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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.
June 1985.

Dear Friend and Member,

The June Meeting will be held as follows:-

Date: Friday, June 21st, 1985.

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

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. Ken Luker, an authority on 'Cannons', will speak of the 'Cannon Highlights Around Sydney'. We have all probably seen the old Cannons at Brighton le Sands, also around the Sans Souci and Rocky Point area. It will be very interesting to hear something of their history.

Supper Roster: Miss Callister, Captain, together with Mesdames Preddy and Teychenne.

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

We want one or two companions of intelligence, probity, and grace, to wear out life with; persons by whom we can measure ourselves, and who shall hold us fast to good sense and virtue.

.... Emerson.

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well. 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 has been arranged by Miss Row. Your support will be appreciated.

Date: Saturday, June 29th, 1985.

Time: 9.00 a.m.

Meeting Place: Railway St., Rockdale (Western side of Station)

Cost: \$5.00 per person.

Further details from Dorothy Phone 50 9300.

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).

BREATHING SPACE - 1.

- Joseph Glascott
- Environment Writer
- Sydney Morning Herald
- Wed., January 26th 1977.

The development of pedestrian plazas, squares and precincts in the 1970s has made Sydney one of the world's smartest and most attractive cities.

The new tower buildings which have transformed the City's skyline in the past decade are often criticised because they have meant the demolition of old Georgian streetscapes.

But at ground level, the towers have given back in return some very elegant shopping plazas and concourses.

Some examples beginning with the early Australia Square are the M.L.C development, Martin Place, Centrepont, Pitt Street; the A.M.P tower, Bridge Street and the King George tower, King Street.

However, the pedestrian plazas and squares which have been most charmingly provided for the people have been the work in the main of the City Council.

One of the newest of these, at Macquarie Place, was completed this week, and will have its first official use today for the City of Sydney's Australia Day celebration.

A series of weekly articles and sketches beginning today describes these new breathing spaces of Sydney.

MACQUARIE PLACE - an oasis full of history.

Macquarie Place Park has been a green oasis in Bridge Street from the beginnings of Sydney town. In recent weeks it has been given a new life as a gracious pedestrian precinct.

Macquarie Place, the charming little street which cuts the corner from Bridge to Loftus Streets, has been closed to traffic. It has been brick paved, lined with flower boxes and lit by a row of six early Sydney street lamps. The lamps are faithful reproductions of the city's first gas lights. They stand in Macquarie Place so perfectly that one can almost hear the clip clop of a horse and coach approaching over the cobbled street to the entrance of the Georgian Customs House Hotel which faces the park.

Macquarie Place is sheltered by the wide-spreading branches of two enormous Moreton Bay fig trees, while two large plane trees protect the Loftus Street entrance. On the bank of lawn in the park, a lone palm tree

sways its head, lending a hint of the South Pacific to the summer scene.

Macquarie Place is a popular lunch-hour haven for the government office workers along Bridge Street. But it is a fascinating place to visit at any time of the day.

Near the large statue of the commercial pioneer, Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, a historic plaque records that Governor Phillip's garden was near this site. On January 30, 1788, vines and fruit trees were planted there to establish the settlement's first domestic garden.

History abounds in this small precinct.

From the stone obelisk erected by Governor Macquarie beside Loftus Street in 1818, *"all the public roads leading into the interior of the colony"* are measured. Did you know that it is 7 miles from Macquarie Place to Macquarie tower at the South Head and 14 miles to the North Head of Botany Bay?

Under the great fig tree lies the iron and timber anchor of HMS Sirius, the ship which convoyed the first fleet to Sydney Cove and was wrecked at Norfolk Island in 1790.

You should certainly stand awhile beside Sydney's smallest but most delightful fountain - the Hague-Smith fountain by Gerald Lewers.

The annual Australia Day ceremony will be held in the renewed Macquarie Place park beginning at noon today. The Royal Australian Navy band (East Australia area) and a RAN detachment will play and stand guard during the ceremony during which the Jack of Queen Anne, the British flag flown until 1801, when the cross of St. Patrick was added, will be raised.

The ceremony will mark the opening of the reshaped Macquarie Place park, which it is hoped will become the permanent venue for Australia Day functions. The Prime Minister, Mr Fraser and the Lord Mayor, Alderman Port, will be present.

BREATHING SPACE - 2.

- 2nd February 1977.
- Sydney Morning Herald
- Joseph Glascott.

RICHARD JOHNSON SQUARE.

A Place for rest and inspiration.

On fine days a thin band of sunlight drops through the Hunter Street canyon and cuts across the corner of Richard Johnson Square. This small pedestrian precinct on the corner of Hunter and Castlereagh Streets provides a ray of hope for people amid the overbearing insurance office towers.

Richard Johnson Square provides inspiration in another direction because it commemorates the site of Sydney's first church and is named after its first pastor. A stone monument beside Castlereagh Street records that the first church in Australia was built there and opened on August 25, 1793, but was burn down in October, 1798.

