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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



PRICE 5 c.

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Registered by Australia
Post N.B.H. 0335

563a Princes Highway,
BLAKEHURST 2221

August, 1985

Dear Friend and Member,

The August Meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, 16th August, 1985 at 8.00 p.m.

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

Business: General

Syllabus Item: Mr. Clyde will take us back to "Cronulla in the Twenties"
This should be a nostalgic and most interesting item

Supper Roster: Captain: Mrs Robb together with Mesdames Robinson and Ronson

LADIES PLEASE BRING A PLATE

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and
Research Officer

Phone: 587 1159

Mrs E. Wright,
Treasurer

Phone: 599 4884

Miss D. Row,
Asst. Treasurer

Mrs B. Perkins,
Publicity Officer

Phone: 587 9164

Social Secretary
A VOLUNTEER PLEASE!

Mrs K. Hamey,
Secretary

Phone: 546 3355

Mrs E. Eardley,
Asst. Secretary &
Bulletin Editor

Phone: 59 8078

"There comes a time in life when one must let it flow over one. The tide is coming in, the waves gently touch one and one knows that it is only a matter of time before one will be submerged."

Chinese Proverb

"We can live without a brother but not without a friend."

German Proverb

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well. Our best wishes to all 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")	Plus
No. 6.	"All Stations to Como")	Postage
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", will be available soon.	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.

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SPECIAL NOTICESixth Annual Waldron McCarthy Memorial Lecture

A cordial invitation is extended to Members to attend this lecture.

Speaker: Dr. Peter Orlovich

Subject: Carruthers, Cook and Kurnell.

Venue: Kanyana Room, Civic Centre, MacMahon Street, Hurstville.

Time: Saturday, 17th August, 1985 at 2.00 p.m.

Peter Orlovich is well known to many from his association with the R.A.H.S. as Research Officer. Peter is also a long standing Member of our Society. He is presently Chairman of the Botany Bay Historic Sites Advisory Committee which covers Kurnell, Bare Island and La Perouse.

Please go along, you will enjoy this lecture.

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ANNUAL CIVIC CHURCH SERVICE

This Service will be held in the Rockdale Town Hall on Sunday, 18th August, 1985 at 7.00 p.m. The Guest Speaker will be Miss Freda Whitlam, formerly Headmistress of Presbyterian Ladies' College, Croydon and Moderator-Elect of the Uniting Church in Australia, New South Wales Synod. Choirs of combined Churches and the Salvation Army Band will be in attendance.

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

- Tape 123 - 3rd September - The Fitzgerald - A. Ellis
Family
(Repeat by request)
- Tape 124 - 10th September - The Kogarah to Sans - D. Sinclair
Souci Tramway.
- Tape 125 - 17th September - The St. George - D. Sinclair
Hospital.
(Repeat by request)
- Tape 126 - 24th September - A Brief History of the - A. Ellis
Carss Family & of Carss
Bush Estate.
(Repeat by request).
- Tape 127 - 1st October - Arthur Phillip - Prt 1 - M.D.Fleming
Destiny Calling - 1787.
- Tape 128 - 8th October - Arthur Phillip - Prt 2 - M.D.Fleming
1787 - Work Starts.
- Tape 129 - 15th October - Arthur Phillip - Prt 3 - M.D.Fleming
Surgeons Busy -
Explorations.
- Tape 130 - 22nd October - Arthur Phillip - Prt 4 - M.D.Fleming
Explorations -
Bennelong & Colbee.
- Tape 131 - 29th October - Arthur Phillip - Prt 5 - M.D.Fleming
1790 - his death
1814.
-

President's Report. 1984-85.

19.07.85.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It seems much less than 12 months since I was elected to the Presidency of our Society. I again thank you for the confidence given.

An alteration in my employment arrangements coupled with my studies connected therewith has made it impossible particularly in terms of available time to continue in my position. It has not been a year I will forget.

