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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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1/46 Oatley Avenue,
OATLEY. NSW. 2223.

September 1978.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, September 15th, 1978, at 8.00 p.m.
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
Business: General.
Syllabus Item: History of Song (Banjo Accompaniment) Presented by
Mr. J. McClymont, Member of Parramatta Historical Society.
Supper Roster: Captain: Mrs. Kalucy, and Mesdames Thompson, Hunt,
Grace and Troughton.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. A. Ellis,
President.
Phone 587.1159.

Miss A. Lang,
Secretary.
Phone 57.2068.

Mrs. E. Wright,
Treas. & Soc. Sec.
Phone 599.4884.

Mrs. B. Perkins,
Publicity Officer.
Phone 587.9164

Mr. A. Ellis,
Research Officer.
Phone 587.1159

"The art of being a good talker consists of talking with people, not at them or even to them."

2.

Many of our Members have been and still are ill. We are sorry to hear this and trust that you will all be well again soon.

It is with regret that we record the death of two of our early and valued Members. Mrs. Hayes, late of Leichhardt, and Mr. Clayton, late of Mittagong. To their families we extend our deepest sympathy.

SOCIAL.

PORT MACQUARIE. Long Weekend.

The Details are as follows:

Time: 7.30 a.m. SHARP.

Place: Corner Railway & Walz Streets, Rockdale.

Date: Saturday September 30th, October 1st and 2nd.

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 the inspections. Ring Miss Otton, 'phone 59.4259. Your call will be appreciated.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The St. George Historical Society is pleased to announce that the following books, written and illustrated by the late Gifford H. Eardley, for the Society, have been re-printed and are now available.

Price: \$1.00 per copy. (Postage extra).

No. 2. "Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway"

No. 3. "Saywells Tramway. Rockdale to Lady Robinson's Beach"

No. 5. "Our Heritage in Stone"

No. 6. "All Stations to Como"

No. 7. "Tempe and The Black Creek Valley" is also available. (Limited stocks only.)

At a later date, Books No. 1 - "The Wolli Creek Valley", and No. 4 - "Arncliffe to Bexley Steam Tramway", will be re-printed.

For your copy of the above books, please contact one of the following:

Mrs. E. Wright - Phone 599.4884.

Miss A. Lang (Sec.) - Phone 57.2608 (after 6.00 p.m.)

Miss B. Otton - Phone 59.4259 (after 8.00 p.m.)

Mrs. E. Eardley - Phone 59.8078.

Mr. A. Ellis - Phone 587.1159.

Copies of early Bulletins are available.

COLLECTING MATERIAL FOR LOCAL HISTORY.

- Miss Jean Arnot - M.B.E.

The following synopsis has been made of the interesting, most delightfully presented, address presented to the Society on Friday 17th February 1978. Miss Arnot spoke with authority and expertise gained from a life-time of association with such matters. Among her qualifications are:

- . Honorary Librarian - R.A.H.S.
- . Member of R.A.H.S. Council for a number of years.
- . Worked for Public Library of N.S.W.
- . Retired at Head Cataloguist, N.S.W. State Library.
- . Acting Mitchell Librarian.
- . President of the National Council for Women for 4 years.
- . Has compiled a history of the National Council of Women.

When local history is recorded or preserved, it keeps for posterity something that otherwise will be forever lost.

Experts at the State Library have an overall picture and from material submitted, future historians will have a fairly comprehensive view of life in the 1970's. Just as we to-day have access to the facilities of the Library to learn of the early history of our State, and country.

The Mitchell Library, supplemented by the Dixon, could be regarded as a local history collection covering Australia and the Pacific.

In collecting material care must be taken in selection, organising and housing. This is of paramount importance now that so many local municipalities, libraries, organisations and particularly historical societies are collecting such material. *In this context beware that your collection does not become the dumping ground for other people's rubbish. Learn to say no, if material given, is not suitable!!!*

Local history material falls into seven categories:-

1) Manuscripts - personal letters, diaries etc. These are unique records of life and thoughts of a particular age. Prove to be very important links in the overall picture. The State Library has a complete record of letters that the Governors of this State sent to the Colonial Secretary until we got representative government. A complete record of the correspondence which was necessary between the Governor and the Colonial Office, has proved to be tremendously important.

Very often letters and diaries, such manuscripts need to be restricted. Some not to be opened or displayed for ten years. But they are there, they are available to the experts and are preserved. Families have the right to restrict material.

Oral history - is today's method of preserving history. Equally important and will be used much more often in the future.

With written manuscripts, have the original photocopied, use that to show around and keep the original in a safe place. This saves deterioration from handling of the original.

2) Printed Materials. Again the principle of photocopy applies. Printed materials include books, church bulletins, programmes, papers etc. What is going on today is of tremendous importance in the future. Find out how to have damaged material repaired. The Libraries know or know where to find out.

