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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



PRICE 5 c .

# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

24 Duff Street,  
Arncliffe. 2205.  
April 1977.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening, April 15th, 1977, at 8 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: PETER SAGE PRESENTS. "Here & There", including a  
short visit to Papua New Guinea.

Supper Roster: Miss Dunsmore, Captain, & Mesdames Barrack, Preddy, Farrar,  
Tarlinton, Miss Callister.

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. & Soc. Sec.  
Phone 599.4884

Mr. A. Ellis,  
Research Officer.  
Phone 587.1159

"The greatest peace this earth affords is a contented mind in beautiful surroundings."

Bernard Newman.

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.

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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" - out of print.
  - 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.

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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.

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Corrigenda to the article "Station Life in the Early Days"

- Mrs. S.K. Hawkins.

Published in the St. George Historical Society Bulletin - March 1977.

- . Burrangang should read Burrangong
  - . Musgrove " " Musgrave
  - . Harry Cameron" " Mary Cameron
  - . p3 - John and James White were the first free settlers.
  - . p4 - Harriet Regan took up land on an area (delete she) called the Levels (delete Lords) "between Barmedman and Wyalong" and later she called the area "the Bland".
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NOTE TO MEMBERS. Please advise Secretary (phone 59.8078) of any change of address - this will save disappointment when your Bulletin is posted to you.

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SOCIAL..... BUS TRIP: To Brooklyn and Patonga, leaving Rockdale Town Hall 8.30 a.m. Saturday, 30th April. Cost \$2.50. Ferry 50¢ extra.

OCTOBER WEEKEND - 1st, 2nd, 3rd October. Trip to Canberra and Braidwood. Cost - \$60 Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Details at next meeting.

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## MANTLE CLOCKS of the 18th & 19th CENTURY.

- Presented to the St. George  
Historical Society - 18.2.1977.

- Dr Trevor Hyde.

In 1816 Mary, Duchess of Gloucester, a daughter of George the Third, married William, who was a distant relation of George the Second. This fact, however unimportant, may have been gathering dust in some archives except for a clock, the mechanism of which, striking the hours and the quarters - i.e. every 15 minutes - jammed in the small hours of the night, disturbing the couple on their honeymoon and, I quote (Recorded in Adam Thompson's "Time and Timekeepers", dated 1842) - "A clock of Tompions upon this construction (Grand Sonnerie) caused much annoyance to H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester soon after her marriage. This clock was fixed in an apartment adjoining the bedchamber; the failure took place about 2.a.m. It struck quarter after quarter, followed by the hour but as the clock continued to go properly, every quarter of an hour was followed by a silence of about 2 minutes which, if possible, rather aggravated the annoyance. As the case could not be opened during the night, the clock continued to strike until 8.a.m.".

This was probably a Bracket Clock, fixed on a stand which in turn was fixed to the wall. Such were common in the mid 18th century and persisted for a short time into the 19th century when they were eventually abandoned. I suppose brackets were abandoned because of:

1. people moving house and leaving the bracket.
2. the advent of lath & plaster walls.
3. the difficulty of mounting a sufficiently safe bracket to support a heavy clock.

There can be no doubt that England in the 17th and 18th century reigned supreme, not only on the high seas but in industry and trade, and also in the development of clock-making. Admittedly, some credit for this must be given to a few Flemish low-land migrants such as Christian Huygens, who introduced the pendulum to England, and Fromanteel, the inventor of the hairspring. Indeed, the second half of the 17th century was a time of great experimentation, great workmanship and great personal resolve.

To some extent this was encouraged by the Monarchy, such as Charles the Second, who founded the Royal Observatory and was able to dismantle and clean his own extensive watch and clock collection. James the Second, his younger brother, also was interested in the mechanisms of watches. Another outstanding member of the Royal Family was George the Third who had a superb collection of watches and clocks, which remain intact now, in the Royal Collection. It was also interesting to note that the Government, in the reign of Queen Anne, offered a reward of pounds 20,000 which was a fortune in those days, for a man who could invent an easy method of finding the longitude at sea with a reasonable degree of accuracy. This, of course,

was the forerunner of the modern ship's chronometer, but that is a story for another day.

