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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

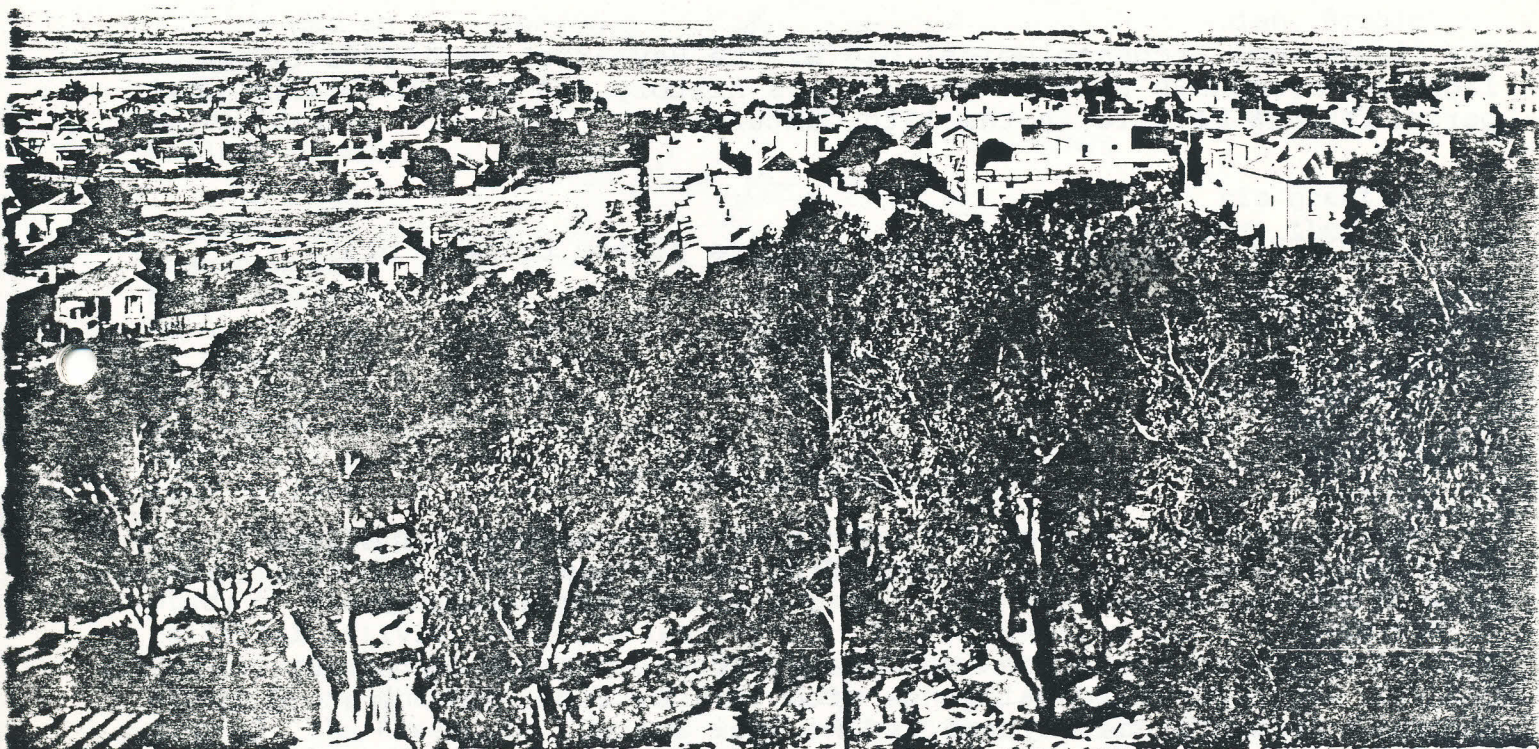
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NBH 0335

7 Lynwood St  
Blakehurst 2221

*AUGUST*  
JULY 1990

## THIS IS FEDERATION-ERA ARNCLIFFE

This photo is one of a series taken from "The Towers" at Arncliffe in the early part of this century. Standing forlorn and neglected atop the Forest Road ridge, "The Towers" has sweeping views of the whole of Arncliffe. The series of photographs was taken sequentially in a 360 degree radius and present a clear picture of what the area was like circa 1910. (cont.inside)



View to the north from "The Towers", Arncliffe, circa 1910. Notice the amount of original vegetation still present.



