



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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6/9 Austral Street,
KOGARAH 2217

November, 1987

Dear Friend and Member,

The November Meeting will be held as follows:

Date Friday, 16th ~~October~~ ^{NOVEMBER}, 1987 at 8.00 p.m.

Place Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale

Business General

Syllabus Item

Mr. and Mrs Havilah, Members of the First Fleeters, and of our Society, will keep us interested for an hour or so, giving the history of "Frederick Meredith", who came out to Australia in the "Scarborough". History dealing with early arrivals in this Country is of interest and importance to all Australians.

Supper Roster

CAPTAIN - Mrs Thompson and Miss Wilding

Supper is the time we like to get together. Our grateful thanks to the ladies who prepare and serve the teas, and do the chores afterwards, also to Mrs Price, who donates and very often makes the prizes for the society raffle.

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and Research
Officer

587 1159

Mrs E. Wright,
Treasurer
599 4884

Mrs J. Price,
Minute Secretary

587 7407

Miss D. Row,
Asst. Treasurer

Mrs B. Perkins,
Secretary and
Publicity Officer

587 9164

Mrs E. Eardley,
Bulletin Editor
59 8078

The story is old, yet fragrant and sweet; I've said it before but just let me repeat:

New friends I cherish and treasure their worth, but old friends are the salt of the earth.

ANON

Walking isn't a lost art, one must, by some means, get to the carport.

ANON

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.

- | | | |
|-------|---|----------------|
| No.1 | "The Wolli Creek Valley" | Book Nos. 1-8 |
| No.2 | "Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway" | \$2.50 each |
| | | plus postage |
| No.3 | "Saywells Tramway - Rockdale to Lady Robinsons Beach" | |
| 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 |
| | | \$4.00 each |
| | | plus postage |
| No.10 | "Early Settlers of the St. George District Volume 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 | 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 230 - 3rd. November - Christ Church Bexley - C.Wilding

Tape 231 - 10th. November - Sesquicentenary of - C.Wilding
Wm.G.Broughton
First Bishop of
Australia.

Tape 232 - 17th. November - Sesquicentenary of - C.Wilding
Wm.G.Broughton etc.

Tape 233 - 24th. November - First Constitution - C.Abigail
First Agricultural
Show.

Tape 234 - 1st. December - First Police Force, - C.Abigail
First Census and
First Airmail.

Tape 235 - 8th. December - Birth of the Ballot - L.Abigail
First Art Gallery
First Bushranger.

Sincere thanks to all readers who voluntarily give of their
time to bring the weekly historical segment to air.

Hopefully programmes will resume the first Tuesday in
February 1988.

Author: Margaret Reeson.

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Parramatta N.S.W. September 26, 1818.

With my handwriting growing smaller and smaller, I have just completed a letter to Thomas. I started writing weeks ago.. then before the letter was sent we were thrilled to receive a letter from Thoimas, written 6 months ago. Poor Thomas had had some serious difficulties during his journey to England.

He wrote to Father about the high cost of paying to collect our letters when they arrive in England. To try to save him extra expense, I took the original 3 pages of my letter to him, turned them sideways and wrote another 3 pages crosswise. I hope he can read it!

Windsor, N.S.W. Friday November 6, 1818.

To-day has been such a beautiful, complicated and delightful day. I was invited to go into the country to Windsor for the laying of the foundation stone of what Mr Lawry and Mr Leigh tell me is the first regular Methodist Chapel in the southern hemisphere. (They don't really count the place where they meet in Princes Street in the Rocks, Sydney, because it wasn't a chapel in the first place and the seating makes it feel more like a tavern. Nor the tiny chapel the settler John Lees has built out on his land at Castlereagh, because that is mainly a family affair.)...To-morrow, we'll have another 20 mile long drive back to Parramatta. I won't mind if it takes a long time.

Parramatta, N.S.W. December 1, 1818.

The letter was handed to me privately on the evening before Mr Lawry planned to leave us and go back to Sydney. Ever since reading it I have been confused. The days are long and I took the letter with me as I walked in the evening under the fruit trees of Father's orchard. My hands were trembling so much that I could scarcely open it. But I opened the letter and he had written that he loved me....What will Father and Mother think? Will they welcome the idea of him courting their daughter? I fear they may not: a young, poor, Methodist preacher from Cornwall, with his family property far away, no security, a life of travel with few comforts and, worst of all they do not agree with his theology.....

