



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Registered by Australia Post  
NBH 0335

6/9 Austral Street,  
KOGARAH 2217

December, 1987

Dear Friend and Member,

The December Meeting will be held as follows:

Date Friday, 18th December, 1987 at 8.00 p.m.  
Place Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway,  
Rockdale  
Business General (Short and sweet for Christmas meeting)

Syllabus Item

Christmas Treat - Peter will show some very special slides while the ladies prepare supper.

Supper Roster CAPTAIN - MISS ROW (if present)  
LADIES WILL YOU HELP PLEASE

Special Plates from all of us - with special goodies of course

Mr. A. Ellis, President and Research Officer 587 1159	Mrs J. Price, Minute Secretary 587 7407	Mrs B. Perkins, Secretary and Publicity Officer 587 9164
Mrs E. Wright, Treasurer 599 4884	Miss D. Row, Asst. Treasurer	Mrs E. Eardley, Bulletin Editor 59 8078

A Rainbow of Wishes

A heart full of wishes I'm sending to you, Wrapped in a bright rainbow of soft, lovely hue. And this happy rainbow will my wishes tell, For it's brimming with hopes that you'll all keep well.

Vera Hardman

Best wishes from the President and all of us for a bright, happy and healthy Christmas

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.



The previous part of this article ended with the reading of Mary's Father will, taken from the entry of her diary on December 1820. We continue with that entry.

Each of us had received a portion. Walter is rather embarrassed about it. Father had planned for me to receive his big Parramatta orchard, a house, 200 acres at Pennant Hills with 3 mares, 50 cattle, 10 pigs and 583 sheep and the great riches of £300.0.0 a year. Of course, as a married woman I cannot inherit directly and so it is in my husband's name. But Walter says that a Methodist missionary is not allowed to own property like that and should live on his stipend.

Mother would be very hurt and upset if my portion didn't come to me, so I said to Walter, "We can use some of the income for all kinds of useful things for the Methodist Society like chapels - it will be all right in the end." In any case, I am very happy to think that Father's orchard is mine. I have many special memories associated with it. Walter and I walked around it the other day and found no less than 19 varieties of fruit tree, many stone fruits, citrus, figs, grapes, berries and 27 peach trees! Walter is afraid that our new riches will be a problem to him - surely not!

So we go on with our lives... We have had to struggle with our questions and feelings about the loss of our child, trying to accept it from the hand of God and wanting to go on in faith.

Parramatta, N.S.W. March 1821.

A year ago, the future seemed to lie ahead, neat and predictable. Now everything is disintegrating and nothing is sure any more. I thought that in 1821 Lucy and Mary and I would be watching our babies learn to sit and crawl and walk together. But my baby is dead and so is Lucy's. I thought that Walter and I would often visit Father and Mother and Father and Walter would go on with their earnest but amiable arguments about doctrine and church practice. But Father is dead too.

I thought that Governor Macquarie would always be our Governor, or at least for years and years. But now, since Commissioner Bigge's Report on the colony, there are strong rumours that he will resign soon and his place will be taken by a new man...

Even Mr Marsden's seminary for Maori students has closed because so many of the boys were ill, died or were too homesick to work as he had hoped.

And I thought Walter and I would work on here in the colony, building chapels, winning converts, teaching children, comforting those in need and strengthening the work over the years - but even that may change.

To-day Walter burst into the house, clutching a letter and white with shock. "That rotten man! He couldn't bear to have me in the colony. I have just collected this letter from Mother. She says that the Methodist Conference of 1820, at the suggestion of Mr Leigh, has appointed me to Tonga!"

EXCERPTS FROM .... CURRENCY LASS ... (cntd.) -14-

Parramatta, N.S.W. April 1821.

It is true, of course. At first Walter thought that perhaps his mother had misunderstood the news from the Methodist Conference - London is a long way from Cornwall, he said - But no, the official station sheet for 1820 has arrived in the colony and Walter's name is marked down quite clearly... "Friendly Islands:W.Lawry..."

