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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

April 1984.

Dear Friend and Member,

The April Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening, April 13th, 1984, at 8.00 p.m.

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

Business: "Heritage Week" Activities to be finalised.

Syllabus Item: Mr. Noel Thorpe, one of our Members, will speak on "The Genesis of a Railway". (The beginning and progress of the Illawarra Railway, from Sydney to Hurstville). Illustrated.

Supper Roster: Captain: Mrs. Kell, with Mesdames Welch & Abigail.
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

'O golden years ye are past and gone,
With the far off flash of a distant dream;
But still we are striving and struggling on,
Chasing the gold and the rainbow gleam.'

Will H. Ogilvie,
(from "Fair Girls & Gray Horses")
Taken from 'Early Australian Times'
Valerie McKenzie.

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 Wollli 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.

- | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|------------------|---|---|---|--------------|
| Tape 48 | - | 3rd April, 1984 | - | Old Kogarah Township | - | D. Row |
| Tape 49 | - | 10th April, 1984 | - | Hurstville | - | C. Wilding |
| 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.

CHANGES GALORE IN A CENTURY OF FIRE FIGHTING ...

- Barton Green
- St. George & Sutherland
Shire Leader
- 8th February 1984.

It's a far cry from small boys' dreams!

Every little boy grows up with a dream of becoming a fireman, but to-day's fireman is a lot more than a man in rubber boots riding a big red engine.

To-day's fire brigade has some of the most advanced firefighting equipment and rescue apparatus, and today's fireman must be engineer, physicist, chemist, doctor and pastor.

This year, 1984, is the centenary of the N.S.W. Fire Brigade, and there have been some dramatic changes to firefighting equipment and techniques in the past 100 years.

The fight against fire in N.S.W. can be traced to the 1820's when soldiers attached to the barracks in George Street used two hand pumps.

In the early days, insurance companies, not State Governments, operated their own brigades. One of the first insurance companies with a brigade was the Australian Fire and Life Assurance Company, in 1837. From 1851, Sydney relied on the Insurance Companies' Brigade. Major insurance companies funded the brigade and no assistance was received from the State or local governments.

In 1844, the Sydney City Council bought two fire engines which were eventually housed in Bathurst Street where the first headquarters of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was later located.

The horses required to take the engines to fires were hired at a cost of 7/6d. In those times, water pumps were worked by hand and even pulled by hand to the fire scene; it was only the big inner-city stations that had fire engines pulled by horses and pumps worked by steam from a boiler.

In the 1880's, if a fire call went out, the local brigade might have had to quickly hire a team of horses from the local livery to hook up to the hose reels.

When motor vehicles entered the fire service in the early 1900's, it was a radical change which allowed the fire brigade to arrive at the fire scene much faster. Sometimes, however, the firefighters almost froze on the way to the fire from sitting on the seats along the sides of the engines.

Later, mainly after World War II, fire engines were equipped with enclosed cabins to protect firemen.

The first of the volunteer Fire Brigades, called the Australian Volunteer Fire Company No.1, was located in Pitt Street, near where the Strand Arcade is now. In 1857, it moved to a new, purpose-built fire station in lower Pitt Street, Haymarket. The station still exists and preservation of the building is being considered.

The first moves to pass a Bill in Parliament to bring the brigades under the control of a central authority were made in 1854. Several attempts were made in 1854 and 1883, but for various reasons they never became law.

During the 1870's, insurance companies told the State Government they would no longer be responsible for providing fire protection and funding the brigades.

The insurance companies threatened to disband their brigades and the State Government passed the Fire Brigade Bill in 1883.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigades were constituted officially in 1884, and the first board meeting was held on April 6, 1884.

Today the old kerosene lamps have been replaced by special lighting trucks with powerful flood lights; a wider selection of smothering agents is available, although water is still the main weapon; and even thick black smoke can be beaten by special breathing apparatus.

Communication was a major difficulty in the early days of fire brigades - a bellowing trumpet was the only aid. To-day an officer can use a hand-held transceiver and be heard by all sets at a fire simultaneously and at the main control centre perhaps many kilometres away.

Carrying enough equipment on a fire engine was also a problem in 1884, but now fire engines have special storage lockers holding, among other things, hydraulic rescue tools and air bags which make the fire brigade the largest rescue operation in N.S.W.

Computers in 1984, housed in the control centre, give an instant reading of the nearest available fire stations.

