellie Tidswell and a little Danish girl named Sigrid Dannerling. Two little girls boarded, one, named Ray Stevens who came from Cobar and wore dresses with no leeves, which, to us in those days was a very remarkable thing.

One of the teachers, a gentle and very petite lady, was known to those boarders and only the boarders as Jumbo.

Every Christmas the Misses Oakes would give the pupils a party tea, in the schoolroom, with bread and butter sprinkled with hundreds and thousands and lots of cakes with icing on them.

This is all I remember of the Misses Oake's School which was a very pleasant one. I think that after closing, they went to live at Lane Cove.
