

SPONSORED BY
ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



LH 34/270/1
PRICE 5 c.

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Registered by Australia
Post N.B.H. 0335

563A Princes Highway,
BLAKEHURST 2221

May, 1986

Dear Friend and Member,

The May meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday, 16th May, 1986
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
Business: General

Syllabus Item: Mr. Ian Ryan will be our Speaker on this occasion, he will review our association with Radio Station 2 NBC FM and its impact on his listening audience over a period of three years, during which period he has managed the station, and still continues in this capacity, very successfully.

Supper Roster: Captain: Miss Row, together with Mesdames R. Lee and I. Buckingham

LADIES PLEASE BRING A PLATE

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and Research
Officer

Telephone: 587 1159

Mrs E. Wright,
Treasurer

Telephone: 599 4884

Miss D. Row, Asst. Treasurer

Mrs B. Perkins,
Publicity Officer

Telephone: 587 9164

Social Secretary
OH DEAR! NO TAKERS!???

Mrs K. Hamey,
Secretary

Telephone: 546 3355

Mrs E. Eardley,
Asst. Secretary
& Bulletin Editor

Telephone: 59 8078

Character is developed through discipline, participation in corporate activities, service and a concern for the welfare of others.

T.S.S.

A man is but what he knoweth.

Francis Bacon

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, 9 and 10 have been compiled by Mrs Bronwyn Perkins.

No. 1	"The Wolli Creek Valley")	
No. 2	"Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway")	
No. 3	"Saywells Tramway - Rockdale to Lady Robinsons Beach")	Book Nos.1-8
No. 4	"Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway")	\$2.50 each
No. 5	"Our Heritage in Stone")	plus postage
No. 6	"All Stations to Como")	
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" Volume 1)	Books Nos.9-10
	(Price \$4.00 plus postage))	\$4.00 each plus
No.10	"Early Settlers of the St. George District" Volume 2)	postage

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	-	Telephone 59 4259 (after 8.00 p.m.)
Mrs E. Eardley	-	Telephone 59 8078
Mr. A. Ellis	-	Telephone 587 1159
Mrs K. Hamey	-	Telephone 546 3355

NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME

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

- TAPE 160 - 20th May - Fanned Into Flame -
 Sunday School
 Movement Part 1 - B Perkins
- TAPE 161 - 27th May - Fanned Into Flame
 Sunday School
 Movement Part 2 - B. Perkins
- TAPE 162 - 3rd June - Sydney's House of
 History & The Signal
 Drops on 109 Years
 of Trade - C. Wilding
- TAPE 163 - 10th June - In Perth - A Piece of
 Olde England &
 Historic Prince of
 Wales - C. Wilding
- TAPE 164 - 17th June - Making Amends to Truganini - T.Allison
- TAPE 165 - 24th June - Highlights of the 2CH
 Story & Extracts Diary of
 Alexander Brodie Spark - S.Cran
- TAPE 166 - 1st July - Illawarra - First with
 Electricity - T.Allison
- TAPE 167 - 8th July - Garden Island Dockyard
 Church - S.Cran
- TAPE 168 - 15th July - N.S.W.Fire Brigade &
 Frog Hollow Rockdale - S.Richter
- TAPE 169 - 22nd July - Store Founded on Cobb & Co
 Route, & Inn Was Council
 for City Father's - S.Richter
- TAPE 170 - 29th July - Sydney First Horse Tram - S.Richter.

VOICES OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN -

- Betty Goodger
retired
Manuscripts Cataloguer
& Field Librarian
The Mitchell Library.

This article is published with permission of Mrs Betty Goodger, who presented it to the St. George Historical Society on 19th April 1985.

Unfortunately no typed material can adequately convey the warmth and interest of this speaker and her subject.

As a Society we were privileged to hear of the doings and intimacies recorded in the diaries and letters kept and preserved over so many years.

During the course of my duties as Manuscripts Cataloguer in the Mitchell Library and as Field Librarian, when I went out in search of original source material, I have read many diaries and letters. The 6 ladies you will hear about to-night interested me greatly. They all lived in Australia during the period 1834 to 1981.

The history of Australia has been a life-long interest to me and I have delighted in working with what scholars call "primary sources" - but what I often call "precious bits of paper" - i.e. log books, diaries, letters - which people write down at the time it was happening, and from which books are written.

