

SPONSORED BY
ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



PRICE 5 c .

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Registered by Australia
Post N.B.H. 0335.

24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

April 1985.

Dear Friend and Member,

The April Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday Evening, April 19th, 1985, at 8.00 p.m.

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

Business: General. Heritage Week.

Syllabus Item: "Voices of Australian Women" will be the subject of Mrs. Betty Goodyer's address. This should be of interest to all of us.

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

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. L. Abigail,
President.
Phone 599.2363

Mrs. B. Perkins,
Publicity Officer.
Phone 587 9164

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

An acre of performance is worth a world of promise.

Beauty Hints.

Wrinkled Brows: Try the well known cream "Sweetness of temper", it tones up the facial muscles, reduces wrinkles, and is very uplifting.

Friendship Book 1971.

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well, and our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

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" |) Book Nos. |
| No. 3. | "Saywells Tramway - Rockdale to Lady Robinsons Beach" |) 1 - 8 |
| No. 4. | "Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway" |) \$2.50 ea. |
| No. 5. | "Our Heritage in Stone" |) <u>Plus</u> |
| No. 6. | "All Stations to Como" |) <u>Postage.</u> |
| 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" | No. 9 |
| | Price \$4.00 <u>plus postage.</u> | Vol. 1. \$4.00. |
| No.10. | "Early Settlers of the St. George District", | |
| | <u>will be available soon.</u> | Vol. 2. |

All books are available at our meeting, also members badges.

For your copy of the above books, please contact one of the following:

Miss B. Otton - Phone 59 4259 (after 8 p.m.)

Mrs. E. Eardley - Secretary, Phone 59.8078.

Mr. A. Ellis - Phone 587 1159.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME.

* * * * *

SOCIAL.

A Coach Trip to Kurnell to be arranged by Miss Row, and your support will be appreciated. Further details from Dorothy, Phone 50 9300.

2NBC-FM STEREO 90.1. St. George Historical Society
Tuesday evenings 6.30p.m. - 6.45p.m.

1985.

- TAPE 91 - 22nd January - Miles Franklin Authoress - S. Cran
- TAPE 92 - 29th January - The Towers of Sydney - B. Butters
 Sydney Town Hall
- TAPE 93 - 5th February - History of the Sargents in - D. Sinclair
 Australia
- TAPE 94 - 12th February - The Development of Municipal - T. Allison
 Administration of Public
 Health Services before 1896
- TAPE 95 - 19th February - Only a Tree is Left - S. Cran
- TAPE 96 - 26th February - Bushfires Sweep District - G. Coxhead
 The Parish of St. George 1874
 The Wood Carters of Early
 St. George
- TAPE 97 - 5th March - Governor Macquarie's Visit - C. Turner
 Charles Bampton and
 William Booth
- TAPE 98 - 12th March - A Brief History of West Botany - B. Butters
 Church & Obed West
- TAPE 99 - 19th March - The Colonial Medical Service - C. Turner
 Part I - Admin. Convict Hospital
- TAPE 100 - 26th March - The Parishes of Mintaville - T. Allison
- TAPE 101 - 2nd April - St. Patrick's & St. Paul's - S. Cran
- TAPE 102 - 9th April - The Colonial Medical Service - C. Turner
 Part II - Admin. Col. Hospital
- TAPE 103 - 16th April - Temple for the Books of Sydney - G. Coxhead
- TAPE 104 - 23rd April - West of the River Road - Part. I - M.D. Fleming
- TAPE 105 - 30th April - West of the River Road - Part II - M.D. Fleming
- TAPE 106 - 7th May - The Reminiscences of Obed West - C. Kennedy
- TAPE 107 - 14th May - The Colonial Medical Service - C. Turner
 Part III - Admin. Col. Hosp.
- TAPE 108 - 21st May - History & Conservation of the - M.D. Fleming
 Queen Victoria Markets Bldg.
- TAPE 109 - 28th May - Smithson's Wine Bar & The Good - C. Kennedy
 Life on Goat Island.

2NBC-FM STEREO 90.1 - St. George Historical Society
Tuesday evenings 6.30p.m. - 6.45p.m.

1985.

