



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Registered by Australia Post
NBH 0335

6/9 Austral Street,
KOGARAH 2217

February, 1989

Dear Friend and Member,

The February Meeting will be held as follows:

Date Friday, 17th February, 1989 at 8 p.m.

Place Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale

Business General

So serious is the present position of our Society that this meeting will be devoted entirely to discussion on the future of the Society.

YOUR ATTENDANCE IS URGENTLY REQUESTED

Supper Roster Generous Volunteers

LADIES PLEASE BRING A PLATE

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and Research
Officer

587 1159

Mrs E. Wright,
Treasurer

599 4884

Mrs J. Price,
Minute Secretary

587 7407

Mrs B. Perkins,
Secretary

587 9164

Mrs E. Eardley,
Bulletin Editor

59 8078

When regard for truth has broken down or slightly weakened all things will remain doubtful.

St. Augustine

Prejudices are the reasoning of the stupid.

Voltaire

SPECIAL NOTICE

Although our Society has 130 financial members, attendance at our meetings has recently fallen to as few as 15 people.

We cannot continue to function without support and must now consider whether our Society has a role to play in the future.

IN SHORT WE ARE AT THE CROSSROADS - A CRISIS POINT

So serious is the present position that our meeting on Friday, 17th February, 1989 will be devoted entirely to discussion on the future of the Society.

May we count on your attendance and contribution to this discussion

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MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE - NO MEETING IN JANUARY, 1989

HERITAGE WEEK - 1989

16TH TO 23RD APRIL

LYDHAM HALL INSPECTION

Saturday, 22nd April and Sunday 23rd April 12 noon to 4 p.m.

Take guided tour of the furnished colonial home (c.1860)

Lydham Hall - once the home of Christina Stead - Authoress

It is the second oldest home in the Rockdale Municipality. Well worth a visit. Provides panoramic views of Botany Bay.

Entry Fee: \$1.00 Adults \$0.20 Children

HARGRAVES HOMESTEAD -- Historical Link with the past --

-Wyong & Upper Lakes
Tourist Directory
1963 Season.

An historic home 110 years old, on the ocean front at Noraville, which was built by Edward Hargraves, the gold discoverer 110 years ago, gives the Wyong district an interesting link with the past.

Hargraves built the home with money made in the gold rush days and it has been lived in ever since by his descendants.

Hargraves, who came to Australia from England at the age of 15, became famous for his gold discovery in 1851.

He bought a 100-acre property overlooking the ocean at Noraville and there built the famous Hargraves homestead which down through the years has always been occupied by someone bearing the Hargraves name.

The home is built of solid cedar with excellent workmanship except that the house is built on logs on the ground for a foundation and this has in recent years enabled white ants to cause some damage.

The home has six bedrooms, a lounge and dining room and kitchen.

Two big Moreton Bay fig trees alongside the house have become equally important as landmarks as the house.

Hargraves fell in love with the land when he lived at Gosford just before he "struck it rich" and kept his word that he would buy the property when he could.

All but 1 and a half acres of the old homestead estate has been sold.

Today Australia's gold discoverer's great grandson, Charles Edward hargraves, lives in the house with his wife and family and at the present time is carrying out renovations.

TROLLEY BUS RETURNS TO ROCKDALE

On 10th. December, 1988, a double-deck trolley bus ran through the streets of Rockdale, after an absence of nearly 30 years. A trolley bus could best be described as a cross between a conventional bus and a tram. It has a bus body, is rubber tyred, and its similarity to a tram is that it is electric and draws current from overhead wires. The almost-restored bus no.19 was towed from Tempe Depot to its new home at the Sydney Tramway Museum, Loftus. En-route, it paused in front of the former trolley bus depot site at Ritchie Street, Ramsgate, for a short reunion of several former bus employees.

The Rockdale - Kogarah - Sans Souci trolley bus system operated from 1937 to 1959, following which no immediate attempt was made to preserve a vehicle, and all buses were sold off, mostly for scrap, but a few for use as storage sheds on farms.

In 1977, bus enthusiasts located no.19 at Catherine Fields, on Sydney's south-west outskirts - just a frame and chassis - stripped of everything, with some parts scattered around the area. The State Rail Authority Apprentice Training College, Chullora, agreed to make restoration of no.19 into a project - and during the past ten years, the enthusiasts managed to locate compatible trolley bus equipment from as far afield as Tasmania, South Australia - and even overseas from New Zealand, Wales and South Africa.

