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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.

MAY 1985.

Dear Friend and Member,

The May Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday, 17th May, 1985, at 8.00 p.m.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. Ralph Skelton will tell about "Yerranderie", an old Silver Mining Town in N.S.W. and will illustrate his talk with slides. I do hope you will enjoy this; something different.

Supper Roster: Captain: Miss Smallwood, together with Mrs. Nelson and Miss Gall.

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 Edtr.
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.

"The greatest obstacle to wisdom is to believe one is wise."

.... Anon.

"All the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of one small candle."

.... Anon.

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well, remembering
Mrs. Wright. 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.

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|--------|---|-------------------|
| No. 1. | "The Wollie 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.

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NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME.

* * * * *

SOCIAL.

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

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2NBC-FM STEREO 90.1 - St. George Historical Society

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

- Tape 110 - 4th June - Bridge Marks 50th Year - D Row
and Cocatoo Island.
- Tape 111 - 11th June - Surgeons of the 1st Fleet - M.D.Fleming
- Tape 112 - 18th June - Bexley (1895-1917) - D. Row
(Repeat by request).
- Tape 113 - 25th June - Persistence Rewarded - C Kennedy
(R.A.H.S)
- Tape 114 - 2nd July - The Aboriginal Tribes - D Row
of the Sydney Region,
Wood Carters of early
St. George & The Great
Australian Verandah.
- Tape 115 - 9th July - James Cook - C. Turner
Birth - Master.Prt.1.
- Tape 116 - 16th July - James Cook - Prt.2 - C. Turner
Master - Endeavour
1st voyage.
- Tape 117 - 23rd July - James Cook - Prt 3 - C. Turner
Endeavour 1st voyage -
Cook's Journal.
- Tape 118 - 30th July - James Cook - Prt 4 - C. Turner
Cook's Journal -
Nth West Passage.
- Tape 119 - 6th August - James Cook - Prt 5 - C. Turner
Nth.West Passage -
Cook's Death.
- Tape 120 - 13th August - Phillip - The Failure - D. Sinclair
Who Became Our 1st
Battler & Sydney as
it was.
- Tape 121 - 20th August - Old Kogarah Township - A. Ellis
(Repeat by request).
- Tape 122 - 27th August - Turner Bros. Kogarah - D. Sinclair
(Repeat by request).

THE TOWERS OF SYDNEY - Sydney Town Hall
 - Clock Tower, Central Station
 - Lands Building Tower.

- John Haskell
Sydney Morning Herald
 17th June 1980.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution 19th century society was radically altered and Australian cities, like most of Western Europe and North America, witnessed a host of new and changed institutions, ranging from railways and factories to the post office, police, banks and all levels of government.

These required buildings, plenty of them, and with wealth derived chiefly from industry and commerce money was lavished on structures whose magnificence would proclaim to all, rich and wretched alike, the new found civic splendour and progress of their city. "Where there's muck there's brass" and from the mid-19th century onwards town halls, opera houses, art galleries and railway stations vied to out-do each other, often incorporating a tower or some other vertical feature to assert their importance.

It is said there is little true originality in architecture, that architects are merely plagiarists, skilfully adapting past achievements of others to solve their own problems. However this may be, such skill was certainly needed by Victorian architects, as they confronted the vast range of new building types for which no past prototypes existed.

Their skill in applying the architectural styles of cathedrals to railway stations or of palaces to post offices, was matched only by their alacrity in combining several sources in one building.

Take the Sydney Town Hall for instance, erected between 1868 and 1888, whose clock tower is so successful a feature in the streetscape of central Sydney. The building is a melange of the French Baroque (Vaux-le-Vicomte and the Mansart-type roofs) with a front derived from Wren's St. Paul's, its tower also borrowing from Wren, but capped with fashionably elongated cupola of the Victorian period.

James Barnet, for 25 years the NSW Colonial Architect, designed three of Sydney's finest towers, on the Lands Building in Macquarie Place, the Post Office in North Sydney and the GPO in Martin Place, all done between 1875 and 1890.

English Palladianism and the work of Wren, acknowledged to be England's greatest architect, were the sources Barnet drew upon for inspiration.

His Lands Building clock tower shows his debt to Wren, with a delightful Regency flourish in the onion dome. One hopes future redevelopment nearby will not impair its continued visibility, especially important from Circular Quay.

