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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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563A Princes Highway,
Blakehurst 2221

June 1986

Dear Friend and Member,

The June Meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday, 20th June, 1986 at 8.00 p.m.

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

Business: General

Syllabus Item: Mr. Ralph Skelton has kindly offered, at short notice, to take us to "Antartica" per medium of colour slides which he took a short while back. Mr. Skelton has helped us out on previous occasions, which we have enjoyed and you will enjoy this evening too.

Supper Roster: I am finding it difficult NOT to repeat the Roster. Would some ladies volunteer for this meeting?? Maybe some other ladies would offer to go on future rosters.

LADIES PLEASE BRING A PLATE

Mr. A. Ellis,
President & 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!!!

Mrs K. Hamey,
Secretary

Telephone: 546 3355

Mrs E. Eardley,
Asst. Secretary and
Bulletin Editor

Telephone: 59 8078

PEOPLE NEED PEOPLE

Having the freedom to do as we please,
Yet not hurting anyone else,
We all need at times to feel as free
as the breeze,
With nothing to do that compels.

But being involved with others,
Sharing, good times and problems too,
Joining hands to make a better life,
Are things that we also need do.

For we share a strong bond with all mankind,
And people need people, it's true.
If we would lead a full and worthwhile life,
Remember, we are self, but we're people too.

Myrtle King

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 |

[Sorry Book No. 2 - "Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway" is out of stock]
Not for too long, we hope.

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION AS FROM JULY, 1986

\$7.00 per Member \$10.00 per family

At the June Meeting will ladies who are interested to help on our supper roster please give me their names. We are short of volunteers, will you help please?

E. Eardley

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.

ALFRED CHARLES THOMAS - OBITUARY ...

- Dr W F Simmons
The Medical Journal of
Australia - 29th May 1971.

The St. George Historical Society recalls with pleasure the late Dr A C Thomas, and some members recall his contribution to the Society. Because of his early association and life long interest in the District, the following obituary is published.

Alfred Charles Thomas was born in Casino in northern New South Wales, on January 20th, 1892. He was the eldest of the four children of Ann and Charles Thomas, who was a general storekeeper in that town.

He received his primary education in Casino and later at Ballina, where he came under the influence of a headmaster to whom he always paid tribute throughout his life. At Ballina, he escorted each day a small schoolgirl, who was later in life to share his fortunes as his wife.

At the State High School entrance examination at the end of 1905 he topped the State, and in January 1906, he was enrolled at Sydney Boys' High School, along with C.G. McDonald who, 15 years later, joined him in partnership in general practice at Hurstville. At "High" he did very well and passed the Junior Examination with seven "A" and the proxime accessit in English.

Alf had always wanted to do medicine, and had hoped to stay on at school and get his matriculation after passing the "Senior". His father, however, had other ideas, and felt that a career in business offered better opportunities, than an academic one.

So, very reluctantly, he left "High" and entered the service of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd., and was posted to Campbelltown, New South Wales. This rural, early settled town offered few opportunities for any young man to develop any talents. The Bank Manager appreciated this, and encouraged him to study for the University matriculation examination as a private study student. This he did, and gained a pass which allowed him to enter the Faculty of Medicine. Seeing he had done this off his own bat, his father relented, and so Alf was enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine in 1910, one year ahead of his friends who had stayed on at school.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, the Senate of the University of Sydney, realizing that the Services would need a large number of junior medical officers, decided to shorten the course by eliminating the long vacation, and so Alf graduated in 1915.

He was appointed a junior resident medical officer at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, and then attempted to join the A.I.F. However, medical examination revealed a deafness which made him unfit for overseas service, so he stayed on at hospital as a senior resident medical officer, and then did a term at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children.

Feeling now that he was fit to enter general practice, he decided to do war-time "locums" so that fit men were released who were anxious to go overseas, but were prevented because of wartime medical manpower shortages.

This he did until June 1919, when he was offered a partnership by Dr James McLeod of Hurstville. In the same month he married his schooldays girl friend, Mabel Curry, and commenced practice in August 1919. He continued to practice in Hurstville for nearly 51 years.

At this time there was a great increase in population in the St. George district, and the number of doctors was insufficient to give a good community medical service. As a result a number of ex-service medical officers were invited to open up practices in various locations.

Alf Thomas was delighted when his old school friend, C.G. McDonald agreed to join the partnership in 1921, and for the next five years they worked happily together, C.G. taking a major interest in the medical side and Alf looking after the surgical side.

Both men felt, however, as the years passed, that the demands of the practice were so great that they must have help. C.G. had been appointed assistant physician at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, and the teaching hospital made demands on his time, which he felt was unfair to the partnership. So in 1926, they mutually agreed to dissolve, although using their special skills in a consultant capacity.

