



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,  
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

May, 1983.

Dear Friend and Member,

The May Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday evening, May 20th, 1983, at 8.00 p.m.  
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.  
Business: General.  
Syllabus Item: Mr. Fred Midgley, Vice President of Sutherland Shire Historical Society. Mr. Midgley has chosen for his subject - "Early Transport in the Sutherland Shire." For those of us who enjoy hearing about the early days and the trials and tribulations, this address should be very interesting.

Supper Roster: Mrs. Jones, Captain, with Misses Murphy & Woods.

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

Mrs. E. Wright,  
Treasurer.  
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Miss D. Row,  
Social Secretary.  
Phone 59.9300

Mr. A. Ellis,  
Research Officer.  
Phone 587.1159

Concern yourself but with today; Woo it and teach it to obey your will and wish. Since time began today has been the friend of man, but in his blindness and his sorrow, He looks to yesterday and tomorrow.

Author Unknown.

Just a thought for Members who are not so well - we hope to see you at the meetings soon.

SPECIAL NOTICE. The St. George Historical Society is pleased to announce that the following books, Nos. 1 - 7 written and illustrated by the late Gifford H. Eardley for the Society, have been reprinted and are now available. Books Nos. 8 and 9 have been 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"	)	Price
No. 4.	"Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway"	)	\$2.50
No. 5.	"Our Heritage in Stone"	)	plus
No. 6.	"All Stations to Como"	)	postage.
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" now available.	)	
			Price \$4.00 plus postage.

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.

#### ST.GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMPETITION.

The above Society conducted during Heritage Week a written competition of local history for students interested. A number of boys in the school, particularly from Years 8 and 9, entered this competition. Congratulations to Vince Araullo, Richard Tuckwell and Peter Douroudis who won their respective competition. We thank the members of the Society for conducting this competition.

#### SOCIETY HISTORICAL WEEKLY SEGMENT COMMUNITY ACCESS RADIO 2NBC - FM - STEREO 90.1.

The Society's segment should begin on Tuesday, 10th May, 1983, from 6.30 p.m. to 6.45 p.m. and the following have been listed for inclusion:-

Tuesday, 10th May	-	The Village of Tempe & Its Regatta - 1855 plus. The Story of Moorfield Racecourse, Kogarah - Arthur Ellis.
Tuesday, 17th May	-	A History of Currency - N.S.W. Interview by B.Perkins and D.Sinclair.
Tuesday, 24th May	-	The St.George Hospital - B. Perkins.
Tuesday, 31st May	-	Scarborough Park - B. Perkins.
Tuesday, 6th June	-	Oswald Scholes - Arthur Ellis.
Tuesday, 13th June	-	The Early Picture Theatres of Arncliffe - Part 1. - Arthur Ellis.
Tuesday, 20th June	-	The Early Picture Theatres of Arncliffe - Part 2. - Arthur Ellis. Plus listing of Society publications.

Tuesday, 27th June - Thomas Birkby's letter - B. Perkins  
written 31st May, 1836

That list brings us to the end of June, and we have Brian Madden prepared to do a tape on the Possible Location of Hannah Laycock's Farmhouse at Kingsgrove plus Post Offices in Kingsgrove, as soon as he is able to arrange a taping session. Don Sinclair has kindly agreed to arrange for another taping session, which will give four tapes -

1. He will interview Mrs. Faulkner about the Terraces of Single-Fronted Cottages of Gibbes Street, Rockdale, and Mrs. Faulkner will talk also on John Murphy of "Leeholme" Bexley and the Horse 'buses'. They of course, were the forerunner of the present 'blue bus' from Rockdale to Beverly Hills.

2. Mrs. Dorothy Sinclair will do a tape on "Brighton le Sands - a suburb evolved from the Sandhills" and Don will do "The Rev. James Clark and John Lucas MP."

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ERRATA: "Early Settlers of The St. George District" Vol.1  
Book 9.

Page 18 - August 1913 - should read - 1813.

Page 19 - 1928 Census - should read - 1828 Census.

Page 28 - September, 1939 - should read - September 1839.

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VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT OUR MEETINGS.

EXTRACT FROM "The Propellor" - 11th October 1934.

THIRTY MILES TO SYDNEY.