The first young lady to whom I introduce you, is - ELIZA CHARLOTTE DARVALL - a young lady of quality, sailing out to N.S.W. in 1839. Fortunately, like so many travellers she kept a diary of the voyage.

Her first entry is dated - Sunday 8th September 1839. "We left Gravesend in the 'Alfred', commanded by Captain Flint and had a fair wind till we got out of the river and anchored at nightfall in the Downs. Our party consisted of my father, and mother, (the Pater in delicate health), 2 brothers, 2 sisters and myself."

They were coming to Sydney to join her brother, later Sir John Bayly Darvall, who became a distinguished barrister and politician.

Naturally, the family travelled 1st class and ate at the Captain's table in the cuddy.

She comments amusingly and astutely on her fellow passengers, but there is one whom she never names. He remains - 'the Irishman' - in charge of the Irish emigrants who were also on board, but not, of course, 1st class.

Here is her description of him: "He is very enthusiastic on the subject of religion, but carries his notions rather far, objecting to any but sacred music, and thinking dancing

quite wrong. However, he is very good natured, and is always ready to lend his books. He eats very dirtily with his knife, spilling the gravy all over the tablecloth. He is not at all fit for his situation and has not the smallest authority over the people, who continue as dirty as they please."

Eliza and the other "Cuddy" passengers made their own entertainment, publishing a ship's newspaper, putting on a play, and so on, but the Irish emigrants provided a lot of entertainment for them.

Here is an entry for 9th December 1839 -
"There has been great commotion lately, in the Province of the Steeraggio. Night after night, a ghost has been seen walking about there. It has at last proceeded to extremities, and pulls the women by the hair, and the screaming is dreadful. Hannah Murphy has more than once been suspected of acting the ghost, and she was yesterday convicted of doing it, in order to rob the women's boxes. All that she had taken was hidden in a large petticoat! She was very angry at being discovered and threatened to cut some of their throats - whereupon the Captain ordered her to be handcuffed. In the evening, more complaints were brought against her upon which she was brought up on to the poop, where she was left until very late in the evening, covered up with a blanket."

No doubt Captain Flint was at his wit's end to control her!

Now, the "Alfred" was taking the fast route to Sydney - going south to pick up the wind in the Roaring Forties - and it did indeed catch the wind.

Eliza's diary of Christmas Day 1839, reports -
"Now indeed we have witnessed a gale and I never wish to experience another at sea."

As it was Christmas, we determined to be merry, and all sat in the cuddy, singing till 8.00p.m., when suddenly it began to blow tremendously. The main topsail split with a terrific report. I could never have imagined such an awful sound, as was caused by the flapping of the sail after it was torn. It was louder than any thunder and we could not think what had happened. I was now much frightened and could not stay in the cuddy a minute longer. But, on going to our cabin, we found the water washing about in it, the scuttles having both been left open. Everything in the cabin seemed to have got loose, and into the water. I was dashed about the cabin from side to side. My shoes and stockings were wet through and there was no dry place for anything. I presently heard a noise, still louder than the first, and this was the foresail splitting; and a short time after, the foretopmast staysail was blown to shreds, so now we were scudding under bare poles.

At 2.00a.m., the wind began to abate and by morning, one of the officers came and 'wished us a Merry Christmas'. I hope I may never see it as ushered in again."

Well, Eliza Charlotte Darvall, weathered that storm, and the family arrived safely on 29th December 1839 - after 4 months at sea.

Eliza later married Henry H Kater of Bungarrané, near Blacktown and lived out her life in N.S.W.

What was life like in Sydney in the late 1830's. Let our next young lady - MARY PHOEBE BROUGHTON - tell us, as she was already settled in Sydney, when Eliza arrived. She began to keep diaries on the voyage out in July 1834. These are a great treasure to the Mitchell Library, as diaries of children are not common.

By 1837, she was a young lady, the daughter of the Bishop of Australia, and here are some typical entries from her diary in January:-

"10th January 1837 - Mamma went to see the prisoners landed at the Dock Yard. We made a cake while she was away.

11th January (Sunday) - Mamma and I walked to St. James but came home in the carriage ... Papa preached twice ... after dinner we walked down to Elizabeth Bay.

23rd January - we made wax fruit.

13th October - we walked in the bush before dinner."

The bush was surrounding Bishopcourt - Potts Point and the Elizabeth Bay area.

"February 1838 - went for a ride to Bondi Beach and a picnic to Cook's River.

19th February - a ship came in from London."