Parramatta, N.S.W. June 1, 1821.

It would be so good if I talk over our questionings about the mission to Tonga with brother Thomas... Samuel's Lucy is expecting a baby any day and Jonathan's son is thriving with two teeth... Folded into the pages of the letter I added a long, silky twist of my hair to show Thomas how long I have grown it. I admitted to him my fear that perhaps the baby I am carrying may not live.....

Parramatta, N.S.W. New Year's Eve 1821.

The house is quiet and still and I have time to be alone and think about things.. Walter has gone to Sydney... he planned to stay overnight for the Watchnight Service at Macquarie Street Chapel.

Our beautiful baby, our sturdy Henry Hassall Lawry, has been fed and changed and settled back in his cradle... He is 17 days old now. I can't but help thinking about our precious little Elizabeth so fragile, who died after 13 days of life. God protect my son....

Walter has been appointed to Tonga and wants to go, but I am not so sure whether I really want to go with him... Perhaps Walter could go alone, just to see if it is safe.. No, that is not what I want... Either we both go or we both stay...

Parramatta, N.S.W. February 1822.

Such excitement! Our dear brother Thomas Hassall has come home from England. When the news came to Parramatta that his ship was in Sydney Harbour, our whole family was all set to rush off to Sydney to greet him. My Walter was away on a trip to Bathurst with brother James, so I had the chance to be with Thomas first, before he met my husband.....

Port Jackson, N.S.W. June 16, 1822.

Today I stood on the deck of the "St. Michael", fat little Henry on my hip and gazed around me at Port Jackson, trying to fix it all in my mind. I know we expect to be home again in six months, but this voyage to Tonga is as strange and uncertain as a magical flight to the moon and I want to be able to remember that Sydney is real.....

Driving away from Parramatta last week was harder than I had dreamed..."I'm being silly", I said to Mother with a sniff. "Why am I being so emotional when I'll be home in a few months?". Mother held my hand tightly. She sometimes finds it hard to say what she is feeling, but after a silence she said: "I've been remembering. Even the filth of the Thames looked good to me the day the "Duff" sailed. Father and I didn't know what we were going to find either."...



A strong breeze has sprung up, the tide is right and we are ready to sail...Brother Thomas was comforting Miss Anne Marsden with more than ordinary solicitude, but that is very understandable as he has recently received permission from Mr Marsden to marry Anne....

They are now only tiny dots in the distance as the wind fills our sails - now out of sight as we move away down the Harbour...

Mu'a,Tongatapu, December 12, 1822.

It was hard to believe that today was my birthday. I am 23 years old. I remember happy birthdays in my mother's house with my brothers and sisters and friends...

Mu'a,Tongatapu, July 11, 1823.

We are still waiting. There has been no word, no sign of a sail for the past two months, though we are weary of watching.... If only we were not in such need of supplies and I were not hoping to return to Sydney for the baby, I think we would be encouraged to stay here for some years...

Mu'a,Tongatapu, July 26,1823.

The "St.Michael" has come, .... Walter came back with the first of the stores and with the precious bundles of letters and newspapers.... Thomas has married Miss Anne Marsden and Anne was expecting a baby in May, just when the "St.Michael" left Sydney. Probably I have a nephew or niece and Mr and Mrs Marsden are grandparents for the first time. Another family romance was that of Eliza, betrothed to the Rev. William Walker.. they were to be married in May....

Mu'a, Tongatapu, September 30, 1823.

So, when the "St. Michael" returns from this trading trip, Walter and I will leave Tonga together - sadly and to our surprise, rather reluctantly....

St.Michael, at sea. November 1, 1823....

I had forgotten in my anxiety to be safely on board the ship just how miserable a sea voyage can be.... Wouldn't it be wonderful if one could be transported by magic and take wings from Tonga to Sydney and arrive on the same day as one left.