In these days of concrete and bitumenous-surfaced roads a journey from Kogarah to Sydney is one devoid of difficulty and may be accomplished in quick time. Before the constitution of the Main Roads Board in 1925, or up to the time that the Board reconstructed Cook's River Road, the condition of that road was atrocious - it was little more than a right-of-way. Mud alternated with dust as the weather was wet or fine or the municipal watercart was in use, while potholes were as plentiful as holes in a collander. Motorists looked upon most of our roads as a "nut and bolt or spare part department" owing to the number of fragments of motor vehicles to be encountered along our thoroughfares. This state of affairs was thought to be a disgrace to those supposedly in charge of the upkeep of our roads, but even this rough condition of the highways was far superior to that which was encountered by the pioneers of the district. There was a time when the only means of reaching Sydney from Kogarah or Hurstville and the surrounding districts was by way of Punch Bowl (now spelt Punchbowl) Road, through Enfield to Liverpool Road, making the journey about 30 miles from Hurstville Station. The cause of this was evidently the absence of roads or bridges over Cook's River. Early records contain the information that "the first bridge across Cook's River 'lower down' was Thompson's Bridge, built by Mr. Thompson, a solicitor, some 60 years ago (about 1830), which was afterwards replaced by the Undercliffe Bridge."

Commenting on the transport difficulties between Kogarah and Sydney some 44 years ago, the writer stated that "like most of the suburbs of Sydney, Kogarah and Rockdale have suffered severely from want of good roads and consequent means of communication with the city. In early times residents were compelled to head Wolli Creek and Cook's River, and to get to Sydney by way of Canterbury or Enfield, and thence on to the Parramatta or Liverpool Roads. Even by taking this roundabout way it was very difficult to get through the bush with vehicles, and most of the carriage was done by means of pack-horses. An occupant of Sans Souci, at Rocky Point House, who established a still, carried the liquor he manufactured in kegs slung one on each side of a pack-horse, and covered the kegs with bags, rushes, etc. The Rocky Point Road is said to have been first cleared by order of Governor Gipps who was in office from 1838 to 1846. Sir George seems to have taken a deep interest in the morals of the settlers. He frequently attended service at St. Peter's Church, and one day, when he met Mr. Robert Cooper, of Rocky Point House, he said, "How is it I've not seen you at church recently?" Mr Cooper explained that it was almost impossible to get through the scrub. "Pooh", returned his Excellency, "that is no excuse. Here, take this order and get some men from the stockade to clear a track; and don't let me have to complain of your absence again." As a result a

track was cleared from the Cook's River dam to Rocky Point (Sans Souci) to enable Mr. Cooper and his family to go to church. For many years there was merely a bush track, in some places almost impassable for vehicles. At a ridge known as Cobbler's Pinch (the steep pinch on Prince's Highway between Rockdale and Cook's River, generally known as Arncliffe Hill), carts, gigs, etc., had to skirt the ridge, and wind in and out among the rocks and scrub for a mile or more until the obstruction was passed, and then make their way back to the cleared track.

The first to cross Cobbler's Pinch with a vehicle is said to have been Mr Berghofer, who went out from Sydney to take possession of his farm with a German waggon and four horses about the year 1862. Mr. Berghofer found it impossible to follow the winding of the track round the ridge with such a team, and therefore he decided to attempt to make his way over the pinch. In this he was successful, but he met with misfortune further along the road when his waggon capsized owing to a wheel of the vehicle going into a hole. From Mr. Berghofer's experience it would appear that the dreaded Cobbler's Pinch was not much worse to negotiate than the road itself.

#### First Road Trust.

It was about this time that the first road trust was formed under the Parish Roads Act ( 4 Victoria, No.12), passed by Governor-in-Council in 1840. It provided that trustees might be elected for three years, and that these trustees should have power to erect toll bars and levy tolls. It also provided that a rate not exceeding 6d. per acre might be struck on all lands within a distance of three miles of a road. The permissive principle in vogue to a large extent in early years of the colony appears to have been the base of legislation in New South Wales from the first establishment of local government in the colony. The Parish Roads Act might have formed a good basis for a more complete local government measure, but for the fact that all its provisions depended on the word "may" instead of "shall". The legislators do not appear to have realised that laws should be made to be enforced, there being otherwise a danger of them proving useless, and too many of the laws of New South Wales have been found useless when tried. The Parish Roads Act was almost a dead-letter. The Rocky Point Road Trust, which was almost the only one in the colony which attempted to carry out the provisions of the Act, found that the rate of 6d. per acre could not be enforced, as the Act provided no means of compelling defaulters to pay. The want of roads in the district, however, was so great that the majority of the residents in Kogarah and Rockdale did not raise any dispute against the rate, which they might have done had they taken legal opinion as to the wording of the Act; and, therefore, this Act remained in force in the district long after the levying of rates by similar trusts elsewhere had been abandoned.

