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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN

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6/9 Austral Street,
KOGARAH 2217

August, 1987

Dear Friend and member,

The August Meeting will be held as follows:

Date Friday, 21st August, 1987 at 8.00 p.m.

Place Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale

Business General

Syllabus Item Vaughan Evans, in his inimitable way, will tell of:
"The Background to the First Fleet" You will enjoy this evening, remembering travels a long way for our pleasure and enjoyment.

Supper Roster MISS DUNSMORE, CAPTAIN together with Mrs Mendoza and Mrs Loring.

LADIES PLEASE BRING A PLATE

Supper time is a most enjoyable meeting time and allows you to talk with our Speaker and each other.

There were a few changes in our Office Bearers at the 1987 Elections.

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and Research
Officer

Mrs J. Price,
Minute Secretary

Mrs B. Perkins,
Secretary and
Publicity Officer

587 1159

587 7407

587 9164

Mrs E. Wright,
Treasurer

Miss D. Row,
Asst. Treasurer

Mrs E. Eardley,
Bulletin Editor

599 4884

59 8078

The best preparation for good work tomorrow is to do good work today

Elbert Hubbard

VINTAGE YEARS

(Courtesy "Vintage Chatter, April, 1987")

As the years progress, you find that places are further away than they used to be, it's twice as far to the corner and they've made the footpath uphill. I've given up running for the bus, it goes much faster than it used to. It seems to me they are making stairs steeper than in the old days, and have you noticed the smaller print in the newspapers? There's no sense asking anyone to read it aloud to you, everyone mumbles so quietly you can hardly hear them.

It's very difficult to reach down to put your shoes on, they make trousers so tight, especially around the waist, I think they skimp on the material.

Even people are changing. They are so much younger than I was when I was their age. But then other people my age are so much older, well they look older than I do. I met an old school mate the other day who had aged so badly he didn't recognise me. I was thinking about the poor devil as I was standing in front of the mirror combing my hair. Damned mirrors aren't even as good as they used to be!

I've noticed as you grow older, you have so much knowledge stored away that it gets difficult to recall important information, like the Greek Alphabet or where you left your slippers. This confusion gets very annoying when you go upstairs to get something. Halfway up you realise you've forgotten what you were going to get. You have to decide whether to back downstairs and try to remember what you needed, or continue upstairs and look for something that needs bringing down. I usually resort to sitting on the landing thinking about it, only to discover I can't remember whether I was downstairs going up or upstairs going down.

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well. Our best wishes to all for a speedy recovery.

SPECIAL NOTICE

ALL BOOKS NOW AVAILABLE

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

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|--|------------------|
| No.1 "The Wolli Creek Valley" | Book Nos. 1-8 |
| No.2 "Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway" | \$2.50 each plus |
| No.3 "Saywells Tramway - Rockdale to Lady Robinsons Beach" | postage |
| No.4 "Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway" | |
| No.5 "Our Heritage in Stone" | |
| 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" | Book Nos.9-10 |
| No.10 "Early Settlers of the St.George District Volume 2" | \$4.00 each plus |
| | 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 | 59 4259 (after 8 p.m.) |
| Mrs E. Eardley | 59 8078 |
| Mr. A. Ellis | 587 1159 |

NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME

Have you volunteered for the Supper Roster? More help is needed!!!

2NBC-FM 90.1 - ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1987 - Tuesday evenings - 6.30p.m. - 6.45p.m.

- Tape 218 - 11th August - Sesquicentenary of Wm. Grant Broughton. - C. Wilding
- Tape 219 - 18th August - Loftus Junction & Tarzans Grip. - H. Loring
- Tape 220 - 25th August - Wm. Grant Broughton - C. Wilding
- Tape 221 - 1st September - Historical 1sts Railway etc. - H. Loring
- Tape 222 - 8th September - First Wool Clippers Bridge etc. - C. Turner
- Tape 223 - 15th September - 1st Gas Supply, Graving Dock, Naval Base - C. Turner
- Tape 224 - 22nd September - 1st Empire Games Aust, Air Force etc. - D. Sinclair
- Tape 225 - 29th September - 1st Aust. Motor Industry Jacaranda Festival etc. - D. Sinclair
- Tape 226 - 6th October - 1st Settlement Victoria South Aust & West Aust. - C. Turner
- Tape 227 - 13th October - 1st. Settlement Tasmania Overland Cape York & 1st to the Centre. - C. Turner
- Tape 228 - 20th October - 1st. N.T. Port, Settlement Q'ld, 1st Lighthouse etc. - D. Sinclair
- Tape 229 - 27th October - 1st University, Public School & Pub. Library. - D. Sinclair

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THE REAL STORY BEHIND ANNE OF GREEN GABLES...