- TAPE 110 - 4th June - Bridge Marks 50th Year & - D. Row
Cockatoo Island
- TAPE 111 - 11th June - Surgeons of the First Fleet - M.D.Fleming
- TAPE 112 - 18th June - Bexley - 1895-1917 - D. Row
(Repeat by request)
- TAPE 113 - 25th June - Persistence Rewarded.R.A.H.S. - C.Kennedy
- TAPE 114 - 2nd July - The Aboriginal Tribes of the - D. Row
Sydney Region, Wood Carters
of Early St. George and The
Great Australian Verandah.

The Society has been requested to read two historical booklets -

1. James Cook
2. Arthur Phillip.

The publishers, Movement Publications of Cabarita approached
2NBC-FM, who in turn invited the Society to tape the booklets.
Both are written by Thea Stanley Hughes and will be presented
over a couple of months.

Sir Thomas Livingston MITCHELL AND HIS WORLD 1792-1855

Surveyor General of New South Wales 1828-1855

Written by
William C. Foster
M.A. F.R.A.H.S.



Published by
The Institution of Surveyors N.S.W. Inc.
363 Pitt Street, Sydney

A MAJOR PUBLISHING EVENT

This is a big book: Size 245cm x 170cm, over 600 pages,
30 illustrations and with maps annotated showing
Mitchell's expeditions. SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED.

ORDER NOW

To: Institution of Surveyors N.S.W. Inc. 363 Pitt St., Sydney 2000

The Author: Educated at Sydney Boys High School, The University of Sydney and Sydney Teachers College, William Charles Foster graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Diploma of Modern Languages in 1924. In 1929 he was awarded the Degree of Master of Arts. His career embraced education, textbook writing and historical research. He served for 24 years on the Council of the Royal Australian Historical Society, became a Vice President and had a Fellowship conferred on him in 1965. He died in 1980.

FROG HOLLOW. ROCKDALE 70 YEARS AGO.

- Reprint from St. George
Historical Society
Bulletin - June 1963.

Reprinted from the "Rockdale Times" of April 17, 1947.

This account of the early history of Rockdale deals with the period over 70 years ago, when a fine orchard flourished where the Town Hall now rears its proportions; from the Grand Hotel to Bay Street was called "Frog Hollow", and the oldest blackfellow at Sans Souci was named Jimmy Lownes.

Our historian, Mr Joseph Bowmer, is 89 years of age, but has a memory like that of a schoolboy. He is not so old, except in years -- his mental outlook is surprisingly modern. He says:

" I will start at Wickham Street, Arncliffe, near the Public School, which is on the Terry Estate. On the southern side of what is now called Princes Highway (late Rocky Point Road), stretched the Terry Estate, except for Mrs Vincent's property at the corner of Spring Street and Rocky Point Road. Opposite Vincents live the large Lawrence family, their land finishing at the Free Church. Next was Mr Lauson's orchard. Mr Iliffe had a large nursery, followed (as we pass to Rockdale), by Frank's beautiful orchard, where the present Town Hall stands. Another orchard extended to the hotel site, and was owned and worked by Mr William Bray.

From Bray's Lane to Bay Street was called "Frog Hollow", as it nearly always was full of water and frogs, and eels used to be caught there.

A gentleman named Campbell owned from Chapel Lane to the old fire station; then came John Andrew's property. His wife had the first drapery shop here, while he conducted a denominational school next door.

From there to the stormwater channel was Mr Sam Schofield's - an orchard and vegetable garden extending as far as the present-day Ashton Street. His brother had an orchard and garden to Beach Street; and a Mr Podmore owned from this point to the site of the Moorefield racecourse."

Mr Bowmer then gives us details of the properties on the western side of Rocky Point Road.

"The hotel at Arncliffe was kept by a Mrs Clune, and had a large area of land attached. Sheath's land came next, and the next again extended to where Rickett & Thorp's factory is -- a vegetable garden belonging to Mr Touchell. On the adjoining property the first Rockdale shop was erected -- a general store run by Mr Moss, who had a vegetable garden around it, and looked after both personally.

Then came Soden's orchard; and Humphrey's property reached to the corner of Tramway Arcade and the main road. Here Rockdale's second general store was opened by Mr Yeoman Geeves, who also conducted the post office."