The first road trust for this district consisted of Messrs. J.B. Carroll (Chairman), Patrick Moore, J.Moore, William Beehag and James Beehag.

The first Government vote for our roads was dated May 20, 1864 and was for pounds 60.0.0.

#### A Toll Bar.

Before this grant for roads was given, however, a toll had been established by the road trust near the Cook's River dam, and the money collected had been expended principally in cutting down and levelling the huge rocks on top of Cobbler's Pinch, and in building a bridge over Muddy Creek (on Prince's Highway between Kogarah and Rockdale). This bridge was opened on February 20, 1862. It was composed of large logs with smaller logs or saplings laid across and covered with earth and stones. The building of this bridge marked the abolition of one of the difficult places to negotiate on the road from Sydney to Kogarah, and to-day is an up-to-date structure, it having been rebuilt in 1933 by the Main Roads Department after having been practically swept away by an unusual rainstorm during that year. A road committee was formed in the early days of the district in connection with Kogarah Road, which branches off Rocky Point Road near Prendergast's Inn, and ran to the punt at Tom Ugly's Point. Kogarah Road and Rocky Point Road are now known as Prince's Highway, the only portion of Rocky Point Road now bearing that name leaves Prince's Highway at Moorefield Racecourse and extends to Rocky Point, Sans Souci. The site of Prendergast's Inn was in the vicinity of Moorefield Racecourse. The Kogarah Road Committee consisted of Matthew Carroll, Patrick Moore and Joseph Clarke, and the first Government vote of pounds 35.0.0 for making and repairing the road was granted on October 3, 1860.

#### Dispute among Residents.

However, a dispute arose in 1869 between residents along Forest Road and the Rocky Point Road Trust, the residents claiming pounds 100.0.0 from the toll receipts for making their road. The residents on the Muddy Creek Road, not to be outdone, claimed pounds 50.0.0 for their road, and as the trustees could not see their way to divert these large sums of money (a large amount in those days) from the use for which they had been collected, the dispute waxed warm, and resulted in the toll being abolished at Cook's River Dam by Mr. William Forster (Minister for Lands in the Fifth Cowper Ministry). Determined not to be deprived of such an easy means of revenue, a toll was shortly afterwards opened on Rocky Point Road south of Cobbler's Pinch, or near where Spring Street, Rockdale, now joins Prince's Highway. This new position for a toll bar thus allowed traffic using Forest Road to go free as the toll was situated a little beyond Forest Road towards Rockdale, and thus residents of the latter road were not in any way entitled to any of the revenue collected.

The road trust was abolished in 1876, the last trustees having been Messrs. J.B.Carroll, Joseph Twiss, Thomas Mascord, James Hickey and William Bush. Mr. Samuel Schofield served three years on the Trust,

and other gentlemen were elected and served for longer or shorter terms. Mr J.B.Carroll was also one of the trustees of the road from the southern side of George's River to Bottle Forest.

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WHEN KOGARAH WAS "THE BUSH" ...

- excerpt from an old "Propellor".

As a 17 year old bride, Mrs Sarah Jane Gyde found life in the bush hard when she first went to live at Kogarah, then a near country centre.

Today at 92, Mrs Gyde looks back on those early days with amusement.

With amusement because she says: "I find it difficult now to imagine the young people I see drawing water from a well in their backyard for washing and drinking. But that is exactly what we had to do in those days in Kogarah and Carlton. I am more than amused when I hear young people say they won't marry unless they have all the conveniences such as washing machines and hot and cold water in their new homes".

Not that Mrs Gyde thinks there is anything wrong in young people wanting all these comforts - she enjoys them herself now in her home in Kitchener Street, West Kogarah.

What does amuse her is how little these youngsters realise the few years which separate them from the time when the area had no gas, electricity, sewerage or running water. Each night she would sit on her verandah and watch the kerosene street lights trimmed and lits.