TRUST REPORT ON WOOLLOOMOOLOO -

- *National Trust Bulletin*
- No.72 - April 1976.

The harbourside district of Woolloomooloo, only 2 km from the centre of Sydney, takes its name from one of the first permanent residences built in New South Wales.

This was Woolloomooloo Farm, the house of John ("Little Jack") Palmer, who arrived at Sydney Cove with the First Fleet in 1788 as purser on Governor Phillip's flagship 'Sirius'.

Palmer, who was later appointed commissar of the colony, developed an extensive orchard on a 100 acre land grant received in 1793 from Lieut. Governor Grosse at the head of Garden Island Cove, & thus became the first settler in the natural basin now bordered by the cliffs of Potts Point, William Street & the grassy slopes of the Domain.

Since then, Woolloomooloo has accommodated a variety of activities. Although Governor Macquarie declared much of the district an aboriginal reservation, the 1850's saw the establishment of small houses, the first Plunkett Street School.

The bay was made into a deep water port in 1866, & by the 1880's the area had become the haunt of notorious "pushes". In 1901 the bay was remodelled to accommodate ocean-going liners & this district beyond, much of it reclaimed land, carried hotels & housed seamen, working people & commercial activity associated with the port.

Woolloomooloo today consists mainly of low-rise 19th Century terrace houses with scattered small-scale commercial buildings. From the harbour, it repeats the historic qualities of The Rocks.

The area is now the subject of intensive urban planning, following an agreement reached last year by three levels of government - the Council of the City of Sydney, the New South Wales Government & the Federal Government - that residential use should predominate in the district's redevelopment.

In response to requests from planners, the Trust has prepared a conservation report for this historic area. All the detailed Provisions within the report were adopted by the Trust Council at its last meeting.

Woolloomooloo has been defined by the Trust as a Conservation Area, & placed on the Recorded list in the Trust Register. This means the Trust considers Woolloomooloo has a special character which contributes to the heritage of Australia & the preservation of that character is encouraged.

The boundary of the Conservation Area follows Sir John Young Crescent

& Lincoln Crescentm Cowper Wharf Road, Brougham Street to No. 30A, the back alignment of Broughman Street properties to Broughman Lane & along the series of lanes running behind William St to Boomerang St., Haig Avenue & Sylvia Chase Square.

Within the Conservation Area the Trust had identified 6 groups of buildings (containing more than 80 individual buildings) which it considers essential to Australia's heritage & must be conserved. These groups have been placed on the Classified list.

The 6 groups are:

- . Cathedral/Forbes Street (168-172 & 174 Cathedral St., 102-134 Forbes St.);
- . Cathedral/Judge St., (176 Cathedral St., 11-31 Judge St);
- . Cathedral/Riley St., (84-104 & 108-118 Cathedral St., 2-8 Riley St.);
- . Dowling St., (126-128a & 132-154 Dowling St);
- . Merryfield Hotel Group (2-8 Sir John Young Crescent);
- . Bossley Terrace (2-34 Crown St.)

Also Classified are the remains of a convict-built sandstone garden wall near Riley St., between Busby Lane & Sir John Young Crescent, & Hills Stairs, Sydney Place.

In addition, 16 groups of buildings & several individual buildings have been given Recorded listing, & many more buildings have been mentioned in the report for their townscape significance.

The report recommends that any new development, as well as being sympathetic in style to the noteworthy existing buildings, should emphasise & enhance existing views to the Domain, the Cathedral, the city skyline, the harbour & its facilities & the cliff face between Broughman St. & Victoria St. The proposed alignment of the Eastern Expressway would cause further serious dislocation to the Conservation Area. Its alignment would require the demolition of 10 Recorded buildings, 15 townscape significance, 17 of townscape potential & some 30 trees.

MAKING AMENDS TO TRUGANINI -

- *Sydney Morning Herald*
8th May 1976.

- *Brian Turner.*

On this day 100 years ago (8th May 1876), Truganini, the last of the full-blooded Tasmanian Aboriginies, died in Hobart.

As a girl she had been kidnapped and raped by whites; her husband-to-be had his hands chopped off and was drowned; her sister was kidnapped; her uncle shot by soldiers and her mother bayoneted. Finally, she was banished with her people to a lonely island in Bass Strait.

Her dying wish was that she be left undisturbed after her death and her bones not be used as anatomical specimens. In character with the treatment of her race, this was not granted and for the past 90 years, 43 of which they were on public display, her bones have been stored in the Tasmanian Museum.

