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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

February, 1986

Dear Friend and Member,

The February meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday, 21st February, 1986

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

Business: General

Syllabus Item: Mrs Fay Young will tell us how and where to begin to "Research your Family History". Should you wish to learn more about your family history you will find this talk interesting and helpful. Do come along.

Supper Roster: Miss Dunsmore, Captain together with Miss Wilding and Mesdames Loring and Mendoza.

Our grateful thanks to the ladies who willingly attend to the Supper each month, should other ladies care to help will you please give me your names

LADIES PLEASE BRING A PLATE

Mr. A. Ellis,  
President and Research  
Officer

Mrs B. Perkins,  
Publicity Officer

Mrs K. Hamey,  
Secretary

Telephone: 587 1159

Telephone: 587 9164

Telephone: 546 3355

Mrs E. Wright,  
Treasurer

SOCIAL SECRETARY  
We are still waiting for a  
volunteer!!!!

Mrs E. Eardley,  
Asst. Secretary and  
Bulletin Editor

Telephone: 599 4884

Telephone: 59 8078

Miss D. Row,  
Asst. Treasurer

Friends, As we go through life we find we leave so many friends behind; These Friends possess our time, our thoughts and for awhile accept our faults. As the years go by these "silver" friends don't stay the course, the friendship ends. Sometimes we find a friend of "gold", who stays our friend until we're old. These "Golden" friends are rather rare, but they are the ones who always call.

by "A Friend"

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well. Our best wishes to all for a speedy recovery. On a sad note, Mrs Keatley, one of our early members passed away on Monday after a long illness. Our deepest sympathy to Mr. Keatley and family.

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. Book Nos.8 and 9 have been compiled by Mrs Bronwyn Perkins.

- No. 1 "The Wollli Creek Valley" )
  - 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 plus postage Vol. 1 ) \$4.00
  - No.10 "Early Settlers of the St. George District" )
- Will be available soon, it is now being printed 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 - Phone 59 8078
- Mr. A. Ellis - Phone 587 1159
- Mrs K. Hamey - Phone 546 3355

NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME

\* \* \* \* \*

AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY

COMMISSIONING OF WORKS OF ART

1. As part of the 1988 Bicentennial celebrations, the Australian Bicentennial Authority wishes to encourage the creation of new works by Australian artists, writers and composers. For this purpose the New South Wales Council of the Authority is inviting applications for the commissioning of such works. Funding for this program is being provided through the Commonwealth funded National program for the Bicentenary.
2. Proposals may be made in respect of any art form or combination of art forms. The works to be commissioned may be works of theatre, puppetry, music, visual art, craft, literature or design, or any other piece suitable for public performance or display.
3. Examples of works which may be commissioned under this program include:-
  - a) A play or work of music theatre for a State or regional theatre company;
  - b) A composition for an orchestra or other music ensemble;
  - c) A painting, or series of paintings, for the permanent collection of a public gallery or civic display;
  - d) A piece of sculpture for a gallery or a sculpture garden.
4. Applications will be accepted from arts and community organisations, corporations, publishing houses, local government authorities or individuals. In addition to undertaking the creative work proposed, successful applicants will be required to accept responsibility for its production, presentation, publication or display in 1988.
5. Applicants will therefore be expected to prove that they have the artistic, financial and managerial resources to undertake the production or presentation of the work. Funds provided under this program are intended solely for the creative artist/s to create the work.
6. The contribution to a commission from this program will not generally exceed \$30,000. In most instances, payments of less than \$10,000 are envisaged.