Makers of mantle clocks in the mid 17th century were masters in their own right in that every part of the clock mechanism was made by the one individual, and made by hand. These have been passed down from generation to generation as examples of superb invention and manufacture, and it is interesting to note that these hand-made machines were modified as each succeeding clock was improved upon, and as new ideas and new information came to hand.

The 17th century began as an Old World, fashioned by Elizabeth the 1st and Henry the VIIIth and ended as a Modern World with cheques and Stock Exchanges, coffee houses and clubs, actresses and umbrellas. But for England it was also a difficult century with famines, four plagues, wars, recessions, two misfit Kings - (one of whom was executed) - and civil war but not only did England survive but produced great men - men of science and discovery and forethought such as Sir Isaac Newton, Harvey, Hook and some of the great names in science.

Mantlepieces were introduced in the 17th century to prevent smoke rising into rooms and this was conveniently found to be a decorative and useful place on which to place a clock, hence the derivation of the word, Mantle Clock, and we shall see that clocks of this period always had a carrying handle so that they could be transported from room to room. Mantle Clocks in the 17th and 18th century were a very expensive luxury for the household, being found only in the most affluent of homes and indeed it was a great rarity to find more than one in each home. It is interesting to note that invoices are still on record of Mantle Clocks in the 17th century, costing upwards of pounds 60.0.0 to 75.0.0, which was an exorbitant sum of money in those days. Not only were clocks of this period endowed with a carrying handle which allowed them to be transported from a living room to the bedside, they also had alarm mechanisms and repeat mechanisms which were worked by a cord and these were sometimes brought out on one or both sides of the clock, depending on which side of the bed the master of the household slept.

In the 17th to 18th century, Bracket Clockmakers began to elaborately engrave the backplates of clocks and these became an artwork in themselves. It is purely a matter of conjecture whether these were examples of pride in workmanship or coincidentally occurred with the manufacture of large mercury and tin-backed mirrors at Vauxhall by the Duke of Buckingham, in the mid 1600's.

Carrying handles on the top of the clock case were abandoned by the mid 1700's. Thereafter, the handles were paired on the side of the case for occasional transport. Later, clocks became somewhat larger and more combersome and were therefore moved less frequently around the house.

It is difficult to appreciate day to day life without the electric light but our ancestors, especially in the Northern Hemisphere, lived a large part of their lives in total darkness or by candlelight, oil lamps being introduced in the late 1700's and the paraffin lamps in the Victorian era and, of course, electric lights only in the early 1900's. Therefore, clocks had not only to

be seen by day but be heard by night, so striking, repeating and alarm mechanisms were essential. The great horological tragedy is that, in Victorian times, so-called repairers ripped out these sweet but complicated mechanisms because they were very difficult or too expensive to repair and they were becoming less necessary with the advent of more efficient means of lighting.

Repeat and alarm mechanisms were usually operated by a separate spring, attached by a cord running from the side or under the clock. In the case of a repeater mechanism, these may strike the quarters on one, up to eight bells, followed by the hour on a larger bell. Alarm mechanisms were usually set by a dial around the centre shaft of a timepiece and activated in a similar manner. The earliest clock dials in the 17th century were of engraved brass and the hours and minutes etched on to the chapter ring which was of varying width. By the mid 17th century, the centre of the dial was of a finely matted, non-reflecting brass surface and ornaments appeared in the corners of the dial (these were called spandrels), on the case doors, around keyholes and on the tops of the clock cases. Brass dials persisted until the beginning of the 19th century when white enamel and painted dials appeared with a small intervening period when silvered dials were in fashion.

The style and size of the clock cases were dictated by the size of the movement and the fashion of the day. The earliest cases were made of ebony or walnut but in the second half of the 17th century, they were commonly ebonised or ebony veneer or an oak carcass. By the mid 18th century a variety of woods, veneers and finishes were used according to the dictates of fashion.