A few days later she tells of them reading newspapers from England and planting out cuttings of rose bushes in the kitchen garden.

By this time she was allowed £2.0.0 a month and at the back of her diary, she listed her accounts -

"2nd January 1837 - 1 muslin pelerina .. 16/6
(a narrow cape with long descending ends in front)
March - 1 pair black silk gloves 2/6
1 muslin frock.....14.0
For making a black silk frock... 15.0
Black crossed bonnet2.0.0."

Paying calls and receiving visitors made up a large part of her day, and these calls are all faithfully recorded.

Church attendance, was of course, very important, but it left time for hobbies and a little gneteel housework. Papa's busy life, with its constant travelling, and Mamma's round of "good works", are noted.

Mary Phoebe's diaries give us a picture of a happy, secure home - with the hours of each day filled very happily for a girl in Sydney Town in 1838.

It was rather different in the country. Work was necessary from all - regardless of class.

MARY HUME - daughter of Francis Rawdon Hume, and niece of Hamilton Hume, the explorer, tells us of her life. The family persuaded her to write down her reminiscences in 1901, and she talked of her life as a child in the Appin District, with great affection. However, the carefree days of childhood did not last very long.

"My eldest sister had to leave off being a child at 11 - to be the eldest daughter - which meant helping with everything and putting on long dresses.... Many girls married at 15 and 16. We all had to take our share of work and I, at the age of 6 or 7, had to have my portion of 'white seam'." (Sewing and mending sheets and pillowcases.)

"At 13, I had to help with everything and it was my pride that at 15 I could make the butter as well as my mother could, prepare and roast a turkey or a sucking pig, and knead up a large batch of bread in the baking trough and bake it in the brick oven - and to this day my hand has not lost its cunning."

This would have been around 1850, for she tells us of the difficulties her father experienced when his workmen all took off for the goldfields. He brought Chinese from China to be his shepherds.

I am sure you will be interested in her description of their servant girl - brought to them by Caroline Chisholm.

"A fresh, bright, happy girl, who later married a rich storekeeper. I wish some of our 'lady servants' could see the dress Carline Chisholm's girls wore. They would, if they adopted it for work, be infinitely more neat and well clothed, and might easily have a banking account. It was a blue serge skirt, not long, and a kirtle (woman's gown or outer petticoat) with elbow sleeves and a neat apron. Of course, they had their Sunday dress and could take their places with anyone."

Regarding herself, Mary tells that she was 9 when she first met the young man visiting from Billibong. "My mental resolve was that I would marry that young man one day." They did not meet again, until she was 15, and he told his sisters, that "I was as long as a late breakfast." They met again when she was 18, and she became Mrs Robert Henry Kennedy - they lived at Jereelderie. Life was very full for a country woman.

The next lady is a great favourite of mine. We are all familiar with the cliché that behind every great man is a woman, but this woman was not behind her husband, she was beside him -- all the way -- WILHELMENA LANG.

The Australian Dictionary of Biography (that wonderful reference tool now available in Australian libraries), summarises as follows:-

"John Dunmore Lang, who lived from 1799 - 1878; Presbyterian clergyman, politician, educationist, immigration organiser, historian, anthropologist, journalist, gaol-bird. His wife's words - engraved on his statue in Sydney - "Patriot and Statesman".

How did he cope with so much? Because his "unpaid curate" was supporting him - completely involved in his activities - his wife Wilhelmena.

He arrived in Sydney in 1823, but travelled back and forth to England many times (7 times between 1822 and 1852). It was on such a trip in 1830, when he was organising teachers for his Australian College, that he married his 18 year old cousin - Wilhelmena Mackie. His mother was totally opposed. She felt the difference in their ages - 18 and 30 - would be disastrous. But the many volumes of letters of the Dunmore Langs show a deep and lasting affection.

His letters always begin, conventionally - "Dear Wilhelmina;" and he closes as "Your affectionate husband, J.D.Lang."

But Wilhelmina, always salutes him in French - "Mon très cher mari"(My very dear husband) and signs off, "I remain, mon très cher mari, votre femme" (affectionate) -Wilhelmina.

The text of letters in English - full of news, very straightforward comments on people and affairs, and while otherwise, most literate, are completely devoid of punctuation!

The correspondence between John and Wilhelmina reflects the difficulties of mail in those days before an organised postal service was run by each government.

John writing to his wife 17th January 1833 - "I have been much disappointed at not hearing from you"...

