



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,  
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

September 1984.

Dear Friend and Member,

The September Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening, September 21st, 1984.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: "Rocky Point Road and the Fitzgerald Family"

Mr. Arthur Ellis has kindly offered to tell the story of a very old Family, and will illustrate his talk with interesting pictures on the screen.

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

Ladies please bring a plate.

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"A proverb is a short sentence based on long experience."

"It is just as well to forget your old troubles, there are plenty more coming????"

(Friendship Book 1974)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH, 1984.

A Coach Trip to Kangaroo Valley, and the Fitzroy Falls, has been arranged by our Social Secretary. All she needs now is your support. We trust that that will be forthcoming as it has in the past.

Watch for details, or if you prefer - ring Dorothy. Her 'phone number is 50 9300.

FIFTH ANNUAL "WALDRON - MCCARTHY MEMORIAL LECTURE".

A reminder of the Fifth Annual "Waldron-McCarthy Memorial Lecture" to be held on Saturday, September 29th, 1984, in the Kanyana/Wandarrah Room, Civic Centre, McMahon Street, Hurstville.

"GREAT TRAIN FESTIVAL"

Just to remind you about the "Great Train Festival", October 8th - 14th, 1984. There will be numerous events to celebrate the Centenary of the opening of the Illawarra Railway, Sydney to Hurstville, and there will be fun for all.

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

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

Tape 71 - 11th September	- Early Settlers of the St. George District. Vol.1, Book 9.	- M. Cumming.
Tape 72 - 18th September	- The Colonial Medical Service Part 11.	- M.D. Fleming.
Tape 73 - 25th September	- The Environs & Ecology of Nanny Goat Hill at Turrella	- M.D. Fleming.
Tape 74 - 2nd October	- The Rosevale Nurseries, Rocky Point Road, Cooks River.	- M. Cumming.
Tape 75 - 9th October	- Rockdale Methodist Church - Jubilee - 1858-1908.	- M. Cumming.
Tape 76 - 16th October	- The 'Echo', October 16th, 1890.	- S. Richter.

SYDNEY - as was -

- Article supplied by  
Mrs E Eardley -  
- Author & origin - unknown.

1944 - in the thick of another horrid war. It's Friday lunchtime, the trams turning into King Street are crowded and so are the stores - on the right, Palmers, McDowells and Coeee Clothing; on the left, David Jones and Beard Watson. But the crowds are looking rather than buying, because their wants were thwarted by rationing.

Everyone was talking coupons. For clothes, for butter ... for just about everything. Petrol, too! So if you'd just forked out 95 pounds for that 1928 Chev. tourer you'd have to limit the miles. Maybe you should have settled for that well-shod 1928 Baby Austin, because its seven horse-powers only swallowed a gallon every 50 miles.

Rationing, and the preoccupation with war, just about brought the world of fashion to a halt. In the forties the skirts were being worn shorter than in the thirties, reaching just below the knee. Front-buttoning florals were the "in" day dresses, with uplifted bustline and tie belt - price 41/11 and 15 coupons. Light-weight woollen coats, 51/9 and 19 coupons; sheer rayon hose, 3/3 and 2 coupons. The men fared no better. A tailored suit in wool worsted, blue striped, pounds 5.5.3 and 38 coupons; a Royal Derby Henderson hat, 32/3 and 6 coupons; poplin de-luxe shirts with two fused separate collars, 20/7 and 14 coupons.

When people employed you they expected a full day's work. Market Gardeners made pounds 6.0.0 per week, working 7.30a.m. to 5.00p.m. week-days and to noon on Saturdays. The National Service Office had jobs for electrical engineers at a little over pounds 10.0.0 per week. This was considerably more than twice the amount earned by a fully trained nursing sister or a typiste.

Under-the-counter was the game in the little corner grocer's shop. All the goodies were carefully hidden to be proffered like jewels to the best customers. Mixed fruit 1/3 per pound; smoked barracouta fillets, 2/- per pound; plum jam in 24 oz. tin for 11 1/2.

Land was cheap. At Caringbah, handy to the rail, you could buy a choice building block for pounds 35.0.0, or 5/- a week. Prefer Eastwood? On the bus, land 100 x 300 for pounds 300.0.0! House and land cost something like pounds 1500.0.0 in most good class suburbs, though you'd have to find around pounds 2,500.0.0 for a brick-on-stone bungalow, 3 bedrooms with Harbour views at Vaucluse.

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## STORE FOUNDED ON COBB COACH ROUTE ...

