



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

INC.

7 Lynwood St
Blakehurst

DECEMBER 1992 - FEBRUARY 1993

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

8 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS MEETING

PETER SAGE will give a slide presentation entitled "POT POURRI"

which will cover a variety of subjects including:- historic buildings of Rozelle Hospital; hulks at the entrance of the Brisbane river - some of which brought the Kanakas to Queensland and one on which the Australian Constitution was signed; *Bird Symphony*; the construction of the Sydney Harbour Tunnel.

MEMBERS: Please bring some food or drink with Christmas in mind.

9 FEBRUARY BEXLEY'S BAREFOOT DAYS

RON HUNT, author of this recently published book about his boyhood days growing up in Bexley of the 1930's and 40's. Join us for a trip down memory lane. Ron will have copies of *Bexley's Barefoot Days* available for purchase.

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

REMINDER: CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER

For all members who have booked our Christmas Get-Together will be held in Lydham Hall at 4pm 12th December.

Look forward to seeing you there!

OFFICE HOLDERS

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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

TEMPE HOUSE RESTORATION IN DOUBT

Three years ago Qantek, a subsidiary of Qantas, announced a grand plan for the redevelopment and restoration of the historic Tempe House Estate. The site was intended to become the nerve centre of Qantas' national computer network. Tempe House itself and the St Magdalen Chapel were to be restored to their original condition by Australia's foremost restoration architect, Clive Lucas.

However, none of this has eventuated. In fact, the Development Application approved by Rockdale Council has been allowed to lapse. This must raise doubts as to whether the promised restoration will take place at all.

Meanwhile, the St George District's most historically significant building languishes.

SOCIAL OUTING

TOUR - LAW COURTS & ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 1993

AM

INSPECTION OF LAW COURT 10.30AM. APPROX. 2HRS.
QUEENS SQUARE, SYDNEY.
GROUP MEET IN LOBBY AT 10.20AM WHERE GUIDE WILL BE
WAITING.

LUNCH AT LAW COURT LEVEL 14 - OWN EXPENSE.

PM

TOUR OF ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL AND CRYPT. COLLEGE STREET
ENTRANCE. 1.40PM
GUIDE WILL BE WAITING.
APPROX 1 1/2 HOURS

Any Enquiries - Please Ring DORA LENANE 660 2714

SISTER MARY GONZAGA STANLEY

Earlier this year we published an article by Sister Gonzaga Stanley recounting her childhood memories of growing up in Surry Hills. For one of our members, Sheila Tearle, the article had special interest. Sheila knew Sister Gonzaga from her university days. Well sadly, Sister Gonzaga passed away on the 8 September but she will be well remembered if the hundreds of mourners who filled St Mary's Cathedral are any indication.

Sister Gonzaga was born Helen Veronica Stanley in 1908 in Dowling Street, Moore Park, second youngest of 12 children. She went on to study at Sydney University and later gave away a promising academic career to follow her three older sisters into the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta.

She devoted the next 50 years to teaching until her retirement in 1984. One of her students, novelist Catherine Gaskin, wrote to her "Love and interest freely given to so many young people over the years have kept you eternally young."

THE ENGLISH HOUSES OF KOGARAH

By Dr Joan Hatton

Edmund English in 1853 purchased 87 acres for £337 in the area bounded by Bowns Road, Princes Highway, O'Meara Street and nearly to Hampton Court Road. On this estate he conducted his market gardens, set aside 10 acres for Kogarah Park (now Jubilee Oval) and raised his eight children. All except one settled on the estate and several of their properties, built in the 1880 - 1890's are still standing.

The Homestead, a large residence with attic bedrooms was unfortunately demolished in 1923 to make way for the construction of Carlton South Public School. It was built about 1854 from stone obtained locally from Blakes quarry and Edmund himself worked on the building. A photo shows it has a galvanised iron roof but it is so closely surrounded by trees that only glimpses of this house can be seen.

Next to it in Station Street (now Jubilee Avenue) was Avoca, built for youngest daughter Kathleen, who, however, did not marry and did not live in it. It was lived in for many years by the Mullarky family. This house was demolished in recent years to extend a car sales yard.

Patrick's residence was Lynwood, on the south eastern part of the estate where he cultivated his market gardens, now on the corner of Princes Highway and O'Meara Street. Lynwood was demolished in the late 1960's and the phoenix of a service station and car wash arose on the site.

