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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



PRICE 5 c.

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

"Registered by Australia
Post N. B. H. 0335."

24 Duff Street,
Arncliffe. 2205.
September 1981.

Dear Friend and Member,

The September meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, September 18th, 1981, at 8.00 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Professor Cable will tell of: "The Current Problems in Studying Australian History". This should prove interesting, especially to those who are doing Research.

Supper Roster: Captain: Miss M. Callister, together with Mesdames Farrar, Predy and Barrack.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. R. Lee,

President.

Phone 570.1244

Mrs. B. Perkins,

Publicity Officer.

Phone 587.9164

Mrs. E. Wright,

Treasurer & Soc. Sec.

Phone 599.4884

Mrs. E. Eardley,

Sec. & Bulletin Editor.

Phone 59.8078

Mr. A. Ellis,

Research Officer.

Phone 587.1159

"It's the song ye sing, and the smiles ye wear,
That's a-makin' the sun shine everywhere."

..... James Riley.

Many of our Members have been and still are ill. We are sorry to hear this, and hope they will be well again soon.

Saturday 3rd, Sunday 4th and Monday 5th October, 1981 - Weekend historical tour of Dubbo and Districts. \$92.00. Final payment please. A few seats still available.

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 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" (Temporarily out of stock).
- No. 6. "All Stations to Como"
- No. 7. "Tempe and the Black Creek Valley" (Temporarily out of stock).
- 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 p.m.)

Mrs. E. Eardley - Secretary - Ph. 59.8078, Mr. A. Ellis - Ph. 587.1159.

The Research Project - "Early Pioneers of the St. George District" - undertaken by some of our members is progressing. Much information has been gathered. However, there is still a long way to go. Help from interested members would be greatly appreciated. Can you help towards "Book No. 9" in our series of books on history?

Members please note: Due to circumstances, it has been found necessary to increase the Annual Subscription as follows:

<u>Per Member</u>	..	\$3.00)	<u>Due July 1981.</u>
<u>Per Family</u>	..	\$5.00)	

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN TO PAY YOURS?

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INCOMEYear ending 30th June 1981.

Members' Subscriptions	\$ 418.10
R.A.H.Society (Cultural Grant)	200.00
Members' Donations	90.25
Badge Sales	14.00
Society Books Sales	526.40
Kangaroo Valley Book	3.00
Bus Trips	624.50
Raffles	83.00
Anniversary Dinner	784.00
Afternoon Teas (Lydham Hall)	36.60
Bank Interest from July 1980 to June 1981	13.08
	<hr/>
	2792.93
Balance in Bank 30th June 1980	886.61
	<hr/>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>\$3679.54</u>

EXPENDITUREYear ending 30th June 1981.

Pink Panther Printing Co.	\$1056.50
Ryedale Printing Services	226.71
V.I.P. Tours	535.00
Mrs Eardley Postage	228.95
Delegates Fee	35.00
R.A.H.Society Annual Subscription	17.50
National Trust Annual Subscription	18.00
Mr A Ellis Delegate Armidale	80.00
Salvation Army Donation	30.00
Mrs Wright Christmas Catering	92.58
Christmas Party (Staff)	43.61
Mrs Wright Petty Cash	30.00
Mrs Wright Postage	20.00
Mrs Thompson Catering	6.80
Ainslee Lodge	20.00
Cheque Book	5.00
Australia Post	20.00
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	2465.65
Less unrepresented cheque	20.72
	<hr/>
	2444.93
Balance in bank at 30th June 1981	1234.61
	<hr/>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>\$3679.54.</u>

LYDHAM HALL FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

Year ending 30th June 1981.

INCOME

Lydham Hall Admittances	\$ 336.50
Cake Sales	5.40
Raffles	112.60
Donations	24.60
Century of Progress Sales	87.00
St.George Historical Scy.Books sold	197.00
Lydham Hall Teaspoons Sales	222.00
Sale of Show Case	20.00
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	1005.10
Bank Interest	54.65
	<hr/>
	1059.75
Cash in bank 30th June 1980	1874.49
	<hr/>
Grand Total	\$2934.25

Capital Investment in St. George Building Society A/c No.111973720
 Credit at \$1524.52 including interest to date \$115.02.
 Value of teaspoons on hand \$110.20.

