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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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7 Lynwood St
Blakehurst

JANUARY 1992

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEMBERS

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON
TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY

8PM, COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ROCKDALE TOWN HALL
PRINCES HIGHWAY
ROCKDALE

THE MECCA CINEMA

WHY SHOULD IT BE SAVED?

The Mecca Cinema (formerly the Savoy) is rated the third most significant cinema in NSW after the State and Capitol theatres. Guest Speaker, Graham Quint, a representative of the National Trust will discuss the considerable merits of this rare Art-Deco building.

SUPPER ROSTER: Members please bring a plate.

Office Holders

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LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE:

Miss B.Otton, Bernard Sharah, Mrs V.Beehag

AUDITOR: Mrs L Thompson

All correspondence to the Secretary, 7 Lynwood St Blakehurst 2221

OUR CHRISTMAS REUNION CANCELLED

Many of you would have been disappointed to learn of the cancellation of our intended Christmas Reunion. It was very unfortunate that after such a long period of dry sunny weather we had three days of continuous rain. Our intended venue, Lydham Hall, has no provision for wet weather and a decision had to be made on the preceding day in regard to the ordering of food. With more rain predicted for the weekend it was thought wisest to cancel the event. Being so close to Christmas and the New Year it was not possible to postpone the Reunion to the following weekend.

Our thanks to Joan Byrne and Geoff Rankin for the hours of preparation ~~made their efforts in preparation~~

TEMPE HOUSE MORE SECURE

Those concerned about the vulnerability of Tempe House to potential vandalism will be relieved to learn that high steel-mesh fencing has (*finally*) been erected around the St George District's most historic building. Last year we wrote a number of letters to Qantek, the owners of the property, expressing our concern on this matter.

COMMONWEALTH BANK AT ARNCLIFFE 60TH ANNIVERSARY

In December the Commonwealth Bank at Arncliffe celebrated its 60th Anniversary. Some time ago they asked for our assistance in preparing a photographic display and in gathering information about the history of the area.

The Commonwealth Bank was until recent years located in the Art-Deco building next to the existing premises in Belmore Street, Arncliffe. The bank started life as the Government Savings Bank of NSW until the Commonwealth Bank was founded in 1932.

The bank's long-term clientele were invited for drinks and refreshments and our research officer, Arthur Ellis, gave an excellent and concise address on the history of the Arncliffe area. Arthur, as most of you know, can speak with more authority on this subject than probably any other living person. Arthur was in rare form and his speech was certainly appreciated by the gathering of long time residents and identities of the area. The manager of the branch extended his thanks to the society for their involvement in the celebration.

"ROCKDALE ITS BEGINNING AND DEVELOPMENT"

Rockdale Council is offering currently selling "Rockdale Its Beginning and Development" by Phillip Geeves and James Jervis at the reduced price of \$5. It's a bargain! This edition has been revised by Ald Ron Rathbone O.A.M. and contains many very interesting photographs not included in earlier editions. It is on sale at all libraries in the Rockdale Municipality.

ST GEORGE LEADER - MORE COVERAGE

Over the Christmas-New Year period we had some publicity courtesy of the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*. It was an article about the horse trough recovered from the backyard of the late Mrs Piper. The *Leader* must have thought the story had some novelty appeal and printed it under the titled "*HISTORICAL SOCIETY SAVES HORSE TROUGH*" which was perhaps a trifle overstated but we certainly appreciated the publicity. Actually, the *Leader* has been very good to us this past year with printing of our What's On? notices and the coverage given the History Walk in June. Thank you, *St George Leader* (particularly Regan Murphy and Sally Taylor) and thank you Rockdale Council for rescuing our horse trough.

WILLIAM GEORGE JUDD

From 'Athelstane - A history of the School and the local area' (1988) by the students of Athelstane Primary.

William George Judd was born on the 30th June, 1847 and christened on 16th August, 1847.

He was the son of John and Selina Judd, nee Matthews, of Pitt Street, Sydney.

John, his father, was a railway employee. His father temporarily abandoned him soon after his birth by sailing to California to make his fortune on the gold fields. He was, however, shipwrecked and claimed to have been stranded on a Pacific island for three years.

John Judd returned to his family. When William was five years old he was almost kidnapped but an employee in his mother's laundry became suspicious and the attempt failed.

William Judd is reputed to have left school when seven years old. He did return intermittently when older and became a conscientious student at night. He worked in Pitt Street, Sydney in refreshment rooms, and later at St. Peters claypits, where bricks were made.

William George Judd married Eleanor Elizabeth Howard on 15th February, 1869 at St. Peters in the house of Henry Edwards. She was the daughter of a brickyard proprietor from Ipswich, Queensland.

They had three sons and a daughter:

John H. born 1871

William Percy born 1874

Annie E. born 1876

Harold Ethelstane born 11th April, 1880

Harold Ethelstone, who was born at St. Peters, was probably named Harold Athelstone as Harold A appears on his father's Death Certificate in 1929. From his son Harold's second name came "Athelstane" the name of Judd's house.

William Judd was an egg and butter salesman at St. Peters in his early days, but was a storekeeper in 1880. In 1882 Judd had a store in Cooks River Road.

In 1883 he was listed in the Sands Directory as a store keeper on Cook's River Road.

He came to Arncliffe in the early 1880's and settled in a small shingle-roofed weather-board cottage, located on the site of the present Arncliffe Railway.

When the Illawarra Railway was built the small cottage was resumed.

When it was auctioned, Mr. Judd was successful in obtaining it. He had it carefully taken apart and re-erected at "Athelstane", his estate (bordered by Hirst and Dowling Streets and Wollongong Road) which he had purchased from John Little on 4th July, 1881 (Transfer No. 49139).