Each partner had to engage assistants to help in the separate practices, and these younger men always appreciated the help and advice they received from their principals. C.G. finally left Hurstville in 1927, and Tom (later Sir Thomas) Greenaway took over the practice and remained in it for the next 13 years.

In the meantime, Alf Thomas, with 2 assistants had been building up his surgical practice, and, having established his assistants as able to carry on, he went overseas in 1929 to Edinburgh to study and sit for the F.R.C.S.(Edin.). This he gained, and he did work in urology in Vienna and at St. Peter's Hospital in London.

During his absence overseas, the St. George Hospital, of which he was an honorary surgeon, decided to establish a position of honorary urologist, and filled the vacancy before his return. As a result Alf Thomas remained a general surgeon.

Shortly after his return, he was appointed to the new Canterbury District Memorial Hospital; the Alfred Charles Thomas Operating Theatre is named after him. Then, later still, he was appointed an active consultant to the Ryde District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital; his portrait hangs in this hospital.

In 1932 he obtained his F.R.A.C.S. and he decided then that, with the wide geographical spread of his hospital appointments, it would be wise to have rooms in Macquarie Street, for the patients' convenience; but he still lived and consulted at his rooms at Hurstville.

Having been turned down for World War I, he was one of the first medical men not on the active list to offer for service in World War II. He was appointed Officer-Commanding (Surgical) 2/5 Australian General Hospital, and left with that unit for the Middle East early in 1940. He served with it in Egypt and Greece until it was forced to withdraw, and he with portion of

the unit escaped to Crete and eventually reached Egypt. Unfortunately, ill-health forced his return to Australia and after a slow convalescence he was appointed to the senior surgical staff of the 113th Australian General Hospital, Concord, where he worked till well after the conclusion of the war.

During the critical years 1943-1944, when the services were in need of every fit man, and when men were refused for overseas service because of inguinal hernia disability, it is reported that in one period of 12 months, he and the late Sir Victor Coppleston operated on over 2,500 such patients, and Alf's record tally for one day, was 17. After the war he served as a surgical consultant for the Repatriation Commission on its Appeals Committee.

His work for the British Medical Association, and later the Australian Medical Association, covered an active period of State Branch Council membership, from 1937 to 1953.....

During his very busy professional life, ably aided by his wife, he found time to serve the community in many and varied avenues. He was a member of Rotary, actively worked for Legacy, and held high office in the Masonic Order. The busy Hurstville Community Hospital owes much of its success to his efforts on the Board of Management.

In the early 1930's he was on the Board of the St. George Hospital. The A.C.Thomas Lecture Theatre is a tribute to him.

When the Rockdale Musical Society was formed he was a foundation member and he regularly attended over many years, its productions....

His family life was ideal, and his wife shared equally with him in each field of community service, which called for their help. They loved to entertain and kept open house for many. The death of his wife in 1954, after they had known each other for over 50 years, was a great blow, but he carried on, ably supported by his family.

Alf had a deep religious sense, which guided all his actions and principles and could never be sacrificed to meet convenience. At the time of his death he was an Elder of St. Giles' Church, Hurstville.

His friends were legion in every walk of life and they all trusted and respected him even if at times they did not agree with him.

At the time of the onset of his final illness, he was a Senior Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in New South Wales and was still in active practice. He was operating only 3 days before his own admission to hospital.

Personally, I feel honoured to have known him for nearly 65 years and during that long period my admiration and respect for him never faltered. To his sister, his daughter and his two medical sons, goes our deepest sympathy in their great loss.

A POEM IS PENNED TO KOGARAH'S 100th...

- St. George & Sutherland
Shire - Leader -
17th October 1985.

Gwen Coxhead has had a lifetime of involvement in the Kogarah Municipality and is devoted to the preservation of its history.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the district she loves, Gwen has penned a memorial poem.

"Odds and Ends" - proudly prints it for posterity.

Kogarah's Centenary: 1885 - 1985.

Within St. George the settlement was slow,
Impeded by the river named for Captain Cook.
At last a crossing made the traffic flow
And in their turn the roads took on a better look,
Improving more from 1884
When railway lines as far as Hurstville township ran
And brought home owners flocking by the score;
And so it was new municipalities began.

Though Rockdale was incorporated first
Her neighbour Kogarah was soon to follow suit.
Her residents combined in zealous burst
And were at last to see their efforts bearing fruit.
In '85 municipal status was proclaimed
When there was much rejoicing and elections then
Were soon arranged; twelve aldermen were named
To be the trusted spokesmen for their fellow men.