-A Staff Reporter
 Sydney Morning Herald
 12th August 1976

"So many women say to me that they were brought up on the Anne books, that I think they have a certain nostalgic vale", says Mollie Gillen, author of a book about the woman who wrote Anne of Green Gables.

But Mrs Gillen, who grew up in Australia, had never read any of the famous Anne girl's books until after she went to Canada as a war bride. "Thge Anne books had a very big vogue here, but i was introduced to the Pollyanna books for some reason, and the Australian ones - Nora of Billabong, and Seven Little Australians" she said this week back in Sydney for a holiday with her family.

Her book, "The Wheel of Things" (Harrap), the story of L.M. Montgomery, which will be released here soon, was a 1975 Literary Guild choice. The 200 page book began from an article Mrs Gillen wrote for the Canadian women's magazine, "Chatelaine", when she was associate-editor and staff writer.

"This was an assignment in 1973 to do a story on L.M.Montgomery and then I had so much material it seemed a good idea to do a new biography; there had beenonly a very slight one done before. I got the whole book written and ready to submit and then I found 80 letters that she had written to a man in Scotland, full of all kinds of interesting quotations, and comments, and filling in quite a big gap in her life. And so I had to more or less re-cast the book in a great rush."

The letters, now in the Public Archives in Canada, covered a 40 year correspondnce L.M.Montgomery had with a Scottish pen friend. "It was just a pen-freindship, but she did open up to him becaue her husband (a Presbyterian minister) was not compatible and I think this was an outlet for some of her unorthodox views. She talked about what she thought about education, her attitude to religion... re-incarnation, spiritualism and anything to do with natural beauty. She was always reving about flowers and the sea and so on, and of course, she chatted on about her two sons. She was very interested in poetry too, and would rther have been a great poet than anything else. I think she knew she never could, but was always striving for it."

L.M.(Lucy Maud), but always known as Maud, Montgomery (1874-1942) grew up on Prince Edward Island, the setting of Green Gables, near Cavendish. The house of a cousin where she used to visit has been turned into a Green Gables tourist museum, with those famous "puff sleeve" dresses in an upstairs bedroom decorated as Anne's.

"A lot of Anne of Green Gables was modelled on her own childhood. If you read her letters, you find her repeating incidents that she has made use of in the book for either Anne or Emily, almost exactly the same," Mrs Gillen said. "Her mother died when she was only very small and her grand-mother brought her up. I think she must have based the strict 'Marilla' somewhat on her grandmother. None of the characters of course, were taken directly from real life but a lot of incidents were."

Like Anne - L.M.Montgomery - did become a teacher. Later she worked as a newspaper woman in Halifax before going home to look after her grandmother. "She didn't marry until her grandmother died and she was by then about 36. She had been more or less secretly engaged to the Rev. Ewan Macdonald for 6 years. He wasn't the sort of man that she thought he would be. She chose him without really loving him, because she was the age she was, and she thought that as he was a well-educated man with a similar social background, they would be compatible. But he turned out to be suffering from melancholia and was more or less manic-depressive and she had a very tough time of it. The only romance in her life had been with a local farmer. She didn't think his social background was good enough, but she might have been happier with him."

Anne of Green Gables, the story of the red-haired orphan who goes to stay with Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, at Green Gables, was written about 1906 and rejected half a dozen times.

"She then thought to heck with that and threw it in the clothes room. And then she was rummaging around there, looking for something and she fished it out, and thought she'd shorten it into a serial and, as she said, earn 30 to 40 pounds for it. When she started re-reading it, she thought 'it isn't half bad, I'll try once more.' This time, they took it."

While the L.M.Montgomery books are still perennial best sellers, she grew "awfully fed-up with Anne" according to Mrs Gillen. The Emily, Pat of Silverbush and Jane Stuarts series books were attempts to get away from the Anne sequels, loved and demanded by readers and publishers. She also wrote a lot of short stories ("very contrived, romantic and comic") and poetry ("sentimental and concerned with nature", while her two sons were small.

"Her surviving son, a doctor in Toronto, feels that her poetry was naive but he thought that her most distinct feature was her sense of duty. Her religious views were rather rigid, but she was able to evoke a real sense of warmth in the family."....