The Society has experienced a most successful year and I have been pleased to note the addition of several new members. Unfortunately several of our Society friends have passed away and we as individuals as well as Society members have felt the loss.

The year now commencing will see a number of changes in our Society and I am appreciative of the opportunity to extend on your behalf sincere thanks to Mrs Wright for her dedication in the office of Treasurer. To Mrs Eardley for her unflagging efforts in performing the duties of Secretary, the arranging of the guest speakers and the preparation of the monthly bulletins. Mrs Wright and Mrs Eardley will not be standing for re-election this year. Both these ladies have given of themselves and more for the Society over a lengthy period. A vote of thanks seems inadequate.

Mrs Thompson and Mrs Perkins also should receive our thanks for their efforts constantly throughout the year.

Miss Row arranged a number of extremely pleasant successful trips during the year. This is a most onerous task and I compliment her on her successes. Unfortunately Miss Row finds the demands on her time are such as to not permit continuing as Social Secretary. On your behalf I extend thanks for her support of the Society.

Our Patrons, The Mayor Mr Moore, The Town Clerk Mr Fuller and Alderman Rathbone have continued the splendid support of many years past and the Society has gained great benefit from this. Thank you gentlemen.

The association of our Society with Community Radio Station 2NBC/FM has continued and the members connected with the programmes have displayed a very high degree of expertise. Thank you.

Miss Otton, the Curator of Lydham Hall can be justifiably proud of the high degree in which the property is maintained and presented. The continued excellence is a tribute to all concerned with it. There was a disappointing lack of member support during Heritage Week this year. It may be necessary to re-appraise the position prior to that time in 1986.

The Management Committee met only once in a formal manner during the year. Several other matters for consideration were discussed at the conclusion of monthly meetings.

A number of members have continued to contribute to the success of the Society. Their participation has not been unnoticed or unappreciated.

An important social aspect of our meetings concerns our gathering together for supper. I would like to take this opportunity to again recognise the vital part played by our ladies in this area.

Similarly with your concurrence I would like to place on record appreciation for the assistance given by Mr Ken Hapgood (and our course Mrs Hapgood) and Miss Betty Baker who both retire from Rockdale Council this year. Arrangements have been made for a tangible expression on behalf of the Society. We wish them well.

In closing I would draw attention to the Society entering its 25th year - it will be I hope a milestone toward continued success and enjoyment for the members.

L. L. Abigail.

THIS AUSTRALIA - Strange & Amazing Facts!

- "Believe" Bill Beatty.
 - Halstead Press Pty.Ltd.
 - Sydney 1941.

No wonder that Australia was described by the first Europeans to come here as a topsy-turvy land! And not without good reason. Our principal trees shed their bark instead of their leaves. Our wild cherries and plums carry their seeds outside the fruit. The Australian pear may be opened only with a carpenter's chisel or hand-saw. Some of our trees with tens of thousands of leaves throw no shade whatsoever, because every leaf is turned edge on to the sun in order to reduce evaporation. The saltbush draws its moisture not through its roots, as does wellnigh every other plant in Christendom, but through its leaves from the night-air. These were some of the queer things of which the early explorers told their kinsmen.

A strange land indeed, and a land with a strange history.

. Australia's First Library was an odd one. It consisted of 4600 volumes & was brought out in the First Fleet for the use of the settlers on their unenviable voyage. The librarian was the Rev. Richard Johnson., B.A., but doubtless his duties were not very strenuous, to judge by the titles of some of the books: Religion Made Easy, Caution to Swearer, Instructions for the Indians, The Wickedness of Stealing and so on.

. The First Census or Muster of Livestock ever taken in Australia was on 1 May 1788. It revealed these interesting figures:

1 stallion	29 sheep	29 geese
3 mares	19 goats	35 ducks
3 colts	74 pigs	142 fowls.
2 bulls	5 rabbits	
5 cows	18 turkeys	

The next census, four years later, 11 December 1792 revealed:

11 horses	23 cattle	105 sheep	43 pigs.
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The scarcity of stock was so great that, three years later, when a convict reported seeing a herd of wild cattle in the interior he was given a free pardon when the report was verified and the cattle captured.