It also commemorates Australia's first Christian service "*To the Glory of God and in commemoration of the first Christian service held in Australia, February 3, 1788,*" reads the inscription.

The Rev Richard Johnson was the preacher and his text was "*What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me,*" Psa.CXVI,12. Until recently the Richard Johnson memorial stood on a traffic island. Now, the short road from Hunter to Bligh Streets has been closed to traffic and paved with bricks.

Steps, flower boxes and an elaborate lamp-post and sign attract a constant flow of visitors. They come, many of them, out of offices in the new buildings which have entirely changed the character of Bligh Street.

Richard Johnson Square is a place to remember old Sydney and watch the city crowds bustle down the Hunter Street hill to Wynyard.

MARTIN PLACE - A Crowning Achievement. No.3. - 9th February 1977

Martin Place is the queen of Sydney streets.

Bedecked in the brilliant greenery of its poplar trees, the spectacular waterfall of the Lloyd Rees fountain and the gay circus waggons of its flower sellers, Martin Place is the answer to those who derided the idea of plazas.

The thousands of people who daily stroll its length or rest in the shade of its trees testify to its popularity. It is one of the joys of Sydney to find this colourful quarter at its heart.

The plaza has given to Sydney an exciting central pulse, comparable to New York's Rockefeller Plaza, where the ice skaters parade in winter, and London's Trafalgar Square, where the pigeons flock all year.

Martin Place (the City Council has decreed Place rather than Plaza) gained its poplar trees between George and Pitt Streets back in the early 1960s. It was not until September 1971, that this section was closed to traffic and turned into a pedestrian walk.

Martin Place has developed since then from a dull and austere street of banking chambers into its full glory this last Christmas season when it was crowned with its magnificent fountain near Pitt Street.

Christmas Eve in Martin Place was a night to remember.

Family groups thronged the plaza, children stared in awe at the tall Christmas tree and its lights and found Santa Claus there to greet them. Up the hill the flashing waterfall, a church choir sang Christmas carols in the amphitheatre.

But when you visit Martin Place don't neglect the buildings adjoining the plaza.

Pay your respect to Queen Victoria, benignly overlooking the scene from her perch above the post office entrance, and count the gargoyles around the grand colonnade.

Admire the gleaming brass doors and elaborate rolled iron-barred windows of the ANZ Bank on the corner of George Street. Step inside to feel the atmosphere of an old-world banking chamber of shining brass pillars and timber desks.

Take pleasure in the great stone facade of the Colonial Mutual Life building on the Pitt Street corner. Its baronial arches lead to a shining new skyscraper block sheathed in its old walls.

Sydney this summer has never looked more beautiful and Martin Place is the jewel on her throat.

SYDNEY SQUARE - A Square of Revelation.No.4 - 16th February 1977.

The big old jacaranda tree outside the northern doors of St. Andrew's Cathedral obviously has been there for many a year. But only regular visitors to the cathedral grounds saw and appreciated it until recently.. The tree was hidden from George Street in the jumble of yards, buildings and parking lots which separated the cathedral from Sydney Town Hall. Now the jacaranda is on show in all its glory to the people of Sydney.

It is one of the features of Sydney Square - the wide, expansive plaza developed through the co-operation of church and city hall. The building of the square has brought much more out of hiding than the jacaranda tree.

The northern walls and western doors of St. Andrew's so long buried from view have appeared clothed in stone all warm and mellow with age. Even the southern side of the Town Hall was hiding a little-known gem. Stripped of rubbishy surrounds, the southern steps and landing dating from 1888 are revealed as a classic structure. They rise from the plaza concourse as though built specially to stage Shakespeare or for a Roman emperor to harangue his subjects.

Sydney Square is distinctive in that it presents vast open spaces sweeping away behind the Cathedral on one side and the Town Hall on the other.

On the Kent Street frontage, the new St. Andrew's House and the City Council's administrative lower block form modern backdrops to the old buildings on George Street.

Much as one is tempted to criticise this mixture, it must be admitted that the new buildings do not detract from the Cathedral and Town Hall. Indeed, it could be said that they enhance them.

Sydney Square has been dressed with young plane trees to complement the old plane trees in front of St. Andrew's. A spectacular wall fountain on the lower level sends the sounds of gushing water to the plaza above. The lower level will soon be busy with shoppers and the shopping concourse is occupied. But already the new square with entrances leading to Town Hall railway station is a popular meeting place and a busy lunch-hour spot in the sun. At all times of the day it attracts people. In mid-afternoon this week, two elderly gentlemen were seated engaged in animated discussion, young lovers sat close locking arms above the fountain and a group of Asian tourists stopped to give their legs and cameras a rest.

