



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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6/9 Austral Street,
KOGARAH 2217

December, 1988

Dear Friend and Member,

The December Meeting will be held as follows:

Date Friday, 16th December, 1988 at 8 p.m.

Place Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale

Business General

Syllabus Item

Christmas once again. Peter Sage will present - "Expo 88" set to music. We all know Peter and I think we all look forward to his presentations, this will be no exception. Do come along, swell our numbers, and have a very happy Christmas "Get Together"

Supper Roster ALL IN TO HELP. THANK YOU LADIES. YOU ARE GREAT

LADIES PLEASE BRING A PLATE - MEN CAN HELP WITH LIQUID
REFRESHMENT IF THEY WISH THANK YOU GENTS

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and Research
Officer

Mrs J. Price,
Minute Secretary

Mrs B. Perkins,
Secretary

587 1159

587 7407

587 9164

Mrs E. Wright,
Treasurer

Mrs E. Eardley,
Bulletin Editor

599 4884

59 8078

The more you love the more you'll find, That life is good and
friends are kind, For only what we give away, Enriches us from day
to day.

"Best wishes for a happy and harmonious Christmas and New Year, to
all of you from all of us"

Arthur Ellis - President

WEDGWOOD - THE UNBROKEN LINK.

- Good Weekend
Sydney Morning Herald
17th October 1987.

"When Governor Phillip sent 'home' Sydney clay,
a 200-year tradition began."

-Louisa Costa traces history.

It is wafer-thin, the size of a small biscuit, worth at least \$30,000 and usually stored in a bank vault. Hold it in your hand and you are immediately transported back to the European birth of Australia. Those who have held it in their hands before you include Governor Arthur Phillip, Sir Joseph Banks and Charles Darwin's grandfather.

That something so fragile has survived 199 years is proof that the Sydney Cove white clay with which Aborigines painted their bodies could, as Governor Phillip suggested, "make good china".

The Sydney Cove Medallion is the first item manufactured abroad from Australian raw materials.

Its story documented in letters, links a curious assortment of people to the origins of white Australia; the Aborigines living at Port Jackson 200 years ago, a Queen's potter, a French priest, an English botanist, a poet and Australia's first governor.

Phillip had a box of clay sent back to England on the return voyage of the First Fleet in the late 1799. About 24 medallions, fashioned from the clay by the master potter Josiah Wedgwood, were returned to Phillip with the Second Fleet. Only 8 still exist - 5 in Australia, and 1 - owned by a private Australian collector, will be displayed at the Wedgwood Bicentennial exhibition - October 1987.

In a letter dated November 16, 1788, Governor Phillip advised Sir Joseph Banks that he would be sending the first shipment of "the white clay with which the Natives mark themselves. You mention it in your Voyage and l'Abbe Mongez, a very sensible man, and I believe a good naturalist, told me that it would make good china," he wrote.

Mongez was one of two priest-naturalists who accompanied the French scientific expedition under La Perouse which anchored in Botany Bay, earlier that year. He believed the clay, already being used by the settlers to seal the walls of their timber shelters and as mortar for the more substantial stone buildings, could be used to make tableware. Neither was suggesting the establishment of a pottery industry for the benefit of the settlers and convicts.

The interest was in knowing just how useful Australian caly might be to the British industry.

Wedgwood, who was already experimenting with white clay from as far away as Canton and North Carolina, told Banks, the wealthy naturalist who had accompanied Cook on his 1770 voyage, "that the clay from Sydney Cove, which you did me the honour of submitting to my examination, is an excellent material for pottery. (It) may certainly be made the basis of a valuable manufacture for our infant colony there." If it were not for the prohibitively high costs and uncertainty of supplies, Wedgwood would almost certainly have made more use of the clay.