Continuing, Mr Bowmer says: "A Mr Waltz owned the next block as far as Napper's store; and the ambulance station site belonged to Mr Fred Barden. This gentleman owned a vegetable garden and slaughter-house here, and a butcher's shop at Cook's River. Then came Skidmore's land - he and his sons gardened, and also carted wood to the city. The bridge over the watercourse was known as "Skidmore's Bridge".

One of the pioneers, Mr James Beehag, owned from Rocky Point Road down Bay Street to what is now James Street, where the hospital stands, and his area took in the swamp land, now Draper's nursery. He had four boys and two girls and divided the property between them, reserving portion as a gift to the Methodist Church in Bay Street.

On the east side of West Botany Street, a Mr Warren had a large market garden, and the next again was Mr Chas. Napper's; then Wilson's garden; and at the rear of this Mr John Bowmer, Snr., till a market garden. From there on to Bestic Street belonged to Mr Foulks, who gave portion of the West Botany Methodist Church. Following this was Wilmot's, then Mr William Beehag's farm, while Mr James Beehag owned from Bay Street to March Street.

The other side of March Street was a bullock paddock owned by Mr McGuinness, who also conducted the hotel at Cooks River. The next settler was Mr Lankorn; then Mr Terry, as far as Spring Street; from here to Tabrett Street was William Beehag's; to Bestic Street, Mr Godfrey's; to Bryant Street, Mr Foulks' and from Bryant Street to Bay Street, Mr James Quirk. All were market gardens and orchards.

Rockdale Park is part of the old Quirk's Estate.

The only outlet from the beach was Bay Street. At Rocky Point Road end, a cliff of rocks blocked the way, so a track was used through private land. Mr Saywell cut through this cliff for his tram line.

The only private property on the beach was where the Brighton Hotel stands, and it was owned by Mr Hook, who had slaughter-houses at Marrickville, a slaughter-house where Sydenham Station now is; and butcheries in the city.

It was a great place for snakes, and there were ducks, snipe, plovers and curlews for the sportsman. A colony of flying-foxes lived here.

The largest tree in Rockdale was blackbutt, on Godfrey's property, known as Avenel Estate. It was 200' high. Mr Godfrey had it felled, used the top as firewood for his boiling-down works, and had the barrel blasted asunder with "black-jack" for posts and rails. A photo of the old stump may be seen at Mr F Beehag's office.

In these days there was no gas, and no laid-on water this side of Cooks River.

Black's camps existed at Blakehurst and Sans Souci. They were later moved to La Perouse. Jimmy Lownes was the oldest aborigine at Sans Souci, and the boys of the village used to enjoy visiting him."

Mr Joe Bowmer's father came to Australia from England in 1853. He was in the formation of West Botany Municipal District, and was elected alderman in 1875. He was Mayor for 1877, and the six years following. In 1885 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace. At the Wesleyan Church he was a frequent preacher. He had 10 children.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF ALEXANDER BRODIE SPARK.

- Reprint from the St. George
Historical Society
Bulletin - April 1963.

June 28th, 1836 - "Mary Stephens pointed out snow on the ground,
a thing I have never seen in the colony before".
(the first recorded fall of snow in the StGeorge area)

August 3rd, 1839 - Mr Spark recorded that he went out into his
spacious grounds and "played golf in the afternoon
with Mr Adam Wilson".

In 1837 Alexander Brodie Spark was having servant trouble at "Tempe". A servant named Pickering staged a one-man strike because Spark would not supply him with shoes. Furthermore, he aggravated the offence by using some choice language to his master. Punishment was swift and brutal - Mr Spark being a magistrate as well as a business tycoon. His diary contains this revealing entry...

"Pickering punished for abusing me before the gardener because I would not give him shoes and refusing work on this account... 50 lashes".

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2CH STORY - THE PHILOSOPHY OF 2CH.

- Courtesy of Nice & Easy
2CH 1170 Club Newsletter
July 1984.

On August 14th 1984, it will be 100 years since the birth, in Newcastle, N.S.W., of the founder of 2CH, Sir Frederick Stewart.

Sir Frederick was one a family of 12, and had but brief schooling. At the age of 14 he entered the service of the New South Wales railways, and was to remain there for 20 years before resigning to apply his quick intelligence and clear thinking to the world of business. That fabled era, the 1920's, had all but arrived.

