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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205
November, 1982.

Dear Friend and Member,

The November Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening, November 19th, 1982, at 8 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Dr. Alan Roberts, Field and Research Officer, R.A.H.S.,
will be Guest Speaker, he has chosen for his subject:
"Oral History in Local History, Writing your own Biography."

Supper Roster: Miss Smallwood, Captain, together with Mrs. Nelson
and Miss Gall.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. R. Lee,
President.

Phone 570.1244

Mrs. B. Perkins,
Publicity Officer.

Phone 587.9164

Mrs. E. Eardley,
Sec. & Bulletin Ed.

Phone 59.8078

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Treasurer:

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Miss D. Row,
Social Secretary.

Phone 50.9300

Mr. A. Ellis,
Research Officer.

Phone 587.1159

Worry is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do, but
it doesn't get you anywhere.

Friendship Book.

1971.

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 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"
- 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 8pm)
Mrs.E.Eardley - Sec. 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 599 488, 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.

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DESTINATION HISTORY - via Preservation.

- *Sydney Morning Herald*
- 18th December 1976

- *Joseph Glascott*
Environmental Writer.

Much of the glamour of the State's railway stations has been lost with the disappearance of steam engines, the loss of travellers to the motor car and aeroplane and the consequent cutback in rail services. Some stations on country lines which now never see a passenger train are virtually abandoned.

The big main-line stations are no longer colourful, bustling scenes of luggage waggons, and struggling porters. No longer do streams of diners head for the RRRs (railway refreshment rooms) for meat pies and veges and steaming silver pots of coffee in the middle of the night.

The railway stations have lost their positions as the hub of the towns and cities but their grand buildings remain, often imposing and certainly the most romantic-looking in many a rural centre. The National Trust has recognised their historic and architectural worth.

It has classified for preservation Sydney's Central Station as well as the stations at Albury, Newcastle, Junee and Bowenfels (Lithgow). The most recent addition to the classified list was Springwood station in the Blue Mountains.

The Trust has recorded as significant (but not necessarily to be preserved) several stations, including Wagga, Mudgee, Bathurst, Hay, Cobar, Blayney, Armidale, Narrandera and Werris Creek.

It is carrying out a major survey of railway stations and many of the recorded buildings are expected to be up on the classified list when the survey is completed next year. However, the Trust fears trouble on the line.

At Albury, railway engineers want to pull down 170m of the overhead awnings above the long platforms to reduce maintenance costs. The Albury platform at 456m, is the second longest in Australia after Flinders Street, Melbourne (708m).

The station was built in 1881 to a grand Victorian Italianate design under the direction of the railway's chief engineer, John Whitton. He was responsible for many of the State's finest stations during the great railway expansion at the end of the 19th century.

The main entrance is topped by a tall clock tower (without the clock) and surmounted by a small cupola.

Newcastle station also has been under threat. The station, built in 1872, is unusual because it is a large provincial city terminating line on the Hunter River and ocean peninsula.

The Trust believes the row of 5 buildings which make up the station is a significant architectural element of Newcastle's civic and commercial centre.

The Trust also has been worried about the future of Sydney's Central Station. Considered the greatest work of the early 20th century, Government architect, W L Vernon, the station was built between 1901 and 1906.

Magnificent rusticated sandstone arches support roadways and bridges, great colonnaded arcades grace Pitt Street and Eddy Avenue and the main building facades of fine sandstone are topped by a clock tower.

The Public Transport Commission has considered proposals for the remodelling of the spectacular, cavernous concourse at Central. It is dominated by a vast, domed roof and skylight supported by steel arches. The Trust fears that remodelling will mean modernisation which would destroy the effect of the concourse and its dome.

A spokesman for the Public Transport Commission relieved some of these fears when asked about the various railway station plans yesterday. He said the Commission followed National Trust recommendations and any alterations or renovations to stations would be in keeping with their historical value. There were no plans at this stage for alterations at Albury or Newcastle.

The great railway stations of N.S.W. will live on - unaltered for the present.

THE " ECHO " - OCTOBER 16th, 1890.

- G.H.Eardley.

No.XXVI. KOGARAH.

