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# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Registered by Aust Post  
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6/9 Austral St  
Kogarah 2217

APRIL 1990

The next meeting will be held as follows:-

DATE: 8pm Friday 20th April.

LOCATION: Council Chambers, Town Hall, Rockdale.

BUSINESS: General.

GUEST SPEAKER: "How Our City of Sydney Got Its Name"

Ald Ron Rathbone OAM will give an interesting talk on  
how our city came to be named after Lord Thomas  
Townshend Sydney.

SUPPER ROSTER: Volunteers please. Members please bring a plate.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:

## BEXLEY HISTORY WALK

Ald Ron Rathbone will be conducting a history walk in the Bexley area.  
The tour will start at Victoria House, Forest Rd and will include  
Dunmore St, Monomeeth St and Harrow Rd.

This area of Bexley is rich in local history and has buildings of great  
architectural appeal. Charming Federation homes rub shoulders with  
stately Victorian mansions.

Ron Rathbone will bring history to life in what promises to be an  
enjoyable and informative afternoon.

TIME: 2PM

DATE: Sunday, 3rd JUNE.

MEET AT: Victoria House, Forest Rd Bexley.

COST: FREE

THE ORIGINS OF THE STREET NAMES  
OF THE  
MUNICIPALITY OF ROCKDALE

Ever wondered about the names given to our local streets?

Ald Ron Rathbone has produced a book explaining the origin of over 550 street names in the Rockdale Municipality.

Be they exotic or prosaic, geographical, descriptive or aboriginal they are all in this handy little book. There are names recording our early history, our pioneer settlers and prominent citizens and inevitably, the real estate developers.

It's an invaluable resource to any one interested in local history.

Copies are available from the Rockdale Central Library or the Council Administration Offices. Cost \$3.00.

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WELCOME, MOLLY MCDONNELL

Welcome to new member, Molly McDonnell. Molly has an active interest in local history and has written an account of the establishment and development of St Francis Xavier's Church and School at Arncliffe.

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ARTICLES FOR THE BULLETIN

If you have material suitable for an article or perhaps just an item you think may be of interest please contact the bulletin editor.

This is your bulletin and to make it interesting and relevant we need more input from YOU!

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CENTENARY - BANKSIA FREE CHURCH -  
Est. 1890 - 1990 -

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- Compiled by  
Walter G Kirton  
Interim Pastor  
March 1990.

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The fact that this independent church has been able to continue a fruitful ministry for Christ our Lord over a period of 100 years gives us this opportunity of recognition of divine guidance in leading our forefathers to establish this place of worship on this present site on 4th May 1890.

The circumstances prompting this decision are both interesting and unusual. On September 6th, 1885 a place of worship was opened at Kogarah by a small group of people who wished to keep themselves together until circumstances allowed them to return to their own church, for they had not resigned their membership.

Others joined this group until it became an active and progressive church. According to their 3rd Annual Report, a steam train was hired to take 600 teachers, scholars and parents to Parramatta Park for their Sunday School Picnic. The services and ministry were helpful and encouraging in the midst of this rapid growth of the church. The members were shocked by the announcement on 24th July 1889, that this church, which had fulfilled its purpose, decided to close.

From the Supervisor's closing report on September 30th, 1889 I quote ...

"This church has been closed, not because of any lack of interest, or financial difficulty, or decrease of its prosperity but in the midst of its prosperity and at the brightest moment of its existence, surrounded with abundant proof of the value of its operations in the direction of spiritual advancement. This church, only being considered as a temporary expedient, was kept open until a successful accomplishment of the object of its establishment which had been attained. Such object being realized, it has closed, amidst expressed regret from its congregation and many who have watched its successful career."

After the closing of this Kogarah church it was felt, by many people who had attended the activities and services and were not involved in the circumstances under which it closed, that there was a real need to continue these activities as an Independent church. It was these people who requested that they be permitted to erect a new building on another site and continue to worship and work together under the same name.

Their request being granted, the present site at Banksia was purchased with freewill offerings and gifts and a church building was erected by J.W. Syman and opened on 4th May 1890. This building consisted of church and vestry and was wholly paid for in 1897.



The present school hall was erected in 1899 at a cost of £210 with a gift of £100 by Mrs W.A.Beehag. This debt was paid off within 12 months. The first section of the Kindergarten was built in 1914 by Mr T.D.Pearce in memory of Mrs S.A.Beehag at a cost of £212. The second section joining the Sunday School was added in 1925 costing £150. The kitchenette and new amenities were added in 1965.

Like the church at Kogarah, this new church at Banksia grew rapidly and became well known by its successful youth work and missionary interests.

This Free Church, then established, was governed by a Committee of six men with Mr W A Beehag as Secretary, Mr W McKern as Supervisor and Mr James H Perry as Chairman, with Robert Allars, W.Lawrance; S.Schofields, S.A.Beehag, Henry Caton and Frank Beard were added to the Church Committee before the end of 1890. The first Trustees were Messrs. H.W.McKerne, W.A.Beehag, J.E.Cooper, J.Schofield and A.Walker.

The Church of England ritual, Prayer Book and Order of Service etc., were practiced by the early church, but, as they were not affiliated with the Church of England denomination, it was decided in 1904, to change the name of the church to the "Free Church" and the Constitution and Form of Service also underwent a change and the evangelical service now in use was adopted.

The early church was lit by gas jets with stick and taper. This was changed to candescent gas and, in 1923, was replaced by electric lights. In those early days street lighting in Rockdale was with gas lamps. In 1890 a Sunday School was opened the same day as the church with an enrolment of 30 children.