But today in a simple ceremony conducted by Aboriginal rights workers and attended by her sole surviving descendent, her cremated ashes will be spread upon the waters of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Though cremation was never a tradition with the Tasmanians, the organisers feel that this is the only sure way to prevent her remains from being souvenired once again for science or curiosity.

The distinction of having conducted the world's most successful genocide is borne with more indifference than shame by most Australians. At school I recall the most lurid details of the brutality of the Spanish in their conquest of Mexico and Peru, but the fate of the 4,000 Tasmanians was dismissed in a few lines about the "Black War".

Perhaps one cynical reason that the enormity of the crime has been reduced, though of course never excused, is that genocide on a far greater scale was practised on the Australian mainland. For example, the ancestors of the blue-blooded graziers of the western districts of Victoria killed an estimated 11,000 Aborigines in nine years, although they did not succeed in exterminating the race.

Apart from Cook, the earliest encounters with the Tasmanians were by the French navigators. True sons of the age of enlightenment their artists made some charming sketches of the Tasmanians, and their accounts, though sometimes exaggerated in a Rousseauesque fashion, show that on first contact they were prepared to be friendly. The French observed that the Aborigines were of a different race from those on the mainland. They hunted with untipped spears hardened in the fire and straightened with their teeth, and did not know either the woomerah or the boomerang.

When Britain planted a penal colony in Tasmania to warn off any unlikely French plans for settlement, they were faced with a desperate food shortage, and armed convicts were allowed into the bush to hunt kangaroos and fend for themselves. Many were later "indisposed to return and submit to the authority of the government," and lived as bushrangers. Other convicts were put in charge of free settlers' flocks and lived in huts in remote parts of the bush. These brutalised men attacked the tribes to abduct the women. Organised manhunts, rape and child-stealing soon became the sport and pastime of the black-blocks.

The Aborigines retaliated and speared the stockmen, and began attacking the homesteads in more closely settled areas. Even allowing for the brutality of that period, the settlers reacted with a savage pitilessness: children had their brains dashed out, the women and aged were bayoneted, the men shot on sight. It is said that their bodies were used as dog's meat.

"The wounded were brained, the infant cast into the flames, the musket driven into the quivering flesh; the social fire around which the natives gathered to slumber became, before morning their funeral pyre."

The Government issued many pious proclamations deploring the murderous excesses of the settlers, but did nothing to moderate them. Probably the most flamboyantly stupid document in British colonial history was Lt. Governor Arthur's proclamation of April 15, 1828, when he ordered all Aborigines to "retire and depart from, and for no reason ... to re-enter, such settled districts, or any portions of land cultivated and occupied by any person whomsoever, under the authority of His Majesty's Government, on pain of forceable expulsion therefrom."

On their annual migrations to the coast, however, the tribal chiefs could obtain "a general passport, under my hand and seal." How this was to be communicated to the desperate blacks, let alone how they should apply for their passports, was not explained. The historian Clive Turnbull, ascribes its authorship to the deranged mind of the Attorney-General, who later had to be removed from office.

Endorsement came from the pulpit of the Rev. Thomas Atkins, who wrote in 1836: "Indeed they have not complied with the conditions on which 'the Lord of the whole Earth' granted to the first progenitors of our race this habitable world. 'For God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth and subdue it.'"

But Mr Atkins overlooked the divine improvidence in not endowing Tasmania with a grain that could be cultivated or animals that could be domesticated or harnessed to a plough, so the Tasmanians lived for thousands of years gathering berries and shellfish and hunting the kangaroo.

Since the Aborigines were more organised and successful in their assaults, martial law was imposed on November 1, 1828 and the extermination was begun in earnest.

In an exhaustively researched thesis, as yet unpublished, by Miss Lyndall Ryan of Canberra, she records the very effective resistance by the Aborigines, and documents 181 Europeans killed by them, and a ratio of four Aborigines killed for every white.

This contrasts sharply with the estimated 10 blacks killed for every white in their conflicts on the Australian mainland. In fact, when compared with the victims of any colonial war, old or modern, the Tasmanians seem to have given a very good account of themselves. A measure of their success may be gauged from accounts of the chiefs wearing redcoats' tunics during their attacks and brandishing captured muskets, which they never seem to have used but regarded as trophies.