"I drew all my water from a deep well in the backyard" she said. That was three quarters of a century ago, when she was Mrs Alfred Baldock. Mrs Gyde's first husband died in 1922.

He was a prominent cricketer in St. George district and a member of the team led by Peter Moorefield, who was responsible for establishing Moorefield racecourse.

Mrs Gyde married for the second time in 1925. Mr Joseph Gyde died in 1951. Mrs Gyde was the elder daughter of a family of seven, five of whom are still living. Her sister is 82.

Their father, Frederick Mason, built many of the fine old buildings still standing in Carlton and Kogarah.

"OLD MAN" MILE POSTS - LINKS WITH PIONEER DAYS.

- 'Father Time'

- Propellor 26.4.1938.

Away back in the days of Queen Victoria, travellers who passed along the oldest highways in St. George - Forest, Rocky Point and other roads - used to be guided on their journey by substantial sandstone mile-posts, which stood at main intersections and at more or less regular intervals between one village and the next. They had a far greater usefulness - those roadside indicators, in the times of slow travel by horse-drawn coaches, carts, horseback and the like - than they have to-day, when fast motor cars practically ignore such old-fashioned things as mere miles. During the last half-century, since the coming of the Illawarra railway to Hurstville in 1884, most of these old-timers have disappeared where continued road-widening and alterations have been carried out.

In spite of all modern influences, however, there is one "old man" mile post in the district which has stood the test of time, and weathered many a storm, for probably 70 years or more, so say some of our old residents. It is standing today (1938) much the same as it did when the clanking mail coaches rumbled past and showered it with dust, at the hotel corner of Forest Road and the Prince's Highway, Arncliffe. Many a weary "swaggy" has sat on that post, many a cart wheel has crunched against its side, many a dog has sniffed its weatherbeaten face, and many a weary traveller through the years has peered at the legend chiselled on it, while making his way toward George's River or beyond. The actual wording on that, which is probably the oldest mile-post in the Illawarra suburbs, reads - "To the Forest, Kingsgrove and George's River".

The forest referred to was, of course, none other than Lord's or Gannon's Forest, which was the original name for Hurstville, when the district almost wholly consisted of heavily timbered land and but scanty settlement. The reference to Kingsgrove is interesting, because the name is actually much more ancient than Hurstville, dating back to the very early "King's Grove" farm, which was founded by Mrs Hannah Laycock, in 1804-1805, the first authentic settler in the whole of St. George.

It is gratifying to know that the local authorities have realised the historical value and interest of this veteran mile-post and made some attempt to preserve and patch its much-worn surface.

Along the main highway to Cronulla and Port Hacking from George's River Bridge, there are also one or two other old sandstone mile-posts, which harken back to the days before motor cars. These are in a much better condition than the "old man" mile post at Arncliffe, but this is largely because they are not nearly so old.

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Addendum: from National Trust Bulletin - July 1975.

EARLY MILEPOSTS SURVEYED.

The Department of Main Roads is to be congratulated on its recently publicised decision to preserve the State's historic sandstone milestones in the new age of metrication.

The Department has now prepared for the Trust a list of all the known early sandstone milestones on main roads in N.S.W. There are only 20 of them, and Trust members might be interested to know their location:

Princes Highway - Sutherland shopping centre, outside Woolworths; near junction with Florida Street, Sylvania.

Hume Highway - Near junction with Badminton Road, Burwood; Hillcrest Avenue, Chullora; Farrel Road, Bass Hill; Henry Lawson Drive, Lansdowne; Hollywood Drive, Lansvale.

Great Western Highway - Near Cardigan Street, Camperdown; near junction Dobroyd Parade, Ashfield; between Telopea Avenue and Birnie Avenue, Lidcombe; between Wentworth and Kendall Streets, Clyde; Stuart Street, Bathurst, about 1 km west of the intersection of Williams and Durham Sts.

Main Road No.177 (Cross Roads to Bulli, via Campbelltown and Appin) -

460 metres south of South Western Freeway overbridge; south from the Hume Highway junction - 5.17 km, 6.74 km, 9.01 km, 11.10km, 11.47 km, 13.12 km, 14.74 km.

The Department has also advised the Trust that it is aware of incised timber mileposts still in position on the Bruxner Highway west of Tenterfield, on the Bourke-Louth Road and on the Bourke-Hungerford Road.

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