None of the other imported clays received the attention Wedgwood gave to the Sydney clay. He had it modelled to make the Sydney Cove Medallion, a two-millimetre-thick white medal with a relief of four figures in flowing robes: Hope, attended by Peace, Art and Labour. Hope, represented by a female figure stands on a rock at the left before an anchor, the symbol of hope. She extends her right hand to Peace, who has an olive-branch in her hand, Art, holding a palette and Labour, a bearded male figure with a sledgehammer.

The letters discussing the medallion setn between Phillip, Banks and Wedgwood provide an unusual perspective on the peculiar way the English regarded the infant colony of New South Wales. It is as if this medallion, with its classical Grecian design, embodied all that the British thought they could do to refine the colony - to tame the natives, control the convicts and temper the harsh landscape.

"Wedgwood has showed the world that our Welsh clay is capable of receiving an Eligant impression", wrote Phillip when he received the medallions from Banks in 1790.

Wedgwood asked his life-long friend, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, a noted poet and physician, to write a short verse describing Sydney Cove to accompany the medallion.

Long before his grandson Charles explained how living things evolve, Darwin's flowery vision of Sydney's future hinted at a harbour bridge and a city of skyscrapers.

"There the proud arch, Colossus-like bestride
Yon glittering streams, and bound the chafing tide...
There shall tall spires, and dome-caps towers ascend,
And piers and quays their massy structures blend."

Charles Darwin married Wedgwood's granddaughter, Emma, after returning home from his famous voyage on the Beagle.

The medallion links a whole host of unlikely personalities to Australia's early history.

Its designer, Henry Webber, was the brother of the artist, John Webber, who accompanied Cook on his third and final voyage. Even Marie Antoinette makes an appearance. Two weeks after the French Revolution, in July 1789, Wedgwood made a similar medallion to commemorate the "glorious" occasion, replicating one of the four figures in the Sydney Cove model. Another variation was made in 1790 to commemorate Leopold II's accession as Holy Roman Emperor.

Wedgwood probably gave a few samples of the Sydney Cove medallion to his friends in England and the rest were divided between the upper echelons of early Sydney society.

There have been many re-issues since, including a late-Victorian version in stained glass for one of the doors of the N.S.W. Minister for Work's office in Macquarie Street. The most frequently seen example is the one beside the main stairs of the Sydney Opera House, produced by the Wedgwood Company to mark the opening of the Opera House in 1972.

Due to various mishaps, a second shipment of clay for Wedgwood, due to leave Sydney in August 1790, left late and did not arrive until 1792. By this time, Josiah Wedgwood had retired and the publicity value of the idea had faded.

Quick to react to current events around the globe, Wedgwood also made medallions of Voltaire, Rousseau, his close friend Captain James Cook, and Benjamin Franklin. The only Captain Cook medallion in the world, complete with a crack across the left eye, features in the exhibition.

Josiah Wedgwood, who more than anyone else was responsible for establishing the British pottery industry, died six years after producing his Australian medallions.....

Combining art with industry, Wedgwood made full use of the leading painters and sculptors of his day. He named his factory "Etruria" in honour of the ancient State in Italy whose arts, particularly pottery, were being re-discovered at the time.

At the time of his death, Etruria was probably the largest pottery in the world. Its name features on the Sydney Cove medallion.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NEWTOWN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH....1856-1956.

Leslie G Bennett
Minister.

In the year 1855 services were conducted by Rev.Charters, in the house of Mr Phillips of Newtown. The same year the Rev. Samuel Chambers Kent, M.A. of Braunton, England arrived in Sydney and was for a period the assistant to the Rev. Dr. Ross of Pitt Street Congregational Church and was at the same time holding services in the home of Mr Handley of Enmore, and also in his own home in Newtown.

After the completion of the first portion of the present building in December 1856, a fellowship was formed consisting of 37 members and an invitation was extended to the Rev.S.C. Kent to become the minister of the Church. He accepted and his ministry began just prior to the official opening of the Church.