How many of the Anne books do you remember?

Anne of Green Gables	Anne of Avonlea
Chronicles of Avonlea	Further Chronicles of Avonlea
Anne of the Island	Anne of Windy Willows
Anne's house of Dreams	Anne of Ingleside
Rainbow Valley	Rilla of Ingleside
and The Golden Road.	

DEDICATED NURSE ENDED GRISLY ERA OF SYDNEY HOSPITAL ...

- Historical Feature
Daily Mirror
3rd January 1986.

Lucy Osburn's Long Battle ...

Governor Lachlan Macquarie's great monument, the Rum Hospital, was in a state of decay. Cracks began opening up in the walls and plaster fell away in sheets. From these cracks and from behind the peeling plaster nightly swarmed hosts of bugs that crawled over floors and beds and even into the mouths of patients too ill to brush them away.

And there was another type of decay abroad. Male wards were serviced by wardsmen who were usually convalescent patients and either unwilling or unable to perform the most simple tasks. It was just as bad in the female wards. In these areas the wards were attended by middle-aged domestics, always dirty and often drunk. Patients died at an alarming rate for many reasons but in 1867 the death of one man was pinpointed to sheer neglect. This was the last straw.

Stung to action the N.S.W. Colonial Secretary - Henry Parkes - sent an urgent appeal for help to Florence Nightingale in London.

The result of that appeal was seen on 6th March 1868 when 6 English gentlewomen, dressed in nursing uniforms consisting of lace caps and long grey dresses, filed into Sydney Hospital.

The administrators of the hospital were not too sure what to expect. These women, they knew, were highly-trained and obviously had their own ideas about how hospitals should be run. They expected some reforms. But reform is what they did not get. Instead the English nurses under Matron Lucy Osburn ignited a medical revolution.

In one stroke the intruders took over entire responsibility for the operation of wards and the care of those in them. The administrators didn't like it. And nor did the doctors who raged that the nurses were, without consulting them, interfering with their patients. And apart from that several members of the hospital board were outraged by the intrusion of females into male wards. Matron Osburn, they raged, must go. But Lucy Osburn had no intention of going. The hospital, she saw, needed her and her nurses, desperately and no one was going to drive them out.

As a result of her determined attitude, Matron Osburn, in time, won for herself a position of almost unassailable authority. And when she retired 16 years later, Sydney - as well as most public hospitals throughout Australia, were world-class.

One of the reasons for this high standard of medical care was that many Australian hospitals came under the nursing supervision of women trained at the old Rum Hospital by Lucy Osburn.

The story of this amazing woman's place in the annals of Australian nursing began in October 1854 when, with 37 other volunteers, she set out with Florence Nightingale to nurse Crimean War casualties. It didn't take Florence Nightingale

long to realise that there was more to wartime nursing than cleaning up the filthy military hospitals and the sick and wounded in them.

The great battle was against the ignorance of medical officers and higher authorities who found it difficult to accept the presence of female nurses in a war situation. Miss Nightingale fought for the rights of her nurses all through the Crimean War and by the time it ended she had come to a firm decision.

If dedicated and educated women were to be attracted into the nursing profession, she was convinced they must be able to work under rules that gave them authority in specific areas. Florence Nightingale was still in the process of getting her message across in England when conditions at Sydney Hospital reached crisis point.

Bed-bugs, cockroaches and other forms of vermin infested the place from top to bottom. Wardsmen couldn't even wash a floor properly and wardswomen were often too drunk to be bothered about doing anything at all.

One horror story that did the rounds in Sydney concerned a Solomon islander who died in Sydney Hospital. Other islanders who were also patients piled blankets on the floor, lay the body on top and set the funeral pyre alight. By the time wardsmen discovered what was going on the stench of burning flesh filled the place.

When a patient died because of sheer neglect soon after this grisly incident, Henry Parkes knew something had to be done. And that is when he begged Florence Nightingale for help. The heroine of the Crimea held a special affection for N.S.W. because this colony had contributed generously to a Nightingale fund set up to train nurses for public hospital duties. The only problem she faced was getting together a group of nurses already fully qualified. She did have a number, of course, but she didn't want to risk their health in a climate like Australia's.

Then in the midst of her quandry, a senior nurse at London's Kings College Hospital, Lucy Osburn, volunteered to take a team of 6 to Sydney.

Florence Nightingale wrote at the time: "Sister Osburn has nursed in the heat of Jerusalem so she will probably be able to stand it. Besides I'm told the colonists actually find the weather invigorating."