Poor Walter is so anxious. He watches me intently... We are both thinking of the story we have heard of the Rev. Samuel and Mrs Marsden when they were young people first coming to New South Wales years ago. Their vessel was so close, just outside Sydney Heads, but a gale was blowing and Mrs Marsden was in labour with Anne, her first child. Mrs Marsden told me many years later how very nervous Mr Marsden was (though I find it hard to imagine him youthful and nervous) and how she herself had tried to stay calm to tell him how to help her. The ship was tossing so violently that he husband had to cling on to stay on his feet. Even as baby Anne was born, a wave broke over the quarterdeck, wetting infant and bedlinen. And all in sight of Sydney Heads, so very close to harbour. Wait, little one.

EXCERPTS FROM .... CURRENCY LASS ... (contd.) -16-

Port Jackson, N.S.W. November 7, 1823.

The rocky arms of Sydney Heads, the entrance to Port Jackson... This afternoon we disembarked and our dear family welcomed us. When my mother put her arms around me, I had no words to greet her, only tears of relief and a hug of such emotion that I knocked her bonnet over one ear! There was Thomas with his wife Anne and baby son James, sister Eliza coming to us with the Rev. William Walker on her arm and saying "I'd like to introduce my husband."..After 17 months of separation it was suddenly too much and I longed to be safely home with the door shut.

Parramatta N.S.W, Tuesday November 11, 1823.

The child is born..4 days after we sailed into the harbour. Mother and my sisters were with me, and the doctor and midwife, in the beautiful safety of my own old bedroom, lying on Mother's fresh bedlinen and a deep mattress of featherdown from her geese. Our daughter is perfect. We have called her Elizabeth Anne, for our mothers, Walter's and mine.

Parramatta,N.S.W. 20 July 1824.

Walter came home tonight after the meeting in Parramatta, stamping his cold feet and rubbing his chilled fingers after his frosty ride home. I threw more wood on the fire and he stood on the sandstone hearth with his back to the blaze while he told me the news: "Everyone agrees" he said,"I'm going to England on the 'Midas' as we had planned and everyone thinks you should come with me." I took a deep breath. For months while all kinds of ideas have been discussed about Walter and his future, I have been fighting a fear that it might mean separation for us...

On board the ship 'Midas'; August 18, 1824.

We have set sail and the coast of N.S.W. is only a line on the horizon.

On board the ship 'Midas', South Atlantic Ocean. 22 November 1824.

5 years ago today Walter and I were married.

Portsmouth,England. New Year's Day 1825.

Thank God we are safely arrived. After 4 1/2 months and 18,000 miles of sea across two vast oceans, today we put our feet on dry land again.....We have missed Christmas in England this year. A week ago we were still well out to sea and only yesterday did we first see the coast of France and sail up the British Channel. Next year I will have my dream of snow on Christmas Day, and roaring fires and carol singers wrapped in cloaks against the cold.

Tregarton, near Mevagissey, Cornwall. June 24, 1825.

We are being cared for so lovingly here with Walter's family and I find it easy to call them Father and Mother Lawry. Sister Emma is having to get used to having us and our lively family around, but she is a lovely, kind aunt to Henry and Elizabeth.....It is all very lovely, but I miss my family...several ships have come since we arrived and I keep on sending to the post office 3 miles off in hopes of hearing.....



St.Austell,Cornwall. December 4, 1825.

This is our birthday week, with Henry's 4th birthday today and 26th birthday two days ago. I woke this morning with a strong feeling that to-day will be the birthday of our new baby too.....

The lamps have been lit, the curtains are drawn and the midwife has gone home.. Walter has been with me and we have held our lovely new daughter in our arms.. 'I want her to be called Mary' he said, "but what shall we call her for a second name?" And so I said sleepily, "Can we call her Mary Australia?"

Epilogue: Parramatta, N.S.W. March 1859.