Over the other side of the park, in Webbers Road (now English Street), The Laurels was built for daughter Elizabeth in about 1888. It is a large two-storey residence in extensive grounds. She lived in it only till about 1895, and since then it has had a succession of occupiers including Rev. A. Killworth, Herman Primrose, the Chelmsford School for girls and kindergarten, a private hospital and a childrens' home run by the United Protestant Association of NSW. This organisation in 1979 built retired persons units in the grounds thus obscuring the view of the house from the front.

Diagonally opposite in English Street, on the corner of Park Street is Karuah, a mirror-image of The Laurels. It is well kept with Sydney lace iron-work on the verandahs and ornamentation on the chimneys. It has extensive grounds and shrubbery. It was built in the early 1880's for James English but his wife died in childbirth and in fact his second wife also died in childbirth. His third wife, Sarah Ann Beavers fared better with seven children. However, Karuah did have some notable occupants including John Sale and Percy Tanner who both were mayors of Kogarah and the house is locally known as Mr Tanner's house.

Next door, with red tiled roof is Terera, extensively remodelled in recent years. It was named from the town on the Shoalhaven River where the Beavers family farmed before they came to Kogarah and bought the Gardeners Arms Hotel.

The two corners of English Street and Princes Highway are occupied by the former Kogarah Hotel on the south side and on the north side behind a wicker-ware facade the produce store of James English. The Kogarah Hotel was built by Edmund about 1879 and James was the licensee for many years, alternating with Edwin Potts, John Murphy and Harry Crichton, until its closure as a hotel in 1916 due to the loss of the licence under the Local Option Act. Afterwards it was used as a residence until eventually sold at great loss as no compensation was given for the cancellation of the licence. Recently it was extensively remodelled and opened as "The Dragon" a Chinese and seafood restaurant.

The produce store was conducted by James and had the usual bay for carts to back into, now replaced by the display windows. The first floor residence was added subsequent to English ownership. Mr Hannaford conducted the business for some time.

Next to the Kogarah Hotel in English Street was the stone house St Elmo built for Mary. It was demolished in 1970 to make a car park for Jubilee Oval.

James also owned a duplex in English Street next to the produce store, and on the Princes Highway another duplex and a cottage. This cottage, number 233, was occupied for several years by one of Australia's greatest landscape artists, Elioth Gruner.

ELIOTH GRUNER

One of the most notable people to live on the English estate was Elioth Gruner, who later became internationally known, and whose paintings are much valued works of art. He was born in Gisborne, New Zealand, the son of a Norwegian father and an Irish mother. The family came to Sydney when he was an infant and at an early age he showed promise. When he was twelve years old, he was accepted at the Julian Ashton school. But when his father and elder brother died he had to help support the household, and at 14 years of age he obtained a position in a shop working twelve hours a day. When he came to live at Kogarah about 1905, he was working on the glove counter at David Jones.

With his mother he lived in the cottage in Princes Highway, between the present English Street and Bowns Road. Every weekend he would be seen with his chair and easel, on the English estate, painting the scenes which later were to make him famous. His speciality was green rolling pastures and farmyard animals, seen through the dewy mists of early morning. His painting *Morning*

Light, which won the Wynne Art Prize for landscapes was purchased by the National Gallery of New South Wales.

In 1911, Gruner was appointed by Julian Ashton to take charge of a small shop in Bligh Street, Sydney, which was to sell Australian works of art. In 1914, when world war started, the shop was closed, and he was appointed as an assistant to Julian Ashton at the Sydney Art School.

In 1921, the trustees of the National Gallery of New South Wales, commissioned him to paint a large picture, "The Valley of the Tweed". This was painted entirely in the open air and took four months to complete. In 1923, he went to England in charge of a collection of Australian art which was to be exhibited at the Royal Academy. He remained overseas for more than two years, visiting the continent and studying famous paintings.

He was generally regarded as Australia's finest landscape painter, and his work is represented throughout Australian galleries. Reproductions of his works are very popular, and many homes have copies of "Spring Frost" (Emu Plains 1919), "On the Murrumbidgee" (1929), and "The Valley of the Tweed" (1921). But there are probably some of his paintings still undiscovered, for with groups of painters he would visit the south coast from Sydney, making payments for board and lodging with his paintings.

His awards included the Wynne Prize on seven occasions, - 1916, 1919, 1921, 1929, 1934, 1936, and 1937.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Once again the opportunity to save a piece of local history was missed. The "Gruner Cottage" joined the ranks of other English buildings demolished for "progress". The cottage was a small brick house with stone facade, bull-nose iron and very early looking cast-iron frieze and verandah posts. Despite an attempt by this Society to save it the house was levelled last year to make way for what was supposed to be the new Kogarah Private Hospital. Needless to say the site is still vacant.