



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

February 1984.

Dear Friend and Member,

The February Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening, February 17th, 1984, at 8.00 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. Jack Sparkes will give a talk entitled: "A Steam Train Passes".
This talk was given to an audience of some 300 people, just a short while ago, and the applause was tremendous. It is a movie with sound effects. I do hope you will come along and enjoy this evening.

Supper Roster: Mrs. Thompson, Captain, with Mesdames Troughton & Hunt.

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.
Phone 599 4884

Miss D. Row,
Social Secretary.
Phone 50 9300

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

All for a Shilling:

Let's recall awhile, the Shilling and how far it had to go,
In times now sadly gone but not forgotten -- oh, dear no!
If we travelled to the city, it would more than pay the fare;
If we gave it to the barber, he would gladly cut our hair.
It would take us to a matinee, or buy hair ribbons blue,
Or a bag of hard boiled lollies, large enough to feed a crew:
Kids could buy such happiness then, just for a Shilling.

(Excerpt only) Grace Burford.

A cheerio 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" (Reprint now available)
- 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" 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 8 p.m.)
Mrs. E. Eardley - Sec., Phone 59 8078, Mr. A. Ellis - Phone 587 1159.

2NBC-FM STEREO 90.1 - ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY SEGMENT.

Tuesday Evenings 6.30 p.m. - 6.45 p.m.

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|---------|--|----------------|
| Tape 40 | - 7th February, 1984 - The Girrawheen Park Earlwood | - A. Ellis |
| Tape 41 | - 14th February, 1984 - Rocky Pt.Rd. P. Geeves | - B. Perkins |
| Tape 42 | - 21st February, 1984 - The Proposed Georges River
Water Supply Scheme | - A. Ellis |
| Tape 43 | - 28th February, 1984 - Echo 1890 - Rockdale. | - M. Callister |
| Tape 44 | - 6th March, 1984 - The Annals of S.S. Erina | - D. Sinclair |
| Tape 45 | - 13th March, 1984 - Historical Medley:
1. Gas to St. George.
2. Ginger Bread Rabbit.
3. Organ Grinder. | - D. Sinclair |
| Tape 46 | - 20th March, 1984 - Arncliffe's Highbury Barn | - D. Row |
| Tape 47 | - 27th March, 1984 - Historical Jottings:
1. Muddy Creek.
2. A.B. Spark | - C. Wilding |
| Tape 48 | - 3rd April, 1984 - Old Kogarah Township | - D. Row |
| Tape 49 | - 10th April, 1984 - Hurstville | - C. Wilding |

- 3 -

Tape 50	- 17th April, 1984	- The West Botany Street Wesleyan Church - Rockdale.	- D. Sinclair
Tape 51	- 24th April, 1984	- The West Botany Farms	- M. Callister
Tape 52	- 1st May, 1984	- Review Year 1 on Radio plus Newspaper Notes & Comments 1899 period.	- D. Sinclair

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This list completes one year's tapes.

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2NBC FM Stereo 90.1 - 1984.

Preparation of the St. George Historical Society's Tapes are underway for the second year.

Readers are required to continue with this popular broadcast of historical interest.

Time involved would be approximately an hour once a month. Scripts are provided - all the reader has to do is read into the microphone at 2NBC, situated at Narwee Baptist Church.

Interested members, please let Bronwyn Perkins know of your interest. Taping is arranged at a time to suit the reader and the station. Want to think about it? Do so, then phone - 5879164 - to say, yes.

The Society is grateful to those members who have done so well to date.

SOCIAL.

Saturday, March 31st, 1984.

A proposed bus tour of the Historic Joadaja Valley.

Details will appear in March Bulletin. Ring Miss D. Row - Phone 50 9300.

FLYNN OF THE INLAND ...

- A centenary tribute to John Flynn
& the people of the outback.

- Compiled by Alan Gill.

The Sydney Morning Herald.
25th November 1981.

Tribute to a Man of Vision -

- Rev. Max Griffiths -
General Secretary
Uniting Church National Mission.

John Flynn would love to be alive today. He was a born optimist and his faith in God & his country's future reigned supreme throughout his long life.