EXPENDITURE

Gloss cardboard & display pins	12.44
Special light globes	25.40
Petty Cash	30.00
Perfection plate teaspoons	165.31
Century of Progress Books	20.00
Grace Bros. for carpet squares	268.30
St.George Historical Society Books	55.20
Christmas Raffle Prizes	31.00
Plate Stands	42.60
Penrose for glass shelves	126.30
Century of Progress Books	20.00
Rockdale Council for show cases etc.	1198.15
Petty Cash	30.00
St.George Historical Society Books	125.50
Cheque Book	2.50
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	2152.70
Cash in Bank	780.54
Cash in hand	1.00
	<hr/>
Grand Total	\$2934.24

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- R F Lee - President
17th July 1981.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to submit this Annual Report to the St. George Historical Society, which coincides with the 20th Anniversary of the Society's foundation.

The present strength of membership, the extremely well attended monthly meetings, the activity and concern displayed by members, the high standard of guest speakers, also the regard and attention shown by various outside sources, more than justifies the enterprise and foresight of those, who from a small and no doubt uncertain beginning, founded the Society.

Whilst the prime purpose and function of the Society is to pursue activities, historical in nature - particularly local history - and this it does, nevertheless, a great deal of pleasure and fellowship is enjoyed by the members, for which we are the richer.

I consider that this requires no explanation or apology, but rather should be acknowledged and encouraged.

Many new members have joined the Society during the previous 12 months and to them I extend a warm welcome. Visitors, also are most welcome.

Regrettably, during the same period, a number of our very esteemed members have died. For us their passing is a sad and irretrievable loss. Also, a number of members have suffered illness and accident. The hope of an early recovery is extended to them.

I express thanks and appreciation to the Vice Presidents and other Officers of the Society, including all members of the Management Committee, for their loyalty and assistance, throughout the year. Special thanks are due to both our Hon. Secretary - Mrs Eardley, and our Hon. Treasurer - Mrs Wright, whose untiring efforts on behalf of the Society, contribute so much to its success.

Rockdale Municipal Council.

On your behalf, I especially acknowledge the generous assistance and kindness which we receive, in many ways, from Rockdale Council - its Officers and Staff.

The Society is not only sponsored by Council, but is also the recipient of practical and courteous support. Particular thanks are due to the Mayor, Alderman R W Rathbone, whose friendship, advice and encouragement is of great value.

Management Committee:

This Committee has met regularly during the year and meetings have been well attended. Various matters have been the subject of discussion, during this period and a number of recommendations have been submitted to the Society for its consideration.

Lydham Hall.

The Annual Report of the Lydham Hall Local Committee, for the year ended 28th February 1981, published in the St. George Historical Society Bulletin, June 1981, is recommended for detailed information regarding the development of Lydham Hall.

This Committee is responsible for the administration and maintenance of Lydham Hall. The Society is represented on the Committee by:

- .Mrs Eardley - (Hon.Secretary of the St. George Historical Society)
- .Miss Otton - (Curator)
- .Mr. R Lee - (President of the Society).

Rockdale Municipal Council is represented by:

- .Alderman Hanratty
- .Alderman Lang and
- .Alderman Rathbone (Hon.Secretary Lydham Hall Local Committee).

The Committee meets at 3 to 4 month intervals.

An important part of the Society's involvement at Lydham Hall, is to assist in conducting visitors through the building. Quoting from the aforementioned Annual Report of the Committee, in the past, this has been undertaken by a "very loyal but very small band, of Historical Society members".

Miss Otton and her "loyal but very small band" of helpers, maintain a very "tidy ship" at Lydham Hall and are to be congratulated. More volunteers are required to assist in meeting this commitment of the Society. I earnestly request that any member, able to assist and who is not already involved, please discuss the matter with Miss Otton.

Involvement in Lydham Hall is an important Society activity and must be maintained at all cost. It is a practical way of demonstrating what we espouse, in respect to the restoration and preservation of local history. The Society's reputation, not only with Rockdale Council, but also with the Community at large, depends very much on the successful operation of Lydham Hall.

Large groups from Mosman Historical Society and Drummoyne Historical Society have recently inspected Lydham Hall. These visitors showed great interest and were generous in their praise of the building and its contents. Both groups expressed regret that they did not have the opportunity to be involved in such a project.