7. For performance proposals, it is intended that companies should include the commissioned work in their 1988 program and not treat it as an extra production entailing additional production costs. Companies intending to stage a commissioned work as a special event or additional attraction will be required to give assurances that they can meet the cost, and may be asked to submit a budget.
8. The Authority wishes to achieve a balance between artforms, between new, emerging and established artists, and between capital cities and regional and local centres. Within the commissionings program funds are available for Aboriginal people.
9. Applications will be accepted from professional, semi-professional or amateur bodies. Applications will not be accepted in respect of works, or similar works, for which commissions have already been received from Boards of the Australia Council or other Government funding bodies.
10. Artists proposed to be commissioned need not have an established reputation; new and emerging talent will be encouraged. However, the organisation backing the commission must be able to demonstrate that the artist is likely to produce a work of acceptable quality and be satisfied that it will be ready by 1988.
11. It is accepted that some commissioned works may not be of a standard to merit production, publication or presentation, and that other unforeseen developments may prevent the production, publication or presentation of a work. In such cases successful applicants will be required to furnish a statement to the Authority setting out the reasons why a work cannot be performed, published or presented. The Authority will reserve the right to make other arrangements for the use of the work.
12. It is expected that organisations, at the time of making an application, will already have discussed their proposals with the artists concerned and reached a measure of understanding and mutual commitment to the project. Applicants must provide a letter from the commissioned artist stating their agreement to undertake the commission. In the case of performance works, the Authority hopes that the piece will be workshopped in the course of developing the commission.

13. Commissions should, where appropriate, be linked to other Bicentennial projects or events such as festivals, commemorative days, community arts events or the marking of a site of historic importance.
14. All successful Commissions under this program will be endorsed by the Authority. Appropriate public acknowledgement in all promotional material and programs will be required by the Authority.
15. All commissioning proposals should be consistent with the Authority's objectives for the Bicentenary, whose theme is "Living Together". Its aims include the encouragement of a sense of national understanding and the strengthening of national pride and identity. Proposals considered to be in conflict with the aims and objectives of the Bicentenary will not be considered.
16. Normally all commissioned artists must be residents of Australia at the time of the application; exceptional submissions from non-residents may be considered.
17. Applications will close on 1 March 1986. Applicants will be notified as soon as possible of the outcome of their applications, and no later than July, 1986.
18. Application forms are obtainable from and should be returned to -

The Executive Director,  
New South Wales Council,  
Australian Bicentennial Authority,  
G.P.O. Box AUS 1988,  
SYDNEY. N.S.W. 2001

Telephone enquiries: (02) 221-1988

FANNED INTO FLAME -

The Spread of the Sunday School -

- Beverley Earnshaw.

(Part 3 - continuing the history of the Sunday School Movement, taking up the story in Australia.)

The Colonial Sunday School.

In Australia there were no Sunday Schools for the first 25 years. In England, children comprised half the population, but there had been only 36 children on the First Fleet out of a total of 1,030 persons, which meant that the juvenile population of the colony represented only about 3.5% This number was made up of 19 children of the marines, 13 children of convicts and 4 babies born during the voyage. The children of the free-born could hope to go back to England some day where there were churches and schools, but the convicts' children were here to stay.

The pioneer chaplain sent out with the First Fleet was a newly-ordained Church of England Clergyman, the Rev. Richard Johnson. He had been appointed to the new colony on the recommendation of William Wilberforce who acted on behalf of the evangelical Electic Society. His appointment came at a time when there was an upsurge of interest in missionary activity in England, but whilst other missionaries were sailing for exotic locations in the South Pacific and the Americas, Richard Johnson was sent alone to Botany Bay and expected not only to reform the 736 convicted felons he accompanied, but also to "enlighten those that sat in heathen darkness", i.e. the Aborigines.

Soon after Johnson's appointment an English clergyman, Rev. Henry Venn, writing to his daughter on 28th October 1786 said:-

"I received a letter from dear Mr Thornton, saying that he, the last Sunday, introduced Mr....Johnson to 250 of his future congregation, aboard the hulk at Woolwich. Through the influence of Mr Wilberforce with Mr Pitt, he is appointed Chaplain to Botany Bay with a salary of £180 per annum. I trust he will prove a blessing to these lost creatures. Those that stole, will there steal no more: for having no receivers of stolen goods, no alehouses, etc., they will be under no temptation to steal. With what pleasure may we consider this plan of peopling that far-

distant region, and other opening connexions with the Heathen, as a foundation for the gospel of our God and Saviour to be preached unto them; when 'a vast multitude, whom no man can number', shall call upon His Name;- when 'the wilderness shall become a fruitful field', and all the savages of the Heathen shall be put off, and all the graces of the Spirit shall be put on." (1)

The armchair missionary supporters in England had no conception of the privations which faced Johnson in his efforts to bring together a church in the new colony, or the overwhelming burdens which they were placing upon him. On their arrival, the contingent immediately set about carving a settlement out of the virgin bush and as they laboured to put up huts and clear the land for agriculture, the erection of a church building was low on the list of priorities.

