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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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BIRCHGROVE. 2041

December, 1986.

Dear Friend and Member,

The December Meeting will be held as follows:-

- Date: Friday, December 19th, 1986, at 8.00 p.m.
- Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
- Business: General.
- Syllabus Item: 'Peter's Pot-Pourri.' A December Special, which you are sure to enjoy.
- Supper Roster: Miss Dorothy Row, and all who are able to help.

A Very Efficient Team

This is the time of the year when the Ladies really excell themselves.

Thank you Ladies

Mr. A. Ellis, <u>President & Research Officer.</u> Phone: 587 1159	Mrs. B. Perkins, <u>Publicity Officer.</u> Phone: 587 9164	Mrs. K. Hamey, <u>Secretary.</u> Phone: 818 4954
Mrs. E. Wright, <u>Treasurer.</u> Phone: 599 4884	Mrs. K. Hamey, <u>Social Secretary.</u> Phone: 818 4954	Mrs. E. Eardley, <u>Bulletin Editor.</u> Phone: 59 8078
Miss D. Row, <u>Assistant Treasurer.</u>		

Life is sweet just because of the friends we have made,
And the things which in common we share,
We want to live on, not because of ourselves, but because of the
people who care,
It's giving and doing for somebody else, on this all lifes splendour
depends,
All the joys of the world, when you've summed it all up,
Are found in the keeping of friends.

..... Friendship Book, Anon.

To all of our Members and Friends, a safe and happy Christmas.
This is my wish for you.

Arthur Ellis (President).

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well. Our best wishes to all for a speedy recovery. On a sad note, Mrs. Alcott, who has been a Member for so many years is no longer with us. To her family, our deepest sympathy.

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 818 4954

NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION AS FROM JULY, 1986 (Have you overlooked yours???)

\$7.00 per Member \$10.00 per family

Will any other ladies who are interested to help on our supper roster please give me their names. We need volunteers. Will you help please?

E. Eardley.

THE MYSTERIOUS BIRTH OF OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM...

- Warren Bebbington
Musicologist
Canberra School of Music.
- Sydney Morning Herald
26th January 1985.

The origin of "Advance Australia Fair" still puzzles. There are at least 9 German folk songs, some dating from early 18th century, which in their first halves are all but identical with the first half of Advance Australia Fair.

The song - "Advance Australia Fair" - has been officially recognised as the Australian national anthem - but musicologists still are not sure who wrote it. There is even evidence to suggest that our anthem melody is not an original composition, but based on older German tunes, sung even before the First Fleet arrived in Australia.

Despite its publication as an Australian composition nearly a century ago, "Advance Australia" seems to have origins in the anonymous Germanfolk songs of the 18th century.

"Advance Australia" was already widely accepted as an Australian national song at the time of Federation. It was sung by massed choirs at the Inauguration of the Commonwealth in 1901, it was taught and sung in many schools of the day, it was being referred to as the national anthem by the NSW Premier in 1907, and by the end of the Great War, the publisher, W.H.Paling, printed it in a group with "God Save the Queen and God Defence New Zealand", as the 3 greatest national songs of the British Empire.

The man generally identified as the composer of "Advance Australia Fair", is Peter Dodds McCormick (1834 - 1916), a Scotsman who arrived in Australia on February 21, 1855. A staunch Presbyterian, he found work in Sydney teaching in the Presbyterian schools established by John Dunmore Lang and became active as a choirmaster for several of the city's churches. While teaching at the Palmer Street School in 1877, he published "in affectionate remembrance of Mary Elizabeth Small", a quaint poetic memorial to a pupil who had died suddenly at 10.

McCormick taught "Advance Australia" to the children at the Palmer Street School: this is attested by another pupil, Mary Elizabeth Small's younger sister - Florence Poulton (1880-1955).

He also arranged the first public performance of the work, at a Loyal Orange Lodge ceremony in Sydney on July 12, 1878, which was favourably reviewed soon after in the local newspapers.

On August 1, 1913, when he was nearly 80, McCormick wrote a letter with his account of how he had composed the work, and on September 3, 1915, he formally established his copyright by lodging a postcard edition of the song with the Copyright Office in Sydney.

Yet, McCormick's claim to the piece has never been beyond all dispute. Descendants of some families connected with

That no exact version of the melody can be found among old folksongs is not of great significance. Folk songs are learned by rote and preserved in the memory, and many variations can occur as one singer passes a melody to another. Indeed, McCormick himself, had the melody fixed in his mind, and wrote it out only later. "It seemed to me like an inspiration", he wrote, "and I wrote the words and music with the greatest ease." In fact, the writing for him involved only transcribing into notation what was fully formed in his mind: he "tried it on an instrument next morning and found it correct."

Could it be that, unknown to himself, he was not composing at all but simply recalling a melody he had heard long ago?

It seems likely that McCormick was not composing something new, but passing on a variant of a melody that was found in the folk traditions of a number of European communities.

If the melody was not uniquely Australian, the text is a different matter. With its references to the "radiant Southern Cross", "gallant Cook", and the brotherhood of English, Scots, and Irish settlers, there is no need to doubt that it was written in Australia.