The former upper deck of another bus, no.21, was subsequently located, having been fitted onto a home-made caravan chassis, and was in such good condition that it was used to replace no.19's former upper deck.

The college has done a remarkable work of restoration, and, although substantially intact, the vehicle requires some further mechanical work and fitting out, but hopefully may one day operate for the public at the Tramway Museum.



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1971.

I am happy to present the President's Report for the year ended 30th June, 1971.

The year under review was an important one for our Society for two reasons - firstly because we completed our first ten years as a Society, and secondly, because of the significant part we were called upon to play in the Centenary Celebrations of Rockdale Municipal Council.

Our Society had its origin on 16th June, 1961, when 12 people attended a public meeting called by the then Mayor of Rockdale, Alderman T. J. McCarthy, to consider the formation of an Historical Society. The proposal met with the approval of those present and the new Society held its first meeting on 21st July, 1961. There were 16 people present and Mr. Swan was elected the first President.

From those small beginnings our Society has grown over the intervening years and today our membership totals 230. A pleasing feature has always been the good attendance at our meetings and during the past year we averaged 82 people at each monthly gathering. Our record attendance was achieved in February when no less than 103 people were present to hear an address by Mr. R. Stark, Town Clerk of Rockdale - a far cry from the 16 at that first meeting!

In accordance with the wishes of members we met in January this year, which was a departure from our normal practice of holding the first meeting in the new year in the following month. The number of members in attendance, totalling 88, justified this decision.

Various outings were arranged to places of historical interest and received the support of members. These have always proved popular, especially since we adopted the practice of travelling by bus which allows members more opportunity to fraternise than is the case when travelling by private cars. It was unfortunate that our proposed outing to "Everglades" at Leura had to be cancelled because of bad weather.

During the Eight Hour Holiday Weekend last October, over 40 members went on a three day tour to Wellington and Gulgong. This proved a great success; so much so that plans are now in hand to undertake a similar tour to Braidwood at the same time this year.

With regard to the Centenary Celebrations, many members dressed in period costume and travelled on the Vintage Train from Sydneham to Rockdale. We also arranged an Historical Exhibition in Rockdale Town Hall which proved an outstanding success, so much so that the hours during which the display was open had to be extended to accommodate all those wishing to attend.

Our Society also undertook to assist with the preparation of Council's Centenary Book. A number of members were engaged on this work for some eighteen months prior to the Celebrations and the result of their efforts may be seen in the book "A Century of Progress". This is a fine publication which has been well received.

To mark the Centenary of the Municipality, Rockdale Council purchased the old home "Lydham Hall" for use as an Historical Museum, and our Society undertook the task of restoring the interior of the building. This involved certain members in sheer physical hard work over a long period and under trying conditions. That the task was performed so well and also completed in time for the official opening is a great tribute to the small band of people who so unselfishly gave of their time and energy to perform a difficult and unfamiliar undertaking.

It also became necessary to raise funds to finance the refurbishing of "Lydham Hall" and a Ladies Fund Raising Committee was formed for this purpose. I cannot speak too highly of the efforts of this small group of members. By their enthusiasm, untiring efforts and incredible desire to help they raised \$2,320 in just eleven months. They staged the North Shore Cavalcade of Fashion in the Town Hall and by this means alone made a net profit of approximately \$400. These ladies are deserving of our admiration and grateful thanks.

We are also greatly indebted to our office bearers for the work they have performed during the year. I would like to mention particularly our Secretary and Assistant Secretary. Coupled with the increase in membership and the Centenary Celebrations, the duties we have asked these ladies to perform have increased considerably during the past year. This means that busy people are called upon to devote more of their limited leisure time in the cause of our Society, and we must never take them for granted for they are deserving of our utmost thanks.

An important feature of our Society has been the opportunity to gather at supper after the meeting and thus get to know fellow members. I would particularly like to thank the ladies on the supper roster, who so kindly and so uncomplainingly undertake this rather tiresome task.

I have always thought that the strength and progress of our Society have been due in no small measure to the ability of members to work and fraternise in a harmonious atmosphere, placing the welfare of the Society before their own interests. I trust that this spirit will continue, and that the Society will grow and progress accordingly.

D. Sinclair.