Three names are probably the best known of the firms which pioneered Hurstville business centre and which are still trading -

*Barter, Allen and Diment.*

- *St. George & Sutherland Shire  
Leader - July 8th, 1970.*

*Barter's* was founded in 1921 by a far-sighted young man, Mr Charles Barter.

He bought a single-storey store in Forest Road on the site now occupied by the ANZ Bank, opposite where the present Barter's store stands. His belief in local patronage was justified and in a short time the premises had to be enlarged.

In 1925 Mr Barter bought a vacant allotment at the foot of the railway steps and in the following year, began building what has developed into the present imposing store.

During the excavations for that building an old horseshoe was unearthed about 14 ft. below the surface in the black soil of a former creek bed. Old-time residents told Mr Barter the site had been a camping ground for teamsters, who watered their horses in the creek which flowed nearby. It was also said to be a watering-spot for Cobb and Co. coaches.

The horseshoe, mounted on a base of polished wood, still hangs in the office of Mr Barter's son, who is now the firm's manager.

The enterprising Mr Barter was followed to Hurstville by an equally enterprising mercer, *Mr Jack Allen.*

Mr Allen opened his store at 308 Forest Road on April 22, 1922, under the name, Jack Allen, Mercer. When he was joined in the project shortly afterwards, by his brother, Mr Tom Allen, the name of the business changed to Allen Bros.

The brothers moved from 308 to 306 while the former shop was being renovated, then to 274 Forest Road where Lowes now stands. They later sold the business at No. 274 and in June 1939, bought the present site at 310 Forest Road.

In 1951 the firm became a proprietary company under the management of Mr John R Allen, son of Mr. Jack Allen.

Although the large grocery and produce store which made *Diments* a household word throughout the district has disappeared, the family name still surmounts a shop front in Forest Road.

The new store, owned and managed by Mr Geoffrey Diment, is a modern and attractive gift shop specialising in china and glassware.

It is in marked contrast to the small grocery store opened by his grandfather, Mr C Diment, who came to Hurstville from Bulli more than 60 years ago.

However, in its day the old store, was just as modern and progressive as that owned now by the founder's grandson.

It boasted two "firsts" - it was the first in the district to deliver goods by petrol-driven truck in place of horse-drawn wagons, and one of the first grocery stores in New South Wales to be granted a wine and spirit licence.

The store - like the leisurely conduct of its business - is now a thing of the past. A modern bustling Coles chain store has occupied the site for almost 10 years.

But so many local residents continued to call the adjoining street - "Diment's Lane" - instead of its rightful - "Station Avenue" - the council decided eventually to re-name it "Diment Way" - a memorial to the pioneer firm.

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WHO PUT IT ON THE MAP?

- *St. George & Sutherland Shire  
Leader - July 8, 1970.*

The Department of Education claims Hurstville was named by one of its officers.

The first school was built in 1876, in what was then called Gannons Forest. The first headmaster was a Mr Michael Lappan. The school board suggested that the school be named, Forest Dale.

But the district inspector (a Mr McIntyre) said he favoured the name, Hurstville.

Departmental records do not explain why he did so, but the school board agreed - the name stuck and the suburb changed its name from Gannons Forest to Hurstville.

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INN WAS 'COUNCIL' FOR CITY FATHERS -

- *St. George & Sutherland Shire  
Leader - July 8, 1970.*

Hurstville's first seat of local government was a hotel built to cope with the " gargantuan thirst" of its early populace of timber-getters and charcoal-burners.

The hotel was the old Blue Post, which once stood diagonally opposite Hurstville Public School in Forest Road.

Built in 1850 by pioneer innkeeper, Richard Fulljames, it was one of Hurstville's first commercial buildings and it soon became more than just a drinking spot for the forest workers. Like many other early inns and hotels, it was a district meeting place and a hub of social and sporting activities.

The first municipal election was held at the hotel in 1887 and Hurstville's first aldermen were W.Humphrey, Myles McCrae, J.W.Bibby, C.Howard, A.E.Gannon, H.P.Tidswell, Hugh Patrick, James Peak and Alexander Milsop. The hotel's link with civic affairs continued for many years.

Even with the establishment of the first council it remained for years as the meeting place for discussions about district progress.

Richard Fulljames died seven years after he built the hotel. His widow remarried and the hotel passed to her daughter then to her son, who replaced much of the original slab building with weatherboards.

However, progress passed to the old Blue Post. The centre of business moved to the western end of the town. By the late 1920's the appearance of the old hotel had deteriorated so much it gained the reputation of being haunted.

