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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



PRICE 5 c .

# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,  
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

October 1982.

Dear Friend and Member,

The October Meeting will be held as follows:-

- Date: Friday Evening, October 15th, 1982, at 8.00 p.m.
- Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
- Business: General.
- Syllabus Item: To be decided.
- Supper Roster: Mrs. R. Lee, Captain, together with Mrs. Loring, Mrs. Teychenne and Miss Dunsmore.
- Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. R. Lee,  
resident.  
Phone 570 1244

Mrs. B. Perkins,  
Publicity Officer.  
Phone 587 9164

Mrs. E. Eardley,  
Sec. & Bulletin Ed.  
Phone 59 8078

Mrs. E. Wright,  
Treasurer.  
Phone 599 4884

Miss D. Row,  
Social Secretary.  
Phone 59 9300

Mr. A. Ellis,  
Research Officer.  
Phone 587 1159

"The man who sings his own praises is usually a soloist."

..... Friendship Book 1976.

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

#### 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 Wollie 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"
- No. 8. "Early Churches of the St. George District"
- No. 9. "Early Settlers of the St. George District" -- should be available at an early date.

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

Mrs. E. Wright - Phone 599 4884, Miss B. Otton - Phone 59 4259 (after 8 p.m.)  
Mrs. E. Eardley - Secretary - Phone 59 8078, Mr. A. Ellis - Phone 587 1159.

Also available is a very interesting book - "Tempe-East Hills Railway", by B.J. Madden. Published by Hurstville Historical Society. Price \$1.80 per copy. Postage extra. Phone 599 4884, 59 8078.

The Research Project. "Early Settlers of the St. George District" -- undertaken by some of our members, is progressing. Much information has been gathered.

Help from interested members would be greatly appreciated. Can you help towards our series of books on history? We would like to thank those members who have contributed. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Visitors are always welcome at our meetings.

SOCIAL NEWS. The following outing has been arranged by our Social Secretary for your pleasure; we do hope Miss Row will have your support.

A Day at the Blue Mountains, to see the Rhododendrons, which should be at their best at this time of the year.

Date: Saturday, November 13th, 1982.  
Meeting Place: Western side of Rockdale Station.  
Time: 8.30 A.M. SHARP.  
Cost: \$6.00 per person.

October long weekend Saturday 2nd, Sunday 3rd, Monday 4th.  
Coach tour - "Taree and Thereabouts".

Unfortunately this tour will be cancelled due to insufficient interest and support.

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONSTITUTION.

1. The Society shall be known as "St. George Historical Society".
2. The Boundaries of the Society shall coincide with those of the St. George District.
3. The Society shall be affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society.
4. The Objects of the Society shall be to:-
  - (a) Encourage the study of Australian History particularly that relating to the St. George District.
  - (b) Promote the compilation of authentic records of Australian History.
  - (c) Undertake the collection of books, records, manuscripts and relics considered to have a bearing on the history of the St. George District.
  - (d) Use its influence to secure the preservation of places of historic interest.
  - (e) Foster the interchange of information among members of the Society by lectures, readings, discussions and exhibitions of historical interest or value.
  - (f) Print, publish and circulate such journals, periodicals, books and other literary publications and undertakings as may seem conducive to any of the objects of the Society.
  - (g) Establish Branches wherever and whenever considered advisable.
  - (h) Affiliate or co-operate with other Societies and institutions having objects similar to those of the Society.
  - (i) Conduct excursions to places of historical interest and to promote other social functions.
  - (j) Carry out such activities as the Society may from time to time determine.
5. The financial year shall commence on the first day of July and end on the last day of June each year.

## Constitution

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6. \* Amended - July 1975.

\* Further amended 16th July, 1982 to read:-

The annual subscription is and shall be \$3.00 per member and \$5.00 for family membership until altered by the members at any future annual meeting of the Society.

Any member failing to pay within three (3) months of the due date shall be deemed to be unfinancial.

7. The management of the Society shall be vested in a Committee consisting of a President, two (2) Vice-Presidents, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and five (5) other members with power to co-opt. All must be financial members of the Society elected by ballot at the Annual Meeting held in July.
8. The Committee shall have power to appoint anyone of its members to act as:- Honorary Research Secretary, Honorary Librarian, Honorary Curator, and such other positions as it may think fit and advisable.
9. The Committee shall have power to:-
- (a) Call special meetings of the Society.
  - (b) Fill vacancies in the Committee including Officers.
  - (c) Appoint Committees.
  - (d) Manage and control the expenditure of the Society.
  - (e) Draw up the programme of activities of the Society.
  - (f) Do all other acts and things which it may consider necessary or desirable in the interests of the Society or to carry out its objects.
10. At all general meetings of the Society, twelve (12) present shall constitute a quorum.