Ministers of the Church:

1856 - 1872	-	Rev. S.C.Kent M.A.
1872 - 1875	-	Rev.D.Mossop
1875 - 1878	-	Rev.J.A.Alexander Dowie
1878 - 1907	-	Rev. J.T.Warlow Davies, M.A.
1908 - 1912	-	Rev. Absolam Deans, B.A.
1913 - 1917	-	Rev. J.J.Willings
1918 - 1920	-	Rev. J.H.Lewis
1921 - 1929	-	Rev. Mearns Massie
1929 - 1937	-	Rev.L.W.Farr
1938 -	-	Rev.L.G.Bennett

An Account of the Opening Services.

Reprinted from the Sydney Morning Herald of November 19, 1856.

"The services connected with the opening of this place of worship have been held within the last few days. It may be well to observe that this suburb is one of the Hamlets of Sydney, and is distant from the centre of the city only about two miles, being the first place on the Parramatta line of railroad where a station is fixed. A few years ago, and between Sydney and the Rev. Dr. Steele's church on the Cooks River Road, distant five miles, there were not half a dozen houses. Now embracing Newtown, Camperdown, Petersham, Cooks River, etc., the population cannot be much less, if any, than 8,000 persons.

It appears that a considerable number of the members and adherents of the Congregational Churches in Sydney and Redfern had gone to reside at Newtown, and have for some time past been anxious for the erection of a Church.

The Rev. S.C.Kent, the agent of the English Colonial Missionary Society, and also of the New South Wales Missionary Society arrived about twenty months ago, and very shortly afterwards, with the assistance of more than £1,000 from the Congregational Church Building Society, he fixed upon this rising locality for the purpose of building a church.

Two gentlemen who happened to own land there, gave an eligible

site, and the structure, encouraged by the contributions which, with great energy and perseverance, Mr Kent collected, has been finally completed, at a cost of £2,700. Of this sum £1,900 had been received and paid during the progress of the work, leaving only £800 to be raised.....

The first public service was held on Wednesday last. The venerable and reverend Dr Ross offered up the dedicatory prayer, and the sermon was preached by the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, from Acts 16:9-10. This gentleman only arrived in the colony about a fortnight ago, in the Vimeira, as the successor of the Rev. Dr. Ross, in the pastorate of the parent church in Pitt Street, and has, we understand, already created a deep interest by his powerful and eloquent sermons. In the afternoon, the sermon was preached by the Rev. Joseph Beazeley of Redfern, from Isa. 62:1. The collections at the close of these two services amounted to £226.....

After the services on the following Sunday, the gross collections were £300.

On Monday evening, a tea meeting was held in a large room adjoining and afterwards a public meeting was held in the Church, which was thronged almost to suffocation. After appropriate prayer to Almighty God for his presence and blessing, the Hon. Thomas Holt, a member of the Legislative Assembly, was called to the Chair. He was a resident in Newtown, and he called the especial attention of his neighbours to the fact that the beautiful Church in which they were assembled was raised, not by themselves, but by the Congregationalists in Sydney....

Their thanks were due to his friend Mr Fairfax and also to his nephew, Mr Alfred Fairfax, for the eligible piece of land on which it had been erected. Let them, the inhabitants of Newtown do their duty that night, and if all friends and neighbours joined together, he had no doubt but the debt would be entirely swept away.

The Rev. Mr Kent announced that the residue of debt was £500....

The collection was then made from pew to pew, and realised £162/2/6. This with Mr Kent's promise of £100, still left £237/17/6.....

Mr Fairfax then challenged his friend Mr Holt to take a fifth, so did Mr Ambrose Foss and Mr Fairfax.... The residue of £90, was then handed in cheques and I.O.I's, varying in sums from £10 down to 2/6, until it was announced that only £13 remained, whereupon the chairman - Mr Holt - offered his cheque for the deficiency..... A vote of thanks was then presented to the Chairman; One of the largest contributors to the church was Mr D Jones M.L.C; and Mr Holt had kindly given a piece of land for the minister's house"

A Committee of Management was elected and the financial obligations of the Church were first met by charging pew rents.....