. In 1807 at Mary Reibey's (Australia's first business woman) store in Macquarie Place these were the ruly prices:

tea 6s. an ounce	sugar 4s a pound	coarse white
butter 6s. a pound	soap 3s	calico 5s a yard
men's boots pounds 2.0.0 to 3.0.0 a pair		
men's hats 3 guineas.		

. Brickfield Hill (Sydney) together with the Haymarket was once known as Cribb's Paddock. It was a grant of land given to one, Thomas Cribb. The area included and extended from Macus Clark's corner to Anthony Hordern's and embraced Pitt, George and adjacent streets. So little, however, did old Tom Cribb think of this property (which to-day is valued at over a million pounds) that he sold it back to the government for nine heifers!

. The First Post Office was established in Sydney in 1809 on the site now occupied by the George Street North Fire Station. In those early days the postage on English and foreign letters was 8d. per letter, but soldiers' letters were charged only 1d. In 1830 the post office was removed to its present site in Martin Place. It is said that the land on which the G.P.O. is built was purchased for pounds 30.0.0 and a hogshead of brandy. Up till 1855 the departure of the mail coaches from the G.P.O. every day was one of the main events in the life of Sydney town.

. Those Who Think that the Modern Generation are more wicked than their predecessors should hearken to the following extract from a letter written by Sir Henry Parkes, 100 years ago. Henry had just arrived in Sydney and this extract is from his first letter written home:

"I have been disappointed in all my expectations of Australia except as to its wickedness. It is far more wicked than I had conceived it possible for any place to be, or than it is possible for me to describe to you in England."

So evidently this village was a mighty tough place a century ago.

. The Town Of Liverpool in N.S.W. was founded in 1810 and called after the English city of that name. Because of its situation on the George's River it was hoped that it would become a great shipping centre like its famous namesake. Indeed the first pub built there was given the nautical name of "The Ship Inn".

. Australia's First Postmaster was an ex-convict - Isaac Nichols. When he was freed he was appointed an overseer of convicts in Sydney and later became assistant to the Superintendent of Customs. In 1809 he was appointed by Macquarie as postmaster for the colony.

. The Hotel Windsor, Sydney, formerly called the Barley Mow Hotel, is on an historic spot. On this site was, at one time, that grim arm of justice - the gallows. On 12 September 1803 an extraordinary scene occurred at the attempted execution of Joseph Samuels, who was sentenced to death for a petty robbery. The rope first separated in the middle and the criminal fell prostrate; on the second attempt the rope unrove at the fastening and he again came to the ground; careful attention was given to the third attempt, but the rope again snapped short. The Provost-Marshal had compassion on the poor wretch. Ordering the dreadful proceedings to stop, he hurried to Government House and related the extraordinary happening to the Governor, who was pleased to reprieve the prisoner.

. The Historic Home, Yarralumla, possesses a mystery story of its own that is most intriguing. The tale is told in an unsigned manuscript dated 1881 that was found in the homestead. A large diamond was stolen in 1826 from James Cobbity on an outback Queensland station. The convict who was blamed for the theft was later captured, but no trace of the diamond was found. In 1842 he gave to a groom a map showing the hiding place of the diamond. The groom found the jewel but made no attempt to sell it. After his death in N.S.W., his son, in company with an aboriginal servant, set out for Sydney with the diamond. Between Cooma and Queanbeyan they were ambushed by bushrangers and separated. The blackfellow was shot by the outlaws and buried under a deodar-tree on the grounds of Yarralumla. According to the manuscript the blackfellow had swallowed the gem to prevent its capture, therefore the diamond should be amongst his buried bones. No attempt has been made to uproot the tree, but many thousands of deodars growing throughout the country have been grown from the seeds of this grand old-timer with its fascinating tale of mystery. Yarralumla is now the home of the home of the Governor-General in Canberra.