In the second half of the 18th century, no doubt due to the influence of trading with Mainland China, lacquer cases made their appearance. This was a complicated decoration on long case and mantle clocks, made by applying multiple coats of thick lacquer of varying depths and contour and colour. Initially, the oak cases were sent to China for this lacquer work and took upwards of five to ten years to be returned. Obviously, the English very soon wearied of this and began to copy the techniques themselves but unfortunately, very few remain in their unrestored state in 1977. One which I hope to show this evening is a lacquered case but, of course, has some restoration, due to the ravages of time.

Unfortunately, time does not allow me to discuss at length, clocks of the 19th century. Suffice to say that by this time, mass production was well established and hence the quality of workmanship progressively deteriorated. Styles were less pleasing to the eye, despite the Victorian taste for multiple embellishments and grotesque proportions.

As far as the social conditions of the workshops were concerned, of child labour, of appalling working conditions, of unhuman treatment and near starvation wages, there was no end. It was left to authors like Charles Dickens to adequately describe the wretchedness and poverty of the 19th century workhouses.



So we shall see, the actual size, the shape, the decoration and the mechanisms of clocks were modified by the social environment of the day by such things as lighting, window size, the local manufacture of mirrors, furniture styles, the affluence of society and the advent of mass production.

Without further ado, I would like to show you a few examples spreading over the early 18th to the early 19th century. The first is a mass produced type of mantle clock of the early 19th century, of eight days duration and striking the hours. It has a very ordinary painted dial with uninteresting hands and this rather plain but conspicuous face is inscribed John Jefferson of Great Dryfield which is in Yorkshire and this member of the company of clockmakers worked about 1822. As you can see, already the mounts were of fairly poor quality, they were mass produced and cheaply gilded. There was little time or money for engraving on the backplate. There was no fancy embellishments here. This was a good workhouse clock in a mahogany case, with a little inlay of ivory, but a thoroughly good timekeeper.

Now, a little further back, in the early 1800's, we have a much finer example of the Regency clock by Ellicot and Taylor, who were working in Sweetings Alley in Cornhill, London and you can see from this clock that this is a much finer specimen. The dial is now enamelled and the metal mounts, instead of being machine-made, have been cast and finely finished with mercurial gilding, which I believe to be original. You can see that the backplate has some very nice but sparse engraving and that this clock has also a half-hour mechanism, striking the nearest hour, on the same bell. This, of course, is a late off-shoot of a development more than a hundred years beforehand, and was probably not necessary or didn't have the usefulness of its forebears of the 17th century. Altogether, the quality of this clock, the dial, the metal castings and the fine quality of the veneer with the ebony inlay, makes it a much more superior one than its predecessor.

A little further back still, in the second half of the 18th century, (1770) we come to a rather nice example of a lacquer clock, made by James Smith of London. Without going into mechanical details, it is sufficient to mention this clock has its original verge escapement which originated in England in the mid 17th century and persisted until the second half of the 18th century when it was changed to the more efficient form of anchor escapement. As you can see, this lacquer clock is in original condition, despite the fact it has suffered here and there from the ravages of time. It is an interesting as well as mechanically complicated clock, in that it has three winding apertures, one to keep time, another to strike the hours and a third to strike the quarters. This clock has a quarter strike mechanism in that every fifteen minutes, the quarters strike a different tune so that in the middle of the night, our ancestors were able to tell, not only the time the hour, but also the nearest quarter of the hour. Now, if this wasn't enough, as you can see there is a repeat mechanism on this clock also, which not only strikes the nearest quarters but, in the middle of the night, when no visual aid was available, it was possible to tell not only the quarters but the hours and this is what is known as Grand Sonnerie striking of the quarters. I would like you to also note the quality of the fine

engraving on the backplate of this clock which, as I said earlier, is a work of art in itself. Just to return to the front of the clock itself, you will notice it has an automated scene of a middle to late 18th century woodyard and we can see the workmen engaged in their various activities, the three on the right-hand side doing repetitive work, whereas the gentleman on the extreme left-hand side of the scene is busy taking wood up and down a ladder. This is a fine, complicated 18th century clock in original condition and mechanically rather complex. Indeed, clocks of an earlier and a later date were usually much more simplistic in mechanism. This clock may be said to be an example of the flamboyance of the middle to late 18th century and of the public demand for the innovative, the toy and the spectacular.

