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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.
November, 1980

Dear Friend and Members,

The regular meeting will be held as follows -

Date: Friday evening, November 21st, 1980, at 8.00 p.m.
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
Business: General.
Syllabus Item: Peter Sage Presents: "Switzerland and Austria".
Peter needs no introduction, by early.
Supper Roster: Captain, Mrs. Thompson, and Mesdames Hunt, Troughton,
Grace and Crum.

Ladies please bring a plate.

President,

Mr. R. Lee,
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Mrs. E. Wright,
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Research Officer.

Mr. A. Ellis,
Phone: 587.1159

"The world is full of willing people, those willing to work, and the
rest willing to let them."
Friendship Book - 1971

HOLIDAYS.

Saturday, 14th and Sunday, 15th March, 1981 - Milton-Ulladulla and District Historical Society invites us to a weekend function. \$45.00. Please ring Mrs. Wright 599.4884 for details.

Saturday, 3rd, Sunday, 4th and Monday, 5th October, 1981 - Weekend historical tour of Dubbo and Districts. \$92.00. Deposit \$10.00 at January, 1981 meeting. Please see Mrs. Wright for details.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The St. George Distorical Society is pleased to announce that the following books, written and illustrated by the late Gifford H. Eardley, for the Society, have been reprinted and are now available. No. 8 Book was compiled by Mrs. Bronwyn Perkins.

- No. 1 "The Wolli Creek Valley"
- No. 2 "Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway"
- No. 3 "Saywells Tramway - Rockdale to Lady Robinson's Beach"
- No. 4 "Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway"
- 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)
- No. 8 "Early Churches of the St. George District"

All books now available at \$1.25 per copy - plus current rate of postage.
For your copy of the above books, please contact one of the following:
Mrs. E. Wright - Ph. 599.4884. Miss B. Otton - Ph. 59.4259 (after 8 pm)
Mrs. E. Eardley - Secretary - Ph. 59.8078 Mr. A. Ellis - Ph. 587.1159.

Book 9 in our series of books on history, local and thereabout, is in the process of being researched. Can you help with any information concerning the early Pioneers of the District? If you can, this will be greatly appreciated.

* * *

Many of our Members have been and still are ill. We are sorry to hear this, and hope thy will be well again soon. I received news of the death of Mrs. Dulcie Hay of Arncliffe who was one of our very early members, to her family we extend deepest sympathy. Mrs. Hay had been ill for a long time.

* * *

FOR CHILDREN - HAND IN HAND - The story of the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children - Sydney.
by D.G.Hamilton, John Ferguson.

-Reviewed by Shawn McIlraith
The Sydney Morning Herald
1st March 1980.

From a humble start in three terrace houses with a weatherboard outhouse for diphtheria cases, the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children rose to become a centre of excellence in child care.

Altruism, hard work, persistence, the vision to perceive what step to take next are all part of the hospital's 100 year history - as are uncertainty and conflict.

The positive qualities remain and with the State in the throes of hospital rationalisation, so do some of the uncertainty and conflict.

For its centenary year, celebrated officially last Monday, Dr Don Hamilton, a pediatrician who worked there for many years, has told the hospital's story with loving attention to detail, a touch of humour and frankness about its troubles.

Sydney was in urgent need of an institution to care for the city's many ill and neglected children when a ladies' committee, chaired by Mrs. W.C.Browne, wife of the member for Singleton, won a promise of support from the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, and collected pounds 4,429.0.0. for a children's hospital. With a roughly matching Government grant, this was enough to buy three gaslit terrace houses in Glebe in which Mr Thomas Bowyer had conducted a school. They stood on the corner of Glebe Road and Wigram Street.

Belatedly, in 1880, the Sydney Hospital for Sick Children opened. Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide had established children's hospitals some years earlier.

A board was elected, with Sir George Wigram Allen, the member for Glebe and later Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, as its president. Among its members was Mrs J.R.Fairfax, wife of Mr. (later Sir) James Fairfax, proprietor of the Sydney Morning Herald.

Two honorary physicians, two honorary surgeons and a matron were engaged. Soon the 41 cots in the hospital were filled.

By modern standards, conditions in the Glebe terrace were primitive: slop water drained into the gutter outside and neighbours complained about the earth closets - they were to be replaced by pans, emptied three times a week.

The new telephone service did not reach Glebe until 1890. When a doctor was needed after hours, a nurse was sent in a horse cab to summon one.

The worrying problem of infection spreading among patients was reduced in 1890 when children with all infections except diphtheria were transferred to the Coast Hospital. For diphtheria cases, who might need surgery to remove a diphtheria membrane from the breathing passages, a free-standing timber ward, was built at the back of the hospital.

Later, a residence on the other side of the street was bought for pounds 4,100 and turned into a diphtheria cottage. Local dustmen, uneasy about germs, initially refused to collect the garbage from it.