In October, 1830, the Black Line commenced its operations. Though there were some complaints about the noise of musket practice on the Sabbath, most of the population was enthusiastic and a ragged line of 2,000 armed soldiers, settlers and convicts tried to drive the Aborigines into a pocket on the island, in the same way that Tasmanians have wallaby drives today. The natives easily slipped through the lines and when the net closed two natives were shot, two were captured and several soldiers were accidentally killed. The cost of the operation was pounds 35,000.0.0.

But we must judge the settlers by the morals and standards of their own time, not by ours, such as our own are. In a penal colony whose main business was punishment, life was held very cheaply. Murder among the convicts was common, and among starving escapees cannibalism was practised. In Hobart in 1825, at one sitting of the Supreme Court, 25 people were sentenced to the gallows. Aboriginal vengeance was indiscriminate, and exasperated the settlers. Homesteads of settlers who have never harmed them were attacked, and, while the settler pursued a group that suddenly retreated, another group rushed into the homestead to murder his wife and children, and the enraged and anguished white man became another implacably cruel foe of the blacks. The Aborigines never realised the might of the whites, or recognised their new friends, such as Captain Thomas, who always approached them unarmed in trying to befriend them. His body was found impaled with 10 spears.

After the Black Line the few hundred survivors began to understand the power and numbers of the 20,000 whites and in their terror and despair began to surrender to the government "conciliator". Professor Manning Clark refers to him as "that great booby, that fool in Christ, George Augustus Robinson." A Christian lay preacher of great personal courage, but of deluded vision, he learnt the Aborigines' language and, alone and unarmed, in the bush, he persuaded the survivors to surrender. He also readily agreed to their banishment where he would instil "Christian civilisation and happiness."

In April 1831, the first exiles were sent to tiny Gun Carriage Island,

one mile long by half a mile wide, and washed by the cold unfriendly seas of Bass Strait. The Tasmanians sat listlessly on the beach there, gazing tearfully at the distant mountains of their homeland.

They were later moved to the larger Flinders Island, where the abysmally stupid Robinson forced them into ridiculous and unhealthy European clothes. He forbade their corroborees, and tried to teach them to read so they could understand the literal truth of the Bible. His assistant, the catechist Clark, in between flogging the girls "in religious anger at their moral offences," taught the pleasures of hymn-singing and church-going.

In this exiled misery they quickly died off. IN October, 1847, the 44 dispirited survivors were allowed to return to Tasmania, where they were given the ruins of a jail to reside in.

When Clive Turnbull wrote his epic, The Black War, in 1948, there were still elderly white Tasmanians who remembered Truganini, alive, alert and dignified. Her mortal fear was that her remains would meet the same fate as those of William Laney, the last male survivor of his race.

The day after his funeral, his grave was robbed and his body hacked up by the robbers. This gesture was intended as a pious admonishment, and no white man was punished for it.

100 years of Greenwich Mean Time...

- The Sydney Morning Herald
27th June 1984.

London: Tuesday (26th June 1984) -

Greenwich Mean Time, which has ruled the world's clocks since 1884, when the international community adopted it at a conference in Washington, celebrates its 100th anniversary, to-day.

The guardians of Greenwich Mean Time moved out of the London suburb years ago, leaving behind an observatory, some ancient astronomical instruments and a brass strip set in the paving, marking the passage of longitude zero, the meridian from which the world measures its time zones.

The observatory of John Flamsteed, the genius of 17th century astronomy, has become a museum and a shrine.

The six beeps broadcast by the BBC to radio sets throughout the world are still the most reliable for setting one's watch, whether it is midnight in Moscow or daybreak in Hawaii.

In the 17th century, navigators had established latitudes but had failed to work out the longitudes which would give them a cross-reference for charting their course. So in 1675 King Charles II ordered an observatory built and charged Flamsteed with finding "the much desired longitude of places, for the perfecting (of) the art of navigation". Flamsteed died in poverty, but he laid the foundation for achieving the king's objective.

But even after the longitudes were established, chaos persisted as each major seafaring nation followed its own meridian. The men of Greenwich devised a contraption whereby a large ball was raised on a pole at five minutes to 1 pm each day and dropped on the stroke of one, thus signaling the exact time to the watching Thames navigators.

Only in the mid-19th century, when British Railways decreed a uniform timetable on all its routes, did Britain adopt a standard time.

- Associated Press.