



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

24 Duff Street,
Arncliffe. 2205.
June 1977.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular monthly meeting will be held as follows:

- Date: Friday Evening, June 17th, 1977, at 8 p.m.
- Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
- Business: General.
- Syllabus Item: An article from the R.A.H.S. Newsletter - June-July 1976, written by Fathers F. & Alan Brown, title - "Eveleigh House", Sydney, also "The Lamplighter", written by M. Ryan, and by courtesy of Casino & District Historical Society. These articles, which will be of interest to all, will be presented by our President, Mr. Don Sinclair, by kind permission of the R.A.H.S.
- Supper Roster: Mrs. H. Jones, Captain, & Mesdames J. Woods, H. Turner, C. Murphy, N. 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. & Soc. Sec.
Phone 599.4884.

Mr. A. Ellis,
Research Officer.
Phone 587.1159.

Inflation has changed things, now one can live as cheaply as two used to.

G.F.C.
(Readers Digest)

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 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 Wollie Creek Valley" - very limited stocks.
Book 4. "The Arncliffe to Bexley Steam Tramway" - very limited stocks.
Also available: (By the same Author)
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. (See Mrs. Wright).

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.

There is now a large glass display case upstairs in Lydham Hall. At present it contains a few souvenirs from the various wars. Can you help to enlarge this display by exhibiting some of the war relics which you might have? These will be greatly appreciated, and good care taken of any souvenirs which you might care to loan or perhaps donate. Ring Miss Otton 59.4259.

DONATED TO LYDHAM HALL.

Two Marble Busts - from the Estate of the late Miss Mabel Kenwood, together with a number of Family Mementos (through the good offices of Mr. Phillip Geeves).

Miss F. Stacy, Bexley - Photograph Captain Cook's Great Great Nephew.

Mrs. Murray, Sans Souci - 2 Cut Glass Goblets, over 150 years old.

Miss Alice Brooks, Artarmon - Hand Kilter,
Tracing Wheel, for Dressmaking.
1 Steel for Kitchen

Mrs. Maitland, Palm Beach - (Daughter of Sir Joseph Carruthers, M.L.A.)
N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates
1 pair of Buffalo Horns
1 sword-fish spear
Several old photographs.

Miss V. Heath, Kogarah - Black Taffeta & Lace Cape over 100 yrs. old) on
1 Bracelet) loan.
1 Book of Cards.

Powder Bowl, presented by The Girls of the Bexley Ladies' College to Mrs. C.T. Forscutt in 1925 - Presented by her grandson, Mr. Ian Forscutt Hudson.

Memorial Bookmark to the late Rev. C.T. Forscutt, 1931, Principal, Bexley Ladies College - presented by his grandson, Mr. Ian Forscutt Hudson.

Mrs. J. Backhouse, Manly Vale (Sister of Misses H. & L. Everson, Carlton) -
2 Decorative Figurines
1 " Teapot.

Mr. Dicken, Bexley North - Rocking chair, cane seat.

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.

SOCIAL.

21/8/77. Bus Trip to Hawkesbury College, at Richmond, "Open Day".
Leave Rockdale Town Hall at 9 a.m. sharp.
Cost \$3.00 per person.

WAITING LIST ONLY.

October 1st, 2nd & 3rd. October Long Weekend.

Saturday - Bus leaves Rockdale Town Hall at 7.30 a.m. sharp.
Ferry trip on Lake Burley Griffin, cost \$2.50 per person.

Sunday - Braidwood & Majors Creek.
Return Monday via Batemans Bay & South Coast.
Cost: Dinner, Bed & Breakfast - \$60.00
Ferry trip \$2.50 extra. (will take 90 minutes).

(Ring Mrs. Wright - 599.4884, for details).

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'If You Don't Give Us A Holiday...'

- George Sprod.

- Sydney Morning Herald.

- 21st August 1976.

Whatever happened to Empire Day, once Queen Victoria's birthday, the day on which schoolchildren were rounded up to salute the flag, to marvel at all those red bits that sprinkled a quarter of the globe, and to listen to inspiring talks about such Empire-building worthies as Cecil Rhodes, Rudyard Kipling and the good Dr Livingstone?

There is, of course, Commonwealth Day (edifying chats about the democratic virtues of Idi Amin, Indira Gandhi et al?) but it's not held on that famous day in May which, after the Queen's death, was converted into Empire Day and lasted almost until our own era.

There can be no doubt that Queen Victoria was the most famous woman of all time; only a little dumpy lady, less than five feet tall, uncertain of temper, imperious of mien, but much more celebrated than Cleopatra, Joan of Arch or Florence Nightingale (those well-known darlings of Women's Libbers) ever knew how to be.