So I took Walter's letter to my room and wrote a note to give him before he left for Sydney this morning. I wrote that I felt it would be wrong for us to have even a regular correspondence unless I had the approval of my parents and this I feared they would not give. My little sister Anne delivered the letter and I saw him ride away from our house with a puzzled and pained look on his face. I saw him go, then ran to the orchard to cry, hidden among the branches of little green peaches.

Parramatta, N.S.W. Sunday January 3, 1819.

At last, this afternoon we heard the clatter of hooves outside and a knock on the door. Walter had come. He looked at me

with a question in his eyes as I handed him a cool glass of juice and offered the basket loaded with apricots, nectarines, peaches and grapes. He spoke of how homesick he had been - "my dear parents and sisters so far away in Cornwall sitting at the familiar table with roast goose and plum pudding, the leaping fire on the hearth, where I have sat and been part of a family."....

He spoke of the laying of the foundation stone of a chapel in Macquarie Street, Sydney with Mr Leigh on New Year's Day. Our Methodist Chapel will be right opposite the fine new buildings of the Rum Hospital and almost next to the building planned for a Court House.

Parramatta, N.S.W. April 1819.

So many people have been travelling lately that I feel quite envious. It is a big occasion for me to travel as far as Sydney to see Walter, let alone across the sea. At least Father has given us permission to write to each other, though he doesn't want us to rush into anything.

Sydney, N.S.W. July 1819.

Last week, Walter and I travelled by long boat from Parramatta to Sydney for me to spend a few weeks with the Bowdens.... Mother and Samuel were with us, but we barely noticed them. We usually travel by road on horseback, in the chaise, carriage or by Watsford's coach. This time we joined the river boat at the wharf near our house in George Street....

Walter likes my beautiful new straw bonnet, which has just arrived from Thomas in England...None of my lady friends will believe that Thomas chose our bonnets..they are the very latest style with such high crowns!... Thomas sent us paintings, books, stuffed birds of paradise to go in a glass case, a paintbox and brushes for me and most treasured of all, a little New Testament which I carry wherever I go....

Our wedding date is not decided, but if I begin making my bridal gown perhaps it will come sooner! There are some of the softest little kid slippers, too, with their ribbons to tie and kerchiefs, parasols... Father won't mind, I hope.

At last, here in Sydney near my love, I have written plainly to Thomas about Walter Lawry. In the past I have mentioned his name, but now I wrote from the heart with complete openness. Mrs Hosking is going to carry my letter when she sails. Surely Thomas will see that I am not being forced into marriage unwillingly.

Not only Walter and I are in love, and Jonathan and his dear Miss Mary Rouse, but Samuel is in the same state. Samuel had been courting Miss Anne Marsden, quite seriously, but every time he even spoke to another girl, she was upset and sometimes was quite rude to him....Then Lucy Mileham came to stay at our house for some weeks after Dr Mileham re-married. Not only did she and I become special friends, but Samuel fell in love. Now he had been out to Windsor on visits and gained the permission of her father for them to be married.

Samuel came close to losing his life in floods on the Nepean river in March. The river had risen dangerously, flooding

across much of the Cowpasture farm land. Samuel went with a party of men in the public boat to rescue 2 settlers up to their armpits in water, but as they tried to row to higher ground the boat was staved on a tree, broke up and sank, forcing Samuel and the others deep under the flood waters. One, Constable Salter, was drowned and the others tore off their heavy clothes and swam desperately to safety through the turbulent waters. Poor Samuel was very shaken by it. It would have been terrible for my brother to have ended his days drowned on someone's stubble paddock.

Parramatta, N.S.W. October 1819.

It may well be that our wedding date has finally been fixed for next month. We are being married at St. John's Church Parramatta on 22 November, in a big family party with Samuel and Lucy, Jonathan and Mary. We hope our old friend Mr Marsden will be back from New Zealand in time to marry us.

Parramatta, N.S.W. 22 November 1819.

The candle has been blown out and the room is shadowed and still. Rain is still dashing against the window, but I can faintly see the outline of my husband's head on my pillow.

Today Walter and I were married. Such a bald, unadorned statement. It sound quite ordinary. But it is not.. it is not! I lie here wide-awake thinking about it all. How can he sleep?

Mother has been working to prepare our house for weeks, so that it is scrubbed and polished and relentlessly spotless. There has been much preparation of cakes and pies, soups and meats, fruits and breads, pickles and sauces. The outside kitchen has been hot with the constant stoking of cooking-fires to prepare mountains of food for our guests. Inside there was the polishing of the silver and brass and the gathering of sheaves of flowers.