The staff coped with the physical problems, perhaps expecting little better. But before long it was to be harried by personal conflict between the first active matron, Miss Frances Gillam Holden, and the two hospital physicians. Miss Holden, an intelligent, capable, forthright woman, complained that the doctors failed to come at regular times and that mothers and babies had to be sent away. The physicians charged her with being high-handed and deliberately annoying.

It was not the first time - and certainly will not be the last - that senior nurses and doctors have fallen out. Is it that the mature, experienced woman who bears so much responsibility for the running of a hospital sees doctors through knowing, critical eyes and finds some of them wanting by her own exacting standards? It is an interesting subject for speculation.

Certainly the lifestyle of senior nurses and that of the doctors they worked with were very different. Miss Rose Kirkcaldie, Matron from 1924 to 1945, had a bedroom furnished with a simple iron bed "and not very much else", while one chief resident medical officer who became a visiting physician used to entertain nurses on his yacht in the Harbour.

Miss Holden, who may have overestimated her own position, lost her fight with the medical staff, even though it prompted the Government to hold a magisterial inquiry into the affairs of the hospital. The commissioners recognised her good intentions, but held her mainly responsible for the friction in the hospital. Eventually she resigned and a number of nurses went with her.

In 1907 a new hospital, built at Camperdown for about pounds 40,000.0.0. was opened. There were only seven patients to transfer from Glebe, but by the end of the year numbers had grown to 86. The diphtheria cottage was burned down. Nobody wanted to buy it.

Chinese made a market garden on land at the back of the hospital, leased by the board. Horses carried the produce through the hospital grounds and once a week an old Chinese came to the hospital office to pay the rent.

Dr Hamilton present many such sidelights for the reader's enjoyment while proceeding with the main task of describing the great moments and great men and women of the hospital.

He covers the eras of pioneers such as Dr Charles Clubbe, who galloped to work in top hat and tails, and the influential and sometimes dominating medical superintendents -

Dr S.W.G.Ratcliff - 1923 - 1949
Dr J.C.Fulton - 1949 - 1965
Dr Philip McReady - 1965 - 1978.

He also pays tribute to the great contributions of Sir Lorimer Dods, Sydney's first Professor of Child Health, Sir Norman Gregg, the Ophthalmic Surgeon who first drew attention to the damage done to unborn babies by the rubella virus, and to many other senior doctors who gave unstintingly to help sick children.

The hospital can be proud of its record and its chronicler.

THE KOGARAH GOLF CLUB.

- Miss Francis Stacey
- September 1979.

Fifty years ago this year of 1976, saw the establishment of the Kogarah Golf Club. I remember very clearly one day when I was in the Chair at the Dental Surgery of the late Mr Stanley Binns, awaiting my turn to be attended to, when the telephone rang. It was Mr Riley, asking Mr Binns if he could meet him at the Moorfield Race Course at once to discuss something important in connection with the work going on for the Golf Course. To my delight, Mr Binns said "you come too Fran and I will show it all to you." So off we went to the Race Course in President Avenue, Kogarah.

I roamed about all over the Race Course with Mr Binns and Mr Riley, learning where this fairway and that should be and backwards and forwards across the old stream which used to run through the course and which became one of the main hazards to us all in time to come, especially after wet weather.

The land to be used was inside the Race Course, although some of the tees were placed beyond and above the race track. This caused a real hazard also as so often the ball would hit a fence or become lost among the hoof marks (some very deep) of the horses.

The Members of the Golf Club had the use of most of the Members Stand at the Race Course. The lovely verandah on the President Avenue side, surrounded and shaded by the lovely old Morten Bay Figs, which must have been a great age then. We also had the use of the cloak-room, wash-room and last, but not least, the kitchen where Mrs Scott served us with lovely lunches and afternoon teas, all prepared by herself. The parking ground for cars was just inside the big gates, off President Avenue. It was most picturesque with the lovely big trees and a man to guard the cars, for a small fee.

I think there could never have been a happier group of people all together - with our President, the late Mrs Primrose, and our Secretary, Mrs Colvin. All our Annual Meetings were held on the big verandah or occasionally on the Race Course side where there was more seating accommodation, and cooler in summer. They were such happy days and I can still hear Mrs Primrose's voice calling - "Ladies!" - when she wished to speak to us. The "Ladies" stopped their chatter immediately!!

I am sure no person who had been a foundation member would forget the kind and gentle patience given us by Mrs Primrose

and Mrs Colvin in teaching us how to play golf, because few of us could play prior to joining the Club. Also to be remembered was the first Professional - Mr Scott, who gave wonderful lessons to all who wanted them, and I can still hear him advising us to "get that gay abandon" when swinging the club to drive the ball.