And what is that metal post near George Street encribed Brisbane ward and dated 1842? Another relic exposed in the Town Hall grounds. No. This is an early council ward boundary marker found in the council stores and re-erected in the square as a curio for people like me to ask questions about.

Visitors should also know that in parts of Sydney Square they are walking over hallowed ground. During excavation of the site in 1974, a bulldozer caved in an old stone vault containing a wooden coffin. The remains of three other vaults and coffins were found by Sydney University archeology students. The Archeology Society says the vaults must be the oldest examples of Australian colonial architecture left in the city of Sydney and certainly were the oldest official burying ground in Sydney.

But it was a long time ago. There is no need to tread softly in Sydney Square.

BREATHING SPACE - No.5.

- 23rd February 1977

PLAZA AT WYNYARD - Unnamed Square a Fitting Tribute -

Sydney's newest pedestrian square appeared at the end of the year in Wynyard Street in the heart of the City. The closure of the street between Carrington and George Streets has provided a small, but exquisitely designed precinct. This small square carries on to Wynyard Station the pedestrian freeway concept beginning with its big sister, Martin Place, across the street.

The Wynyard Street precinct is also a memorial to the Royal Australian Regiment.

The western wall carries a striking brass sculpture of RAR soldiers fighting in the wars from Korea in 1950 to Vietnam in 1972. The foot of one wall figure plunges into a lily pond in the foreground. The memorial sculptured by Dennis Adams, is one of the most effective of its type in the City.

This square was built with the help of financial contributions from the two banks on either side of Wynyard Street. Plaques in the garden boxes tell us that the Bank of New Zealand gave part of the cost to commemorate its first 100 years in Sydney.

The Bank of NSW which has been closely associated with the area since 1853 also gave part of the cost. The bank erected its first head office on the corner of George and Wynyard streets in 1853 and rebuilt there between 1927-32.

This square is so new that it does not yet have an official name. But at the suggestion of the RAR, the City Council has proposed to the Geographic Names Board, of N.S.W., that it be called Regimental Square.

FARRAR PLACE - No.6.

- 2nd March 1977.

Morocco Calls From Here.

Between the tangle of streets which thread the hillside from Bent Street to Circular Quay, there is a small island of palm trees. Farrar Place and its palms have always suggested Morocco to me.

The yellow granite walls of the Agriculture Department in the background become the walls around a mysterious Casbah. In recent weeks the Farrar Place island has sprouted more trees. Almost overnight it has become a veritable forest of palms. The City Council landscape architects who are creating a new pedestrian precinct at Farrar Place have accentuated the palm tree theme. To the 4 tall slender palms (3 big Washingtonians and a Phoenix) they have added a further 10.

The new trees, a mixture of Washingtonians, Phoenix and Kentia, have been transplanted already well grown to provide an instant setting.

Until recent years, Bligh Street curved with courtly grace into Bent Street opposite the entrance to the old Metropole Hotel.

The hotel's lounge, the mecca of graziers and jackaroos down from the country, overlooked Farrar Place and its palm trees. Now the island is squeezed beside the barish bulk of the Caga centre tower and its neighbouring blocks.

But if you need respite from the street canyons and wish to listen to the winds blowing on to the coast of North Africa, sit awhile under the palm trees of Farrar Place.

RAILWAY SQUARE - No.7.

Surprise Tonic for City Travellers - 17th March 1977.

Railway Square is a gateway to the city. Road travellers pass through it from the west and train travellers see it first from Central Station.

But until a couple of years ago, the square was one of the seediest, untidiest areas of the City. An island in the square housed a service station, a fish and chips shop with pinball machines and a hamburger stall. Around this unedifying jumble of take-away food counters, noisy buses belched diesel fumes.

The concentration of traffic pouring through Railway Square night and day makes it a difficult case for treatment.

However, City Council landscapers have removed the food stalls and service station and have created a simple and pleasant pedestrian precinct where once there was chaos.

Work on the precinct was completed at the end of last year and followed regeneration of the square in 1975 with its \$2 million pedestrian subway and modern bus station.

The centre of Railway Square, overlooked by advertising hoardings and surrounded by noisy buses and cars with an odd train clacking underneath to Darling Harbour, hardly appeals as a restful pedestrian plaza.

Nevertheless, with brick walls, flower boxes and the ever faithful plane trees, the architects have developed a small garden court.

In the centre of this paved area is the square's centrepiece - an historic, cast-iron drinking fountain with a canopy of iron lace.

The fountain is one of four erected in 1860 to mark the supply of water to the city from the old Botany swamps still remaining. It was dismantled and taken from its site near the old former wooden tram sheds in July, 1973.

Later it was resurrected from the council stores with the help of the Herald's Column 8, repaired and relocated in the new square.

The brick paving of the Railway Square pedestrian court has been carried over to the northern end of the square where the same theme has been used in traffic islands and in a widened section of Quay Street.

It's hard to believe, but the garden court has made Railway Square a welcoming Gateway to Sydney.
