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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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7 Lynwood St
Blakehurst

NOVEMBER 1990

NEXT MEETING

DATE: 8pm Friday 16 November.

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

BUSINESS: General

GUEST SPEAKER:

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF GALIPOLI

Brian Madden and Lesley Muir were present at the ceremony commemorating the Anzac landing at Galipoli. They have made a comprehensive record of this historic event so join us for an interesting night.

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

ST GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OFFICER BEARERS

PRESIDENT & BULLETIN EDITOR: Bernard Sharah 5991971
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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE
6 - 7 OCTOBER 1990

I was privileged enough to be your delegate to the RAHS Annual Conference held at the YWCA Wentworth Ave, Darlinghurst. There were to be 2 delegates but unfortunately, Arthur Ellis was unable to attend having only recently undergone a major operation. (good to see Arthur is up and about now)

The theme of the conference was "Heritage Conservation: Local Issues and Local Action" and ~~given a personal interest on my part~~ I found it full of interest.

Margaret Henry, a Newcastle resident, related the ongoing battle she and other concerned people have had in attempting to salvage as much as possible of that city's shattered architectural heritage. Her talk highlighted the need for recording and listing buildings of historic interest. Beautiful and irreplaceable buildings were lost needlessly in the haste to demolish what was considered by sometimes unqualified authorities to be "unsafe".

The highlight of the contrasting views of Ian Stapleton, leading conservation architect and James Broadbent, curator of Conservation Resources at the Historic Houses Trust. Mr Broadbent made a witty and highly critical attack on the popular concept of "restoration" and architects and archeologists were in the firing line. Considering the fact that his speech was preceded by an architect, Mr Stapleton, and followed by an archeologist, Dr Rosemary Annabel, it certainly became the topic of conversation at conference. His uncompromising view was that if something was of historical importance it should stand on its own merits and not be "restored".

Dr.Ken Cable explained that there had been a shift in responsibility from Heritage Council to local government. The Heritage Council simply could not cope with number of items proposed for consideration - hence the change.

An alarming feature of this is:-

The almost total lack of publicity surrounding the policy. The success of this approach depends very much on an ACTIVE and AWARE group of local people to ensure that councils live up to their responsibilities.

The fact that 3 years after the introduction of this policy only 43 out of 170 councils have got around to compiling registers of their historically important buildings and sites is damning evidence of its ineffectiveness.

Bernard Sharah
President.

ITINERARY FOR COACH TRIP TO CARCOAR

DAY 1 9TH MARCH 1991

Depart Blakehurst at 7.30am and pick up at points to be discussed, including Rockdale Station.

Morning tea will be served at the Hawkesbury Lookout, then a scenic tour of Katoomba. Lunch will be at Bathurst where will be met by a member of the Bathurst Historical Society with information about their area and if time permits, a short tour.

Leaving Bathurst, a tour will be taken around to Mt. Panorama Motor Racing Circuit then on to Carcoar for afternoon tea served by the ladies of the Carcoar Historical Society. We are planning on a 2 hour tour of Carcoar and pictures and history of this town will be available at meetings of both St George and Hurstville Historical Society meetings.,

Heading towards our dinner and over-night accommodation at the Town House Motel in Cowra (tel. 063 421055), we will make an inspection of the Japanese Cemetery and P.O.W. Camp.

DAY 2 10 MARCH 1991

After a hearty breakfast we hope to leave the motel at 8am to visit the Japanese Gardens and Cultural Centre, then we leave for Hartley where the Young Historical Society have a museum and will meet us and give us a brief talk on their area. Morning tea will be served.

Passing through Young we'll stop by an old mill at the twin town of Harden -Murrumbarra. This has just been declared a historic town and a most charming lady, Mrs Win Doolan of the Harden Historical Society has promised us that we will be sure to want to plan another trip in which we can spend more time in that area. They have an old 2 storey house that is now their museum and a delightful craft and pottery shop called "Witchcraft" and 2 antique shops and excellent book shop, devonshire teas etc.

Post haste to Young for lunch where the big cherry will identify their information office. Here Marjorie Daw will arrange a quick bus tour for those who would like a "sandwich and popper" type lunch to eat on board as time will most likely be limited by then. Those who prefer to relax in their information centre and eat lunch there we can order for them in advance at the RSL Club.

So on through Goulburn and a short stop at Berrima and hopefully home by 5.30pm.

TOTAL PRICE OF \$80 INCLUDES:-

TWIN- SHARE ACCOMMODATION
DINNER BED & BREAKFAST
2 MORNING TEAS
ENTRY FEE TO JAPANESE GARDENS

Lunches are not included or afternoon teas and there will be charges into some museums etc.

\$10 deposit must be paid at December meeting as we will need other people to make up the numbers.