3) Maps and plans. Very important in local districts, showing the development of the area. The trouble with maps is the storage. Maps must be kept flat. Best stored in the Library with the proper facilities. The Library would explain how to correctly store.

Adelaide is a most fortunate city. All the early maps have been kept and one can trace exactly who owned which block in the early days of settlement. This gives part of the history of the city.

4) Newspapers. Their value is a prime source of life in a city. Only true history of the country is to be found in the newspapers. This is seen from the importance of the Sydney Gazette and Hobart Town Gazette. Sydney Gazette first printed March 5th 1803. That was the history of the new Colony, life as it was then. Hobart Town's history is equally important. These early papers were the only ones printed at the time and their reporting of day-to-day life of that period have given to-day's historians invaluable information.

Again the correct storage and repair of such newspapers is for the experts. If keeping today's papers, find out how best to do it.

5) New Cuttings. When cutting out news items for reference, immediately date and label. In six month's time you won't remember from which paper the cuttings came. If keeping an album of such cuttings, index the material. The State Library has many such fine collections, but unfortunately all are not indexed and for staff to do this, is a time consuming work, and it may well be that very valuable collections will never be fully indexed for this reason.

6) Photographs. Prime source of interest when writing up centenary records. But check and double check source of information and people recorded in the photographs. Labelling and identification essential when preserving such photographic records.

8) Museum Articles. Must be of historical significance, typical of the period being displayed. Again never assume details, check and double check, when indexing or labelling for display purposes. Particularly in this area, do not clutter the museum with other people's unwanted rubbish. This means being very fair and firm in accepting articles submitted for display.

So much in this area needs to be adequately housed. Gowns and material from a bygone era, needs to be expertly handled to avoid the normal everyday marks that human handling, no matter how clean and careful, leaves behind over a period of time.

There are experts available and several avenues where expert help can be found. Do not hesitate to ask for help in order to preserve properly precious garments, ornaments and articles of historical value. This way all can be seen and appreciated by succeeding generations.

When labelling articles etc. make sure of the facts. If you are not 100% sure of the facts, state "Bill Smith states" or "Peter Jones is of the opinion that". This gives the facts as given, the source of the information and protects the Society from making any mistakes or presuming upon information given. Never state a fact categorically unless you are very sure.

All such historical data collected, be it manuscripts, articles etc., is for the use of all interested in local history. Because of such use, it is imperative for all facts to be verified and recorded before verbal or written statements are made. Much confusion and argument will be saved by taking care to double check.

What body should collect local historical resource material? It doesn't matter as long as it is properly preserved and that there is complete co-operation between the people responsible, as to its use.

THE BEXLEY LADIES' COLLEGE AND ENVIRONS

as it was about 1915.

- Ralph Dunsmore.

LOOKING FROM MONOMEETH STREET:

The College was founded by Rev. C.T. Forscutt in 1895. It was situated on a block of land running between Gladstone and Monomeeth Streets, Bexley. The House and original School faced Gladstone Street and later the School Building was erected facing Monomeeth Street.

My parents came to 33 Monomeeth Street in 1904, their house "Kenilworth", having been built in 1900.

The College next door was then a boys' school, later it was changed to the Bexley Ladies' College, about 1905.

The School building was a two-storey brick, situated about 4' from our side fence. It was only about 18' from the front fence, which was a fairly high picket one, reddish brown in colour. On the front gate was a brass plate bearing the words "THE COLLEGE". To the side was a pair of matching double gates. It had a tiled verandah running the full width, just above ground level, with a corresponding balcony with an iron balustrade. The front door was in the middle, with an arched brick porch. The school rooms, music room and drawing room were on the lower floor and the dormitories on top. There was no front garden but four or five prickly pine trees and two or three chilli bushes along the verandah.

Mr. Forscutt used to drive an old single buggy with a poor old horse we called "Bag of Bones". Inside the double gates and to the right, was a coach house and stable where an old handyman lived. He was known to us as "Baggy Britches". There was a row of pines with an old gum tree and some pittosporums along the fence line to Queen Victoria Street.

The Rev. Forscutt lived in a large two-storey house facing Gladstone Street. It was surrounded by trees, gardens, tennis courts, summerhouse but no lawn that I remember. It was hardly visible from either Gladstone Street or Monomeeth Street because of the trees. Some of the boarders were in the main house and the kitchen and dining room for the pupils were there also, the students being called to meals by bells.

Between the school building and the homestead was the sports ground for basket ball etc. It was really a hard gravelly clay patch. To the left, facing Gladstone Street, were three small brick cottages. In one of these, Mrs Mellhuish (Mr. Forscutt's daughter) lived when she married about 1916. The front fence was a fairly high galvanised iron one and a row of pines extended down the fence alignment to Queen Victoria Street. On the other side of Mr. Forscutt's was a

small cottage in which Mr and Mrs Humphreys lived, they being members of his staff. There was a row of cottages, or land subdivided for cottages, facing Queen Victoria Street. The land between the school and the back fences of this land formed a large paddock in which the horse and a couple of cows were kept.