Just think: for 64 years this diminutive party held sway over immense tracts of palm and pine (and a large number of gum trees) and her ships ruled the waves; she was the mother and grandmother of kings, the matriarch of most of the royalty of Europe; she gave her name to an age and her moral attitudes to posterity ("The Honorable Member must think we're still living in the Victorian ers.")

During those six and a half decades nobody could ignore her ambience. She was with them every day of their lives; her likeness was on every coin they handled, and - after Sir Rowland Hill's innovation of the 1840's - on every stamp they licked, on every medal they won (except for the Victoria Cross, which was an invention of hers, anyway), and in every public building. In every Town Hall, every courthouse, every officers' mess and every government department, hung Her Majesty's portrait, in every medium from gleaming oil (after Winterhalter) to steel engraving or humble photograph.

Outdoors her statues proliferated; she must have been the most sculpted personage of all time! Wherever the Union Jack was planted sooner or later a loyal committee would be formed to organise the Queen Victoria statue. (It is said that a foundry in Birmingham used to turn them out in mass production; there were several attractive models to choose from.)

When the countries of the Empire were handed back to their original owners the effigies of all those grim colonial governors and generals were topples from their pedestals by cheering nationalists, but the Queen, somehow, walways was spared - as in the city of Calcutta, where the Victoria Memorial is venerated to this day. It was as if she became a totem, an Earth Mother, to be touched for luck and prosperity; even

now, for many an innocent black, she distils a potent magic.

Sydney, believe it or not, has, within a three-mile radius of the General Post Office no fewer than 11 sculptural representations of the Queen. There is the well-known centerpiece on the G.P.O. building itself - so shrine-like that it seems almost blasphemous - where the Queen sits enthroned in glory mid shafts of celestial light crowned by floating cherubs and attended by allegorical figures. Round the corner, orbed and sceptered, there used to stand a more conventional version; it is temporarily away on vacation in the council yard while Queen's Square is being re-furbished, but not to worry, it will soon be back.

Out at Chippendale the Prince Alfred Hospital boasts a fine bronze atop its Queen Victoria Wing, while at the nearby Queen's Hotel a naive but endearing Queen stands in a niche, her outstretched sceptre indicating the entrance to the public bar.

The other sculptures are all of the Queen's head used as the keystone of an arch; For some reason this decoration was popular with the builders of the day; perhaps they thought that the hardness of the medium matched her stony expression. Here they did her an injustice; people just did not smile for the camera in those days - the photograph was for a record, not for entertainment - and besides, the Queen had at all times to be mindful of the dignity of the Crown. In her relaxed moments, said many who knew her, the Queen was possessed of a charming smile, and this is borne out by a photograph taken towards the end of her life, when the invention of the roll-film had made snapshots possible, which captured her in a smile that is truly enchanting.

Australia grew up in the Victorian era, so it is small wonder that with two States named after the Queen many other topographical features should similarly honour her, thus invoking royal favour and an unassailable cachet of respectability. Consequently many lakes, mountains and other geographical features bear the royal name and as for districts and thoroughfares there are literally hundreds of them. Sydney alone boasts in Victoria's name, 16 avenues, one cross, three lanes, one parade, 24 roads, one square, three Queen Victoria Streets, seven Queen's roads, 32 Queen Streets and 43 Victoria Streets.

Melbourne, named as it is after the Queen's great mentor, Lord Melbourne, is not far behind, with a score of nine Victoria Avenues, two Courts, three Crescents, one Drive, three Groves, two lanes, four parades, two Places, eight roads, one terrace and 38 streets. Also 25 Queen Streets, eight Queen's Avenues, one Court, two lanes, five parades, two roads, and one Queen's Square. And a Victoria Market.

Brisbane has its share; besides an impressive array of thoroughfares it has a Queen's Wharf, a Queen's Court, a Queensway and a Victoria Park.

Adelaide too, has a Victoria Park, where the racing on the flat is free, the course having been built on public land. It also boasts an enormous Victoria Square adorned by the Queen's bronze statue, which serves as a traffic bollard.

Outside the capitals, the larger country towns shared in the Royal glory of streets and monuments - in Bendigo a stern bronze Queen seems resolutely to be turning her back on a particularly nude statue in an adjacent park, and if they don't possess a Victoria Hall or Park there is usually a Victoria Hotel somewhere about. The Queen's name was immensely popular for pubs - perhaps it was that urge for respectability again - so that there are dozens spread over the land, with even an appropriate beer, Victorian Bitter, for drinking the loyal toast on suitable royal occasions.

Variouly the royal name has been attached to hospitals, institutions, societies, parks, public buildings, swimming pools and army barracks. Commercial concerns, also, share in the glory; such diverse enterprises as the Victoria and Albert Boutique, the Victoria Hosue Fashion Co., a health store, a carpet warehouse, a pharmacy and, astonishingly, in view of the good Queen's antipathy towards the horseless carriage, the Victoria Auto Port, the Victoria Radiator Service and - belated retribution - the Victoria Smash Repairs.