His optimism about Australia began with the belief that the people who went out to live in the terrifying isolation of the outback were not a bunch of crazy fools. They were the frontier men & women of Australia. Flynn firmly believed that one day as a result of their work the seemingly barren country would bring forth the wealth of the nation.

Today thousands of people are going out into the remote areas of Australia because Flynn's vision has been proved correct. All the major mining activities, oil and gas developments, agricultural and pastoral projects are in the remote parts of the country. Their development requires men & women & families to live in strange & isolated places.

John Flynn believed it was the role of the Church to go to these places & be with the people. So far as living in remote areas is concerned "survival" is still the name of the game. Ask any staff manager of the mining company about personnel turnover in remote areas. Ask yourself if you would go & live & work in a place where the temperature can run at 45°C for weeks with a humidity to match. In these circumstances being with people means making a practical contribution to their survival. It is why Flynn developed things like the Flying Doctor Service, the pedal radio network, the nursing outpost hospitals & the patrolling padres. It is why similar services are still conducted today in remote areas by Uniting Church National Mission Frontier Services & similar bodies.

It is a far cry from the pedal radio to the satellite picture. It is a far cry from the primitive gold mine in Halls Creek in the Kimberleys to the massive Roxby Downs project in outback South Australia. But Australia is still a frontier country & people still have to go & work & live in harsh & lonely conditions. So there is still a need for people who care enough to go & live with them & help them.

A hundred years after he was born, John Flynn would still be glad to be alive in a country called Australia & with a faith called Christian.

Pioneer in the Outback -

In 1951, it was proposed, half-seriously, that the Northern Territory be re-named Flynnland. It was an intended tribute to the man who had died some weeks earlier, & who was regarded by many as among the greatest Australians of this century, & the greatest Australian churchman of all time.

The Rev. John Flynn was born on November 25, 1880. He has become Australia's only clerical folk hero.

He founded the Australian Inland Mission, and was a pioneer in outback radio, communication, education, nursing & aviation. He was the supreme initiator, starting projects & willingly handling these over to other people once these were under way. The Royal Flying Doctor Service is the classic example.

At the opening of the Flynn Memorial Church, Sir William Slim, the then Governor-General, said of John Flynn: "His hands are stretched out like a benediction over the Inland." He aimed to serve people wherever their needs were. This remains the policy of his successors today. Flynn was not academically gifted. According to his successor, the Rev. Fred McKay: "During Flynn's student days there were people who felt that Flynn would never make the ministry, that he was not interested enough in the traditional things to make the grade. But most people realised that he had potential - that he had gifts that were different."

The sheer ambition of Flynn for his mission, particularly in the early days, was staggering. The ministry was not confined to the Northern Territory. Much of his major work took place in Queensland, where the flying doctor service was started, & South Australia. In fact, "Flynnland" covered two-thirds of the continent of Australia. The padres existed to serve the pioneers, but were themselves pioneers.

Right up until World War II there were rarely more than 7 of these "Apostles to the dispersed", who patrolled from the tip of Cape York Peninsula to the south-west corner of Western Australia.

Flynn had great ability at fund-raising. This was witnessed by Fred McKay at an early age, when the superintendent visited Walkerston, near McKay, in 1913. Flynn brought with him a wooden camel, complete with saddle packs, which he took to local children in the Sunday School. Young McKay, then aged 6, was so impressed that he emptied the entire contents of his money box into one of the saddle packs. Thirty-eight years later, he succeeded John Flynn as Superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission.

Another of Flynn's ideas, was a curious episode which, in later years, he would delight in recounting as "The Plot". The scheme actually helped finance a survey safari which led to the establishment of the mission itself. It concerned a request by Flynn (in 1911) that the Presbyterian Church release a man to make a detailed study over a one-year period of religious and medical needs "beyond the farthest fences."

Flynn's idea was that supporters be invited to lay a 1/4 mile of 3d. pieces. In his methodical way he had calculated that this would raise pounds 350 (\$700) enough to finance the year-long survey.