JOAN FAIRHALL (PHONE 546 5555)

"LOOKING FOR HISTORY"

By JAMES KANE

An eminent English historian said that the most essential pieces of equipment for historians are a notebook and pencil and a stout pair of walking boots. Certainly this district has history in plenty for those prepared to go and look for it.

There has long been a useful human compulsion to celebrate the erection of public buildings by the setting of a ceremonial stone, sometimes at the commencement of building, sometimes on completion. This practice seems to be in a regrettable decline, but all is not lost. Australia has an abundance of politicians and many of them take pleasure in opening buildings of all kinds and in permitting their name to be included on a suitable commemorative plaque.

The position of a commemorative stone, the material from which it was made, the lettering and carving techniques employed and, finally, the information contained in the inscription itself, are all of use to the alert historian,

Be careful, however, in making assumptions based on too hasty a look at the evidence. Stones from original buildings were often incorporated in later ones without the fact being acknowledged. I draw your attention to the Anglican Church in Rockdale which has an embarrassing number of foundation stones bearing different dates.

At one time I took a class of high school boys on a series of walks in the area around the school. They faithfully recorded every plaque on local government amenities -- parks, gardens, public toilets, library, senior citizens' centres, etc. It was a demanding task, as each plaque bore the name of every alderman and a number of council officers.

Back in the classroom the boys compared lists and were able to draw up a list of probable dates of council elections. They noted the durability of some aldermen and the short tenure of others. They noted a period when the council was run by an administrator and took note of the fact that very few aldermen returned after the administrator stepped down. What happened, of course, was the suspension of the council by the state government and the failure of many aldermen to renominate because they were helping the police with their enquiries. These boys extracted a surprising amount of information from these plaques, enjoyed themselves enormously and, I believe, gained a great deal educationally.

Sometimes, when looking isn't enough, you may find that in carefully recording the inscription you have saved it for posterity. Eighteen months ago I took a group of adults on an historic stroll around the St George Hospital area. They were interested in seeing a 19th century stone laid by a Mrs Holt (from a family of great local historical importance), they were stirred by the foundation stone of a Greek Church marking the alliance between Greece and Australia in World War II, they were charmed by a foundation stone, dated 1888, naming the Kogarah "Centennial" Congregational Church. All of these buildings have come down in the cause of development and the stones are!

Sometimes a stone has some feature that takes the eye at once. Other features become interesting if you have a bit of special knowledge. If you glance at the list of inscriptions you will understand this point. Stone 1 is reputedly the only existing example of the original spelling of

'Kingsgrove". The second stone is part of the Hurstville and District United Friendly Societies Pharmacy . This organisation merits a talk of its own, so we merely note the use of "Brother" as a form of address among members of friendly societies. Stone 3, in Carlton, has what seems to us a quaint usage --"Australia and Tasmania".

Stone 4 contains the names of 2 distinguished clerics. Norman Gilroy, an altar boy in the Hurstville parish, served in the R.A.N. at Anzac Cove and became Australia's first native-born cardinal.

Stone 5 gives a new meaning to the word "Honourable". T.J. Ley, local member and minister for Justice died in a hospital for the criminally insane, having been convicted of murder. Stone 6 tells a lie. Cardinal Gilroy was called to Rome and the stone was blessed by Bishop Eris O'Brien.

Briefly, looking at foundation stones is fun; like many other activities, doing it is more fruitful than talking about it.

1. KING'S GROVE
BAPTIST CHAPEL
A.D. 1875

2. THIS STONE WAS LAID
BY THE PRESIDENT
BRO. J.H.S. MULHOLLAND
27th FEB. 1915.

3. THIS FOUNDATION STONE WAS SET BY
THE MOST REVEREND H.W.K. MOWLL, D.D.
ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY AND
PRIMATE OF AUSTRALIA AND TASMANIA
ON 23rd AUGUST 1952.

4. THIS SCHOOL OF ST MARY STAR OF THE SEA
ERECTED AS A MEMORIAL TO ALL WHO DIED
FROM THIS PARISH IN TWO WORLD WARS
AND TO THE PIONEERS OF THE PARISH
WAS SOLEMNLY BLESSED AND OPENED BY
HIS EMINENCE
NORMAN THOMAS CARDINAL GILROY
ON SUNDAY AUG 16th, 1959
FATHER T.V. DUNLEA

5. THIS STONE AS LAID BY
THE HON. T.J. LEY M.L.A.
MINISTER FOR JUSTICE
BEXLEY SCHOOL OF ARTS
15th NOV. 1924.

6. THIS STONE WAS SOLEMNLY BLESSED BY HIS EMINENCE
NORMAN THOMAS CARDINAL GILROY, ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY
ON SUNDAY 18th APRIL 1948