At Christmas 1900, at the height of the Boer War, Her Majesty sent to every soldier a tin box of chocolates bearing her portrait and her good wishes. Many of the Australians brought theirs home intact as souvenirs - some still survive to this day - their foil-wrapped contents too precious to be eaten. (There were rumours that many a tin fortuitously deflected a bullet from a warrior's breast, but the rumours remain rumours; no alleged case has ever been authenticated.)

From the chocolate tin to the biscuit tin was but a short step; scenting the possibilities of a Christmas bonanza - and with no Buckingham Palace public relations officers to get in their way - the enterprising firms of Peek Frean's and Huntley and Palmer flooded the market with their cream assortments assuring the public that the contents would be no less tasteful than the royal portrait adorning the tin. The Victorians, it seems, didn't much seem to mind their Sovereign appearing in commercials. (What a scream would go up today!) Earlier she had featured in an advertisement for Bourneville Cocoa, in which, seated in a railway carriage with her daughter-in-law, Alexandra, she takes a soothing sip of that nourishing beverage.

Astonishing as it may seem, although the Queen's domains covered a quarter of the world's land surface, though her name was venerated and held in awe as the Great White Queen, she never once set foot in any of her possessions. Never once did she visit any of her colonies or dominions, not even India, the great sub-continent of which she was Empress. Apart from her visit to Ireland (to the mixed reactions of its population), the only times she crossed the water were to visit her continental relatives or to winter in the sunshine of Nice.

To her subjects at home in Britain she was just as much of an invisible mystery. Apart from diplomats, courtiers and public men, few had ever set eyes on her; after the death of the Prince Consort, she lost the confidence to face large crowds.

When at last she was persuaded to show herself to her people at her

Golden Jubilee the acclamation was tremendous; thousands of flag-waving children cheered themselves hoarse, even the meanest streets were festooned with bunting and soldiers from all over the world paraded to do her homage.

Her Diamond Jubilee was even more spectacular; it was the high noon of Empire and there was such enthusiasm as the world had never seen. To the clip-clop of hundreds of horses a mighty cheer saluted a tiny black figure with a parasol, so small she could hardly be seen.

"So loyal, so loyal, dear Louise," murmured the Queen to her dutiful daughter and there were tears in her eyes.

To the British and to her colonial subjects the Queen had seemed imperishable, eternal, so that when she died at Osborne the whole Empire was stunned, there was a great and appalling sense of loss, strong men wept openly in the streets and all the newspapers came out purple-edged in mourning. (Except for the Sydney Bulletin which, in its erstwhile larrakin way, came out with a Norman Lindsay cartoon of a thirsty drunk locked out of his favourite pub - shut for the funeral - and the caption "The Nation Mourns".)

But still the Queen lived on in Empire Day, and many old photographs exist of pianafored girls with hair-ribbons and squinting boys in long shorts clutching their Union Jacks. One can almost hear their piping voices wafted down the years:

*" It's the twenty-fourth of May
The Queen's Birthday,
If you don't give us a holiday,
We'll all run away."*

SYDNEY'S LIBRARY HAS A BIRTHDAY PARTY ...

- Helen Frizell
- Sydney Morning Herald
- 31st January 1976.

One Hundred and fifty years ago next Tuesday, John Mackaness, Lt.T.De La Condamine and other leading citizens of the city met in the Sydney Hotel to form the Australian Subscription Library and Reading Room.

Alexander Macleay was first president. The entrance fee was five guineas (\$10.50), annual subscription two guineas (\$4.20), and membership was by ballot. This was a private and very exclusive library. Members refused to give the public free access to books. For years the books moved from one lodging to another.

Then in 1845, the Australian Subscription Library and Reading Room put up a new building on what is now the corner of Bent and Macquarie Streets.

Victoria got a public library in 1856, but New South Wales lagged until 1869, when the State bought the former private library, and renamed it the Free Public Library. More name changes happened over the years. Other titles have been the Public Library of New South Wales, the Library of New South Wales and, since July, 1975, the State Library of New South Wales.

The library stayed at Bent Street from 1845, and through an 1889 rebuilding until 1943, when the new building opened on its present site facing Shakespeare Place and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Mr R F Doust, State Librarian and secretary of the Library Council of N.S.W., says the library will celebrate its sesqui-centenary by holding a reception for 500 guests there next Tuesday evening, Mr Justice R Else-Mitchell, president of the Library Council, will speak of the library's long and proud history and its future.