Activities of the Society:

During the year, the Society was involved in various activities associated with its aims. These were well supported by members and consequently most successful.

Research Project: Pioneers of the St. George District.

The Society is committed to the completion of this project in response to a grant through the Royal Australian Historical Society. Much work has been done and progress made. However, the project has still a way to go for completion. Members who have research work to be submitted are requested to see Mrs Eardley for reassurance and encouragement. Other members able to contribute further to this project are invited to so do.

Heritage Week - March 1981 & October Holiday Week-End 1980 trip to Wagga Wagga were both memorable occasions. Mrs Wright & Mr Ellis, also all other members who contributed to the success of these activities, are thanked.

Support was given to the Haberfield Association in their endeavour to preserve the Haberfield Federation Garden Suburb. The Management Committee recommends that the Society support similar worthy conservation issues.

The 20th Anniversary Dinner to be held tomorrow evening (18th July 1981) will be the concluding function for the year.

Also, during the year, members attended other related functions, including:

Rockdale Municipal Council - Australia Day Celebration & Civic Church Service.

The 211th Anniversary of the Landing of Captain Cook at Kurnell.

In conclusion, I extend sincere thanks and appreciation to all members, for the encouragement and kindness, which has been given to me throughout the year. I also pay tribute to those ladies who so willingly provide and prepare supper each meeting.

I trust that the Society may continue to progress and achieve success in future years.

Signed. *R. T. Lee*

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - 1981 - 1982.

- Annual Meeting July 1981

President	- Mr R F Lee
Patrons	- Alderman R W Rathbone (Mayor) Mr R Fuller (Town Clerk)
Senior Vice-President	- Mr D H Sinclair
Vice-Presidents	- Miss V M Dunsmore Mr A Ellis
Secretary	- Mrs E Eardley
Treasurer	- Mrs E Wright
Auditor	- Miss V M Dunsmore
Research Officer	- Mr A Ellis
Publicity Officer	- Mrs B Perkins
Bulletin Editor	- Mrs E Eardley
Social Secretary	- Mrs E Wright.

Lydham Hall Local Committee: Nominated subject to Council approval -
Mr R F Lee President Mrs E E Eardley Secretary Miss B Otton

Lydham Hall Fund Raising Committee:
Miss B Otton, Mesdames F Day, L Blackshaw & D Prebble.

Management Committee:

Mr R F Lee President, ex officio
Mrs E Eardley Secretary " "
Mrs E Wright Treasurer " "
Misses V M Dunsmore, M Callister & D Row
Mrs B Perkins
Messrs A Ellis, D H Sinclair & W Dixon.

AUDITOR'S REPORT: as at 30th June 1981.

I am pleased to certify that I have examined the records of postages and outlays for stationery etc. kept by Mrs E Eardley as Secretary and Bulletin Editor for the year ended 30th June 1981 and in my opinion they are correct in every respect.

I have also examined the books of account, receipt and cheque butts and bank statements presented to me by Mrs E Wright as Treasurer of the Society and those kept by Miss B Otton as Treasurer of the Lydham Hall Fund Raising Committee and in my opinion they form correct records of all transactions of receipts and expenditure and I compliment all three ladies on the clear and careful way in which these records have been kept.

(Sgd) V M Dunsmore

Auditor 15.7.1981.

JOHN BOWMER -

- Margaret Callister
July 1981.

John Bowmer, aged 25, arrived in Sydney on the "Irene" on 16th October 1852 with his wife, Eliza Maria aged 28 and their infant daughter Fanny, born in 1852, another child having died at sea on the way out.

John Bowmer was a gardener and was born at Rephem in Lincolnshire, England where his father, Abraham, was a groom. Mrs Bowmer was born at Bully Gloucestershire.

They were married at Cottesmore in Rutlandshire (the smallest county in England) in 1849 and when they first arrived in Sydney they lived at Woolloomooloo before moving to Stanmore near where Newington College is now situated.

In 1862 he bought land in Rockdale at the corner of West Botany and Bryant Streets where he worked a market garden. Mr Bowmer later sold some of this land to Mr James Wilson who built the stone house still standing opposite Rockdale Park in West Botany Street which now belongs to Rockdale Council and is known as "Wilson's farmhouse". The stone for this house was quarried nearby. The Bowmer house was in Bryant Street at the side of the Wilson farmhouse and the property stayed in the family for three generations until it was sold in 1968.