Buses were a relatively rare and primitive form of transport in those days, but Sir Frederick reasoned that they had a very big future. So, he bought one, and before long that single bus had grown into a fleet of 90: The Metropolitan Omnibus Company. It was Sydney's first, and for many years, its largest, fleet of such vehicles.

As a land sub-divider, Sir Frederick Stewart developed the Sydney suburbs of Chullora and Elanora. He operated a woollen mill, and built roads and highways with his own construction company. A model stud farm for Jersey cattle, which was to be widely acclaimed by the dairy industry, was merely one of Sir Frederick's varied and creative interests.

And all the time, Sir Frederick Stewart was demonstrating that classic social concern of the true Methodist. "Where can I help? - either with my money, my talent, or my time" could well have been a question Sir Frederick Stewart asked himself every day in his long and constructive career.

For 15 years, he was a member of Federal Parliament, winning the seat of Parramatta in 1931. Within months he had been given a cabinet post as Minister for Commerce. In successive ministries, Sir Frederick Stewart was Minister for Health and Social Services, Minister for External Affairs, and Minister for Supply. In 1935, (the year of his knighthood), Sir Frederick led the Australian delegation to the International Labour Conference in Geneva.

Although he had woven most of his enterprises into the tapestry of success, Sir Frederick Stewart nevertheless did know failure: the collapse of the first Australian National Airways. However, as a pioneer supporter of aviation, he never regretted the financial backing he

had given Kingsford-Smith and Ulm in their valiant but doomed venture.

The establishment of 2CH in 1932 on behalf of the Council of Churches in N.S.W. was financed solely by this man of superior ability, upright character, and widespread influence. That he enjoyed great affluence to the day of his death has never been disputed; that he looked upon his wealth as being held by him in stewardship to God, has never been in doubt.

At Sir Frederick's funeral service in Sydney's Wesley Chapel on July 3, 1961, a massive gathering, including vice-regal personages, business and church leaders, service chiefs and members of the Diplomatic Corps, head the Rev. Alan Walker say of the deceased:

"As a successful businessman, political leader, and Christian philanthropist, Sir Frederick Stewart has, in an almost bewildering way, influenced the life of this country.... He responded generously to human need when and where he found it, using his wealth with the same wisdom he applied in the gaining of it. He was a man of quick compassion. His family loyalty was steady. His wife and children were ever at the heart of his concern."

Perhaps, the founding of 2CH was merely one of many highlights in the life of Sir Frederick Stewart. But, Sir Frederick himself was surely a big highlight in the story of 2CH.

The Philosophy of 2CH...

On February 15, 1932, when 2CH first went to air, the philosophy of the station was clearly enunciated by the founder. It was - "to educate, to evangelise, and to edify".

That's a long time ago; and perhaps the role of any Australian commercial radio station to educate in the manner of a school teacher, is no longer applicable. Nevertheless, in addition to news bulletins, we at 2CH do try to be as informative as possible about events, circumstances and situations likely to affect, or be of interest to, our listeners. (And when we ask an on-air question, as all radio stations are fond of doing, we ensure it's a question requiring a fairly wide general knowledge to elicit the correct answer.)

At 2CH the vital Licence to Broadcast is held by the N.S.W. Council of Churches; so, the station evangelises; that is, it proclaims the Gospel.

And, as a corollary of that, 2CH will not broadcast any spoken material whatsoever that advocates or shows in a favourable light any activity the Council holds to be morally, materially or spiritually harmful to the community.

Do we still edify? To Christians, either practising or nominal, and to many others, the answer to that is surely implicit in the station's evangelism, as well as its on-air prohibitions.

But there's another 'e' that belongs here, even is Sir Frederick Stewart didn't mention it: and that's 'entertain'. 2CH takes pride in its high quality Easy Listening format, the professionalism of its staff, and thus on the high standard of its all-round entertainment.

To educate, or inform, to proclaim the gospel, to edify and to entertain; that's 2CH's Nice and Easy owned and operated by Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Limited, a company which has worked in harmony with the N.S.W. Council of Churches almost since the station's inception, in 1932.

1775 Remembered.

- Catherine Harper

- S.M.H. 6th August 1976.