Nevertheless, it is significant that the first verse differs markedly from the others. Its half-line rhyming patterns (soil/toil, page/stage) are not imitated in the latter verses; furthermore, the rhythm of the later verses frequently collides with the music. In the second "Albion" is set to two syllables instead of three, and "of" has an ugly stress, while in verse three, the phrases "of the globe", and "renown and shine", are ill-matched to the melody. Verse four is rather better - but in this verse McCormick acknowledges "improvements" made by Professor Stuart Blackie of Edinburgh.

The differences between the first verse and the others may have been caused simply because they were written at different times: McCormick himself implied this when he wrote, "on the way home in a bus I concocted the first verse of my song, and when I got home I set it to music". But could there be another explanation?

Could it be that verse one was written not by McCormick at all but by McFarlane, and that McCormick added the other verses later? If so, this would explain why, after he had written it down, McCormick published the song under the name "Amicus"; he thereby attributed its origin to McFarlane.

Thirty years after its first publication, with McFarlane long dead, it would have seemed a trifling matter for McCormick to claim that the name "Amicus" referred to himself.

Where would this leave McCormick? He can claim to have transcribed and popularised our national anthem - and probably he must take responsibility for the crudeness and woodenness of its later verses.

Writing his account of the origin of the song in 1913, when he was nearly 80, perhaps he had forgotten how he and his friend McFarlane, had arrived at a melody for the piece. If indeed he was merely recalling a folk song he had heard

long before, then the real identity of our national anthem composer, like that of so many folk song creators, will remain buried in anonymity.

To refresh the memory of readers - here are the first two verses of the National Anthem - Advance Australia Fair....

Australian's all, let us rejoice, for we are young & free,
We've golden soil & wealth for toil, our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts, of beauty rich and rare'
In hist'ry's page, let ev'ry stage Advance Australia Fair,
In joyful strains then let us sing - Advance Australia Fair.

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross, we'll toil with hearts & hands,
To make this Commonwealth of ours, renowned of all the lands;
For those who've come across the seas, we've boundless plains to share:
With courage let us all combine to Advance Australia Fair,
In joyful strains then let us sing - Advance Australia Fair.

IN THIS PLOT - THIS EARTH - LIES A MAP OF
AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY -

- Sally McInerney
Sydney Morning Herald
Good Weekend
19th January 1985.

"In these places beautiful monuments may be erected, but yet the dimensions should be regulated by an architect, and not left to the fancy of every mason - for thus, the rich would shoulder out the poor."

- Christopher Wren - writing in support of the 1852 Cemeteries Act in England.

Rookwood Necropolis at Flemington, established in 1867, is the largest 19th century cemetery in the world.

It contains more than a million graves, whose headstones run the gamut of funerary styles, from tall mid-19th century sandstone slabs with gothic crosses to modern polished black marble graves in the double-bed style.

It still has enough empty space among its 285 hectares to support a sizeable mob of sheep, which might help to keep the kikuyu grass from winding itself around the graves.

Its sombre name was probably not inspired by Macbeth's "rooky wood", of night-roosting crows. Mary Mackay, art historian and chairman of the National Trust's Cemetery Committee, thinks that it came from a murky gothic novel called "Rookwood", by W. Harrison Ainsworth, which begins: "Within a sepulchral vault, and at midnight, two persons were seated."

Who lies there? Among the gathering are thousands of - "Devoted wives and mothers"... Jack Lang, Roy Rene, Louisa Lawson, Isaac Pitman's brother Jacob (his epitaph written in phonetic shorthand), Christopher Brennan and one Reuben Hall, who - "died peacefully in the train at Ashfield" in 1895. Only time can sort out the true heroes: the ship's captain or the mother of 15.

The Rookwood Necropolis is a Mecca for genealogists and family-tree cultivators, but that is not its chief value.

It was unique in having a funeral train service from Central to the necropolis; the old railway spur can still be seen. Its old, mellow areas - very pretty when all the wild flowers are out - are fine places for picnics. It occupies a large tract of Wianamatta shale, which extends through the suburbs and is most covered by buildings now.

A survey in 1984, showed that 292 of the original 350-odd bird and animal species still survive in the necropolis, no doubt because it has been neatly manicured.

Because it is so old and large, the necropolis is a condensed map of Australia's history. Norfolk Island pines, bunyah pines

and sturdy palms - the trees favoured for cemetery planting last century - mark the oldest sites.

Changes are spelt out by the headstones. The way they are grouped in the cemeteries is as important as their inscriptions, and different cultures' attitudes to death and life, are reflected in the choice of styles.

On leaning headstones near the old Catholic church, settlers are described as natives of County Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary; beyond them are the new and roomy marble vaults introduced to Australia by the Italians, the present upholders of the faith, years later.

Homesick like the Irish natives, the Lithuanians displaced by World War II have "Far From Our Homeland" written on a marble slab in front of their cemetery.

The neat garden-like Baltic cemeteries contain doctors and professors who became exiles at a late age and had trouble recovering their skills in a foreign country.

The small Chinese cemetery consists of discreet red headstones. In some of the Anglo-Saxon areas, broken vases and bleached plastic flowers litter the graves.