Being the only clergyman, Johnson was undoubtedly one of the busiest men in the Colony. He was responsible for services at both Sydney and Parramatta as well as being the only person able to conduct baptisms, weddings and funerals, but his chief worries were the number of executions he was required to attend and the hostile attitude displayed by most of the convicts towards religion. Yet Johnson considered religion to be the convicts' only hope of rehabilitation and reform and amongst the equipment he had brought to the colony with him were 4,200 religious books, enough for each of the First Fleet convicts to borrow 6 at a time. However, one thing Johnson had not realised when leaving England was that most of the convicts could not read. It distressed him to see so many adults "sho knew not a letter of the alphabet" and in 1792 he wrote to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge mentioning his desire for a "little pittance" with which to start a Sunday School to teach the convicts to read in their leisure hours. Johnson was not considering a juvenile Sunday School, but one for adults, however, as there was only two ladies in the colony capable of helping him, he decided against putting them in charge of such rough characters on a Sunday.

The Rev. John Crowther who had been sent from England to assist him in 1789 lost heart when his ship "Guardian" was wrecked after striking an iceberg near the Cape of Good Hope and he returned to England, leaving Johnson to battle on alone for 6 years. From his writings one thing is certain, Johnson did not like New South Wales. In November, 1788 he expressed the "humble opinion" in a private letter that the Government -

"would act very wisely to sent out another fleet and take us all back to England, or to some other place more likely to answer than this poor wretched country where scarcely anything is to be seen but rocks or eaten by rats." (2)

Nevertheless, he comforted himself with the thought that the worse his trial were in the colony, the greater would be his reward in heaven. He wrote:

"Two things alone can and do support my mind under all these my present trials, difficulties and afflictions. One is my firm persuasion and belief that whatever happens is by the wise and gracious permission of God, and that the heavier my present crosses, the sweeter will be my future comforts; and the other is, that my present sufferings will be but of short continuance."

In the next few years convicts poured into the colony but it was not until 1794 that the next minister arrived, the Rev. Samuel Marsden. Then just at a time when the clergy seemed to face an insurmountable workload, Divine Guidance brought a band of dedicated Christian Missionaries to Sydney. These people were not ordained ministers but they had been solemnly set aside by the Missionary Society for the work. They seemed to have regarded it as a form of ordination, but the Missionary Society did not take this view. They were sent out to Otsheite in Tahiti in a party of 17 missionaries with 5 women and children which left England on 22nd September, 1796 in the ship "Duff". Soon after their arrival on 5th March 1797, tribal wars broke out, hostile natives tried to take the women, and fearing what they thought was an approaching massacre, 11 of the 17 sought refuge on the ship "Nautilus", a trader from Sydney, which brought them to safety in New South Wales. They arrived on the 14th May 1798 and Governor Hunter granted them permission to settle. Not all stayed but those who did gave the colony a leaven of faithful Christian people who were able to help the overworked clergy.

Some of the early arrivals who had been capable of doing some form of Christian work had come to New South Wales with the military and returned to England when their tour of duty was up. One who served very ably was James Bain, Chaplain of the N.S.W. Corps who relieved Johnson by conducting services at Parramatta in 1791. The Tahitian Missionaries could conduct

services and preach, but as they had to earn their own living, the amount of time they could spend on religious duties was limited. Some of those missionaries had distinct leanings towards Methodism and several played an active role in the establishment of the Sunday School Movement in Australia.

In spite of the Missionaries' presence, when Johnson returned to England in 1800, the colony was again desperate for clergy. By this time there were numerous outlying settlements and a thriving satellite colony on Norfolk Island.

When the ship "Minerva" berthed in Sydney Cove in January 1800 it was found that among the convicts was an Irish clergyman, Rev. Henry Fulton from the Parish of Killaloe, a political prisoner serving a life sentence for his part in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Fulton was well educated and gentlemanly, a rarity among convicts, and the Bishop of Derry writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1807 remarked that Fulton had "agreed to transport himself for life to Botany Bay". (3) He was conditionally emancipated but in 1801 was sent across to Norfolk Island leaving Marsden to cope alone on the mainland.

