



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

7 Lynwood St
Blakehurst

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1992

**MEMBERS, PLEASE NOTE
THE BULLETIN IS NOW BI-MONTHLY**

This means one bulletin every 2 months.
Here are the details for the August and September
meetings:-

11 AUGUST DR. PETER ORLOVICH

"ROCKDALE'S FIRST PUBLIC LIBRARY"

Rockdale's first public library dates from 1892 and archivist and Society member, Dr Peter Orlovich has an interesting story to relate about it.

18 SEPTEMBER LOUELLA McCARTHY

"THE COMMUNITY HISTORY PROGRAM"

This is a program run by the University of NSW School of History to promote the study of local history. Louella will give an informative talk on the work done by her group.

Meetings are held 8pm at the Council Chambers, first floor, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.

MEMBERS: Please bring a plate.

OFFICE HOLDERS

PRESIDENT: Arthur Ellis 529 4879

SECRETARY: Mrs Val Beehag 546 2819

TREASURER: Mrs Margaret Persen 771 5461

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT: Noel Beehag 546 2819

VICE PRESIDENTS: Joan Hatton and Bernard Sharah

RESEARCH OFFICER: Arthur Ellis 587 1159

SOCIAL SECRETARIES and PROMOTIONS OFFICERS:
Mrs Joan Fairhall 546 5555 and Mrs Dora Lenane

BULLETIN EDITOR: Bernard Sharah 567 8989

LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE:

Mr A Ellis, Miss B.Otton, Mrs V.Beehag

AUDITOR: Mrs L Thompson

All correspondence to the Secretary, 7 Lynwood St Blakehurst 2221

LAST MEETING

At our Annual General Meeting last month, Mr Arthur Ellis was elected as our new president. Mr Ellis brings much valuable experience to the position having had several lengthy terms in the past. New to the management team are Dr Joan Hatton (Vice-president) and Mrs Dora Lenane (Social Secretary/Promotions Officer). At the meeting it was decided to combine the positions of Social Secretary and Promotions Officer to provide the existing Social Secretary with some assistance. Congratulations to the President and the Committee on their election and in particular welcome to our new Committee members

BULLETIN NOW BI-MONTHLY

As you have read on the front page our bulletin will be issued on a bi-monthly basis. This decision was taken for a number of reasons but one of the main ones being the high cost of postage. Last year the bulletin cost the Society \$909.35. This included postage, bromides for photographs, and photocopying for the one time Pockdale Council were unable to do our printing. Hopefully the extra time between issues will allow us to produce a better newsletter with more local content. We know for a lot of you the bulletin is the only contact you have with the Society. Our aim is to give you, the members, a better quality product.

WHAT IS WORTH SAVING IN ROCKDALE?

As you would know from recent issues of the Bulletin, St George Historical Society is represented on the Rockdale Heritage Advisory Committee which is acting as an advisory body to Rockdale Council.

Rockdale Council commissioned consultants to identify all items of historical, architectural and natural heritage in the Municipality. Their list of over 200 items appears in a report entitled "Rockdale Heritage Study" which you can purchase from the Council for \$8.00.

However, the Committee feels that there is still the potential for greater community involvement in this process. Put quite simply, **WE WOULD LIKE YOUR IDEAS AS TO WHAT IS OF "HERITAGE" IMPORTANCE IN ROCKDALE.**

As St George Historical Society's representative on the Rockdale Heritage Advisory Committee I would be very pleased to hear your views and put them to the Committee.

With the increasing pressure to redevelop existing landlots in Sydney and the widespread practice of wholesale renovation the face of our Municipality is changing rapidly. So much so, that I am of the opinion that if an item of heritage is not listed in all probability it will not survive the next two decades.

In the meantime, here are some of my suggestions to add to the list:-

Stone cottage 17 Abercorn St Bexley.

Stone barn Victoria Street, Arncliffe. Reputedly built by Arncliffe pioneer settler, Samuel Jeeves.

Victorian house "Bard of Avon" Eden Street, Arncliffe a two-storey terrace-style house with bust of William Shakespeare on parapet.

Lane between Firth Street and Stanley Street, Arncliffe has as its entrance the magnificent cast iron fence of "Glenevie" a graceful Victorian residence now demolished. I would like to see this walkway named "Glenevie Lane" to recall the old house.