When the 6 nurses first inspected their new domain they were horrified. At the time the building was over-run by rats that had bred in the blocked sewage works at the building's rear. In the mortuary the English women found themselves staring at corpses with faces half eaten away by rats. In one bed rats tore away a poultice on a wound and began nibbling the patient's flesh.

It was frustrating for Lucy Osburn - given the title of Lady Superintendent - that when she tried to clean up the mess she made little headway. Most staff members ignored orders given by a mere woman. They accepted only instruction handed down by Superintendent John Blackstone, a board appointee.

As a result the following 5 years saw a never-ending battle

between two strong personalities for internal control of Sydney Hospital. Typical of the conflict was the occasion when Matron Osburn had gas ovens installed in a number of wards. Blackstone responded by having his staff turn the gas off at the mains. Yet, in the general scheme of things, the Blackstone-Osburn conflict was merely a storm in a teacup compared to the struggle that went on between nurses and hospital doctors.

Under a system that had been in operation for years, the hospital's in-patient accommodation was divided into separate surgical and medical wards. Theoretically each doctor was entitled to a fixed number of beds, but, because of the fierce competition for patients, doctors, over a time, had established their own set-up. Now, if beds were available, doctors could admit their private patients every fourth week. Thus many patients who should have been discharged were kept in hospital until the doctor's week came round. Then they were tipped out by wardsmen in the pay of a particular doctor and the vacant beds given over to the medico's private patients.

Lucy Osburn attacked the system and insisted 24 hours should be allowed to elapse between patients so that the bedding could be thoroughly cleaned. Gradually Matron Osburn and her nurses made progress. For instance, the obstinate hospital staff came to accept the need for cleanliness and ventilation. But if the staff began to fall into line the doctors fought back by encouraging their patients to flout the hospital rules. And they stuck to their argument that only they had the authority to order a patient's discharge.

On one occasion a patient turned out of the hospital for constantly smoking in his ward was brought back next day by his angry doctor. Lucy Osburn reacted by putting the man out again.

Clashes like this soon led to bitter divisions on the hospital board. The matron's antagonists said her arrogance would drive away young women who might be attracted to the nursing profession. In addition, they claimed the woman rarely bothered with patients, confining herself to stalking imperiously through wards clasping a pet dog to her bosom and inspecting the floors.

But if there was substance in some of the attacks made against her, others were petty. One was illustrated at a board meeting in 1870. The complaint was that Miss Osburn had abandoned the title, Lady Superintendent, on the pretext that people confused her with the Superintendent's lady. Instead she had adopted the lofty-sounding Lady Superintendent and took to calling nurses in charge of wards "Sister".

By stacking a hospital board meeting a faction passed a regulation that in future the Lady Superior would simply be called "Matron" and the "Sisters" would be referred to as "Head Nurses".

The battle raged on for 3 years with both sides putting their cases before Florence Nightingale in London.

One anti-Osburn group claimed that Sydney Hospital was the only such institution in the world where the Nightingale nursing system had failed to work.

On the other hand a pro-Osburn faction said that if the system

had broken down, it was not the Matron's fault. It was caused, they said, by the disgraceful tactics of her enemies.

One board member developed such a hatred for Matron Osburn that whenever he walked by the hospital in Macquarie Street, he shook his fist in the direction of her office.

The dispute became so bitter that finally in 1873 the State Government set up a Royal Commission to delve into the facts. That Commission was a triumph for Lucy Osburn. It found unreservedly in her favor and made a number of recommendations.

One was implemented immediately. The post of Superintendent was abolished leaving the Matron to take over full responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the hospital.

Long before she retired from Sydney Hospital and returned to London in 1884, Lucy Osburn had transformed nursing, not only in N.S.W. but throughout the country.

No longer would women, fearful of offending their feminine sensibilities, be afraid to enter a ward reserved exclusively for males. And no longer would some doctors be able to use patients as pawns to enhance their incomes and achieve a higher ranking in their profession than their colleagues who stuck faithfully to hospital bed rules.

By the time Lucy Osburn died in 1891, her name had already been enshrined among the great pioneers of medicine in this country.

From Column 8 - S.M.H. - 27th September 1977 -

"Police tightened the dragnet around Wolli Creek near Bardwell Park yesterday after an armed robbery at North Bexley Hotel. Three shadowy figures carrying small sacks were reported disappearing into the bushes. After much stealthy tracking the police swooped - to net a man and two women gathering natural salad vegetables."