It was restored later as the business offices of a bedding manufacturing firm, but was demolished in 1962 to make way for a modern building supply store.

Nor is there any trace today of the old racecourse - Chappelow's Paddock - which was another popular local meeting place. The racecourse was just behind the old hotel. Stewards and starting gates were unheard of and starting procedure non-existent. The horses just lined up and raced.

The Blue Post was not without competition in its heyday. Its success resulted in the establishment of the Currency Lass Inn on a site in Forest Road near that occupied now by Hurstville Post Office.

One of the "Lass's" chief sporting attractions was a bowling alley where patrons played the old-fashioned ninepins - forerunner of the

modern game of tenpins.

Other early hotels were the Gardener's Arms and the Hurstville Hotel.

The Gardener's Arms was pulled down to make way for the railway when it was extended to Hurstville in 1884.

Hurstville Hotel on the corner of McMahon Street and Forest Road is the only one of the "old timers" in existence now.

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#### Given Away.

By present-day standards land was almost "given away" in the Hurstville of sixty years ago. Large home blocks could be bought then for weekly payments equal to less than half the price of a packet of cigarettes today.

The Evening News of Saturday May 7, 1910, advertised a few of these land bargains on behalf of the Pitt Street estate agents, Ernest C.V. Broughton.

One advertisement said: "1 shilling and 2 pence per week will purchase lovely high sites close to Mortdale station, 83 ft. by 132 ft, 8/- per foot." The same firm advertised poultry and pig farms in Hurstville municipality, making this generous offer: "A subdivision is being prepared of blocks 85 ft. by 855 ft. Price pounds 40.0.0 per block, on the following terms: pounds 4.0.0 cash deposit per block, no further instalments for 2 years, then 5 years' credit, interest for the whole terms of 4% per annum."

Building blocks similar to those offered at Mortdale would be worth about \$10,000 today and the \$40 poultry farm blocks would be worth more than \$20,000.

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PHILLIP: The failure who became our first battler -

- The Sydney Morning Herald  
6th June 1984.

A new book reveals some surprising facts about the founder of modern Australia, reports Philip Derriman.

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Until now, it has seemed to many of us that the only surprising thing about Arthur Phillip, founder of modern Australia, was that he was not buried in the noble town of Bath, where he spent his last years, but in a plain little town some distance away called Bathampton, with which he does not appear to have had any immediate connection and which Australian tourists may visit today only with much inconvenience.

In fact, there is a great deal about Phillip which is surprising. In the first place, he was half-German and is said to have spoken English with a German accent. His father, Jakob Phillip, came from Frankfurt but apparently settled in London, where Phillip was born, after marrying the widow of a British naval officer.

Second, Phillip's appointment as commander of the First Fleet was not the climax of a brilliant career in the British Navy, but a rather fortuitous sequel to a career of mediocrity. Indeed, the Navy thought so little of Phillip's ability that it laid him off on half pay for more than half of his years of service.

Third, such qualifications as he did possess for supervising the establishment of a colony in New South Wales was acquired not in the service of the British Navy, but in the Portuguese Navy, to which he resorted as a mercenary when the British had no use for him.

We have been reminded of these and other extraordinary facts about our first Governor, by a new book. "The Rebello Transcripts". The author is the Melbourne lawyer and historian, Kenneth McIntyre, who, it may be remembered, set the cat among the historical pigeons a few years ago with his book "The Secret Discovery of Australia", which proved to the satisfaction of many that the first Europeans to chart the East Coast were not the British in the late 18th century, as we had always supposed, but the Portuguese 250 years before.

"The Rebello Transcripts" take their name from General Jacintho Rebello, the chief librarian at the National Archives in Lisbon, at the end of the last century, who was asked by two Australian historians researching Phillip's life, to dig out all information about Phillip's service in the Portuguese Navy. Rebello made an exhaustive search of Portuguese records, which came to be called the transcripts.



The transcripts thus have been available to us for almost 100 years, but until now little use has been made of them, the principal reason being that historians interested in Phillip were generally ignorant of Portuguese history and certainly of that part of Portuguese history in which Phillip played a part.

Because they were unable to view the transcripts against their proper historical background, they could make no more sense of them than if, say, they had been studying a Test match report without any knowledge of cricket.

Hence, you have an historian as eminent as George Mackaness declaring in his biography of Phillip, published 50 years ago, that Phillip took part in the defence of Portugal's "colony" in South America, presumable meaning Brazil, whereas Phillip actually took part in the defence of a Portuguese settlement **called** Colonia, in what is now Uruguay. Apparently, Mackaness had never heard of Colonia, which he therefore took to be colonia, with a small c - that is, the Portuguese word for colony.