Flynn's sister, Rosetta, edited a women's column (under the name of Cousin Charlotte) in a church newspaper. He wanted her to promote the scheme, but did not want his sister - who considered his ideas hare-brained - to know who was behind it. "We must plot" he told a woman collaborator, drafting a letter for her to send to the newspaper. Cousin Charlotte received the letter & enthusiastically pushed the idea to her readers. As it happened, Flynn himself was chosen to undertake the survey.

Flynn had no time for those within his denomination who did not share his vision. He had the typical impatience of a man of action.

In a report of 1912, which led to the setting up of the Australian Inland Mission, he had suggested the formation of a Bush Brigade, of 5,000 members, each making an annual donation of pounds 1 (\$2). He contrasted this modest sum (\$10,000) with the pounds 500,000 spent by the Presbyterian Church in supplying the settled districts of Australia with churches & "the means of grace".

At intervals throughout his ministry, there were those on the Board who considered him a "hopeless" man to administer, that his schemes were unrealistic, & that his mandate should not be renewed. Flynn could be just as critical of his Board, which he attacked for 'ignorance & timidity'. He complained, particularly in the early years, that he was neither given the finance nor manpower that he needed. He was to state, two years after the formation of his mission: "After all our enthusiastic assembly declarations, publication of reports & magazines, formation of committees, campaigns in church meetings & public demonstrations, deluge of circulars & individual campaigning for funds; after all our patriotic Church talk, & writing of the need for workers in Inland areas - we have increased the number of Church workers in the Inland by two men & a quarter."

Like all enthusiasts, Flynn was a difficult man to manage. His policy of "venturing in faith", & as he put it, "choosing the path of danger", filled some of his board members with misgiving. According to Scott McPheat: "He could be extremely stubborn, & and AIM Board Room witnessed more than one battle of wills. To

play the autocrat, however, was alien to his nature, & tensions soon subsided."

Flynn was a born pamphleteer, & could express a situation with cryptic language & eye-catching prose. He used this gift to develop mottos like "A man is his friends". He founded The Inlander, an attractive & well-produced magazine which, in its hey-day, had an exceptional circulation for a publication produced by a Church body. A copy of The Inlander went to every Parliamentarian in Australia.

Flynn was a compulsive letter writer, &, according to the Rev. Graeme Bucknall, author of the entry on Flynn in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, seemed to have a very warm relationship with people, even by correspondence. "He never seemed to write in an official kind of way. He wrote in a very human fashion, the letters were very human letters, & when people replied to him - for example his padres - they wrote as a friend to a friend & not as a suppliant to the boss who might do something for them."

On his early journeys across the outback Flynn used a buggy & two horses - Robin & Dodger. With these he followed the trails of his predecessors & made new ones. Knowing how bushmen judge a padre by his animals, he always carried a comb & brushes & kept his horses well fed & groomed.

He also utilised primitive motor vehicles & advocated that these should have "iron tyres".

In May, 1912, Flynn was given the title, Special Commissioner in the Northern Territory for the Home & Foreign Mission Boards of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. In that year he completed a survey which profoundly impressed the Home Mission Board. The report described simply & arrestingly vast areas previously ignored or neglected by the Church & Government alike, & it outlined a sweeping program of remedial action. The Government, he said, should be "bold enough" to provide simultaneously freezing works, shipping facilities to world markets, & immigration of both settlers & labourers. "Today we call Darwin the remote corner of our land. Tomorrow we, or the possible new Australians who may occupy what we despise, will call Darwin the Great Front Door of Australia. Whichever way it goes, Darwin must become great."

He quoted a recent visitor who hoped to buy land. "It's all very well to read in story-books about the old pioneers with their flocks & herds, but we are living in the 20th century, & we want railways."

On spiritual matters, Flynn said: "The very conditions that make it difficult to get at the heart & mind of the bushman, make that heart & mind more responsive when once touched."

According to Scott McPheat, Flynn took the readers of his report "beyond the farthest fences". He showed them a wide brown land & rugged settlers, & confronted them with a challenge they dared not ignore. The effect of John Flynn's report upon the Federal Assembly of the Church which met in Melbourne in September 1912, was electric. "This is not a mere document," said John Ferguson, President of the Home Mission Board, "it is a living message, an urgent call, a noble vision of Christian enterprise." Several months later Flynn's blue-print was given a name - Australian Inland Mission.