For meetings of the Committee four (4) shall constitute a quorum.

If a meeting of the Committee should fail for lack of a quorum another meeting shall be held a week later and those present shall constitute a quorum, provided there are more than two (2) present.

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11. The President shall chair all meetings of the Society or in his absence, the Vice-Presidents in rotation.
12. An Honorary Auditor shall be appointed at each Annual Meeting. The Committee shall prepare and submit to each Annual Meeting, a Report and Balance Sheet for the current financial year.
13. The Honorary Secretary shall keep a list of names and addresses of all members and a book containing the minutes of all meetings. He shall have charge of all correspondence and records of the Society.
14. The Honorary Treasurer shall receive and pay out the monies of the Society and he shall keep an account thereof.
15. A Society Bank Account shall be opened in the name of the Society and cheques shall be signed by any two of the following officers:-  
President - Hon. Secretary - Hon. Treasurer.
16. Any member changing his or her name or address shall notify such change to the Hon. Secretary without delay.
17. A copy of every paper communicated to the Society shall become the property of the Society.
18. The Committee may appoint as an Honorary Member of the Society, any person who, in its opinion, has rendered valuable service or made a notable contribution to the Society.
19. Any alteration shall be made to these rules only at the Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting called for that purpose, whereupon due notice shall be given to the Hon. Secretary of an intention to propose any alteration.
20. In matters not expressly provided for in these rules, the Committee shall have full power to act.

The following additional clause, was adopted for inclusion in the Society's constitution, at a meeting held on 16th October, 1971.

21. (a) The assets and income of the Society shall be applied solely in furtherance of its objects and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to its members except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.
- (b) Upon the winding up or dissolution of the Society the net assets of the Society shall be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Society and which shall also prohibit the distribution of its or their property amongst its or their members.

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This is a copy of the Society's Constitution as adopted on 12th July 1961, and as subsequently amended at the dates indicated.

A copy to each member for inclusion in the October 1982, Society Bulletin, for information.

15.9.1982.

(Mrs) E Eardley  
Hon. Secretary.

MILES FRANKLIN - AUTHORESS

by Alderman R.W. Rathbone.

As a primary school child attending Carlton Public School in the early 1940's I had a paper run. I had no need to have a paper run but my father thought it was a good idea as "it would teach me the use of money". My run from Cooper's Newsagency took me along Carlton Parade, up Grey Street, along Ethel Street and down Willison Road and Short Street. It netted me nine shillings and sixpence per week.

Carlton, in those days, had more than its fair share of "characters" but one I remember in particular was a small lady named Miss Franklin who lived at 26 Grey Street, a simple weatherboard cottage with a gloriously unkempt garden.

Miss Franklin had steely grey hair, piercing blue eyes and seemed to be in a perpetual state of agitation and disorganisation.

I remember her particularly because she was one of the few customers I had who took both evening papers and rarely ever paid for either. On those infrequent occasions when she could find her purse she seldom had any change in it.

According to her neighbours, who regarded her with tolerant and genuine affection, she wrote poetry.

A decade later as a student at the Teachers' College studying as part of my course, Australian Literature, I discovered that the pleasantly eccentric Miss Franklin of my paper-boy days was probably the most outstanding woman novelist Australia had produced in the first one hundred and fifty years of its history.

Some time after her death, in 1954, perhaps the only close friend she had in Carlton, the late Miss Nellie Battye, a lady who was a personality in her own right, gave me a battered first edition of Miles Franklin's first novel autographed "Stella Franklin", which I treasure to this day.

Stella Maria Miles Lampe Franklin was born at Talbingo on the Tumut River in southern N.S.W. on October 14, 1879, the eldest of seven children of John Maurice Franklin and his wife Margaret Susannah Lampe.

John Franklin was a squatter and the owner of a property called "Brindabella" so named because it nestled under the protection of the nearby Brindabella Ranges. With her younger brothers and sisters and a number of nearby cousins she shared a tutor - an engaging Scottish remittance man named Auchinvole whose two great loves were the Classics of English Literature and strong drink.