Lucy and Mary have visited me often in the past few weeks to work together on our wedding gowns, nightshifts and new dresses and my bridesmaid, Elizabeth Marsden, often joined us to help with the sewing. We have each spent months on embroideries - I made pointlace - and have stitched our gowns with the daintiest of stitiches.

Poor Father tried to escape from the centre of things by announcing that he was going to compose a wedding hymn - and retreated to his room!

When I awoke this morning, the sun was shining despite some clouds. "It is going to rain" Mother said anxiously.

By 8.30a.m. we were all at St. John's Church - Lucy, Mary and I, walking joyfully and proudly between the twin towers to join the men we loved.... We came out of the church to a sprinkle of rain, but all our guests were whisked into carriages to come to my paretns' house....

I looked at Samuel born in Coventry, Jonathan born in Tahiti, Walter born in Cornwall and the other brides and I born in New South Wales, and marvelled at how God had brought us together.

Quite late our friends began to go home. Father looked out into the streaming darkness and announced - "your certainly can't go driving off to Sydney in this - you must all spend the night here."....

Macquarie Street, Sydney, N.S.W. February 1820.

As I wrote to Thomas, I wouldn't change my place for all the riches of Peru.....

I like living here in Sydney. From our house we can see the brilliant blue of the harbour at the foot of the hill. One day soon I hope dear Thomas will come into harbour and I'll be the first to greet him. Our Methodist friend, Mr Scott, has given this house - how own is next along Macquarie Street, with the new Methodist Chapel being built between the two houses. Our cottage is very comfortable with an outside kitchen, verandah, a good garden and stables.

Our house is directly over the road from Governor Macquarie's new buildings - the Rum Hospital - with its elegant long verandahs and classical columns upstairs and down and the newly opened Barracks with accommodation for the convicts. We see the men going out to work in the mornings and back at sunset, small gangs going off under the supervision of the red-coated soldiers, some wearing the tell-tale yellow of newly arrived prisoners and others in the blues and browns of ticket-of-leave men.

Beyond our street to the south, is the big open paddock called Hyde Park (surely as a joke) where horse racing and cricket matches take place.

On the far side of the Hospital and Barracks the land falls away down the hill to a branch of the harbour, thick with scrub where wicked men are said to lurk.

It is not far to walk from our house to the nicest shops and I like to look at pretty things. They say that Mrs Rickard's Fasionable Repository has as fine a stock of lovely things as the smartest shops in Bond Street, London, but of course, they are very expensive. With Walter's feelings about money, I usually just look. Yes, I really do like living in Sydney.

I have tried to go with Walter whenever I can and have been with him on his December and January tours into the country. It was a good chance to visit my parents and my Parramatta and Windsor friends. Samuel and Lucy are settled out at 'macquarie Grove', but Jonathan's Mary is staying with my parents while Jonathan finished the job of felling trees and building them a little cottage on the land Father is giving them in the Cowpastures.

Lucy, Mary and I have had some private giggles; we think our triple wedding may be going to produce 3 grandchildren at once!

Sydney, N.S.W. March 1820.

Samuel Leigh sailed for England late alst month on the "Admiral Cockburn"...Walter doesn't think he will survive long. He wrote to his father about Mr Leigh: "I expect he will totter along for several months and then lie down and die".....

Samuel Leigh took a lot of letters to England for us - from me and my family to our Thomas and letters to Walters' family in Cornwall, as well as letters to the Committee....

Sydney, N.S.W. July 1820.

It is strange indeed to be the wife of a minister. All my life, the wives of the clergy have been contemporary with my mother, mature women with families who have considerable respect and prestige in the social scale. Mrs Marsden in particular, has been like a second mother to us all, despite being partly paralysed from a stroke ever since her youngest daughter was born.....

Some things about it are quite unexpected. Sometimes I have to stop myself from giggling when I see the preacher, the Rev. Walter Lawry, standing before his flock in his best suit and with his holy Sunday face, cravat arranged so neatly under his chin. In my mind I can also see him dishevelled, unshaven, relaxed, irritable, passionate or asleep - all the normal humanness of being a man rather than the minister.

The care Walter gives to the convicts, specially those condemned to hanging, weighs very heavily on his mind, too. Some evenings he comes home to me looking grey with exhaustion and tells of the agony of being with poor, terrified men in their last hour, trying to bring them comfort and hope. On days like this he can't bear to look out of our front windows across the road to the convict barracks, to see the parties of men going back through the gates at sunset.