Services for the Bushmen - from the Bushman's Companion.

During his first outback journey, Flynn encountered a shearer who observed that a copy of a funeral service would have been useful when he recently buried his mate far from a church cemetery, as all he & his companions could do was sing Auld Lang Syne.

This led Flynn to start a fund which led to an unusual literary enterprise, the Bushman's Companion, which made its appearance in September 1910.

This small volume, described as "just the article for pocket or saddle-bag", was widely hailed. Its 111 pages included a large section on first aid, Bible selections, hymns & prayers, a "Ramble among Ideals", a funeral service, a children's service, directions for making a will, postal information, a calendar, cash account, pages for memoranda ... & the words of Auld Lang Syne.

HOW THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE WAS LAUNCHED.

John Flynn's interest in aviation & wireless led to complaints that he was being sidetracked from a missionary's zeal. His reply to these was "We are intensely interested in the realities beyond the shadows." The two developments complemented each other excellently. The Flying Doctor removed the dread of physical illness & the pedal wireless - now-a-days the transceiver - gave the Bush its voice.

Until 1914, the aeroplane was still a sideshow wonder to the world. It took a war to arouse serious interest in its potential. Even before 1918, however, there were those looking forward to the day when bombs & bullets would be replaced by mails & passengers. Among these was John Flynn.

In 1914, Australia had the nucleus of a small air force. Among the early volunteers for the Australian Flying Corps, was Clifford Peel, a young medical student from Inverleigh, Victoria. It was Peel who gave Flynn his first effective ammunition for a Flying Doctor campaign.

In November, 1917, while on a troopship for Europe, Peel wrote an article which he sent to Flynn in Sydney. Under the title, "A Young Australian's Vision - Aeroplanes for the Inland," Flynn published it in The Inlander in October, 1918. Before it appeared in print, Peel who had been serving with the famous No. 3 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, was killed in action while on a photographic reconnaissance at St. Quentin Canal, France. "We hope his family will see his work for his land completed," wrote Flynn. "Has not someone said - 'If you start an idea nothing can stop it?'"

At the end of the war, Flynn struggled with great difficulty to organise a Flying Doctor appeal. He received support from the Prime Minister, William Hughes, Hughes told Flynn one day that he had read the latest Inlander from cover to cover. In Parliament he threw his weight behind the causes of aviation & radio communications. "I hope that honourable members will thoroughly appreciate what the conquest of the air means to a great island continent like Australia." It was not until 1927 that the AIM Aerial Medical Services was launched on an experimental basis at Cloncurry.

For the position of the world's first flying doctor there were 23 applicants. The doctor selected was K. St. Vincent Welch. Dr Welch, was in his early 40's, vigorous & personable. He told Flynn that since the war he had been looking for just such a challenge. From the moment of his appointment Welch found himself the focus of widespread interest. At a luncheon in his honour at the Windsor Hotel, Melbourne, Sir George Syme, Federal president of the British Medical Association in Australia, spoke of Welch as the one who would "usher in a new era of medical practice."

The press played up the romantic aspect & Welch found himself in the role of a somewhat glamorous figure before he even reached Cloncurry. He travelled there, by Qantas-mail plane, with his pilot-to-be, Arthur Affleck. Waiting at Cloncurry, trim & freshly painted, was the Victory, the Flying Doctor aircraft. It was a cabin bi-plane with a single water-cooled engine. It has been built by Qantas at Longreach, under licence from the De Havilland Company of Great Britain. Dr Welch's first call came from Julia Creek, 85 miles away on May 17, 1928.

At the Julia Creek airstrip 100 people were waiting with a battery of cameras. Their inspection of the plane was so spirited, Affleck feared for its fabric. Welch visited the Bush Nursing Home, attended to two patients requiring minor surgery, gave a half-hour lecture to local ambulance officers & joined the local citizens in a cup of tea.