There were 10 children of this marriage and 17 grandchildren.

John Bowmer played a leading role in municipal affairs. In the early days of the West Botany Council his work in West Botany Street had so impressed the Council that it decided to form a further 24 chains of road in the street at a cost of pounds 30, he being employed almost full time by the Council as its first road construction contractor.

In 1876 John Bowmer was elected to the Council. The only unfortunate incident on the Council that year occurred in April when some person with evil intent sent John Bowmer a packet of black spiders through the post. In one of its very few unanimous decisions the Council recorded its "disgust at the unmanly conduct of the person or persons who sent the packet to the Mayor". The reason for this was that Mr Bowmer was a most gentlemanly and patriarchal figure and enjoyed enormous popularity both with the Council and the other residents. This what caused the outrage when somebody sent the spiders.

During stormy protests and complaints during the years to 1880 only the steady hand of Alderman John Bowmer (now in his third term as Mayor) kept the ship of state on an even keel.

He presided at the luncheon on 15th October 1884 to celebrate the opening of the railway line as far as Hurstville. He was mayor for seven terms from 1878 to 1884.

In 1884 he was appointed the first Returning Officer for the State electorate of St. George. To celebrate this fact he was given a medal by his fellow clerks to be hung on his watch chain. This medallion is now kept at Lydham Hall.

He is mentioned in the Centennial history of N.S.W. in 1888.

He was one of the founders of the West Botany Wesleyan Church (now the Uniting Church in Bay Street, Rockdale). In those days it was known as the Rocky Point Chapel, attached to the Newtown circuit.

The movement towards municipal incorporation in Kogarah began at a public meeting held on Monday, April 7, 1884, at the Beavers' Gardeners' Arms Hotel, Kogarah at which there was an attendance of 40 persons and Mr J Bowmer, Mayor of West Botany presided.

Mr Bowmer died on December 13, 1903 at Rockdale aged 76 and was buried in the Wesleyan cemetery at Sutherland.

As one of its pioneers John Bowmer made a significant contribution to the development of our district in the days when life was a very different proposition from what it is today.

20th ANNIVERSARY DINNER -

- *Ralph Dunsmore.*

On Saturday evening, 18th July, 1981 we celebrated the 20th birthday of the St. George Historical Society by having a dinner and social gathering, organised by Mrs Wright. It was held at "Ainslee Lodge", Seaforth Street, Bexley. This is a lovely and very well-appointed old house, which, when I was a boy was the home of the Young family.

There were 72 present and after drinks and savouries in the reception rooms we were ushered into the dining room. Those occupying places of honour at the official table were: Alderman Rathbone and Miss Rathbone (Guests of Honour), Mr & Mrs Bob Lee (our President), Mr & Mrs Don Sinclair, Mrs Wright, Mr & Mrs Faulkner, Mr A Ellis, Miss K Duggan, Mrs Monk, Mrs Foster and Miss Margaret Dunsmore.

We were given a baked dinner, hot and nicely served, after Grace was said by Miss Margaret Callister. Judging by the conversations going on, I think all were enjoying themselves. The orchestra played pleasant music, mainly old-time tunes.

Our M.C. proposed the Loyal Toast, after which he sang two songs. Bob Lee, President, made a speech in which he gave an account of the Society's growth from small beginnings and was known at first as the Rockdale Historical Society, and is now the St. George Historical Society. Mr Ron Rathbone also spoke of the Society growing from the initial 12 members, and when going on excursions members used their own cars and invariably became lost en route, so the idea of using a bus came into vogue. Don Sinclair also spoke in the same vein, saying that Ron Rathbone was the first secretary, treasurer, and how he got things moving. He proposed a Toast to the "St. George Historical Society - now and in the future". Bob Lee called for a vote of thanks to Mrs Wright for her efforts in giving us such an enjoyable evening.

After the speeches, Mrs Wright had the tickets for a raffle drawn, this was won by Mrs Dixon - the prize being a picture made from natural wool; it was procured by Jenette Hindmarsh, and was made by one of her country friends.

The floor having been cleared by this time, the orchestra struck up an old-time waltz and dancing was in progress for a while. About 10.15p.m. after a very pleasant evening, we departed for home.