Probably in May, the library will exhibit some of its "non-Australian treasures" to the public. These include the great folio set of Audubon's Birds of America with its life-size representations of birds. In 1885, courageous library trustees bought the four-volume set for pounds 260.0.0 (\$520.) Today says Mr Doust, its value is about \$150,000. The Audubon will go on display (heavily guarded) as will the priceless Shakespeare First Folio.

The library hopes this year to reprint the 1943 publication, The Public Library of New South Wales, which tells the story of the library.

Mr Doust says: "The people who own the library ought to see it" - and therefore the library plans this year to show the public over the building on "open walks".

The library has three sections: the Mitchell Library (1910), named after David Scott Mitchell, the great benefactor whose collection of Australiana is housed there; the Dixon Wing (1929), called after Sir William Dixon,

who bequeathed his books, manuscripts and historic pictures to the State; and the central portion (opened 1943).

Work on the central section began in 1939 - the year World War II started. Mr Doust is amazed that a library of such magnificence was built during the war years. No public buildings will be in this style again, he says. The craftsmanship is superb.

The building is in Renaissance style, and has a portico of Roman Ionic columns and bronze entrance doors. Sculptured panels on the doors show the discoverers and explorers of Australia and scenes from Aboriginal life. The vestibule floor reproduces Tasman's map of 1644.

Marble of various colours is everywhere in the building - even in skirtings and on the inquiry desk. Stained glass blazes from windows.

In the 50m by 27m reading room, sunlight shines through the glass ceiling. Railings are bronze, skirtings of black marble, and wood-work is polished Tasmanian blackwood. The reading room can hold 500 people.

Mr Doust, 47, the State Librarian, has worked for the library since he was 16. He went to the library school in 1944, was in charge of State archives from 1962 until 1970 and took up his present post in 1973.

The State Library building, he says, is classified by the National Trust as an historic building. It will stay where it is and cannot be demolished. But today it is too small for its staff of 300 and its collection of more than a million and a half articles.

Conditions are intolerably cramped. The Rare Books room, now the "acquisitions department" has 50 people working in it. Other rooms look like supermarkets. Cardboard cartons are everywhere, bearing old labels for catfood or tinned tomatoes, the cartons hold incoming books and manuscripts. Library workers can hardly walk between the packages.

The "short-term" solution, says Mr Doust, is for some staff and some books to move out of the building - and into other offices. "This is an island building" he says, "We can add nothing to it."

The library has plans for a new building on the site between its present building and Parliament House. The new building would cost about \$10 million, and would conform in height to the older. The timetable for the new annexe depends upon when the new administration building of Parliament House is finished. Parliament, at the moment, is using the Library's site. "I guess we're talking of 10 years' time", says Mr Doust, with some regret.

The library is trying to plan for the future. In 1974 its council invited six staff members to form a committee to inquire into the library's role and needs. The committee presented its report last March. "We are convinced that future development of the library ... lies in co-operation with other libraries, and the joint development of services for public use," it said.

Mr Doust says that legislation of 1975 created the Library Council of New South Wales. The Council's task is to "promote, provide and maintain library services and information services for the people of New South Wales through the State Library and through co-operation with local libraries", and to advise the Minister, local authorities and other bodies about library and information services.

Once, says Mr Doust, Sydney was smaller. People travelled short distances to the library. Now, with Sydney's spread, the number of people using the library has declined. The "average number of seated readers" in the general reference library at 1.30p.m. on weekdays in 1945-46 was 167. In 1973-74, it was 108. At 8.0p.m. in 1945-46 there were 182 readers on week nights. The 1973-4 figure was 39.

The library must reach out to the people, says Mr Doust. There must be "access points" where they can get books. Once, the library had a lending branch. This does not exist now.

The State Library itself needs alteration. The day of the huge reading room has gone. Students today like to work in small, partitioned areas. Updating may come.

The library is "badly served" with audio-visual materials. It needs machinery for microfilming documents. There must be rooms where people can watch films or listen to records. The present building cannot cope with a conveyor system for handling materials. The future building must have this.

There is a tremendous increase in the use of photocopies. This jumped from 240,000 in 1973-74 to 290,000 in 1974-75. Students, says Mr Doust, like to take their material home in phot-copy form from the library. Gone is the old idea of sitting in the library and laboriously taking notes.

In 1960, a former Principal Librarian, Mr G D Richardson wrote: "Our ancestors built well, but the library by world standards is still small and imperfect".

In 1976, the library is "still small and imperfect". Change must come. The State funds the library. Money from the Federal Government would "be nice - if we could get it without strings" - says Mr Doust.

The Whitlam Government set up a Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries. The report should be made by March 1976.

Whatever happens, says Mr Doust, the library will keep its special role in Australiana, through the Mitchell and scholars "will continue to beat paths" to the reference library and the Dixon.