NEXT MEETING

DATE: 8pm Friday 17 20 August

LOCATION: Council Chambers, 1st Flr. Rockdale Town Hall, Princes Hwy  
Rockdale.

BUSINESS: General

GUEST SPEAKER:

ROSEMARY ANABEL WILL PRESENT

"SYDNEY'S HIDDEN HISTORY"

The historical archeacological dig at the Haymarket in 1988-9 brought to light some unknown aspects of Sydney's history and helped to show the personal side of life in the 19th Century.

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

OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting last month was well attended and some lively discussion took place. As in preceding months new faces continue to appear. As well, we have some new faces on our management committee.

Mrs Valda Beehag is our new secretary, Mrs Joan Fairhall is our Publicity Officer and offers of assistance with various tasks were gratefully accepted from Mrs Joan Byrnes and Mr.Noel Beehag.

On behalf of the Society, thank you for willingness to participate.

## WAZIR STREET, ARNCLIFFE.

Early in 1989, I was asked by the Council to compile a list of the streets in the Municipality of Rockdale and how they received their names. Many are named after the district's pioneers or members of their families; some are descriptive geographical names; royal and vice-regal names abound as do the names of former mayors and aldermen. The principals of the development companies which subdivided the land after the opening of the Illawarra Railway Line are well represented and there is a smattering of aboriginal names. The origins of many of them were easy to track down but others took many hours of research. A number had very unusual origins and one of these was Wazir Street, Arncliffe. The origin of this name has fascinated local residents for years.

Wazir Street, Arncliffe was named after Dr. Wazir Beg, a noted Presbyterian divine and the Minister of the Chalmers Street Free Presbyterian Church in Cleveland Street, Redfern from 1865 until 1882. He was born in India at Poona in the State of Bombay some time in 1827. His parents were devout Moslems and he received a typical Moslem middle-class education. About 1842 he became secretly converted to Christianity and was befriended by a Scottish Presbyterian missionary family. He then became a teacher in the mission school in Poona and decided to become a missionary.

He was an outstanding linguist, speaking Hindustani, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Latin, Greek and English. In 1853 he completed his theological training and was licenced as a Minister. He then went to Edinburgh where he decided to study medicine. In 1861 he became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London.

In 1864 he arrived in Melbourne as a ship's surgeon but his great interest was not medicine but Semitic History. The Semites were the descendants of Shem, one of the three sons of Noah born after the Great Flood and included the Jews, Arameans, Phoenicians, Arabs and Assyrians. No university in Australia provided studies in this area but the University of Sydney had a readership in Oriental Languages and Literature based mainly on the Arabic language. Beg successfully applied for the position and was also appointed Oriental interpreter to the Government. The University position did not last because of the lack of students and in 1865 he accepted the Ministry at Chalmers Street.

There he became a noted scholar on Presbyterianism and his Manual of Presbyterian Principles, published in 1870 was probably the most in depth study of the Presbyterian Faith published in many years. He was also a political activist taking a leading part in the campaign against State Aid for denominational schools. He became a prominent Freemason and rose to become Grand Chaplain of the N.S.W. Lodge as well as being editor of its journal, The Freemason. He was also an Orangeman, editor of that organization's paper and a bitter critic of Roman Catholicism and the ritualism of the Anglican High Church.

He had suffered from Bright's Disease for many years and died aged 58 at his home in Woolloomooloo in January, 1885. He was survived by his wife Margaret Robertson, a Tasmanian widow whom he had married in 1873 and five children. He purchased the land in Arncliffe in 1882 as an investment and it was sold by his widow in 1887 as Beg's Estate.

Alderman R. W. Rathbone (based on the research of E. C. B. McLaurin former Head of the Department of Semitic Studies, Sydney University).