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Another computer allows officers to train on a simulator, the same way pilots learn to fly jumbos.

Brawn has given way to brains, and today's fireman must be engineer, physicist, chemist, doctor and pastor depending on the job facing him.

The Fire Brigade is one of the last male bastions in a world striving for equality of the sexes. Not because firemen and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade are male chauhanists; women have yet to overcome the physical demands of the job.

In the last intake, 70 women were among 2000 applicants for the 170 vacancies, but none has made it through to service.

Many women dropped out of the training program after a very demanding fitness test and obstacle course. During the fitness and endurance tests, applicants must ride an exercise bike for four minutes at a time, with 90 second rests, for 12 minutes while hooked up to a machine which registers heart and lung capacities. They must also lift a 20 kilogram barbell above their heads 19 times in 40 seconds.

But the obstacle course is probably the hardest. Included on the course is a wall with a window in the middle of it, and several low tables. Applicants must run the course alternating between obstacles such as running to the wall, scaling it, then turning around and diving back through the window head first, then scaling the wall again and jumping back through the window, feet first.

A fireman also must be able to carry an injured or smoke-affected person over his shoulder, or an injured partner who can be very heavy when wearing breathing apparatus.

Fire fighters at Rockdale fire station were among the first in N.S.W. to receive medallions to mark the centenary of the Fire Brigade. The medallions were presented by Supt. Henry Bailey, of Sydney headquarters.

COLONIAL CABINET MAKER - William James Packer.

Born Sydney, N.S.W. November 12th, 1794.

*Died Tarago, School House, in what is now
the village of Lake Bathurst, N.S.W.,
March 18th, 1881.*

- J.B. Hawkins
Antique Dealer
Cammeray.

- The Australasian
Antique Collector No. 12.

When I first purchased the cabinet used in my advertisement at the Chelsea Antique Dealers' Fair I had only those two photographs on which to base a decision. The fact that it was both signed and dated, therefore of great Australian interest, helped to make the decision comparatively easy.

(Advertisement details: "A very fine collector's sample cabinet on stand, veneered and crossbanded in Casurina and other native timbers, made by William James Packer in Sydney, New South Wales, 1815. Height with stand 48", width 21", depth 18". This cabinet is of great interest to lovers of Australian colonial furniture due to its date of construction and because we can establish that it was made by a native born craftsman. The cabinet proves that even though only 27 years had passed since the landing of the First Fleet, cabinet work of a very high standard was firmly established under the English system of indentured apprentices in Sydney. This cabinet may therefore be designated a most important place in the history of colonial furniture, for it is a link piece that may be used on stylistic grounds for the dating of other pieces of early Australian furniture, also for attributing their province to the workshop of Lawrence Butler to whom Packer was apprenticed.")

The next problem was to ferret out the available information on Packer; it soon became obvious that there was a completely unknown quantity. For the sources used in this article may I express my thanks to The Trustees of the Mitchell Library, Mr. Lea-Scarlett, Mr. Kevin Fahy and Mr. W.F. Bradshaw, without whose help and guidance my research would have proved impossible.

On my first visit to the Mitchell Library certain good leads emerged. The Packer family came variously as free settlers to Australia. William James Packer's father was Sgt. William Packer who in 1789 was a Private in the N.S.W. Corps under orders to proceed from Spithead in December 1789¹ in what is generally known as the Second Fleet. He appears in the Muster roll 5th June - 24th December 1789 as an enlisted man, and duly arrived in the colony in 1790. His mother Sarah Baxter arrived in the First Fleet,² she following with her mother in 1792 on the Royal Admiral.³

The first reference to their son is in the Register of St. Phillip's Church where it appears that Sarah Baxter and Sgt. William Packer had a natural son on November 12th, 1794, who was baptised William James Packer (on December 7th, 1794). His parents were not married until 5th April 1801, also at St. Phillip's Church, by Samuel Marsden, so apart from being a natural son his Australian antecedents are impeccable.

Sgt. William Packer had been discharged from the N.S.W. Corps by the time of his marriage and was running a General Store in Pitt Row now Pitt Street.⁴ By 1803 he had one of the largest businesses of its type in Sydney; he was also in receipt of a land grant from Governor Macquarie of 100 acres at Cooks River, and had purchased various properties in Sydney as is evidenced by his will.⁵ The will is filed in the probate office at Mena House and numbered 9, making this one of the earliest surviving Australian wills, being dated 11th June 1817 for probate.