There can be no doubt that during the short time Captain Cook remained in Botany Bay in April and May, 1770, he was active in exploring the various bays and nooks around it, and the George's and Cook's rivers which flow into it from the west; and it is certain that Sir Joseph Banks, Dr Solander and the astronomer, Mr Green, were delighted with the newness and variety of the flowering plants and the gigantic trees, as much as with the strange-looking animals then seen for the first time by British born men. The huge gum trees and dense undergrowth were justly taken by them as indications of the richness of the soil. They were charmed with the picturesque and beautiful scenery and with the number and variety of the birds and their gay plumage. The land was, to them, a land flowing with milk and honey; and their enthusiastic praises were almost boundless.

Captain Phillip and his companions took a much more practical view of the new country in which they were to found a colony. They were settlers, not visitors.

The enormous trees were not only valueless, but they also entailed heavy labour in connection with the work of clearing the land before it could be made habitable for civilised beings. There was very little esculent grass, as the scrub was so thick that there was only room for it here and there in small patches. The bay was shallow - too shallow for ships even of the moderate tonnage of those days. The ENDEAVOUR and the other larger vessels of the Fleet lay only just inside the Heads and were barely sheltered from the rollers of the Pacific Ocean. It is true that there was deeper water in the George's River, Kogarah Bay, and the other places further inland, but these would have to be reached over the "shallows" of Botany Bay; and so, the future capital of the new settlement was started in Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, instead of in Kogarah, or on some portion of the western or southern shores of Botany Bay.

Even if the above harbour, named Port Jackson by Captain Cook, had not existed, the settlement would never have been made at Botany Bay. The difficulties, apart from the shallowness of the Bay, would have been sufficient to have caused the removal of the settlement which actually took place. The labour of clearing the timber away before

the land could be cultivated would, with the small force under his control, have been sufficient to induce Captain Phillip to seek for a spot where the conditions were more favourable. An open or lightly timbered plain where the grass had room to grow would have been searched for, and the heavily timbered and scrubby lands would have had to wait until the population increased. It may be considered that these reasons combined prevented the first settlement from being formed in some part of the country where the southern suburbs of Sydney now stand. The land was too rich with the growth of centuries to be used without labour, and the labour of clearing it would have been not only severe, but also unproductive. And thus, instead of Kogarah and Hurstville being as they perhaps might, in other circumstances have been, the parent city, they are now amongst the younger suburbs.

HISTORICAL JOTTINGS.Extract from the Centennial History of N.S.W. - 1888.KOGARAH - alongside of Botany West, was incorporated in 1885, and as a municipality, is in its infancy.

Its area is about 7,000 acres, and is bounded on the north by the Illawarra railway line, on the south by George's River, on the east by West Botany, and on the west by Illawarra railway line.

It is at present new and sparsely settled. Its great extent of territory, and the rolling character of its lands, with its easy communication with Sydney and its relation to the Illawarra line that runs along the coast country south, must tend to make it a very desirable suburb.

There are at present 1,500 electors on the roll, which is sufficient evidence of the favour with which the municipality is looked upon by the citizens of Sydney as a place of residence. The streets are all wide and the residences are of a superior character. There are 120 miles of streets surveyed, only about one tenth of which is yet completed. The revenue last year was pounds 2,243.8s.7d. and the expenditure pounds 2021.19s.8d. The following gentlemen have filled the office of Mayor:

Edward Hogben 1886 and part of 1887
J.B. Carroll balance of 1887.

This suburb will be purely residential and, although new, will before many years become a favourite place of abode.

CANTERBURY - Canterbury, embracing Moorefields and Kingsgrove, is a municipality lying about three miles south-west of the city of Sydney. It is divided into two wards - North and South. It is bounded on the south by Holli (Wolli) Creek and West Botany, on the north by Burwood Road and Ashfield, on the east by Petersham and Marrickville municipalities, on the west by George's River and Hilley's Road; thence along the Punch Bowl Road to James Gorman's block, and to Bond's Road on to Podmore's Estate. It was proclaimed a municipality in 1879, and has a population of over two thousand. It occupies an area of twelve square miles.

HURSTVILLE - is well suited for residential purposes. In general features it is very much like its southern neighbour, Kogarah.

It is bounded by the Illawarra line, on the east by Arncliffe and railway line, on the north by Wolli Creek, and on the west by Salt Pan Creek.

It is divided into three wards - namely, Bexley Ward, Hurstville Ward and Peakhurst Ward.