. Banking Institutions are noted for their staid and dignified demeanour, their aloof and solemn business transactions, but surely in the history of banking there has never been anything to compare with the final flutte of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land Ltd. Hobart, which went into liquidation in 1893.

The Bank Directors were a sporting crowd and they decided that the best use they could put the bank's assets to was to raffle them. They made them into a lottery - 300,000 tickets at pounds 1.0.0 each.

The first prize was the bank building itself and the land on which it was built on Miller's Corner, Hobart. The second prize was Hadley's Orient Hotel, which was owned by the bank. All the other prizes consisted of a long list of bank properties in various places. Tickets were fully taken up.

Incidentally, this lottery, the first in Tasmania, was conducted by George Adams. It was because of its success that George Adams was inspired to inaugurate his famous Tattersall's Consultation.

. Gas-Light was introduced into Sydney just on 100 years ago. The first night that it was inaugurated was on Queen Victoria's birthday, and as a patriotic gesture the gas-light company gave the illumination free of charge to the city. The Sydney Morning Herald stated in its editorial: "Little more than 20 years have elapsed since the beautiful art of gas-lighting was introduced into England, and now we have it in Sydney. The inhabitants can now see how soft and pleasing is the light that it diffuses; with what facilities they may control its illuminating powers, and how strikingly its cleanliness contrasts with the defilements of oil & tallow."

. Here Is An Interesting Fact of which all Aussies should be aware. The idea of wood-paving for streets originated in Australia. The toughness of our timber led to the idea and in 1854 for the first time in any city on earth, wood-paving was used in the New Markets, Hobart. It was 30 years later before Sydney adopted the scheme, King Street between Pitt and George Streets being so paved. The timber used was bluegum.

. The Longest Journey ever taken by a steam-roller or traction engine in Australia occurred in January 1861. It rolled or rather crawled from Sydney to Goulburn taking more than six months for the journey!

. The First Crusade of the People versus the Bankers occurred in the early days of the colony when the ex-convicts and emancipists were encouraged by the authorities to save their frugal earnings. The amounts being too small be handled by the Bank of N.S.W. a gentleman of the day decided it would be a golden opportunity for private enterprise. And how! He opened a bank in Campbell Street and soon acquired considerable wealth and property. Eventually the depositors became suspicious and, when the gentleman banker failed to account for their savings, called a meeting and decided to liquidate the bank. Their method of liquidation was slightly unorthodox. They marked to the bank and demolished it with pick and shovel.

. In 1793 in N.S.W., according to meteorology data, what seemed to be a ray of forked lightning appeared about dusk and remained stationary for five minutes!

In 1824 the district of Prospect and Pennant Hills received a terrific fall of hail-stones. In many places the mass of ice was 10' high on the ground. Four days after the storm one piece of hail was picked up which even then measured a foot in circumference.

Imagine a huge waterspout appearing in an inland country town! Well that's what happened on 6 May 1875 when the amazed inhabitants of Inverell, N.S.W. watched a remarkable waterspout which suddenly came from nowhere.

On 16th September 1878 the good citizens of Warranambool, Victoria, were frightened out of their wits by an extraordinary deluge of sulphur from the skies.

.Newcastle has seen some hectic strikes in its short history, one of its earliest was noteworthy because it was settled by the womenfolk.

In 1861 the miners of the Coal & Copper Company went on strike against a 20% wage reduction. When the management retaliated by bringing sailors to the mine to act as strike-breakers, it seemed that all was lost for the miners. But, if the men were disheartened, their womenfolk were not. The ladies put their heads together and then sallied forth to the mines armed to the teeth. The sailors were tough guys to say the least. A fight to them was a thing of joy and they had done battle in the toughest ports in the world, but this was too much for them. At the sight of the grim amazons brandishing flat-irons and broomsticks their spirits failed and they fled. Thus Newcastle's first strike was settled.