His son, who appears to have preferred the christian name James, was in the year 1814 an apprentice to Lawrence Butler, cabinet maker of No.7 Pitt Row. He was probably indentured at the age of 13 for a seven-year apprenticeship with Butler; this would have been completed in 1815 by which time he would be 21.

Butler who became a political prisoner during the Irish uprising of 1798 was transported to N.S.W. in 1802 for life. He must have had one of the largest workshops in Sydney with four indentured apprentices and an unknown number of Journeymen. I would tentatively attribute on the evidence of this cabinet the Macquarie Chairs and the Breakfast Table crossbanded in Casurina both at Old Government House to his workshop.

Sgt. William Packer died at his house in Pitt Street after a long and prolonged illness on 28th November 1816.⁶ His son had presumably completed his apprenticeship by this time, and on his father's death inherited all his father's landed property. It is interesting to note that his mother was left no property in the will; however, possibly this was due to her husband's long illness, for she had personally taken over his business which by then had grown to substantial proportions. In October 1815 a fire at their premises in Pitt Street destroyed the Coach House and three coaches doing pounds 600 worth of damage in fifty minutes.⁷ In most of the advertisements in The Sydney Gazette from 1809-1815 relating to the Packer business replies are solicited to Mrs Sarah Packer. Her son in later life states that his mother lived in opulent circumstances.

February 1st, 1817, sees William James Packer advertising in The Sydney Gazette that he intends to leave the colony and that all claims against him should be settled. It is interesting to speculate where he went as a result of his inheritance? He was back in the colony in 1821 to marry on March 27th his wife Esther, nee Haley, she being aged 20. The witnesses were his mother, Sarah Waples, she having re-married in 1817 and Joseph Inch. His mother ran a public house "Adam and Eve" in Pitt Street losing her license in 1816 for six months for running a disorderly house.⁸ Joseph Inch also ran a public house in Pitt Street "The Bunch of Grapes." There is a book, "Radcliff's Journey", possibly a wedding gift to his wife inscribed James Packer, March 26th, 1821.⁹ This helps to prove the use of James in preference to William in his signing of non-commercial documents.

Packer sold his farm at Cooks River in 1822 and in a Memorial to Governor Brisbane¹⁰ in 1826 was renting a farm from Joseph Inch at Lower Minto. At that time he states his assets to be pounds 1039 including a chest of carpenter's tools valued at pounds 20; he further states that he served his time as a cabinet maker. It would therefore appear that he in fact completed his apprenticeship to Butler. This Memorial or application for land grant took a long time to mature but he eventually received a grant of six hundred and forty acres in 1830 at Gundaroo.

This property he called Esther Mead, presumably after his wife; he was however no newcomer to the area around Lake George. For the rest of this information I am indebted to Mr. Lea-Scarlett and his forth-coming book on Gundaroo. It would appear that in 1816 after completing his apprenticeship and before leaving the colony in 1817 he discovered Lake George for he was sufficiently well versed in the area to be invited by Governor Brisbane to survey the land between Limestone Plains and Bateman's Bay in 1822. ¹¹

His acquisition of land at Gundaroo near Lake George by 1838 totalled 2789 acres and he lived in considerable stule. He had hiw own pack of hunting kangaroo dogs and a very fine orchard of stone fruits surrounded by plaited hawthorn hedge which still survives.

He must have suffered severely in the 1866 drought for he sold 1,860 acres in 1868 at 16/- per acre which was a low price for cleared grazing land. His wife, Esther, died without issue in 1846 at Gundaroo, also his mother in 1856, and he himself in 1881 at Tarago Public School leaving an estate of less than pounds 40. ¹² All the family are buried in a family vault at Esther Mead. Sgt. William Packer and Robert Waples her second husband were buried in the same grave at the Old Devonshire Street Cemetery. The reason for the decline in the family fortune by the time of William James' death is not at present apparent.

That to date is all that I have managed to discover about the rise and eventual demise and dying out all within the space of 100 years of a pioneer Australian family. Packer himself was an Australian born member of what will I am sure eventually prove to be the finest easily school of Australian cabinet makers. This piece of furniture provides good evidence of the standard of living enjoyed in the colony as early as 1815.

The Schedule of property belonging to William James Packer, including the lines "chest of carpenters' tools, being myself a carpenter, pounds 20" and "served my time as a Cabinet Maker."