Judd moved to the district of Arncliffe after occupying the mayoral chair of St. Peters Municipality, and almost immediately he was elected an Alderman of West Botany. He served in this capacity until 1905; was Mayor of Rockdale from 1885 to 1889, and again from 1898 to 1900. The first Rockdale Town Hall, the forerunner of the present building, was erected during his mayoralty and bore the inscription "1888 W.G. Judd, Mayor". Elected to Parliament as M.L.A. for Canterbury in 1885, he served until the dissolution in 1887.

William Percy Judd remembered his father riding a horse from meeting to meeting during election time, the locations being as far apart as Marrickville and Salt Pan Creek.

Judd arranged for a bridge to be built over Wolli Creek and also had land set aside for parks at Arncliffe, Marrickville and Penshurst. He had swamps around Shea's Creek and Cook's River reclaimed.

Judd had a decisive influence on the final location of the Illawarra Railway line through the Municipality of Rockdale.

In 1884 - 1885, he was an alderman for Botany West and lived on Old Wollongong Road, and was the owner of a produce store on Cooks River Road, St. Peters. By 1900 he was a J.P. and lived at "Athelstane" in Old Wollongong Road.

Judd owned brickworks at St. Peters, the Hurstville Steam Brick Company, Mortdale (now St. George College of Advanced Education), and Sutherland.

Judd's estate, "Athelstane", was bordered by a row of splendid *Pinus insignis* trees, which served as a wind break for the orchard. The trees sheltered under the lee. Several large gum trees were scattered about the property and a creek flowed through the orchard in a south to north direction. This creek (near the present Fripp Street) began as a spring which also watered the Chinese market garden of Kim Too, which was situated where Arncliffe Park is now.

Mr. Judd built "Athelstane", his imposing two storey mansion, on the portion of his property near the corner of Wollongong Road and Dowling Street, possibly about 1884.

The house was of plastered brick construction, with a lavish use of cast iron for the verandah posts, frieze work around the verandah and iron lace panels around the upper verandah. This High Victorian mansion, which faced Wollongong Road, was flanked by two

magnolia trees, reputed to be the largest in the state of N.S.W. These two magnolias and other beautiful trees have been preserved.

The estate, seven acres, one rood and twenty-four perches was later reduced to 2 acres, one rood, one perch with the sale of land after 1920. Judd subdivided the land and put in Athelstane and Horsall Avenues.

The Arncliffe to Bexley Steam Tram passed "Athelstane" from 1909 to 1926. Steam trams travelled up Wollongong Road from Arncliffe Station to Preddy's Road. A tram stop was near the stone house across from the school. Another stop was at Landsdowne Street.

There were two steam motors and four cars when the tram line was opened, but mostly one motor and one car were in use. An hourly service from early morning to midnight was given. The cost was 3d for the whole journey. The Arncliffe-Bexley line closed on 31st December, 1926.

In 1920, Judd, a Justice of the Peace, was still living at "Athelstane", 133 Wollongong Road.

On his Athelstane Estate, Judd built another house called "Actonotus" in which his son James H. Judd, a draftsman, lived. "Actonotus" is now in Wollongong Road, the front of the house looking up Farrar Street.

Judd had another house, "Laureen", in Dowling Street near Horsall Avenue, and his son, William Percy Judd lived at 49 Hirst Street.

Judd mortgaged his land in 1884 and 1888 to the Bank of Australasia. In 1903, the bank, exercising the power of sale of the Athelstane Estate, transferred the land to his wife, Eleanor Elizabeth Judd. Judd died on 6th December, 1929 at "Athelstane". He was buried at Woronora Cemetery.

In 1935 Judd's wife, Eleanor, transferred the land to Margaret Isabella Judd, wife of her son William, who at that time was a Merchant. Eleanor died 9 years later.

The Minister for Public Instruction resumed the land in 1949 for the school. The Notification of Resumption of Land was published in the Government Gazette of 9th December 1949. The land purchased comprised 2 acres, 1 rood, 1 perch and had the "Athelstane" mansion still standing in the midst of large pine and magnolia trees.

William Percy and Margaret Isabella Judd lived at "Athelstane" even after it was purchased by the Minister for Public Instruction, which became the Education Department in March 1950. The Judds made a tentative arrangement with the Department of Education to live in the house for a period of two years due to the poor health and age of Mr. Judd. The Judds moved from "Athelstane" about October 1951.

Mr. McGrath, the M.L.A., suggested Mrs Burke, the school cleaner, live in the old residence as a caretaker.

In the St. George Historical Society Bi-monthly Bulletin of February 1964 (Vol. No. 9) Grace Middenway Nicholls recalls the following about W.G. Judd:

"Mr. W.G. Judd, who had at one time a business interest in the Hurstville Brick Works near what is now Allawah Station, was a very much respected and well liked member of the community. He was always a most enthusiastic member of any organisation of which he was a member.

He was Mayor of Rockdale for some time. He was much interested in the Congregational Church. He was a deacon, Choir Master and an Office Member of the Literary and Debating Society of the Church. He lived at "Athelstane" in Wollongong Road, Arncliffe. He owned a large piece of land adjoining his house. This he made available for the use of the church football and cricket clubs.

He was very interested in young people, and, on occasions, he and his wife would entertain a number of them at his weekend cottage in a delightful setting at Yowie Bay on the banks of the Hacking River.

My first drive in a motor car was with Mr. and Mrs Judd. I'll never forget it. It was a glorious day and we drove to Yowie Bay. It was quite an experience. I asked how fast the car would go, so Mr. Judd showed us what he considered "speeding". We travelled at 34 miles per hour! It was an open car, of course, and compared with the very low cars of the present day, we appeared to be perched very high in the air."



William George Judd and Family Outside "Athelstane"