THE ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL  
INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR

INCOME

Members Subscriptions	954.00
Donations	78.00
Sale of Society Books	344.05
Refund from Mrs Perkins	64
Kogarah Historical Society	10.00
Donations for refreshments	
after Historical Walk	77.00
Bank Interest	<u>61.91</u>
	1525.60
Balance in Bank 30.6.1989	<u>1608.40</u>
	<u>\$3134.00</u>

I have examined the books, vouchers, cheque butts, and bank statements presented by Miss C Wilding as treasurer of the above society and this presents a true statement of its financial affairs as at 30th June 1990

...  
Auditor 16/7/90

SOCIETY  
YEAR ENDING 30th JUNE 1990  
EXPENDITURE

Mrs. Eardley Postage	127.35
Mr B Sharah Postage	260.72
Mrs Eardley Petty Cash	30.00
Mrs E Wright Petty Cash	20.00
Miss C Wilding, Treasurers Petty cash	26.47
	10.00
2 Cheque Books	121.00
St George Call (Envelopes)	192.96
Mrs Perkins Secretary Expenses	30.00
Flowers for Mrs Eardley	49.70
Framing of Certificates	100.00
Sydney City Mission (Mrs Monk)	50.00
Subscription R.A.H.S.	56.00
R.A.H.S. Conference	50.00
National Trust	5.00
Staples	40.00
Photocopies	
Afternoon teas at Lydham Hall	66.32
\$44.80 & \$21.52	<u>4.39</u>
F.I.D. & F.D.T. ...	1239.91
	<u>140.52</u>
Less 2 unrepresented Cheques	1099.39
Balance in bank 30/6/90	<u>2034.61</u>
	<u>\$3134.00</u>

## DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Our Society publication, "The History of the Wolli Creek Valley" by Gifford Eardley will be read by a great many school children this year.

We were contacted during July by Mr Lindsay Hewson, from the NSW Disadvantaged Schools Programme. Mr Hewson was so impressed by our booklet that he has included it in a "kit" about the Wolli Creek Valley to be distributed to children in Disadvantaged Schools. The kit will be non political and will attempt to give both sides of an issue about which many people have very strongly held views.

The good news is that we sold 100 books as well as creating interest in local history amongst the younger people in our community.

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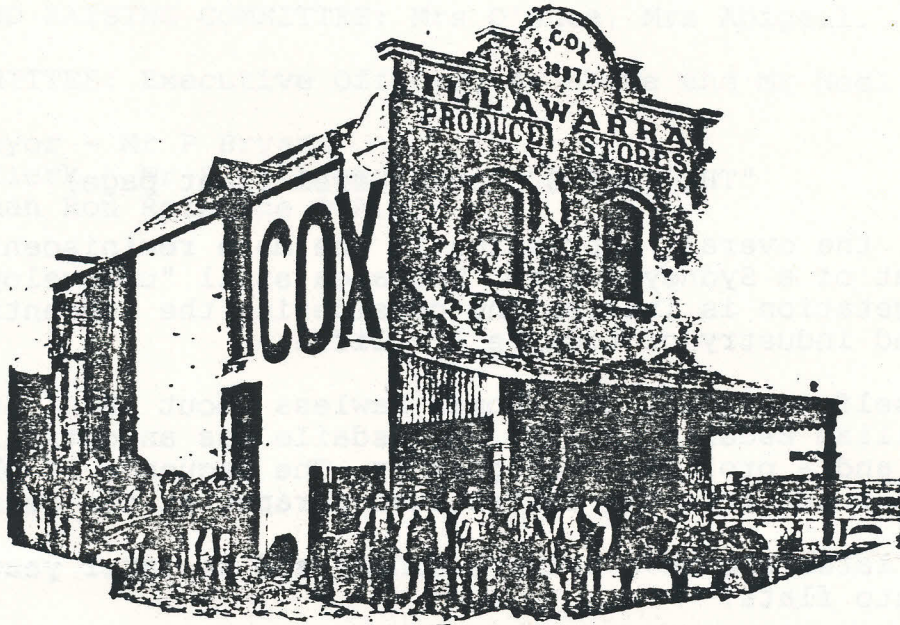


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78 Wollongong Road  
Arncliffe 2205

July 1990



Speaking of creating interest our cover photograph on last month's bulletin certainly did that. Arthur Ellis went to considerable trouble to prove that the building was in fact located at King St, St Peters. It wasn't clearly visible on the photocopied image that most members saw but on the original, a chimney stack of the old Bakewell's Pottery on Mitchell Rd was in the background. I'll let Arthur tell you about his detective work at a later date. Numerous people mentioned the item and it prompted a few to do some research. Ann Carolan also correctly located the building.



