



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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6/9 Austral Street,  
KOGARAH 2217

July, 1989

Dear Friend and Member,

The July Meeting will be held as follows:

Date Friday, 21st July, 1989 at 8 p.m.

Place Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale

Business Annual General Meeting - Election of Office Bearers  
1989/90.

**See Special Notice attached, for Committee of Management  
and Members**

Syllabus Item As time permits

Supper Roster Will you please volunteer to help????

LADIES, WE DEPEND ON YOUR GENEROSITY TO PROVIDE THE GOODIES  
OUR FELLOW MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ENJOY. THANK YOU LADIES.

Mr. A. Ellis,  
President and Research  
Officer  
587 1159

Mrs J. Price,  
Minute Secretary  
587 7407

Mrs B. Perkins,  
Secretary  
587 9164

Mrs E. Wright,  
Treasurer  
599 4884

Mrs E. Eardley,  
Bulletin Editor  
59 8078

Knowledge is experience remembered, but wisdom is experience  
understood.

Quote by Lord Samuel

In my reading I came across these thought provoking lines.

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed?  
Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?  
Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?  
Or stay at home in comfort to criticise and knock?  
Do you take an active part to help the work along?  
Or are you merely satisfied just simply to belong?  
Think it over Members, you know right from wrong -  
Are you an active member or do you just belong?

**SPECIAL NOTICE**

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE will meet at 7.00 p.m. prior to the Annual General Meeting, in the Council Chambers, Rockdale Town Hall on Friday, 21st July, 1989. The reason for meeting is to consider the analysis of the 10 questionnaires returned.

**NOTICE FOR MEMBERS**

The following positions will need to be considered prior to the meeting. Each Officer concerned has indicated inability to stand for renomination this year.

1. The President - Mr. A. Ellis
2. The Treasurer - Mrs E. Wright
3. The Minute Secretary - Mrs Joan Price

Replacements will be needed.

We are sorry to hear of Mrs Price's illness and sincerely trust that she is much improved.

THE "LOST" ILLAWARRA ROAD ...

Arncliffe Progress  
Association News  
Vol.13. No.6  
March 1966

Supplied by Mrs E Eardley 1987.

In the pioneer period of Arncliffe, there was another road, (other than the original Rocky Point Road), if such could be called a road, which became the bane of the early waggon teams and settlers and was also subsequently abandoned.

It is interesting to note that the location of this notorious piece of track was only recently revealed as a result of the researches of a local historical enthusiast and its discovery has filled in an important segment of early local history.

The "lost" road formed the initial portion of the famous Wollongong Road or as it was shown on very early maps - "Mitchell's line of road to Illawarra" - or called simply the Illawarra Road, (commenced about 1843).

The road branched off from the then Rocky Point Road (now Princes' Highway) immediately opposite the point at which the present Botany Street has its junction with Princes' Highway.

Its starting point is today marked by Argyle Street.

Thereafter the road skirted a swamp which was extant at that time, to a point which today is the corner of Argyle and Allen Streets (W.C.Stevens' large factory also at this corner covers part of the area of the original swamp).

The old road then proceeded in a more or less direct line to the bend of the present Wollongong Road (adjacent to Almond Reserve) thence to a creek, also extant at that time, marked today by the depression in Kelsey Street.

From this point the road meandered in a southerly direction to ultimately gain the ridge of the present Forest Road. (This section was straightened to its present alignment shortly after the Council for West Botany (now Rockdale Council) came into being in 1871.

The plotting of the road to skirt the swamp arose out of the necessity to gain access to water for the waggon teams found at the creek site and also to avoid the heavy timber and dense scrub which covered the land slightly further back from the swamp fringe.

And so for almost two decades (1843-1862), until the better drained Forest Road ridge extension came into being as an alternate road, this piece of swamp track formed the route for the waggons which hauled the great timbers gained from in the vicinity of the present Forest Road to the market of Sydney Town.

Needless to say, having regard to its proximity to the swamp, the low lying nature of the land and the surrounding higher country, the road, especially after rain, became a quagmire holding the waggons in the tight grip of its deep glutinous mud. The track became so bad that a map of 1861 marks the road simply as - IMPASSABLE.



Until the recent discovery of the "lost" road before-mentioned, it had been generally believed that the initial portion of Wollongong Road was that shown in the earliest maps of the Council of West Botany (inc.1871) as Illawarra Street or Road (known today as Arncliffe Street).

This road, although in the same vicinity, traversed perhaps better drained ground than the original swamp road and ran from immediately behind "Tempe House", near Cook's River, in a direct line to the present bend in Wollongong Road. Its southern extremity was subsequently drastically altered with the construction of the Illawarra Railway and the sewer carrier.

The road which had been believed to be the original Wollongong or Illawarra Road came into being as a result of a sub-division which was endorsed by the Council of West Botany in the 1870's in accordance with the practice obtaining at that time whereby the large land-holders virtually sub-divided their own land. The unfortunate councils in due course were obliged to clear the timber from the path of the resultant roads and then to construct them.

The second Illawarra Road originated as a result of this custom, its alignment representing the western boundary of the Spark estate.

And so, when the old swamp road was abandoned the name by which it was often known, viz. Illawarra Road, was given to the new one, thus causing the confusion which almost led to the whereabouts of the "quagmire strip" being lost to history.

The new road, like its predecessor, however, was also far from being popular with the horse-drawn traffic of the period, the long distance travellers preferring the more elevated and drier conditions of the Forest-Rocky Point Roads route whilst the local settlers gave it a wide berth by bringing into use the first Done Street (superseded later by the present Done Street).

And what of the creek which played an important part in the history of early Arncliffe and whose waters once emptied into and formed the swamp which we have been discussing?

It had its source in a spring near Fripp Street and some of its contour may still be discerned to this day. Giant underground pipes now cover much of the water course of the early creek and empties into an open water-channel in Cahill Park which follows the same waterway as when it originally flowed into Cooks' River.

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