When still no clergy were forthcoming from England, Marsden went back himself, one of his reasons being to secure more Chaplains.

One of Marsden's recruits, the Rev. William Cowper arrived in 1809 and was given charge of St. Philips Church Hill, and in 1810 Marsden returned with the Rev. Robert Cartwright.

Meanwhile, a whole generation of Australians had grown to adulthood, some of them never having seen the inside of a church. The extent of their religious experience was a rare visit by an itinerant clergyman when Richard Johnson occasionally had time to visit the convicts in their huts. Johnson once wrote in a private letter, "I have found more pleasure at times in doing this than in preaching." (4) The children's companions were convicts many of whom had displayed open hostility towards religion. Their parents were often illiterate, thus unable to read the Bible and many of the youth through no fault of their own had become separated from the church.

By 1810 almost the whole of the agricultural land on the eastern side of the mountains had been taken up, yet only 3 churches had been built. The population was scattered and roads and bridges were non-existent so that families had no hope of attending public worship, and Sunday School to them was an innovation seen only in England. People living in the bush were

far removed from schools, but even if one had been near, the convict families were too poor to afford the fees and the children's services were too valuable on the farm or in the home for them to be spared. Poverty was rife amongst families whose breadwinner was still serving a sentence and those who had been emancipated, but were unskilled.

Schools charged 4 pence ( 3 cents) per week to teach reading and children learning writing and arithmetic paid an extra 6 pence (5 cents), making a total of 10 pence ( 8 cents), which represented a huge slice of a poor family's income. An unskilled labourer earned about £15 (\$30) per year, but amongst the convict parents was a high percentage of unmarried mothers. Wages for an unmarried domestic servant in 1838 were as low as £8 (\$16) per year with food and lodging, or about 3/- (30 cents) per week. Wages were even lower in earlier years and if there was a child to be fed they were further reduced. (5) Therefore payment of school fees for children of the poor was out of the question.

Yet these children represented a vigorous, healthy generation of young Australians, who had a craving for knowledge as observed by Dr. Thomas Reid in 1822:-

"The children notwithstanding the boundless depravity of the parents, generally speaking are well disposed, given to industry and of religious habits. They are represented as being passionately fond of instruction; and many of them who are not blessed with the means of obtaining information from legitimate sources, (are) known to make successful efforts to learn to read and write without any assistance." (6)

Commissioner Bigge made similar observations when he reported to his superiors in England:-

"The class of inhabitants that have been born in the colony affords a remarkable exception to the moral and physical character of their parents; they are generally tall in person, and slender in their limbs, of fair complexion, and small features. They are capable of undergoing more fatigue, and are less exhausted by labour than native Europeans; they are active in their habits, but remarkably awkward in their movements. In their tempers they are quick and irascible, but not vindictive; and I only repeat the testimony of persons who have had many opportunities of observing them, that they neither inherit the vices nor the feelings of their parents." (7)

These children were the "Currency Lads" (andlasses). The term was coined during the Macquarie Era by a 73rd Regiment Paymaster who used it to infer that "Currency Stock", or the youth born in the colony was somehow inferior to the "Sterling", or that born in Britain. (8) The term was meant to apply to the children of convicts, but it came to refer to all children born to the white population of the colony.

When Macquarie arrived in 1810, there were only 5 schools, and out of 2,304 children, only 440 were receiving any kind of education. (9) Those citizens who could read, were steeped in the King James Version of the Bible and the Church of England Prayer Book, which were the main text books in the 18th Century Schools, and to them, any education that was not based on religion was quite unacceptable. This meant that in the early 19th Century, secular and religious education stemmed from the same source.

The first attempt to bring children together for religious instruction on a Sunday was made by the Rev. William Cowper at St. Philips Church Hill in 1810. The Sydney Gazette mentions earlier gatherings of this kind but it is not clear whether they were in England or Australia.

"On August 8th, 1810, an examination was held in the church of upwards 200 children, who were catechised by the minister (Rev. Wm. Cowper), on moral and religious subjects, in the course of which many excellent maxims were laid down in terms best calculated to inform the youthful mind with a becoming sense of duty to their creator and their fellow mortals. Many who had attended at previous assemblages of the same kind gave evidence of improvement and, as often upon the formation of early notions the future course depends, we have every reason to hope that this ... labour will be productive of lasting benefit to the rising generation." (10)

The writer concludes: "Such is the description of the beginning of Sunday Schools in the Colony".