At the beginning of the second year, 1891, there were 144 scholars with 12 teachers and, in the fifth year, 144 scholars with 11 teachers. In 1897 the Sunday School picnic at Oatley Bay was attended by 500 children and parents. In 1902 the 12th Annual Picnic at Kurnell was attended by 300 with the Steamer Boat "Federal". Also in 1901 the picnic was held at Parksvale Georges River. A train was taken to Como, then 7.5 miles up Georges River by Steamer "S.S.Telephone".

It is interesting to note successful participation of our children and young people in concerts held in Rockdale Town Hall during 1901 held by the St.George Sunday School Union - admittance charges for adults sixpence and children threepence. The Free Church choir, quartette and duets were successful in competing with other churches.

The present pulpit is the original pulpit donated by Mr J.H. Perry in 1890. The communion table was donated by the Partridge family, the three communion chairs by the Kirton family (in memory of their parents) and the Thomas electronic organ was purchased by members in memory of Mr A A Beehag.

Organisations of the church over the years were ...

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| . Band of Hope 1893-1903                   | .Debating Society 1899-1903         |
| . Dorcas Society                           | .Young Peoples Institute 1917       |
| . Junior Christian Endeavour 1901          |                                     |
| . Intermediate Christian Endeavour         |                                     |
| . Young Peoples Christian Endeavour.       |                                     |
| . Youth Bible Class                        | .Women's Devotional Fellowship 1936 |
| .Mid-week Bible Study and Prayer Meetings. |                                     |

The Banksia Free Church, over these 100 years, has been ministered to by efficient lay preachers and Ministers of various denominations, including its own Pastors, and has been helped and encouraged by their faithful preaching and ministry of the Word of God. Some have continued regularly for many years.

The first Minister of the Church was - James H Perry 1890-1900, followed by - Henry Phillips 1900-1938, A.L.Perry 1938-1955, D.Woodward 1955-1959, W.G.Kirton 1961-1984,

Hans Rietenbach 1984-1985 and W.G.Kirton

as interim Pastor from 1985 continuing 1990.

Church Secretaries have been - Mr W.A.Beehag 1890-1897, Mr M Tuck 1897-1903, Mr T Barlow, Mrs F.W.Bye, and Mr T D Pearce 1906-1914. When Mr Pearce was overseas during the war, Mr Tom Perry was secretary from 1914-1919. Mr K Matta 1933-1941, Mr W G Kirton 1941-1961, Mr E Hunt 1961-1965, Mr Colin Kirton 1965-1969, Mr Ivan Perry 1969-1985, Mr Paul Perry 1985-1987. The present secretary is Miss E Webb.

Church Treasurers were - Mr H W McKern 1890-1895, Mr James Mackie, Mr A E Green 1895-1900, Mr A H Willison 1900-1902, Mr H Phillips 1902-1903, Mr W J Buckland, Mr A L Perry 1903-1940, Mr C A Perry 1946-1956, Mr W Unsworth 1956, Mr Victor Kirton...1988. The present Treasurer is Mrs I Wood.

Auditors were - Messrs W.M.Onions, W.H.Cadagon, W.B.Doust, H.C.Martyn, C.B.Doust. The present Auditor is Mr Wilfred Davies who has been in office since 1949.

Organists have been - Messrs H.W.McKern, S.Sharlock, A.H.Willison, C.A.Pain, Miss Dora Beehag, Mr Charlie Martyn, Miss P Partridge, Miss Flo Pearce, Mr Mark Larkinson and Mr Victor Kirton who held the organist position for 51 years. The organist position is now vacant.

Over the years we acknowledge the long, faithful services of these people. Also ... Mrs M Pearce- J.C.E.Supt.,

Miss Nance Tester-J.C.E.Supt & National Supt.J.C.E., Mrs Muriel Perry-J.C.E. Supt - Women's Fellowship, Mrs Elsie Kirton - K.G.Supt. - Women's Fellowship, Mrs Margaret Kirton - K.G.Supt., Mr N.Sachisthal, Mr K Matta & Mr Jack Wrightson -Y.P.I. Mr & Mrs Paul & Yvonne Perry for recorded music to whom we are indebted.

A very interesting history can be recorded of men and women who have entered the ministry of other churches and organizations or who are engaged in missionary work after service with Banksia Free Church.

We mention ....



Miss Elaine Webb - A.I.M. - Mr Keith Napper - Borneo -  
Miss N Tester - New Guinea - Mrs D Lambert - China Inland Mission -  
Rev. Keith Matta - Congregational Union - Mrs Norma Warwick - A.I.M.  
Members of Wal Kirton's Bible Class - Rev. A. Dube, Rev. A. Tester,  
Rev. Alan Gardener, Rev. Doug Gibb, Pastors Alan & Eric Hall  
and voluntary workers with O.A.C - Ted Hunt, Keith Graham,  
Eric Porter, Malcolm Gardener etc.

This church, over the years, has become very well known by its activities in youth work, in competitive sport, in missionary interests, in women's meetings, in Bible training classes and Sunday School classes.

The original church building was demolished in 1960 to make provision for the widening of Princes Highway and the present church building was erected by Mr Bate (Builder) and Mr Ken Werry (Architect).

The church tower was erected in memory of those who served in the war years.

The new church building was opened by former Pastor A.L. Perry on 7th October 1961. The meeting was chaired by the secretary, Mr Wal Kirton, who later that year was inducted Honorary Pastor, by Rev. Arnold Long.

Over a period of 100 years so much must be recorded and the names of so many who have made valuable contribution not mentioned - but we thank you all.

However, we cannot live in the past. Today we are facing a challenge to continue which requires the faithful attendance and services of all our members and interested friends.

We rejoice that the church established here in 1890, has been so wonderfully blessed for a century!

For the work to continue we would value the return to worship and service of all interested friends to revive and build upon the past a new church for the future.

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