Two Storey timber house George Street, Rockdale.

I will be seeking endorsement of these recommendations at the next meeting of the Society.

Bernard Sharah

ST GEORGE HISTORICAL

SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE

YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE, 1992

INCOME

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Members' Subscriptions | 1,193.00 |
| Donations | 116.00 |
| Sale of Society Books | 202.60 |
| " " Badges | 4.00 |
| Carcoar Bus Trip - Profit Adjustment | 230.00 |
| Bank Interest | 66.58 |

Balance in Bank at 30th June, 1991

| |
|-------------------|
| 1,862.18 |
| 1,813.74 |
| <u>\$3,675.92</u> |

I certify that I have examined the books, bank statements, vouchers and cheque butts presented by Mrs. M. Persen, treasurer of the above society, and this presents a true statement of its financial affairs as at the 30th June, 1992.

A. Olsen
Auditor 13/7/92

EXPENDITURE

| | |
|---|--------|
| 30th Anniversary Celebration | 60.47 |
| Hospital Donation (Mrs Kell, dec'd) | 30.00 |
| Cocktail Party | 74.01 |
| Tecal Conference (Mr Sharah & Mr Ellis) | 264.00 |
| Floral Tribute (Mrs Piper, dec'd) | 30.00 |
| Fares for Speaker | 15.00 |
| Treasurer's Expenses | 46.80 |
| Subscription - R A H S | 60.00 |
| Secretary's Expenses | 20.67 |
| Subscription - National Trust | 50.00 |
| Printing of Society Booklets | 930.00 |
| 2000 Envelopes, Printed | 200.00 |
| Extension/Reservation of Business Name | 18.00 |
| R A H S - Public Liability Insurance | 140.00 |
| Printing of Newsletter | 135.00 |
| Bromides (Newsletter) | 70.00 |
| Registration - Bulk Postage | 80.00 |
| Bulk Postage | 624.35 |
| F I D \$1.11, B A D \$5.75 | 6.86 |
| Outstanding Cheque 430395 - presented | 50.00 |

Balance in Bank 30th June, 1992

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 928.76 | 3,833.92 |
| Less unrepresented cheques - June | |
| 548372 18.00 | |
| 548373 140.00 | |
| 158.00 | |
| <u>\$3,675.92</u> | |

LYDHAM HALL FUND

RAISING COMMITTEE

Income and Expenditure for

Year ending 30th June 1992

INCOME

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Cash in Bank at 30.6.91 | 1255:05 |
| Raffles | 159:20 |
| Cake Sales | 2:50 |
| Donations | 30:70 |
| Society Books | 139:50 |
| Teaspoons | 25:00 |
| Lydham Hall Admissions | 214:10 |
| Bank Interest | 50:06 |
| | <u>\$ 1879:11</u> |

EXPENDITURE

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Petty Cash | 10:00 |
| Society Books Sold | 127:50 |
| F.I.D. 28 & G.D.T. 30 | 58 |
| Bank Balance | <u>1727:23</u> |
| | 1856:31 |
| | <u>13:80</u> |
| | <u>\$ 1879:11</u> |

Capital Investment in St. George Building Society
A/c No 111-973-102 at 13-6-1992

| | | |
|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| Interest | \$62:13 | 1560:88 |
| Less F.I.D. | <u>3</u> | <u>62:10</u> |
| | \$ 62:10 | <u>\$ 1622:98</u> |

I have examined the Books, Bank Statements, Building Society and Pass Book presented by Miss B. Otton as Treasurer of the above Committee and this presents a true statement of its financial affairs as at 30th June 1992

Value of Cake Forks on Hand
at \$2:50 = \$17:50

.....
Auditor 13.7.92

BOWEN ' S CAMP

A talk given by Arthur Ellis
to the St George Historical Society
on 14 July 1992

Somewhere during the last 12 months some stone ruins were rediscovered in Wolli Creek Valley . The origins of these ruins baffled the Wolli Creek Preservation Society in spite of the fact that they got an archeologist onto the job and a few other people did some research.