29th November 1852 (from London) ... "after more than 3 months silence, nearer 4 indeed, I received your 3rd letter.." and hers - 28th October 1852.. "We have received no letter from you yet, but as we now know the reason, we are somewhat content." (She had just received news that his ship had not been wrecked in a storm, but had reached port safely.) Here is an extract from that letter -

"The morning I heard of the 'Wandsworth's' safety, I was bending over the little blue coffin of our dear little baby, taking the last look of her I loved so much, the carriage and people had just come to carry her away. I need not say the blank is great - very great - my constant companion these 15 months... interesting little girl, running all through the house and speaking so distinctly ... She used to stand before your picture in the dining room and call 'Papa Papa', with so much heart and glee. In my last letter to you, I said that she knew nothing more than a picture father. Little did I imagine that that was to be the extent of her knowledge of you. I pictured so often her first sight of her real father, and her surprise."

Such grief was not an isolated incidence .. of their 10 children, 5 died in infancy.

In another long letter, dated 9th February 1853, she shows her support of her husband's Republican ideas.

"Miss Ironside (Adelaide Ironside, an artist and mutual friend) is quite a hero. She would have a coat of mail and a steed, and take her stand tomorrow for the independence of her native land; having you, of course, to wield the sceptre of liberty for our great Australian land. We are almost on the eve of

something already, but not abroad. It is high time to throw overboard those Downing Street pirates, who are daily swamping this fair land with their deluge of oppression in the shape of convicts."

Finally, her long letter draws to a close. This happened as soon as a ship was sailing, the letter was completed and entrusted to the Captain... "and now my dear husband, when shall I stop writing to you, at such a distance my heart is sad, when I think of you so far from all those you hold so dear, surrounded too often by cold indifference. Wishing anxiously, to see you again,

I remain

Mon très cher ami

Votre affectionate femme Wilhelmina."

To move on into the 20th century, let me introduce a lady whom I have always admired - MRS DAISY BATES - her voice speaks to me often from the many letters in the Mitchell Library.

Daisy Mary Bates was born in Ireland sometime between 1859 and 1863. (It depends what authority you have consulted). From her own letters, it seems 1859 is correct. She came to Australia in 1884, to recover from a lung complaint. Recover, she did, not departing this life until 1951 - at the age of 90 years. Her work with aborigines is well known - but the woman - is less so.

She was a great correspondent, and kept the friends she made. To one life-long friend, Georgina King, a geologist, she wrote in 1910 - on 24th February - "I have given up all social life to my work, and am as happy as Larry over the 'sacrifice'."

Again writing to Georgina 17th November 1913, about caring for some old and sick aborigines, she says: "I don't let them wait on me at all. I wait on them, that is the sick and helpless. But that they would be willing to serve me is shown to me every day. When I retire at night, no queen is safer in her palace than I am in my unfastened tent. I am up at sunrise, but early as I am, I find my fire lighted when I come out of my tent."

Incidentally, Daisy did not share the republican ideas of Wilhelmina Dunmore Lang. She respected the Throne most deeply. Her tent and its surrounds were entirely private and men were never invited into it - with one exception - when she gave tea to the Governor of South Australia. She had explained carefully to her aboriginal friends - that he represented the King.

Another friend was Mr Ifould, Principal Librarian of the (now) State Library of NSW in 1930. In a letter to him dated 4th February 1930, she remarks that "It is 110 degrees as I write, worst of all, I have to ration my bathwater. Happily I am only 5 ft. 4 inches, and slight, exactly the height of Lord Roberts. We measured ourselves in a Dublin Drawing Room many years ago." Later she reveals that the reason for rationing the bathwater was to share it with the little blue wrens who came to the camp.

One of my favourite letters is one to Miss Campbell, on 24th October 1943. Daisy supported herself by journalism and had written an article on tea rationing, and was

embarrassed to receive gifts from all over Australia!
"Dear Miss Campbell - 'I miss my tea' - was not an S.O.S.
I missed my tea, but I took or tried no substitute for it.
I just boiled and boiled nad boiledthe tea leaves and
pretended that it was still tea.. and I had great faith."

The last voice of an Australian woman, I want to share with
you is that of - RUTH CRISTOBEL AROHA BROWN -

I had visited Mrs Brown on several occasions, collecting her
family papers which included those of her missionary ancestors
in Fiji and her 3 sons, each of whom has distinguished himself
in his chosen field, and enjoyed my contact with her very much.