Sydney November 22nd 1826

Schedule of Property belonging to William James Packer of the District of Lower Minto, immediately applicable to Agricultural purposes

120 head of horned cattle at pounds 4, each	480.0.0
4 Breeding Mares with Foals by their sides at pounds 60, each	240.0.0
2 One year old Fillies at pounds 25, each	50.0.0
12 Pigs at pounds 1, each	12.0.0
35 Acres of Wheat deducting Rent & Expenses at pounds 4, per acre.	140.0.0
15 Acres of Maise deductyd at pounds 3, p. acre	45.0.0
4 Ploughs at pounds 2.10.0 each	10.0.0
2 Carts with Harnefs complete at pds 15 each	30.0.0
2 Harnefs pds 2, 1 steel mill pds 5	7.0.0
Hoes, Spades, Axes etc.	5.0.0
Chest of Carpenters Tools, being myself a Carpenter	20.0.0
	<u>1039. 0.0</u>

W.J.Packer for an additional Grant.

I beg leave to state that I born in the Colony and served my time as a Cabinet Maker, but for the last three years I have rented and cultivated a Farm of 200 Acres in Lower Minto from Mr. Joseph Inch of Pitt Street at the Yearly rent of pounds 50. - I am a married...

References:

1. N.S.W. Historical Records, page 435
2. N.S.W. Historical Record, page 416
3. 1828 Census
4. Sydney Gazette S.G. January 8th, 1804
5. The Will. Sgt. William Packer, No.91. Will dated 9th June 1815.
Property left to William Packer: 100 acres Spriggins Grove;
50 acres St. James' Park; 30 acres Kensington Gardens; 30 acres Hyde Park.
6. Sydney Gazette, December 14th, 1816
7. Sydney Gazette, October 7th, 1815
8. Sydney Gazette, 21st September, 1816
9. Property of the Everton Estate, Gundaroo
10. Colonial Secretary's file Ref 2/7945
Mr James Styles in this Memorial states that Mr.J.W.Packer is to be recommended. This tends to confirm the use of James as the form of address used by his friends.
11. Lea-Scarlett, Queanbeyan, page 5.
12. Will of James Packer. Ref. 55783.
Packer left all his real & personal estate to Samuel John Galloway, school-master of Tarago. A sum of pounds 40.

JUST A PART OF CALCUTTA AND ALL AUSTRALIA -

- Alan Gill

- Sydney Morning Herald
-4th June 1977.

On the fly-leaf of the first church register of the parish of Narellan is recorded the first piece of historical documentation of the Church of England in Australia - outside the immediate environs of Sydney.

In wispy handwriting and on a now-fading brown page, the Rev. Thomas Hassall announced that he had taken charge of the "districts of Cook, Mulgoa, South Creek, Cabramatta, Camden, Goulburn Plains, Bong Bong and Inverary - 1 April 1827."

Hassall's parish was described by others at the time as "all of Australia beyond Liverpool", the only other churches in the south-western part of the colony being St. Lukes, Liverpool and St. Peter's, Campbelltown. The parish is celebrating its sesquicentenary. Forthcoming events include a dinner, historical exhibition and publication of a book about the parish. The Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev Sir Marcus Loane, will be guest preacher at a special service on August 21.

The Narellan parish is unusual in that its principal church - formerly St. Paul's, Narellan - is not actually in Narellan but in Cobbitty. It was re-named St. Paul's, Cobbitty, when another church (St. Thomas's) was actually built in Narellan.

Another unusual feature is that Narellan contains the only place of worship named after a bishop of Calcutta, in which diocese the whole of Australia belonged during the early years of settlement.

The Heber chapel was built by Thomas Hassall soon after his arrival from material he had originally acquired to build a home. It was dedicated by the Rev. Samuel Marsden on November 30, 1828, and served as both the first church and school for the district.

The inscription over the door carries the words: "Named after Bishop Heber in whose Diocese of Calcutta Australia then was." The wording is grammatically incorrect. Bishop Reginald Heber had died two years earlier, in 1826.

The chapel now used as a meeting hall, stands alongside St. Paul's Church, consecrated on April 5, 1842, by the Right Rev William Grant Broughton, first and only Anglican Bishop of Australia.