By 1858, the new Church at Newtown had made such rapid progress that the building had to be enlarged.

The Foundation Stone of the addition was laid by Rev. Thomas Binney. In 1859 the first Manse was acquired. It was formerly the property of Mr Kent and was purchased at the cost of £1,650.

The development of the school which began in October 1856, necessitated the erection of a suitable hall. Land adjoining the Church was purchased and a building was erected at the cost of £1,700 and was opened in November 1862. The same year the Department of Education was granted the use of the hall. They occupied the building without charge for 13 years.

Lighting was first by candlelight. In 1864 kerosene lamps were installed. Four years later these were replaced by gaslight.

A choir was formed in 1865, and has continued with an unbroken record until the present day (1956).

The Young Men's Christian Association was formed under the leadership of Mr John Legg, who afterwards became a minister of the Gospel.

Congregations increased rapidly and the galleries were erected at a cost of £700, and the Church re-opened on 26th August 1868.

It is interesting to know that wuarterly rates for gallery seats were 5/- per sitting in the front rows and 4/- per sitting in the back rows.

The Rev.S.C.Kent resigned the pastorate of the Church in 1872 and became the minister of one of the Congregational Churches in Melbourne.

1882 saw considerable alterationsto the Church. An apse was built to provide for a pipe organ and the east gallery was cut back to provide for two vestries. The old ceiling was removed and replaced by a coffered ceiling, the pews were taken up and refitted. A new pulpit was erected costing £200, the gift of Mr George Holdship of Auckland. The premises were repainted throughout and an iron railing and stone fence erected on the front of the buildings. The total cost, excluding the organ and pulpit, was £1,928.

In 1883 the pipe organ, the gift of Josiah Perry, was dedicated at a special Musical Festival.....

In 1879 work was begun in MacDonalddtown. Services were held in a schoolroom and later transferred to Erskineville Council Chambers. In the same year mission work began in Enmore at the request of the Congregational Union. A building, formerly an oyster saloon, in the Palace Gardens was purchased and erected on a piece of land given by Mr Pritchard.

In 1879 it was decided to place the Church deeds in the care of the Congregational Union as trustees.

In 1885 the Manse, which for several years had not been occupied by the minister but let to tenants, was converted into a shop and dwelling.

In 1889 it was decided to abandon the letting of pews and to finance the work by means of voluntary offerings.

In 1921 the Rev. Mearns Massie began an interesting pastorate, the congregations increased rapidly until it became necessary

to have a sign made and placed outside the Church each Sunday evening intimating that the Church was full.

The Church was one of the first to broadcast services and assumed a widely spread popularity.

The Rev. Louis W Farr was called from the church at Bexley to the pastorate and served for a further eight years. During this time the Church was called upon to face the very critical days of a depression which had become world wide.

In 1930 the pipe organ was connected to an electric blower at a cost of £47.

In July and August 1936, the church roof was re-slatted and the front of the Church painted at a cost of £185.

It is understood that when the Church was extended the stone was covered by the additions. The Foundation Stone of the extensions is said to be under the steps leading to the choir vestry.

This history is written from such records as are available. Some records are missing and of necessity there will be omissions.

The name M.H.Hutton was well known in many areas, to many denominations. Rev. Hutton lived for many years at Carlton in his later life. Those who knew him will be interested in the following published in the Centenary of Newtown Congregational Church:

"My connection with the dear old Church goes back to 1891 - 65 years ago.

It was there I received my spiritual and missionary inspiration under the ministry of the Rev. J.T.Warlow Davies, M.A.

48 years ago, I was called to be a missionary and in 1911 sailed for China under the China Inland Mission.

One has always regarded the Newtown Church his spiritual home with very much gratitude to God.

M.H.Hutton."