The attached sketch will give some idea of the layout in those days.

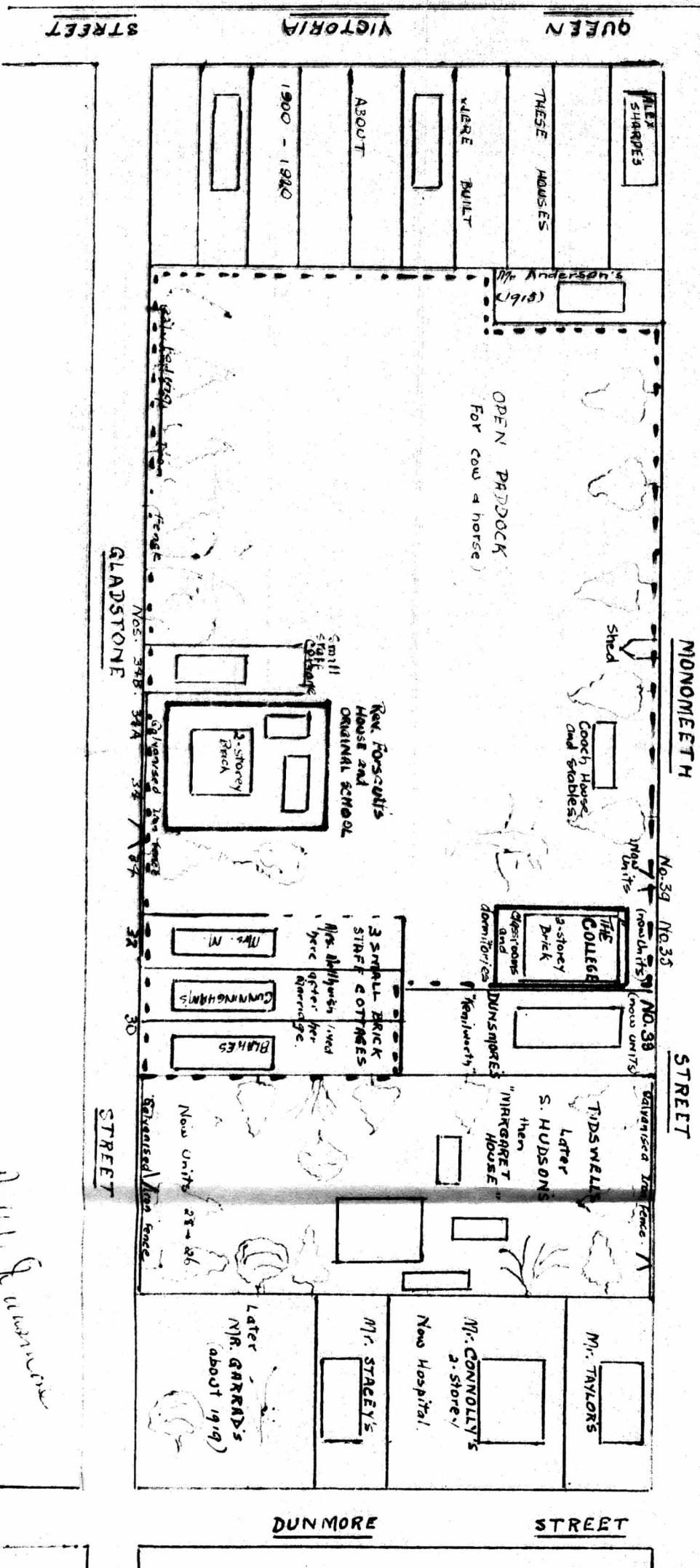
The houses in Queen Victoria Street were built between 1900 and 1920. The portion of the school grounds facing Monomeeth Street was built on in 1927 and the Hudson's block was built on about 1930-31. A block of Home Units was built on the site of the old school in 1958-59 and the ones next door, on the site of our old home, No.33, in 1964.

Mr Hudson purchased "Auderly" from the Tidswells, there were a large number of trees. Tall pines extended round the perimeter along Gladstone Street, along our side fence and across Monomeeth Street side. There was a big variety of trees; pinus insignis, Bunya pine (prickly pine), stone or Roman pine (the one that had the round cones with nuts we liked to eat), pittosporum, cedar, Illawarra flame, camphor laurels, also quite a number of fruit trees on the Monomeeth Street end. Mr Hudson had the trees removed about 1920, the land landscaped and a beautiful stone and rail fence with an imposing gateway erected facing Gladstone Street. He had a beautiful lawn tennis court, a flagpole and spacious lawn in front. It was later taken over for Wedding Receptions and was known as "Margaret House". There are Home Units there now.

THE BEXLEY LADIES' COLLEGE

AND ENVIRONS AS IT WAS

ABOUT 1915



Handwritten note: Ralph & ...