Finally, on a much more conservative note, I have an example of a 1730 timepiece, made by John Kirton, the apprentice of Daniel Quare, who is one of the great names in English Antiquarian Horology.

This clock is wound by a single spring and it does not strike the hours. You can see by the one handle on the top of the case, it was made for transport from room to room, hence its small size, average weight and therefore capable of easy mobility. This clock also has a wonderfully engraved backplate. There is a repeat mechanism on the side of this clock for telling the time during the night and it may very well be that this clock was made for the bedchamber in that it does not strike the hour, but if the master of the house wanted to know the time during the night, the small repeater cord was pulled and the nearest quarter and the hour were struck on two separate bells. I would think that this clock probably lived for some part of its life on a bracket, as there is a central hole in the baseboard for attachment on to some form of bracket.

So there we had a superficial but, I hope, interesting jaunt through the 18th and to a lesser extent 19th century table clocks and I hope you will not agree with that old cliché which says:

*"He who watches the clock will always be one of the hands"!*

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EXCERPTS FROM - SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - KOGARAH

- DIAMOND JUBILEE 1950.

Growth of the Church -

From a study of the early history of the Kogarah charge it might be fairly claimed to be the cradle of Presbyterianism in the St. George District, for the first services were held in the home of Mrs Carss, at Kogarah Bay. As the numbers increased, services were held in the School of Arts, the first one there being held in 1886. As the majority of the congregation lived towards Bexley, a church was eventually opened there in 1887, with the Kogarah group still meeting in the School of Arts.

In 1889, Kogarah became a sanctioned charge and the following year the Rev. R Inglis was inducted as its minister. Immediate steps were taken to build a church. Land was bought at the corner of Kensington Street and Derby Street at a cost of pounds 4.0.0 per foot. On 11th March 1893, the foundation stone was laid. The Church and Manse, which had already been purchased, cost pounds 1,600.0.0.

In 1894, Rev. J Lamont was inducted and remained in charge until 1898, when he accepted a call to Mosman. He was followed by Rev. J. Adamson, who only remained one year. The next three years were difficult ones, there being no settled minister.

At last in 1903, the Rev. J.Keith Miller accepted a call and remained for four years. He was followed by Rev. A.McW. Allen who only stayed one year.

In 1909, with the induction of Rev. C.W.Willis, the church entered upon a new era. For 17 years he remained in charge, and in 1925 he was elected Moderator of N.S.W., an office which he filled with great dignity.

On his resignation in 1926, the congregation extended a call to the Rev. A.D.Robertson, who soon made his presence felt. It was not long before it was evident that a new church would be necessary to accommodate the fast increasing congregation. In February, 1928, the foundation of the present church was laid. The building cost pounds 5,210.0.0 and was opened by the Governor-General, Lord Stonehaven, and became known as the "Soldiers' Memorial Presbyterian Church". All the furniture was donated by various members.

Rev. J Hannen was inducted in March 1934. He remained until 1943, giving to the people, during those years, much of his wide experience and education. In his term the Golden Jubilee was celebrated.