The President of the rebellious Provincial Congress of Massachusetts declared that the area was threatened by the powerful army of the British. He warned the people of the province to prepare to defend themselves. Military supplies were stored in readiness at Concord, a village about 30 kilometres from Boston. The British military commander sent a detachment to destroy the supplies. About 700 redcoats were advancing ... Paul Revere and William Dawes, supporters of the American cause, rode into Lexington, a village 10 kilometres from Concord, to warn that the troops were on the march. (Revere became a folk hero for his patriotic action.)

The colonists prepared to face the army. When the British advance guard approached Lexington a group of 60 or 70 Massachusetts men met them. A shot was fired - each side was later to blame the other for beginning the hostilities - and the redcoats charged. Eight patriots were killed, 10 others wounded; one British soldier was hurt.

The American War of Independence had begun.

The British marched on to Concord and destroyed what supplies they could find. Hundred of patriots had gathered. Fighting broke out, and Concord became the site of the first battle of the War of Independence.

Among the British soldiers was a young Englishman who had joined the Army that year (1775) - 21 year old Francis Grose. Seventeen years later that English soldier found himself in a different settlement. By then a major in the Army, he was Lt.-Governor of the penal settlement of N.S.W., in charge after the departure of Governor Phillip.

In 1793 he made land grants "five allotments of 25 acres each and one of 30 acres", situated nearly midway between Sydney and Parramatta, to six non-commissioned officers of the N.S.W. Corps, Major Grose named the area "Concord".

In August '76, the Concord Historical Society held a celebration to mark, in the bicentenary year of American Independence, its connection with the first battle site of the War of Independence. The celebration was held at the Society's Museum, a building that has its own links with the history of what is now the Sydney suburb of Concord.

The Museum is in the grounds of the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, Rocky Point. It is one of the complex of hospital buildings designed by the famous architect Sir John Sulman.

Scottish-born Thomas Walker came to Australia at the age of 18 to work with his uncle's merchant firm, to which he and a cousin later succeeded.

When he was in his early 30s he went to look at the developing Port Phillip settlement and bought four blocks of land in Bourke Street for pounds 135 (\$270). He continued buying land in the Port Phillip District, and ended up with 12,700 acres of freehold land in developing Melbourne, for which he paid less than pounds 16,000 (\$32,000). He was soon one of the colony's richest men.

In the first part-elective N.S.W. Legislative Council, he was a Port Phillip representative.

In the late 1850s, Thomas Walker took over a property at Concord over which he had held a mortgage. It was known as Yaralla, and had been given to a former convict, Isaac Nichols in the form of two 50 acre grants. Thomas Walker had a mansion erected on the property. It was completed about 1864. About this time also, the bachelor millionaire married. He was nearly 60 when he married Jane Hart, almost 30 years his junior. They had one child, Eadith. The delicate Mrs Walker died when Eadith was only five.

Thomas Walker gave up many of his business interests, but kept up his involvement with the bank with which he was closely associated, the Bank of N.S.W. He was president of the bank from 1869 to 1886. His sister, Joanna Walker, came from Scotland to manage his household and help bring up Eadith.

Thomas Walker died when his daughter was 21 and left most of his vast fortune to her. However, one of his charitable bequests was provision of pounds 100,000 (\$200,000) for the building and maintenance of a convalescent hospital. Eadith provided an extra pounds 50,000 for the project and Sulman, the architect, was engaged to design it.

Miss Walker entertained lavishly at the mansion, Yaralla, that she inherited. Her noted visitors included the late Duke of Windsor. She also worked untiringly for the Red Cross, hospitals and charitable institutions giving both her time and money. She was created a Dame of the British Empire in 1928. She died a spinster, at the age of 72.

Her home, Yaralla, became the Dame Eadith Walker Convalescent Hospital for men. Across Yaralla Bay, part of the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital complex was a brick cottage built in the 1890s as the Joanna Walker Memorial Convalescent Children's Cottage Hospital. Named, of course, to honour Dame Eadith's aunt, it was used until the early 1950s. It is this historically connected building that houses the Concord Historical Museum. The Historical Society rescued it from the hands of vandals and restored it in 1972, furnishing historical period rooms and setting up displays of historical interest. The displays are a reminder that Concord, N.S.W., the namesake of historic Concord, Massachusetts, has notable past associations, too.