With pride, successive councils growth have seen -
Not one alone, but many, surely played their part
Through years when times were good, or fair, or lean;
All served their given term with hand and head & heart.
This thriving suburb facing Botany Bay
Has seen one hundred years go by to change its face;
Prosperity has come to it along the way
And it's become an envied residential place.

.../2

It's residents have helped to make it great,
With some in sport excelling here and overseas,
And stars in other fields who scintillate.
Yes, Kogarah can point with civic pride to these.
Development from farms to many sorts
Of buildings - urban dwellings, churches, shops & schools;
Clubhouses, halls, facilities for sports
And all the needs of modern life -
Olympic pools
Where champions train; neat gardens, parks, reserves.

Car parks and seats and well kept paths & thoroughfares
Attest to ways in which the Council serves
And for its changing population cares.
Incorporation was a forward stride
To start it on its way, and thanks are due
To those whose chosen task it was to guide
Its course successfully the recent century through.

.....

WHEN BEEF WAS A SHILLING & SCHOOLING THREEPENCE....

-Elizabeth Fortescue
Sydney Morning Herald
10th August 1985.

" Australian Colonies

Emigrants' Information Office
31 Broadway, Westminster S.W.,
11th October 1886.

New South Wales.

This Colony is situated at the South-east of Australia,
and is 2½ times the size of Great Britain.

The time taken on the voyage is about 52 days by steamer;
by sailing vessel about 3 months.

The climate is somewhat hotter than that of England, but
very healthy.

The population is estimated at 980,000, of whom more than
one-third are resident in Sydney and the suburbs.

The males are in excess of the females by more than 100,000.

The principal products of the Colony are wool, coal, silver,
tin, iron, copper and gold.

Every religious body is represented as in England; there are
some 1,600 places of worship. "

-extracts from the emigration brochure of 1886.

It is the England of 1886, and making a new life in the colony
of New South Wales, suddenly attracts you. You buy third-class
passage on a steamer for your family at 21 pounds each, and
52 days after waving your friends goodbye, you disembark in
a strange new world.

You immediately rent a modest cottage in Sydney's suburbs for
about 11 shillings a week, and set out to find work.

You find a job as a bricklayer fairly quickly, with a wage of
12 shillings a day.

For that, you can afford a pair of strong boots (six shillings
and sixpence), a pound of cheese (one shilling), a pound of
bacon (tenpence), two pounds of beef (a shilling), two loaves
of bread (sixpence), and a pound of butter (two shillings).

Your modern equivalent now earns an award wage of \$69.24 a
day (before tax, but without site allowances and fares).

For that - going by the advertisements, in this week's
newspapers - he can buy an electronic toaster (\$29.95),
a bottle of Scotch (\$12.99), 1kg rump steak (\$4.39),

300g instant coffee (\$4.14), three pasties (\$.00), two barbecued chickens (\$8.00), one frozen chicken (\$4.49), 250g butter (69 cents) and a pair of work socks (\$1.33). He still has enough left over for a couple of packets of cigarettes.

Back in the colony your family is finding that the climate is far from being "somewhat hotter than that of England," but very healthy", and is quite unsuited to the heavy clothing they were used to at home.

Soon your children are enrolled in a government school which is compulsory and costs threepence a week for those who can pay.

This portrait of life in Sydney in 1886, can be gleaned from a document turned over to the Mitchell Library recently by an architect and former State ALP MP, Ralph Brading.

The document is headed "Australasian Colonies" and dated "October 11, 1886. In today's terms it is an advertising brochure selling the colony to the English people.

"My father found it about 20 years ago in the roof of a house in St. Leonards, along with several letters from England indicating the original owner of the document was a carpenter," Mr Brading said.

It provided general information, like population (estimated at 980,000, with males outnumbering females by more than 100,000), products (wool, coal, silver, tin iron, copper and gold), religion (the colony had about 1,600 places of worship), banking (savings banks and building societies "will be found plentifully scattered over the Colony"), and post (a mail was despatched to and received from Sydney every week. Letters to and from England were charged at sixpence for 1/2 oz.)

The brochure also told intending pioneers that the colony had more than 1,700 miles of railway, 50 hospitals and 8 benevolent institutions.

It said that English money was used throughout the colony and listed 26 occupations and the corresponding wage. These included: nursemaid 30 to 39 pounds a year, with board; married couples without children for agricultural stations, 65 to 80 pounds a year with board; shoemakers 35 to 60 shillings a week.

"There is little demand for labour; the best opening is for persons connected with the building trade, railway and agricultural labourers, and single female domestic servants," the brochure said.

Immigration was responsible for nearly 30% of Australia's population increase between 1861 and 1900.....