The first rector of the parish, Thomas Hassall, was born in England on May 29, 1794 and was the first young man to grow up in New South Wales and to seek ordination. He had arrived in the colony

with his father, Rowland Hassall, in 1796. Rowland Hassall was an evangelist with the London Missionary Society, who, with numerous companions, sought refuge in the colony after they had been summarily ejected from Tahiti.

Samuel Marsden, senior chaplain to the colony, greeted the refugees with warm hospitality and offered Rowland Hassall a job as a clerk. Marsden exercised a strong influence on the young Thomas Hassall, who founded, at the age of 19, the colony's first Sunday School, then decided four years later to go to England to prepare for ordination.

On arrival in England, Thomas Hassall was unable to produce the traditional "title" of recommendation from a sponsoring parish. Instead, he produced a letter from Mrs Macquarie, which was accepted as a substitute.

On his return to Australia in 1822, he was appointed curate to Marsden, and three years later married his mentor's eldest daughter.

Hassall was appointed to Narellan (then known as the Cowpastures) early in 1827. At one time he had a wide itinerant ministry as far south as Goulburn. He was known as the "Squire of Denbigh", and his long preaching tours on horseback won him renown as "the galloping parson."

He was a woolgrower and landowner, and once owned 83 acres. At one stage he was reprimanded by Archdeacon Thomas Hobbes Scott for owning too much land.

Hassall was popular with his flock and was described by a chronicler as a "truly good man". He was one of the first white men to espouse the cause of Aborigines. Letters from Hassall on this topic are housed in the Mitchell Library. He served as a magistrate, but, according to his son, James, "never had a man flogged."

Rectors of Narellan have a tradition of longevity. The first four clergy served a combined 113 years.

The second rector of Narellan, the Rev Arthur Wellesley Pain, came to Australia from England "for his health" in the ship *Sobraon*. During the voyage he was locked in his cabin (at his own request) at nights to prevent his habit of roaming the ship conducting services in his sleep.

He was rector from 1868 to 1883, and later became first Bishop of Gippsland. His eldest son, Allan, who was born in the rectory, became fourth rector of the parish in 1919.

Rectors of Narellan have included several "characters". One of these was the Right Rev E N Wilton, a former Bishop of Melanesia, who was appointed at the age of 80, in 1951. He served - decrying all thoughts of retirement - until shortly before his death at the age of 92.

As might be expected of a man of advanced years, he was inclined to be forgetful. On one occasion godparents at a baptism service - after waiting in vain for him to appear in the church - knocked on the rectory door to find the bishop in his pyjamas. The bishop was equally neglectful about the rectory and its gardens. He once called a churchwarden to shoot a snake in his bedroom.

Bishop Wilton, who died in 1963, was succeeded by a retired senior army officer, Brigadier the Rev R J "Tim" Barham, who is now rector of Longford, Tasmania. Brigadier Barham is not quite the most senior military man to hold holy orders in Australia. This honour is held by Major-General the Rev C. A. Osborne, an assistant minister at St. Mark's, Darling Point.

The present rector of Narellan, the Rev Barry Marsh, was previously rector of Norfolk Island. He has taken a strong interest in the history of the parish and is largely responsible for organising the current sesquicentenary activities. He is the ninth rector of Narellan - five of the previous eight rectors are buried in the churchyard. There are some interesting graves, including that of Thomas Hassall, a former Miss Australia (Phyllis Ethel Gregory), and an unfortunate man who was killed when lightning struck the steeple. His tomb carried the apt inscription: "In the midst of life we are in death."

One of the church's better-known worshippers was Sir Charles Cowper, former Premier of N.S.W. who was a churchwarden for 30 years. A stained glass window was installed in his honour.

The district is agricultural and contains several large dairy farms and bloodstock studs. Parishioners include students, farmers, lawyers, retired business men and airline pilots. Sir Warwick and Lady Fairfax, and Mr & Mrs Anthony Hordern are regular members of the congregation.

The church has nine boxed family pews. Nowadays occupancy is purely by custom. Pew rent of pounds 1.17.4 was abolished many years ago. Pews in the church are numbered. Originally the last six rows were reserved for "convicts and strangers". Assigned convicts in the district were well treated.

The present population is less than 4,000. This will jump to about 60,000 when population increases under the Macarthur Growth Centre (The Campbelltown Plan) come into effect. The northern half of the municipality of Camden, of which Narellan forms part, is in the growth centre. This will have a total population of 100,000. When this occurs the parish of "*all Australia beyond Liverpool*" will come into its own once again.