The population of this suburb is 2,163. It has a rural appearance.

Having only been incorporated a few months, there has not been time to effect any substantial improvement of a public character. It occupies a fine country, and will be chosen for residences by many doing business in the city, from which it is seven miles distant by railway line.

Alexander Milson is Mayor, and Mr William George Leader is clerk.

JOHN B. CARROLL - was born in 1832 in Kildare, Ireland and came out with his parents to this colony in 1848 to Kogarah. Here his father was the first person to purchase land and settle in what now constitutes the municipal district of Kogarah, there being at that time but three families living on free grants in this locality.

About two years after the discovery of gold the place became more populated and in 1862 the inhabitants who had increased rapidly, realised that the progress and settlement of the district depended upon their being able to make the main roads. For that purpose they placed them under the Parish Roads Act, John Carroll taking a leading part, and on every occasion being elected chairman to the several road trusts, where by his able and zealous exertions he contributed materially to the successful carrying out of the work.

Upon the opening of the Illawarra Railway the district became one of the suburbs of Sydney, when the inhabitants, again realising their altered position, caused the town to be incorporated, since which time it has made rapid progress in settlement and prosperity. It enjoys this year a revenue of pounds 10,000.0.0 and has churches, public schools, a school of arts and hundreds of buildings, which have mostly been erected during the last two years.

Mr Carroll was returned at the first election as alderman to the Council, and again at a subsequent period. He was, on the resignation of Mr Hogben, placed in the Civic Chair.

THOMAS SAYWELL - whose name is almost a household word, is a native of England, and was born in Nottingham in 1837. He received his education in France, and in 1848 sailed for, and arrived in Sydney.

In 1863 he started a tobacco business, which, in 1881 he floated into a limited liability company for pounds 110.0.0. This business is situated in Clarence Street, Sydney and stands out as a monumental industry of the colony. Mr. Saywell was the pioneer of the Western coalfields and to him is due the credit of having floated the Vale of Clwydd Coal Co. in 1871. He it was who founded the Eagle Brick Co., and the Standard Brick Co., two of the largest concerns in the colony. In 1887 Mr Saywell erected the Belambi Jetty, South Bulli, one of the finest properties on the Southern Coast at a cost of pounds 40,000.0.0. He is the owner of the Zig-Zag Coal Co., and supplied the Government with coal.

In addition to these possessions, he owns the South Bulli Coal Mine and is a director of several other companies.

The New Brighton Hotel at Lady Robinson's Beach is the property of Mr Saywell, and was erected by him in 1886 and opened in 1887. This hotel contains 60 magnificently furnished rooms, and the lower verandah is artistically laid out with tiles. From the tower a magnificent view is gained of Botany Bay, the hotel facing the very spot where Captain Cook landed and the surrounding country is spread like a panorama before the visitor.

Those athletically inclined can pleasantly exercise in the large skating rink attached, or in either of the two magnificent baths, each three hundred feet square, and presided over by the well-known Mr and Mrs Von Hammer. During the month of January, these baths, the best in Australia, are patronised by over 25,000 persons of both sexes, and that they may suffer no inconvenience or difficulty in reaching either the hotel or the Baths, Mr Saywell has constructed from the Rockdale Station a tramway at a cost of pounds 15,000.0.0. This, added to the fact that no less than 19 trains run daily between Rockdale and Sydney, ensures a liberal patronage to what is certainly the finest hotel in the colony. The New Brighton Hotel is under the management of Mr.C.R.Smith.

KENWOOD AND KERLE - architects and consulting engineers, 141 Pitt Street, Sydney. Mr Kenwood was born at Hastings, England and served his articles to a prominent London firm of architects. For two years he practiced in Hastings, and in 1878 emigrated to New South Wales and settled in Sydney. Here he established the present business, and in 1882 was joined in partnership by Mr. Kerle.

Harry Wood Kerle served his articles with a firm of engineers in London and in 1881 arrived in New South Wales. He filled the position of chief draughtsman in the office of Mr Norman Selfe, with whom he remained for a twelve-month, and until he joined in partnership with Mr Kenwood.