When her son called to deliver the last few items she had
left ready for the Library, he gave me these words, which
she had written shortly before her death - to be used on
the 'return thanks' cardher sons would soon be sending -

" Ruth Cristobel Aroha Brown
5.9.1899 - 12.2.1981

Ruth asked me, in the brief time she
knew was left to her, to send this
message of appreciation and deep
gratitude to you for sharing all those
things that have made your friendship
more precious than any earthly possession.
She leaves her fondest love with you all,
hoping for a new world, a wider outlook
and knowledge, encompassing all to
begin again."

BEXLEY'S FIRST G.P. STAYED FOR 47 YEARS...

- St. George & Sutherland
Shire Leader -
9th May 1985

An era ended on Sunday 5th May 1985, with the death of Bexley's first medical practitioner - Dr Bill Simmons.

The popular well-known medico, died only days before his 97th birthday, in Rockdale Nursing Home where he had spent the past 5 years.

Dr Simmons opened his practice at the corner of Herbert Street and Forest Road in 1919, and stayed for 47 years. When he retired he went to live in the family home at Vaucluse.

Born, William Foster Simmons in 1888, he graduated from Sydney University in 1913, attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, serving in New Guinea, Egypt, France and Belgium during World War I. He was the last surviving member of the Australian Nursing and Medical Expeditionary Force, South-West Pacific.

His wife, Edna, who died in 1977, served with the Australian Army Nursing Service in Egypt during World War I. The couple married in Adelaide on Armistice Day, 1919.

During his years in Bexley, Dr Simmons was a familiar figure as he drove around the district in his T-model Ford.

In the Depression years and later, many of his patients paid him with vegetables and fruit grown in their backyards.

He became one of the first honararies at St. George Cottage Hospital at Kogarah. Having delivered 2,500 babies, he stopped counting the score at that stage.

Apart from the hard work of his practice, Dr Simmons was active in many areas of his profession, holding positions including federal treasurer of the British Medical Association (a fore-runner of the Australian Medical Association); secretary of Illawarra Suburbs Medical Association; director of the Medical Benefits Fund, of which he was a founder.

During World War II, he was a director of Medical Manpower and in this capacity was an advisor to prime ministers - Curtin, Chifley and Menzies and to Sir Earl Page, then Health Minister. At the end of the war, Dr Simmons assisted in the re-location of doctors.

From 1957 to 1964 he was chairman of the Commonwealth Medical Research Advisory Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

In 1971, he was made a Life Governor of the Australian Post-Graduate Federation in Medicine, Sydney University. For services to the medical profession, he was awarded the Order of St Michael and St George, in the 1960's.

In his time, Dr Simmons had some close brushes with death. It was his wife's premonition that he would be killed, which prevented him flying home from a discussion in Perth in 1938, on a national health scheme.

As he travelled home by train, the plane carrying 18 politicians and medical advisors from the conference, crashed in the Dandenongs, killing all on board.

Some 25 years ago, Dr Simmons suffered a heart attack. In 1966 he had a second and more severe one, and in 1979 he had a stroke.

He leaves 2 daughters, Rosemary and Rosamund, and 8 grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

RINGING DOWN THE AGES

- Readers Digest
December 1985.

There is a magic in bells which is hard to resist. The first bell is believed to have to life in China, perhaps as long ago as 2000 BC.

Through the centuries, clay and metal bells evolved round the world, and in two forms - the open-mouth, like a handbell, and the "crotal", the little round, almost closed sort that we associate with a jester's cap or a child's rattle. The early bells, in China and India, possessed spiritual power. Their voices called on ancestral shades, controlled the weather, aided the growth of crops. Windbells tinkled from the eaves of temples.

Small bells, worn by individuals of any age, had a protective power. They were sewn to children's garments, and the little gold bells that we see on a baby's rattle were originally for this purpose.

For caravan and herd animals everywhere, the bell has been important. The sound of bells helped to keep caravans together in the dark and in dust storms, as well as invoking celestial protection. Llamas in the high Andes still wear them.

Great bells, cast in bronze, were of huge importance in medieval cities. They rang warnings of fire or attack, told citizens the time of day and presided from their tower over communal life. In time, Christian churches began to cast their own bells, build their own bell-towers and employ bell-casters. By the 11th century, churches everywhere had bells.

- Margaret Lane, reviewing "Bells and Man"
by Percival Price (Oxford) in Daily Telegraph
London.

Francis Bacon