. About Fifty Years Ago the tramway authorities in Sydney tried out an electric tram for the first time. There were no overhead wires; the power was in a storage battery on the tram. Also the lines were the ordinary ones on which the old steam trams ran. The experiment was unsuccessful and after a trial of about two weeks the electric tram was taken off. However s most interesting fact was the reason for its discontinuance. The traymway authorities stated that the tram had proved a failure because the electricity affected the watches of the passengers!

. In 1876 A Boundary-Rider by the name of Charles Rasp accidentally discovered eposits of sliver-lead ore at Broken Hill,N.S.W. He pegged out a claim and later offered his share for sale. He wanted pounds 200.0.0 but was offered pounds 120.0.0. Being a dinkum Aussie he offered to play a game of cards to settle which price he would accept. The game chosen was euchre. Charlie lost and accepted pounds 120.0.0 for his claim. Today that particular claim or share is worth more than 4 million pounds.

. In Sydney, about 70 years ago, there lived at Eastwood (then a part of Ryde) an old lady by the name of Mrs Thomas Smith. One day, at Paddy's Markets, old Mrs Smith made some purchases, including a few fruit-cases that she thought would be useful. One of the cases she discovered on her return home, contained some over-ripe Tasmanian apples. These she tipped into a creek on her property.

This is where fate stepped in. One of those rotting apples took root and grew up hidden among ferns and long grass. The tree with its fruit was discovered by the inevitable small boy. But unlike most kids, he told Mrs Smith what he had found and said that though the apples were green they tasted better than any he had ever eaten. The old lady investigated and found that not only was this new variety of apple a wonderful eater, but a good cooker, excellent as a dessert apple and when stored kept better than any others. From this little tree old Mrs Smith grew and cultivated more of its kind and soon its fame spread all over the globe. And so Australia gave to the world, the celebrated apple known as Granny Smith.

. Sir Henry Parkes had 17 children. 12 of these were born to the first Lady Parkes, who on her death-bed called over her housekeeper and placing her hand in that of Sir Henry's begged them to marry after her death so that her children would be well looked after. This dying request was carried out and the housekeeper became the second Lady Parkes. She in turn had 5 children to Sir Henry and by a curious coincidence the same thing happened. On her death-bed she called over her housekeeper and expressed a dying wish that she marry Sir Henry. This was later fulfilled and the second housekeeper became the third Lady Parkes.

. The Original Lease of the Flemington racecourse has a 99 year duration and the course is vested in trustees for the benefit of the people. Most interesting of all is the fact that the yearly rental for this world-famous racecourse is 3 peppercorns!

. Although Hyde Park holds the honour of being the site of the 1st organised race-meeting in Sydney in 1810, horse-racing was held in Parramatta 6 months before that. And what fun they had at these Parramatta meetings! In between the horse-racing and trotting events there was cock-fighting, wheel-barrow and sack racing. The ladies too, were well catered for. It is recorded that the most popular event was a ladies' race with a grand prize of "as much calico as would make a goodly-sized chemise"!

. Here Is The Origin of the term "the Ashes". The word was coined after the 9th test match in London in 1882 which Australia won by 7 runs. On the result of the match the London Sporting Times published this "In Memoriam" notice: "In affectionate remembrance of English Cricket, which died at the Oval on the 29th August 1882. Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends and acquaintances. R.I.P. N.B. - The Body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia."

. IT IS INTERESTING to note that wireless telegraphy was used for the first time in the world between ships in Australian waters. In 1907 the German mail steamer Bremen sent word that she expected to arrive in Sydney Harbour at 5.0p.m. on a stated day. The receiver of the message, H.M.S. Encounter, was asked to notify the agents accordingly. The Bremen arrived punctually.

. DO YOU KNOW that the longest telephone land-line in the world is in Australia? Well that's so; from Cairns Queensland to Geraldton W.A., the line goes through Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth - 4,000 odd miles.