Sometimes he spends hours with condemned highway-men, pick-pockets and murderers who go to the gallows quite unrepentant.

Recently he came home shaken but profoundly moved after he had been with 3 convicts who had turned to God in their last week of life. Before they climbed the scaffold, they knelt together on the grass and prayed and then each man made a moving speech to 6,000 convicts and military men there to witness their hanging, pleading with them to take the saving gospel of Jesus Christ seriously. He said there were many tears as his 3 friends went to their deaths singing a hymn. Even then, the rope broke on one of them, and the poor victim had to wait another agonising 20 minutes while they found another rope. The man had the strength to wait calmly, still thanking God for his mercy.

I have been watching our fruit trees and the wattles in the bush where Mrs Macquarie likes to walk at the foot of our hill... And soon, when the spring comes, the fruit blossoms will unfold, the tight wattle blossoms will open into a million tiny suns - and my beautiful baby will be born.

It was a late winter, then came the influenza epidemic...

Then came our last happy morning. Mother was here visiting. That afternoon I began to feel ill - miserably ill with aching head and throat and body - Mother put me to bed and Walter did his best to make me comfortable.

EXCERPTS FROM CURRENCY LASS ... (contd). -12-

During that wretched night - I knew my labour had begun.. but it is too soon, much too soon. I remember very little of the next days... "We have a little girl" Walter said.

Our beautiful daughter, Elizabeth, was so tiny and exquisite and fragile. She did well at first, premature but healthy.

Walter came to me one morning to say "Lucy and Samuel's baby was born last night. A little boy.. he is not very strong. They want to call him Rowland after his grandfather. And your father - he's ill. He has caught the influenza. The family want me to go to Parramatta to see him."....Walter was away all day and while he was absent, baby Elizabeth became very ill.... It was only very much later that night, when Elizabeth was resting a little more easily and Walter had returned, that he held me very gently and said: "Mary, I must tell you news of your family. Two things - one good and one very hard. Jonathan and Mary's baby was born today, a healthy boy - they are calling him Rowland James - and your dear father died this evening."

For the next 3 days our baby clung to life. In Parramatta my father was buried on Wednesday evening, August 30, in the cemetery near St. John's Church.....On Saturday kind Captain John Piper sent us his long boat and crew to take us and the small coffin by river to Parramatta. The river journey of 17 miles was silent and bleak, the quiet splash of the oars a background for our brokenness. Mrs Marsden sent her coach to the wharf to meet us and take us to my mother's house.... Then we all went up the hill to the cemetery.

Only 2 days after we buried my little darling, our family stood for the 3rd time at the graveside for the burial of Samuel and Lucy's baby son, Rowland, aged 12 days.

Parramatta, N.S.W. December 1820.

Poor Thomas. He has had sad letters from us all. Even Samuel wrote a long painful letter during the hours when Lucy was in labour and he couldn't find ease in any other task. I wonder if Thomas will come home soon to help Mother as her eldest son.....

Walter went on a long journey to Bathurst in early November with brother Samuel, while I stayed with Mother. He came back very excited about the fine country on the far side of the mountains...The road Mr Cox is building over the mountains is very rough - with great chunks of rock like giant stairs, thick bush everywhere, fine waterfalls and superb views... Walter was very delighted to preach at a Methodist service in Bathurst to 200 men. He is the very first minister to go there, although my father had preached there several times.

Father's will has been read. AT the time of his death he owned 2,360 acres, consisting of a number of farms with livestock. Each of us has received a portion.

To be continued in due course....

EMBROIDERED HISTORY ...

- Marie Knuckey
- *The Sydney Morning Herald*
- July 14th 1977.

Probably the earliest examples of Australian embroidery were the quilts worked by the early women convicts on their voyage from England.

Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker who did so much for prison reform, gave them each the patches, needles and thread to make themselves a quilt during the long months of the sea trip to the penal settlement.

Unfortunately, as far as we know, none of these has survived, says Diana Pockley. Mrs Pockley, who is president of the Embroiderers' Guild of N.S.W., has contributed the section on embroidery in the comprehensive guide to Australian antiques, which is being published by Golden Press in association with the National Trust of Australia (NSW) Women's Committee.

In the early years of the colony, when supply ships took months to get here, every scrap of material was precious, and was used and re-used.