The stone ruins consisted of some massive retaining walls, some garden patches hemmed in with little slabs of stone, some very useful terracing on the steep ground to give some flat land some rock had been blasted and some stone boundary walls built.

Since it was last inhabited the bush had overgrown all this and I'm sure thousands of people have walked past it, even through part of it, not knowing it's there because of the thickness of the bush. Besides this, it being on the steep slopes of the land running into the creek those inhabiting the other side of the street at the top of the steep slope have been bringing their weeds and grass clippings for generations and throwing it over the side. The rain washes this stuff down and the juices of the live vines and vegetation have stained all the stone a deep green so it is barely visible when you are standing right in the middle of it. It baffled the archeologist. It baffled the Wolli Creek Preservation Society despite the fact that they put on a fairly diligent researcher. But he was very busy doing other work and he referred it to me.

Clearly there had been some human habitation. There was no geological dig in that no holes were dug to find buried ruins. That has to be agreed to by the Heritage Council before you can do that. You must never dig for archeological remains with the intention of finding archeological remains. You can dig a hole to put a post in but if you find archeological remains you must notify the Heritage Council immediately and pay for a proper professional archeological dig.

I had been asked to solve this problem so I just searched the surface. I decided the way to find a solution was to make a guess at what period it had been done. I decided the period I would search would be the period of the Great Depression of the 1930's. Ever so many people were evicted from their homes who had access either by loan or perhaps they owned a piece of land on which they built some sort of a humpy. and that was the word, humpy, and live in it! And some lived in it long enough to raise families. This occurred at North Brighton-le-sands, La Perouse and many other places called Happy Valley and a variety of names. I have named this place, because it hadn't been given a name before, Bowen's Camp.

Whilst living at 102 Mill Street Carlton in 1931 Andrew Murray Bowen purchased two part-landlots at Wolli Creek. (If you think I am trying to avoid divulging its exact whereabouts you are quite correct! I don't want to pinpoint its location because this could attract vandals). He was a tramway employee. He paid £180 for two landlots. (I could give you the lot numbers and the DP numbers but I'm not going to. That pinpoints it exactly.) But this was the point of view from which I started the research - from the point of view of the history of land title. Maybe we would find that the person who did this work and lived there would be the owner of the land. Then where to find him? I've done lots of detective-work. By telephone I've been to Glen Innes. By telephone I've been to Thirlmere I've got the man's will out from the probate registry of the Supreme Court. I have got the purchase and sale documents. Purchase in 1931, sale in 1943 land transfer documents from the Land Title Office. So with the will at one end (he died in 1972 at Thirlmere) to assure myself that it was one and the same man laid the three documents out and compared the signatures. They are identical.

After living for some few years at Bowen's Camp and having built a small stone building on a cement foundation with a tin roof (2 sheets of iron extending down beyond where the gutter would normally be and made a sort of an awning - a very crude primitive residence. Under this awning was a fuel stove propped up on some stones and there was where the woman cooked all the food. And raised the babies! By about 1938 they left there and went to Padstow. He was on the move again. And from Padstow he went to a town just south of Thirlmere. There he had a poultry farm until he retired and he died on the 20th October 1972. As soon as I found his probate number at the probate register and got a copy of his will I compared it with the land sale documents and confirmed it was the same person. He had left his property at Thirlmere to his second wife. His first wife had died - you might say "No wonder!" She bore two children but in appalling primitive circumstances. Bowen was not destitute. He was a tramway employee Wages might not have been big. He bought the land for £180 and sold it for £100 in 1943. He had a second wife to whom he left his property but the will did mention his daughter. I picked up the name of the daughter in the funeral notice but it didn't give a surname. Since it said he was grandfather to her children this indicated that apparently she was married so she has changed her name. I found Beryl living at Glen Innes. How do you find out where a person lives at Glen Innes who was born in a bush humpy at Earlwood? Well, I went to the Commonwealth Electoral Roll microfiche after having found the name Beryl Brand in the will. Then the question arises - where is she now? And I found her at Glen Innes. I'm still saving up to buy the ointment and bandages I will suffer when I get my phone bill. Andrew Murray Bowen willed his property to his daughter, Mrs Brand but also made provision for his second wife to live in the house while she still lived unmarried. This research will continue and I am doing this in order that this research becomes the property of our society.