On the Rev. J Hannen accepting a call to Ryde, our present minister, (1950) Rev. G M Scott, came to take charge, and what was Dubbo's loss was certainly our gain. Many changes were introduced, such as the Annual



Special Appeal, the monthly Church Paper and the bi-monthly and Christmas morning Communion Services. Many improvements have been made also in the building, such as the panelling of the walls as a memorial to the late John Watson, the Cockburn memorial lectern, an improved lighting system and an extension to the dais to accommodate the increased Session. An organ fund, which had been started years before, was resuscitated. As a result, a beautiful pipe-organ, erected as a memorial to those who served in World War II, will be installed as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The Rev. Scott's ministry has been notable for the number of special services which have been held, such as the Annual Anzac Day Service, the St. George Hospital Service and Lodge services. Evidence of Rev & Mrs Scott's popularity is given in that he has performed 600 weddings and 610 christenings since coming to Kogarah. The Communion Roll now totals 383.

#### Session.

As the progress of the church has been connected closely with the various ministers, so, too, has it been in regard to the various elders who have served since 1889.

The following elders have served as Session Clerks: J Robinson, D.Steel, P Gordon, F.J.Polley, J.Pillans, A.R.Strachan, W.Scott, J.C.Parnell.

The present Session consists of Messrs. J.C.Parnell, Abbott, Forbes, Gaunt, Hamilton, Hay, James, MacGillivray, McLaughlin, Parsons, Simpson, Smith, Taylor, Templeton and Wigney.

The Committee of Management, which exercises an oversight into the administration of the temporal affairs of the congregation, has had, over the past 60 years, to solve many knotty problems, especially financial ones.

Members of the Committee in 1893, were Messrs. Maze, May, McPhail, McCall, McFarlane, Wall, Gordon, Colvin, Young, Thorburn and Reid.

The present members (1950) are, besides the elders mentioned, Messrs. Gordon, Lewis, Vaughan, Eastman, McLennan, Harvey, Bourne, Lytton, Nicholas and Singe.

The present office-bearers are V.Smith (Chairman), J.Forbes (Secretary) and N Gordon (Treasurer).

The Women's Guild was formed in 1928. The first office-bearers were Mrs A Robertson (President), Miss Crawford (Secretary) and Miss Elliott (Treasurer). The present one are Mrs G Scott ( President), Mrs V Smith (Secretary) and Miss Elliott(Treasurer.)

The records reveal that the church has always had a choir to lead in the song of praise.It seems that one of the most successful periods was during the ministry of Rev. C.Willis, when the choir, under the

conductorship of Mr. F Polley, was looked upon as the finest church choir in Sydney.

The Sunday School had its beginning in June, 1889, when Mr Robinson was chosen as Superintendent. The first picnic was held at the grounds of Mrs, Carss, Kogarah Bay. The number of teachers in the Sunday School (1950) is 47, with a total enrolment of 258 pupils. Mr V Smith, our present Superintendent, has raised the standard to such an extent that the Kogarah Sunday School is known throughout the whole of the metropolitan area. The Kindergarten Department was formed in 1914, under the charge of Miss Harrison. To-day it has grown to 110 pupils and forms one of the bright spots of our church. It is under the charge of Miss W Lewis.

The first Fellowship Association was formed a few years after the opening of the church, and has functioned almost continually ever since. With its four aims - to develop the spiritual, social, mental and physical powers of the youth, it has done much for the young people of the Church after they have passed out of the Sunday School.

The Boys' Brigade was formed in 1944 as the 46th Sydney Company.

The Girl's Life Brigade (15th Sydney Company) was formed also in 1944.

For some years prior to World War I, the church had strong teams in the cricket competitions. Then came the war, and it was not until 1930 that the game was taken up again. World War II forced our team out of existence because of enlistments. It was reformed in 1946. The Soccer Club was formed in 1945.

The Langlea Church commenced first as a Sunday School in McPherson Street (Carlton) about April 1919, under the supervision of Mr and Mrs R Sneddon. The following year a block of land was secured, and in a few months a hall was built. In 1921, regular Sunday evening services were commenced. They were held until 1925, after which they were discontinued for several years, but the Sunday School still carried on. In 1930, Mr C Haxton (now an ordained minister) was appointed as Student Preacher, and under him the cause made good progress. The services were continued with visiting preachers until 1945, when Mr J Gaunt took charge.

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