I, Walter Lawry have never forgotten that bitter Christmas Day, 1825, when my beloved wife Mary died... Months after her death, letters she had so longed to see, addressed to her from her family in Australia, came. I stumbled with them to her grave and wept. Wept because she couldn't read her letters and wept because I had lost her.....

Almost a year after Mary's death, letters came from Australia telling of how her family had received the news.....

That was all many years ago, and I am an old man now - 66 years old and crippled since I had a paralytic stroke....

The years have brought many changes. I remember writing to my good friend and brother-in-law, Thomas Hassall, explaining how many people had recommended that I should remarry for the sake of the children, but how I had not been able to bear the thought for several years....

Four years after Mary's death, I married Mrs Eliza White, a Falmouth widow some years older than myself - a good, kind woman who has cared for our family with great love.....

Eliza and I, with Henry and Elizabeth and Australia, sailed from England in September 1843 and arrived in Sydney in January 1844. We arrived in time for me to be asked to preach at the opening of the grand new Methodist Church in York Street, Sydney. It was all very moving to see the many changes in Sydney, with all the new buildings, and to meet again some of my dear friends from the past.

So many of them had gone. Of the Hassall family, Mother Hassall had gone - as had brothers Samuel and Jonathan, who both died in their 30s. James Hassall now ran the Cowpastures farms and was a wealthy and much respected man. Mary's dear brother Thomas was well established with his own Cowpastures property called "Denbigh". He was also Rector of St. Paul's Church, Cobbittee, which he described as "All of Australia beyond Liverpool!" He is greatly loved by his people and rides hundred of miles to spend time with people in lonely places - they call him the "Gallopington Parson". Mary would be very proud of him. Her sisters were now married ladies - Mrs William Walker, Mrs William Shelly and Mrs Robert Mackay Campbell - all three with large families. Both the Rev. and Mrs Marsden had been gone for some years and Parramatta seemed strange without him.



EXCERPTS FROM .... CURRENCY LASS ... (contd.) -18-

Samuel Lee died in 1852. None of the Methodist ministers were the men I knew. After about 10 years of deep trial and struggle my friends had all gone, a whole new team of missionaries had arrived and the work began to take on new strength under the leadership of Rev. Joseph Orton....

Our family went on to New Zealand...

My son Henry joined the Mission and became in due course the Rev. Henry Hassall Lawry - which would have pleased Mary very much..... My daughter Elizabeth married Francis Oakes, the son of one of the "Duff" missionaries and long-time friend of the Hassallas. She came to live at Parramatta and died two years ago, a young mother of 5. My daughter Australia, married the Rev. John Aldred, a Wesleyan missionary in New Zealand. After 10 years in New Zealand, my health was deteriorating, and my eyesight was weakening, so I became asupernumary in 1854 and moved back to Australia to live in Parramatta in 1856..... My good Mrs Eliza Lawry is here, growing old beside me - a dear, short, and stout little lady. Perhaps it is as well that she can't see how often I think of a slim young girl called Mary who once lived here too.

-----

The Rev. Walter Lawry died in Parramatta on April 7, 1859 and was buried there.

-----

Acknowledgements: One of the special pleasures of working on this biography has been the opportunity to meet and learn from many people who have an interest in early Australia and the Pacific....Appreciation goes also to Mrs Lucy Marshall of Auckland, historian and great-great-granddaughter of Mary and Walter Lawry, who corrected family information and provided some family folklore.....Friends in the Uniting Church congregation of Central Belconnen in Canberra bore patiently with my pre-occupation with Mary Lawry and did me the kindness of listening and encouraging.....My family has been long suffering over many months... they have graciously kept on loving me, even when wife and mother has been confused about whether she was living in the 19th or 20th century.

-Margaret Reeson.

-----

The St. George Historical Society records its appreciation of permission granted for this moving story to be published in the Society's monthly Bulletin.

Copyright 1986  
Albatross Books Pty.Ltd.  
P.O. Box 320 Sutherland 2232.

-----