In 1889 the family moved to a dairy property at Thornford near Goulburn. At the tiny one teacher school which she attended there, Stella Franklin proved to be a voracious reader with a flair for writing.

After she left school Stella Franklin remained at home, helping with the chores, reading everything she could get her hands upon and amusing herself at night by writing stories to read to her younger brothers and sisters.

On her frequent visits to Goulburn she met Agnes O'Sullivan, wife of Edward William O'Sullivan, radical member for the seat of Queanbeyan in the N.S.W. State Parliament. Mrs. O'Sullivan was the epitome of a liberated woman - well educated and scarcely less radical in her views than her controversial husband. Agnes O'Sullivan made a deep impression on the intense young teenager.

In the late 1890's Stella Franklin had written - more as a pastime than as a serious literary work - an autobiographical manuscript of her early life at Brindabella. With the encouragement of Mrs. O'Sullivan and the assistance of Henry Lawson who wrote a preface to the work, this was published under the title "My Brilliant Career" in 1901.

Its effect upon the literary world was astonishing - that a young girl of only 21 years could write with such insight and characterisation.

Its impact upon members of her own family and the friends on whom she had drawn so freely for her characterisation was marked by offence, bitterness,



resentment and ostracism. Stella Miles Franklin was accused of betraying and caricaturing her own class.

So embarrassed was she by their reaction that she refused to allow the book to be republished during her lifetime.

The result of all this - lionisation in the literary world and bitter resentment at home, caused her to leave Thornford in 1902 and move firstly to Melbourne where she was befriended by the novelist Joseph Furphy and later to Sydney.

In Sydney she wrote articles for The Bulletin under the pseudonym Mary Anne and worked as a domestic to sustain herself. She also became actively involved in feminist and radical causes.

During this time she wrote a second novel - partly out of remorse for her previous effort and partly as justification, entitled "My Career Goes Bung", but it was more than forty years before it was eventually published.

Whilst in Melbourne Miles Franklin had met the militant feminist Alice Henry and in 1906 followed her to America where she had organised the National Women's Trades Union League. Miles became co-editor of the radical journal "Life and Labour".

In 1909 she published "Some Everyday Folk and Dawn" another novel based on the underprivileged position of women in the Australian bush and their fight for the right to vote.

With the outbreak of the First World War Miles Franklin was given the option of renouncing her British citizenship and becoming an American citizen or leaving the United States.

She sailed for England in 1915, joined the V.A.D's. and served with the Red Cross in the Scottish Hospital at Salonika in Greece during the Balkans Campaign.

After the War she remained in England working as a political secretary with the Ministry of Housing and doing social work. She was again active in radical causes.

Between 1928 and 1931 after a brief return visit to Australia she published a trilogy of three novels - all associated with the Australian bush under the pseudonym of Brent of Bin Bin. They were "Up the Country", "Ten Creeks Run" and "Back to Bool Bool". It was not until after her death that it was finally established that she was the author.

In 1931 she also published a novel "Old Blastus of Bandicoot" under her own name. It was a classic portrayal of the "cow cocky" and "wheat cocky" farmers she knew so well.

Two years later, in 1933, she returned to Australia settling in Carlton and remained there for the rest of her life. There she began work on the novel that was to win her world renown. "All That Swagger" is an impassioned justification of Australia and all it meant to a person who imposed upon herself 30 years of exile from the country she loved. To many, it was the other side of the picture of the pioneering families she had caricatured in her first novel.

When it was published in 1936 it was awarded the Prior Memorial Prize and was serialised in The Bulletin. It established her once and for all as one of Australia's foremost literary talents.

But the effort of writing this last piece seemed to burn her out and for the remaining 20 years of her life she published very little although she co-operated with the Melbourne author, Kate Baker, on a memorable biography of her early mentor, Joseph Furphy, which was published in 1944.

As age and illness eventually overtook her she seemed to become more confused and less able to marshal her great literary resources but strangely, it is her autobiographical novel "Childhood at Brindabella" published after her death that may yet prove to be her most enduring memorial.

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In September 1954, while she was working on the manuscript of another novel, "Gentlemen of Gyang Gyang" she died of pleurisy following a heart attack in a private hospital at Drummoyne.

"My Brilliant Career" - the novel which launched her literary career, was made into a film in 1980.

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