At the end of each year, the Annual Meeting and Luncheon was held on the verandah and afterwards the presentation of trophies. These were lovely, happy occasions also. One of my treasures is a very lovely picture of red poppies growing in the fields of France. This was presented to me by the late Mrs Fifi Binns, wife of the late Dr Will Binns, of Kogarah. On all the Annual Meeting days, members were invited to bring along their favourite dish to augment the luncheon table.

Some months ago we had occasion to use a number of taxis. One day we drove through Arncliffe and the driver remarked on the sad fate of Kogarah Golf Club and its amalgamation with Bonny Doone. He used to be a caddy at Kogarah, and remarked on all the people he had caddied for - mostly Mrs Primrose and Mrs Colvin. His name is Mr Higgerson and no doubt, some of you will remember him as he also caddied with others, too. He was most interested to hear of the 50th Anniversary being celebrated.

THE OLD SUPREME COURT BUILDING -

- From brochure distributed
in May 1979 when the building
was open for inspection.

Restoration work on the 150-year-old Supreme Court building in King Street, has been completed by the State Government.

Six Courts within the building have been faithfully restored and will be used to provide temporary accommodation for the District Court. The former Banco Court has also been restored and will be used for sittings of the Supreme Court.

The State Government has spent \$2 million on the restoration of the Court complex, a key link in the group of early 19th century buildings around Queens Square.

The Old Supreme Court Building and St. James Church are the only two early major public buildings in the City of Sydney which have had continuity of use in the functions and traditions for which they were built in the early 1820's.

Francis Greenway was responsible for the design of the first of the Supreme Court Buildings and since his time, two other leading colonial architects, James Barnett and W.L.Vernon have designed additions to the Court.

The outside restoration work involved cleaning and restoring the stonework and facade of the buildings, and re-roofing of the whole complex with slates from the Lakes District in England.

Recent additions to the buildings, out of character with the original courthouse, have been demolished to expose the facade of the original building as it was in the early days of the colony.

The most striking feature of the original building, the Greenway spiral staircase, has been restored and the attractive pink and yellow decorative scheme on the walls reproduced. Layers of paint were scraped away to reveal the original pattern and colours decorating the walls. The circular staircase is regarded as an engineering feat of its time.

An antique light fitting from Scotland which dates back to the early 19th century has been placed in the stairwell.

The St. James Road Court, the original Banco Court built in 1895, another important feature of the Court complex, has been restored to its original condition.

The timber work and wood panelling has been french-polished, the

ceiling repainted and gilded and a historical patterned carpet specially designed for the Court. 24-carat gilding has been replaced on the capitals and ceiling panels of the Banco Court and the No.1 Court in the complex. The woodwork in the courtrooms has been restored and french-polished and the building carpeted throughout.

Another feature of the complex is an attractive Gothic stairway in the original Registry Building which forms part of the Court complex. The stairway has cast-iron stairs and balcony with a floor of glass tiles. The traditional colour scheme of the area- blue and green, has been reproduced after scraping away layers of paint on the walls.

The Courts were originally lit by natural light obtained through lantern lights in the ceiling and this effect has been retained although modern lighting has been included in the courtrooms.

The restored Court complex provides an excellent example of early colonial architecture and acts as a significant reminder of the colony's progress to a self-governing State.

The Old Supreme Court -

The old Supreme Court is part of a group of early 19th Century buildings built around Queen's Square, including the Hyde Park Barracks, the Mint Building and St. James Church.

The Court was founded by Sir Frances Forbes, First Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of N.S.W. on May 17, 1824. The original building was occupied by him in 1827, although it was only partly finished. The Charter establishing the Supreme Court of N.S.W. was signed by George IV on October 13, 1823, and proclaimed in the colony on May 17, 1824.

Work started on a Court building but the plans were changed and the building became the St. James Church. Work then started on a school building but again the plans were changed and this building became the Supreme Court. Both these decisions were made by Commissioner Bigge - the man who sacked Governor Macquarie. Francis Greenway was sacked as the Government Architect in 1822 - five years before the Supreme Court Building was finished. A new Registry building, designed by James Barnett was added to the original building in the 1860's.

The Banco Court building, built along St. James Road, behind the original building and the Registry building was completed in 1896 under the supervision of the Government Architect at the time, Walter J Vernon.

The complex of buildings has been in a bad state of repair, especially in the 1960's when it was condemned for demolition. In the late 1960's the architectural merit of the building was recognised when a campaign to save the building from demolition was successful.

The Banco Court.

The St. James Road Court, the original Banco Court, was built in 1895 and designed by the Government Architect, W.L.Vernon.

The name "Banco", is derived from the term describing the Supreme Court when sitting as a full court.

The design was based on an Irish Court, St. Stephen's Court, in Dublin. The Court is finished throughout in polished cedar and features a large glazed skylight in the centre of the ceiling which provides natural lighting for the courtroom.

The bench or dias for the accommodation of the Judges is framed by an ornate and massive cedar canopy which is beautifully carved.

The Court will be used as a Supreme Court.