The AIM Aerial Medical Services became generally known as the Australian Aerial Medical Services from February 1934. The AIM ceased to have any direct involvement from 1939, but Flynn

served on the movement's federal council, as an individual member, until May, 1950.

The national body was re-named the Flying Doctor Service in 1941.

The Queen visited the service's Broken Hill base during the Royal Tour of Australia, in 1954, & following her visit the Flying Doctor Service was given permission to add the prefix "Royal". The movement's official title is now Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia.

Max Griffiths is a member of the federal council of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, & hints at possible changes to come. "There are a whole range of medical & health services in outback Australia today. There are new community health organisations in all States, special campaigns, like that to eradicate the eye disease, trachoma, from Aborigines, & there are the medical & hospital services run by bodies like the Uniting Church National Mission. "As well as the Flying Doctor Service, there are in some states State flying services such as the Aerial Medical Services of the Northern Territory. St. John Ambulance is also in some places conducting aerial services. There is still a great romantic image about the Flying Doctor Service. People appreciate it & they respond to it - they respond financially, which is pretty important for its continuity. They believe the Flying Doctor is doing a 'beaut' job, & of course, he is. But in my view the pastoral care of people, the sort of care which is exercised by the mission's patrol padres, & which they carry out on a regular basis, is just as important.

"The Flying Doctor nips in & out of a place & has all his equipment on board. But most of the padres still have to battle up the road, they get bogged, have to dig themselves out, & then arrive at the station property dirty & dusty. They will possibly stay several days trying to 'work through' particular problems. The padre may not go along to set a broken arm, but he may set a broken heart."

THE WIRELESS THAT GAVE A VOICE TO THE BUSH .

In June 1919, John Flynn wrote to a friend: "Winged pilots, flying doctors, but they alone cannot save. The Bush is at present, for the most part, dumb." Flynn believed the wireless would provide the 'magic touch'.

He spoke to a number of technical men, all eminently qualified, about his dream, for a system of direct communication between individual homesteads & a transmitting/receiving base. All those consulted said it wasn't practical. But not Alf Traeger, an amateur radio ham, who believed that short-wave transmission, then regarded as a toy, could solve these problems in a way that long-wave transmission,

which was already in use, could not. Flynn & the shy young engineer were kindred spirits. According to Fred McKay: "Alf Traeger, who was a brilliant young engineer, worshipped Flynn. John Flynn paid him well - more than he was getting himself. At the time that he employed Traeger, Flynn was getting pounds 360 a year, & he gave Traeger 500 a year. He made him Radio Engineer & he gave him complete freedom, saying, "Do what you like & just keep me informed."

The pedal wireless was developed & refined over a gradual period. The first successful experiments were made in 1926, & early models were distributed in 1928. An improved version was completed in April 1928. The cost of the finished product was only pounds 33. It was a marvel of simplicity & efficiency.

A new mother station, VJI, was installed in the vestry of the Cloncurry church, & the generator in a small iron shed in the church yard. The maiden installation was at Augustus Downs, 180 miles to the north.

Because women were so often alone at the homesteads while the men were at work, it had been decided to entrust care of the radio, where possible, to the manager's wife or daughter.... For the first year of its life, the Aerial Medical Services had operated without wireless & the limitations showed. Traeger's invention transformed this situation, while, at the same time, assisting general social development of the outback. Alf Traeger, probably the last surviving direct contemporary of John Flynn, died in Adelaide on July 31, 1980, the eve of his 85th birthday. Traeger Transceivers, to use the current brand name, are in daily use throughout the Australian outback. Older folk still employ the phrase, "on the pedal", to describe a conversation by transceiver. The transceiver itself is gradually giving way to the latest innovation, the radio telephone, which operates much the same as normal domestic telephones & ensures privacy.....

A year ago Bucknall was invited to conduct a wedding of a young couple from the bush, both from families with long associations with John Flynn & his mission. "After the wedding two of the women started talking excitedly. One was the mother of the bride, the other was a woman who lived several hundred miles away. They had not met since their children were tiny. Yet for over 20 years they had heard one another daily over the radio, & considered themselves neighbours chatting over the fence."