Clothes, blankets, curtains - anything that became too worn for its original purpose - was re-made into something else, and every scrap hoarded for use in patchwork.

Fortunately we still have some examples of the fine hand stitchery done by flickering candlelight or lamplight during the early years of our history.

The embroidery dealt with in the book falls into three groups - patchwork, samplers and Berlin Embroidery or gros point.

Samplers were used to teach children how to sew, as well as giving them practice in learning the alphabet and numbers, Mrs Pockley explained. The child doing them usually included her name, age and the date on the sampler.

As conditions in the colony became easier, and the more prosperous settlers began to enjoy a more elegant way of life, the type of embroidery changed too, with the accent switching to Berlin embroidery.

But designs were re-creations of the loved and familiar, remembered things of the Old World, not reflections of the strange, sometimes frightening New World that surrounded them. Gaily coloured parrots were often featured, but not copied from the brightly feathered birds that inhabited the bush of their new country.

One of the pictures in the book shows a collection of flowers in Berlin wool work under a glass dome. This was worked by Elizabeth Syme about 1880, when she was about 13.

Jim Garaty, a bachelor of Newcastle, who now owns it, will pass it on to a niece when he dies. Elizabeth was his great-grandmother's sister. His parents died when he was young, and he was brought up by his grandmother. The flowers sat on a cedar table in her parlour.

"As children we used to get chased out of the front parlour in case it got broken," he said, "You know how old people sitting by the fire at night tell you stories of the old days. That's how I came to know its history. When my grandmother died I wanted the cedar table, so I had to take the flowers as well. The flowers are worked in wool and crepe paper and they are in a porcelain vase that is pale pink with flowers painted on it."

He thinks there must be several dozen wool flowers in the vase, from tiny violets to roses. "But you'd have to be a horticulturist to know what they all are," he added.

Elizabeth's father was killed in the Wallsend mining disaster of 1873, he said, when she was about seven years old. The house where she did the embroidery was an old slab mining cottage with a lean-to at the back and a verandah in front.

"They built the slabs straight down into the ground and filled in between with clay." Mr Garaty explained. "In later years as the clay fell out the spaces were filled in with iron." The house was still there five years ago, and may be still. "But I'd have to go and look to find that out," he said.

In spite of the fact that he took the flowers because he wanted the table they were on, Mr Garaty cherishes this piece of Australianiana. As for the dusting: "Thank heaven it's under glass," he said fervently.

Another picture featured in the book shows the Nepean receiving cloth (used at the birth of a baby) that is now in Old Government House, Parramatta.

It was originally used by descendants of Nicholas Nepean, who arrived in Botany Bay in June, 1770, in charge of the first detachment of the N.S.W. Corps. In 1791 he was stationed at Parramatta, and went back to England in 1810. It was brought back to Australia by one of his descendants this century, when she came here to live.

But only a few examples of the work done by pioneering women with their needles can be fitted into a book like this. Because so few Australian houses have been built with either attics or cellars where "junk" can be tossed out of sight, we have kept probably far fewer of the previous generations' treasures than northern hemisphere families do.

But how many readers have hidden away and forgotten - in old trunks, suitcases or cupboards - pieces of the fine needlework done by someone's grandmother or great aunt?

How many people today have examples of the fine, elegant hair-pin work, like a more airy form of crochet, that used to be done at the end of the century?

By candlelight or lamplight, in rough bush houses, in lonely and isolated station homesteads, in camps on mining sites, Australian women dreamed as they stitched.

Much of the time was spent patiently mending or making work-a-day clothes for the family. But now and then the artist imprisoned in the housewife was evident in the creative and decorative things she made for the house.

And it is these examples of homely craftsmanship that should be kept and treasured by any descendants lucky enough to still have them.

OF INTEREST ...

Mawson Deed Fully Restored -

- *Sydney Morning Herald*
- 14th September 1977.

Conservationists at the National Library of Australia in Canberra have completed restoration of an historic document which was buried under rocks in the Antarctic for 46 years.

The document is the Proclamation of British Sovereignty over George V Land, now part of the Australian Antarctic Territory.

The proclamation was buried at Commonwealth Bay by Sir Douglas Mawson, on January 5th 1931, during the explorer's third voyage to Antarctica.

- S.M.H - 7.10.1977.

Sound turns golden this morning, Sydney time. It is the 50th anniversary of the world premiere of *The Jazz Singer* at the Warners' Theatre, New York - the movie that launched the Talking Picture.