Kenneth McIntyre has had the advantage of being a specialist in Portuguese history, and is apparently held in high regard in Portugal itself. His book, "The Secret Discovery of Australia", is about to be published in Lisbon in a Portuguese translation, and the President of Portugal, General Ramalho Eanes, has made him a knight commendador of the Order of Prince Henry, the Navigator, roughly the equivalent of a knight commander in Britain.

Born in 1738, Phillip attended an obscure seamen's school at Greenwich, learned his practical seacraft on a merchant ship plying to Greenland and served in the Navy without special distinction during the Seven Years War. When the war ended in 1763, the Navy stood him down on half pay, and for the next 10 years Phillip languished in rural Hampshire, running a farm.

In 1773, the Portuguese let it be known they wanted to recruit British naval officers, and Phillip, who had never risen beyond the rank of lieutenant, offered himself and was made a captain in the Portuguese Navy. "The avidity with which Phillip snapped up a job of such low esteem indicates how desperate for employment he had become", McIntyre observes.

In 1776, he found himself in South American waters in command of a Portuguese frigate protecting Colonia, a Portuguese penal settlement in territory which Spain claimed as its own. Colonia was being blockaded by the Spanish, and food was so scarce that its inhabitants ate dogs, cats and rats. Phillip impressed his Portuguese superiors by his conduct there. One of them later testified: "This Officer is most honourable and meritorious."

When at Colonia he, with only his own frigate, made the Spanish respect that fortress as they ought to".

It does not seem that Phillip actually came to grips with the Spanish Navy at Colonia; it was more a case, probably, of keeping them at bay by patrolling about with guns primed and flags flying. Later on, however, he did demonstrate that he was not at all averse to battle.

Early in 1777 a large Spanish fleet cruised past the Brazilian coast, as if daring the much smaller Portuguese fleet to come out and fight. The Portuguese commander, an Irishman named Macdoual, consulted Phillip about his options (an indication in itself that Phillip's opinion was valued) and told him he favoured avoiding combat in view of the odds against them.

Phillip was horrified. "He made every effort to induce the Chief (Macdoual) to attack the enemy," the transcripts report. Macdoual would not be persuaded, and when Phillip returned to his own ship he wrote him a letter "imploing him for the sake of his own honour, and that of the nation, not to refrain from attacking them."

Poor Macdoual was later accused, rather unfairly, by the Portuguese of shirking his duty.

Phillip would have been aware of the likely outcome of the battle, so his eagerness for the fray is revealing. It shows he was impulsive, certainly brave and possessed a strong sense of duty. This is consistent with this appraisal of him by a superior, found elsewhere in the transcripts: "This officer...is a little headstrong, but can easily be brought to reason".

Phillip returned to England in 1778. Until now the popular belief has been that he hurried home because his country, then losing ground in the American War of Independence, needed his services. In fact, according to Kenneth McIntyre's reading of the Rebello transcript's, Phillip wanted to remain in the Portuguese Navy, but the Portuguese had no further use for him. For the second time in his career, he was made redundant.

Moreover, the British Navy was clearly none too excited at having him back. It gave him a couple of humble postings, laid him off again for 16 months and in 1781 took him back. Then, at last, he was put in command of a decent warship, the 64-gun "Europe".

Thus, Phillip was 43 before he attained any degree of respectability in the British Navy. Only 5 years later, he was put in charge of the grand Botany Bay enterprise. How may his late and rapid rise from obscurity be explained?

It has been suggested that one reason Phillip got the job was that nobody else of worth wanted it.

Yet the British Government would not have entrusted Phillip with the mission simply because he was willing. There must have been something to commend him, and it is here that McIntyre makes his most interesting conclusion of all - that Phillip got the job mainly because of the experience he gained in the service of Portugal, particularly when he was stationed at Colonia.

Colonia had been a hard-pressed settlement at the extremity of supply lines, as Botany Bay was expected to be. It was in the southern hemisphere and had a similar climate. It was a penal settlement, too, and Phillip would have learned a thing or two there about handling convicts.

So Phillip has some relevance to modern Australia after all. As a failure for much of his early life, he can rightly be considered our first battler. As an Englishman of German extraction, who sailed for the Portuguese, he can rightly be considered our first ethnic.

- The Rebello Transcripts -  
by Kenneth McIntyre -  
Souvenir/Hutchinson.

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