The firm have erected many important and stately edifices, among which may be mentioned, the Central Stores, Sussex Street; Wollongong Town Hall; New Brighton Hotel at Lady Robinson's Beach and the Grand Hotel at Waverley. They constructed the North Bulli Ocean Jetty, the Lady Robinson's Beach Swimming Baths, the hydraulic elevators of the General Post Office, Sydney and several similar works in connection with mining properties.

It is not widely known that the ashlar blocks of sandstone, used in the formation of the seal wall facing of the shipping harbour at Wollongong, came from the quarry now marked by the deep side cutting at the lower northern end of Macquarie Street, Sydney.

This latter area was levelled about the 1864 period when Circular Quay was being formed. It is an educated guess that the huge stones were chiselled to their dimensions at the quarry and then transported to Wollongong by sailing vessels engaged in the Wollongong to Sydney coal trade, as ballast.

GALLERY BY THE SEA ...

- Graham Bennett
- The Sydney Morning Herald
- 1st July 1978.

Eleven kilometres from the heart of Sydney, out of reach of vandals, a unique record of Sydney's maritime history has been carved into the cliffs and rocks of North Head.

Since the earliest detention of infected vessels at the Quarantine Station, idle crews with time on their hands have chiselled hundreds of carvings on almost every piece of rock.

Ship's crests, lists of officers, seagulls, lifebuoys, flags and some truly shocking doggerel record the fears and frustrations felt by many immigrants, who found themselves incarcerated within sight of their destination, with smallpox or a similar scourge casting a grim shadow over them.

The Quarantine Station is a thought-provoking reminder of how delightful Port Jackson was before being despoiled by the white man. Gentle lawns reach down to a spotless beach; clumps of trees gather to form sheltered glades; low cliffs have formed the ideal canvas for masons amateur and professional. There is not an empty can or a fast-food carton in sight.

The oldest carving to be readily found dates from 1857, but undoubtedly there are earlier carvings hidden in the bush. Although the station was officially proclaimed in 1832, long before that date, ships' captains had found the site a handy place to dump their dead and dying passengers and crew. There is evidence of a cemetery before 1810.

Wind, rain and flora have no respect for history, and time has done much damage to the carvings. In many cases seepage from the higher levels has carried down the rich black loam, covering much of the work and providing the ideal foothold for grass and bush plants.

Unfortunately many fine carvings were made across faults in soft sandstone, which has cracked under the influence of wind and water. That so much has been preserved is a tribute to the selfless effort of the quarantine staff. Much of the regular cleaning and preservation of the carvings has been done by employees in their own time, clearing away dirt and plant growth and applying clear protective coatings to delay the effects of erosion.

Encouraged by the Commonwealth Health Department, which administers the station, the staff has also created a valuable historical museum in an old laundry building.

To ensure their preservation, many headstones from the station cemetery have been brought into the laundry. The best are a set of four stones which recall the tragedy of the ship William Rodger, which arrived at the station on September 26, 1838, with six adults and ten children crossed off the ship's complement as having died during the voyage.

Another twenty-four adults and five children died at Spring Cove, as the site was then known, including the captain, John Hall, who died forty-two days after arrival.

The museum hold a magnificent collection of the kitchen and laundry utensils of the 19th century, with priceless furniture and medical relics.

Not all the carvings relate to quarantine emergencies. During the Boer War, two world wars and in several other military events, troops have been quartered at the station and these have duly added their records and unit crests to the collection. Most of these, however, are to be found on the flat surfaces on top of the cliffs on the ocean side of the station; lacking the shelter of trees, and too remote from the station buildings to attract the regular attention of the staff, they have suffered severely. Many are almost covered by the windborne loam.

One relatively recent addition is a crudely scratched carving made by evacuees from Darwin after Cyclone Tracy. This last carving serves to emphasise the high standard of the earlier efforts, done in days when there were mason a-plenty on the passenger lists of emigrant ships.

You can take your pick of languages. Most lettering is in English, but some is in Greek, Italian, Dutch. There were Japanese and Chinese visitors as well.

What's to become of the carvings? That question worries the privileged few who have inspected this magnificent gallery of history.

One leaves the station hoping that the Royal Australian Historical Society will get a working party together to sketch, photograph and catalogue this priceless record of maritime history. This would take many months of work, but the result would be worth the effort.

" STOP

Let weary travellers listen we tell
The awful treatment that to us befell
On the Mariposa many were our woes
Is a mercy we haven't turned up our toes."