In 1810 Governor Macquarie established the first Government day school at Parramatta and appointed John Eyre, one of the Tahitian Missionaries as schoolmaster. (11) From the beginning, Eyre's policy was to assemble the school children for 1-1/2 hours prior to the Sunday morning service and 1 hour prior to the afternoon service for religious instruction. On occasions, the Rev. Samuel Marsden would visit the gathering, address the children in simple language and sometimes preach

them a modified version of the day's sermon.

Some may regard Cowper's and Eyre's attempts as Sunday Schools, but the first Sunday School of the type known today was started by Thomas Hassall in his father's house on the corner of George and Charles Streets, Parramatta in May 1813.

Thomas Hassall was born at Coventry, England on 29th May 1794, the son of Rowland and Elizabeth Hassall. His parents were two of the Tahitian Missionary party which arrived in Sydney on 14th May 1798 (just before Thomas' 4th birthday). Governor Hunter granted his father 100 acres near Dundas, but the family lived at Parramatta.

Thomas Hassall's interest in children was awakened during his late teenage years when he became friendly with a young Irish boy named Jemmy Mullins. Jemmy appeared to be an intelligent child but extremely ignorant and Thomas offered to teach him to read and write. They met for lessons every Sunday evening and in the course of three to four months the boy could read his Testament "tolerably well", and although he was a Roman Catholic, began to attend church and chapel with Thomas as often as he could. Shortly after this, Jemmy Mullins died. Thomas' only consolation was his belief that he had been instrumental in bringing the boy to "a better world at his death" and it was this experience more than any other that inspired him in his ministry towards children. Thomas explained that after the death of Jemmy Mullins:-

"...I removed to Parramatta, the residence of my family where I began upon a humble scale another Sunday School consisting of 6 or 7 children, 2 of whom were convicts. We rapidly increased and in the course of 12 months we numbered upwards of 200 children, in our Parramatta schools - which considering the class of people amongst whom we resided was a considerable number. Since my departure I have had the most pleasing intelligence from time to time and the last letter I received was from one of the little boys who joined us at the first onset. In his letter after speaking of the attendance, etc., he says 'we have all a blessed opportunity of being brought to the knowledge of Christ'." (12)

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To be concluded...

2NBC - FM 90.1 - ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1986 - Tuesday Evenings 6.30 p.m. - 6.45 p.m.

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- TAPE 145 - 4th February - An Introduction to 1986 - D. Sinclair  
TAPE 146 - 11th February - Breathing Space - M. Callister  
TAPE 147 - 18th February - Parramatta River Service  
(Part 1) - M.D. Fleming  
TAPE 148 - 25th February - Parramatta River Service  
(Part 2) - M.D. Fleming  
TAPE 149 - 4th March - Parramatta River Service  
(Part 3) - M.D. Fleming  
TAPE 150 - 11th March - Early Settlers of the  
St. George District - M.D. Fleming  
TAPE 151 - 18th March - Early Churches of the  
St. George District - M.D. Fleming  
TAPE 152 - 25th March - The Flying Angel -  
Missions to Seamen - M.D. Fleming  
TAPE 153 - 1st April - Campbelltown and Gregory's  
Directory - M. Callister  
TAPE 154 - 8th April - Tank Stream, Towers of  
Sydney & Woolloomooloo - M. Callister  
TAPE 155 - 15th April - This Australia - Strange  
and Amazing Facts - D. Row  
TAPE 156 - 22nd April - This Australia (cont.)  
Greenwich Mean Time and  
Concord - D. Row  
TAPE 157 - 29th April - Melbourne's Century Old  
Botanic Gardens and  
Academically Speaking - D. Row

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The Society thanks all who have taken part in recording these historical segments. New readers are always welcome.

Next month, May, 1986, begins the fourth year of transmission. The first segment went to air on Tuesday, 10th May, 1983 when Arthur Ellis spoke on the "Village of Tempe and its Regatta of 1855" as well as "The Story of Moorfield Racecourse".

The Station is equally grateful to all who have taken part.

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