## THE BULLETIN NEEDS YOUR INPUT!

As Bulletin Editor I am trying to produce a newsletter that is visually more appealing and tells the members more of what's happening within the society and other goings on that may be of interest.

In order to achieve that end I need YOUR help.

Photographs are an excellent way of drawing readers' attention (although they tend to lose a lot of detail in the photocopied reproduction). So if you have an old photo that you would like us to research or you think would be of interest please let us know.

For the main historical article of each bulletin I am desperately short of ORIGINAL material. Ald Ron Rathbone has generously contributed numerous articles over the past year and I have also received a piece of research on the Botany Goods Line from Mrs Ruth Foster.

But remember, it doesn't have to be a work of art - it may be your reminiscences of yesteryear, a few lines about some forthcoming event, an historical question you would like cleared up or some other small item.

### "THE TOWERS" (cont. from front page)

Surprisingly, the overall impression is one more reminiscent of a country town than that of a Sydney suburb. The area still "undeveloped" and covered in native vegetation is interesting considering the concentration of population and industry of today's Arncliffe.

The house itself was built for Thomas Lawless about 1890. It was acquired by Edward William Esdaile in 1910. Mr Esdaile was an optical goods manufacturer and a prolific photographer. The sequence of photos in question were taken from the castellated parapet at the rear of the house.

"The Towers" later became a private school and in later years was subdivided into flats.

It stands well back from the road at 105 Forest Rd and although still occupied has now fallen into a state of considerable dilapidation.

Perhaps, you the members, can tell us more about this interesting old building. We might even be lucky enough to find a photograph of the house itself. Please contact me, Bernard Sharah (599 1971) if you have more information.

(Source of historical information: National Trust guide book for walking tour of Arncliffe 1982)

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS : ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday 20 July 1990

PRESIDENT: Mr Bernard Sharah

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT: Mr Don Sinclair.

VICE PRESIDENT: Mr Arthur Ellis.

SECRETARY: Mrs Valda Beehag.

BULLETIN EDITOR: Mr Bernard Sharah

TREASURER: Miss Connie Wilding

RESEARCH OFFICER: Mr Arthur Ellis.

AUDITOR: Mrs Leila Thompson.

SOCIAL SECRETARY: In abeyance.

PUBLICITY OFFICER: Mrs Joan Fairhall

LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE: Miss Bette Otton, Mr B. Sharah, Mr A. Ellis.

LYDHAM HALL FUND RAISING COMMITTEE: Mrs O'Shea, Mrs Abigail.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Executive Officers as above and Mr Noel Beehag.

PATRONS: The Mayor - Mr P Bryant  
Town Clerk - Mr S. Blackadder  
Alderman Ron Rathbone O.A.M.



KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY:OPEN DAY

Kogarah Historical Society are having an Open Day at Carss Cottage, Sunday afternoon, 26 August. This is the anniversary of the opening of the Museum in 1971. Admission FREE. Devonshire teas available.

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View of what is now Esdaile Place from "The Towers"  
105 Forest Rd Arncliffe.



BERNARD SHARAH  
PRESIDENT  
599 1971

MRS VALDA BEEHAG  
SECRETARY  
546 2819

MRS JOAN FAIRHALL  
PUBLICITY OFFICER  
546 5555

MISS C WILDING  
TREASURER  
597 3215

MR A ELLIS  
RESEARCH OFFICER  
587 1159

BERNARD SHARAH  
BULLETIN EDITOR  
599 1971

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YOU'RE NOT A MEMBER OF OUR SOCIETY?

WELL JUST COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION AND SEND TOGETHER WITH CHEQUE OR  
MONEY ORDER ( \$7 INDIVIDUAL, \$10 FAMILY) TO 4/73 FREDERICK ST ROCKDALE  
2216

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NO:

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