The contrast between the new vaults and old graves is startling. It is also the difference between beliefs in above-ground and in-the-ground burial.

Some conservationists have suggested that there should be a distinct and separate area for the building of vaults and mausoleums, with all respect for the feelings of the bereaved and deceased.

In the eastern corner of the Necropolis, pre-fab vaults with pebbly concrete walls stand open waiting for occupants. They look as if they have been plinked down between the stately old palm trees without much thought for aesthetics. The graves in this area, topped by the occasional angel in a flowing cloak, are old enough to have been mellowed by rose bushes, yellow daisies and clumps of agapanthus gone wild. It is a peaceful scene, which is the whole idea of English 19th-century cemetery planning, after all. But the mausoleums are beginning to wall off the view and make visitors feel trapped.

In some groups they form miniature towns with main streets of imposing facades, while the old graves were meant to look pastoral and therefore soothing.

A certain degree of dilapidation and wild nature is desirable in a cemetery but there are a lot of chipped angels about.

Rookwood contains an elaborate system of brick drains, many of which have been filled in. In some cases, the headstones and surrounds have been removed from the graves to make mowing easier.

Maintenance is a major problem. The difference that money makes can be seen in the immaculately-maintained Australian War Graves area, which is funded by the Commonwealth.

Rookwood consists of 7 different cemeteries:

Independent -- Jewish -- Catholic -- Uniting --
Presbyterian -- Church of England -- and the crematorium.

Under the Necropolis Act of 1901, each of the 7 cemeteries is run by its own board of trustees. Naturally the 7 boards are not unanimous in their attitudes to running a cemetery. There is also a joint committee which consists of members from each of the seven trusts. It is responsible for roads, fences and drains and has no authority over the 7 trusts. The Lands Department is theoretically in charge, but has little say.

Because the trusts are responsible for all the roads in Rookwood (some used by through traffic) the high cost of labour means that they have very little to spare for maintaining the graves.

The National Trust applied for a permanent conservation order on Rookwood last year (1984) but the application was opposed by the 7 trusts and by Auburn Council.....

Under the Heritage Act, all pre-1900 monuments are classed as relics and cannot be interfered with....."Some areas are immaculately kept", said Mr Chris Pratten environment director of the National Trust. "It relates to the finances and the management structures of the separate trusts and to the ethnic background of various groups...Some set more store on the family unit than others. Rookwood displays the migration patterns of a century and we want to preserve patterns."

Mr Lloy Farrar, secretary of the Joint Committee of Necropolis Trustees, and also secretary of the Independent Cemetery Trust, said: "So many graves are more than 100 years old and there is nobody to maintain them. Wage costs have had a big effect." The trustees' report to the Crown Land Office, recommends, that there should be a limited tenure on grave sites.. about 50 years, as in Europe, where land is scarce.

"The accent would be on lawn graves, not big stone monuments... Certain things would be preserved for historical reasons. Historians seem to go for what's written on a headstone; they don't care where it is so much, so some of the old stones could be removed and set up somewhere else.....There's been some interest in the idea of a Pioneers' Park at the northern end, near the old churches.".....

Mary Mackay, in a booklet called "In Memoriam", published by the Historic Houses Trust of N.S.W., criticises the practice of removing selected headstones from their settings and somehow preserving them. She cites examples: at St. Stephen's Church, Camperdown, hundreds of gravestones (dating back to 1848), have been cemented along the stone boundary wall; At St. Thomas' North Sydney, "Most of the tombs have been razed; of the survivors a few are placed in 2 VIP areas, the rest are relegated to rows along a paling fence."

And in Pioneer Memorial Park, near Gosford, choice tombstones have been grouped in 3's and 4's like garden beds...

"It's out of fashion now to die and it's out of fashion to be buried," said an elderly man who, with his wife, was removing skeins of kikuyu grass from a grave in a rather desolate,

treeless area of Rookwood. One day a year they travel from Katooma by train, to tidy up the grave of her parents, his in-laws. They had brought a bunch of daisies, but the taps were broken and it had been a long walk to fill the vase with water.

Another man said: "My parents - they're way over the other side in the old Catholic section. I visited their grave from 1938 to 1970; that was enough. It got beyond me. Look at this mess. They run a mower past once in a while, that's all."

Away over the other side in the elegant old Catholic section, Mr Alec Jamieson and his sister were ripping more kikuyu from their parents' grave, overlooked by an angel. Cousins of theirs were weeding another grave nearby and yet another cousin, had just been buried in the plot beyond his parents', hence the impromptu working-bee.

Funeral flowers lay on the fresh earth and less formal calliopsis grew everywhere else. Blue wrens and peewees were carrying on as usual in the trees. Further on, two hares dashed from the old Catholic graveyard into the long grass behind the new lawn cemetery. There was a willy-wagtail amongst the Poles and a couple of sacred kingfishers near the Latvians. The continual sound of birdsong was punctuated by the distant click of secateurs or trowels on stone, from various plots where 19th-century solutions no longer work.....

The Necropolis Act was appropriate in 1901, but it needs to be amended.
