

SPONSORED BY
ROCKDALE COUNCIL



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1993

7 Lynwood St
Blakehurst 2221

MEETING PROGRAMME

SEPTEMBER 14TH

HELEN BELTON - HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST OF NSW

Mrs Belton, a volunteer guide at Vacluse House, will give a talk on the role and responsibilities of the Historic Houses Trust. The talk will be illustrated by slides of the many beautiful houses the Trust has in its care.

OCTOBER 12TH

MERLE PETERS - "CHARACTERS OF SYDNEY"

Merle Peters from the Bankstown Historical Society will entertain us with a talk on the colourful characters of old Sydney.

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

Members please bring a plate.

DAY TOUR OF MT WILSON

17TH OCTOBER

Spring is the perfect time to visit beautiful Mt Wilson in the Blue Mountains. Our day tour includes visits to 3 gardens and morning tea.

Coach departs 8am from Rockdale Town Hall but other pick-ups at Hurstville, Carss Park, Kogarah and Strathfield have been arranged.

Cost \$30. Book early!

For details contact Joan Fairhall 546 5555

OFFICE HOLDERS

PRESIDENT: Mrs Bettye Ross

SECRETARY: Mrs Val Beehag 546 2819

TREASURER: Mrs Margaret Persen 771 5461

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT: Arthur Ellis 529 4879

VICE PRESIDENTS: Noel Beehag and Bernard Sharah

RESEARCH OFFICER: Arthur Ellis 529 4879

SOCIAL SECRETARIES and PROMOTIONS OFFICERS:

Mrs Joan Fairhall 546 5555 and Mrs Dora Lenane 660 2714

BULLETIN EDITOR: Bernard Sharah 567 8989

LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE:

Mrs B.Ross, Miss B.Otton, Mrs V.Beehag

AUDITOR: Mrs L Thompson

All correspondence to the Secretary, 7 Lynwood St Blakehurst 2221

FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT

The Society is proud to announce that at its Annual General Meeting held in July our first female president, Mrs Bettye Ross, was elected.

Mrs Ross is very interested in local history and historical research generally. She has strong associations with the Rockdale-Arncliffe district through her husband who grew up in the area.

We wish Bettye every success in her new role as President.

(Whilst not in the forefront of the womens'affirmative action movement it seems we are making progress in that direction!)

LIFE MEMBER - ARTHUR ELLIS

At our August Meeting Life Membership was conferred on former President, Arthur Ellis, in recognition of his outstanding services to the Society.

Mr Ellis has been a member of the Society for 32 years and has served 8 terms as President. In addition he has been Research Officer for almost the entire period. Congratulations Arthur!

A WORD FROM YOUR NEW PRESIDENT

My husband's joking remark as I left home Tuesday evening, 13th July, for the Annual General Meeting and election of Officers of the St. George Historical Society was "don't come home President". I laughed at such a thought and went off to enjoy the Meeting.

It was with a little astonishment that I arrived home a few hours later to say I was not only the incoming President, but the first Lady President!

To magnify the remarks and introduction I made, of myself, that evening I would just like to put into print, for those not at the Meeting (13th July) and particularly for those who are unable to come to the Meetings over the next twelve months, but are on the Mailing list, that I do feel very honoured to not only preside over the St. George Historical Society Meetings but to also be the first "Lady" President, and hope that I can fill the position, with the dignity it deserves. I shall perhaps have to quash my sense of fun a little here, but do look forward to an interesting year in the position.

I wish all the other Executive Officers the best for this new year of Office and to thank members for their support, in advance. I thanked the outgoing Officers at the Meeting for the work put into the Society during this past year and know that those re-elected will continue in this way, but I

would also like to thank Mr Arthur Ellis for his "prompting" when I actually did take the Chair. I felt like a "fish out of water" on the evening and hope I can manage, with not too many mistakes, from now on.

I moved early 1940 to the St. George areas of Rockdale, then to Bexley and later to Arncliffe, before my husband and I in 1960 bought a home at Oyster Bay (Sutherland Shire). St. George is where my formative years were spent - happily at that - and I enjoy both viewing, and hearing, of things pertaining to its area that I am either familiar with or which are "new" to me - be they of ever so ancient origin.

Let's all work together, again this year, to promote the function and growth of the ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Bettye Ross

Foundation and Life Member, Mrs Jean Faulkner, was kind enough to write the following letter to our secretary.

Dear Mrs Beehag,

Many thanks for sending me the copies of the bulletin throughout the year. They are most appreciated by me.

I would just like to add to two items in the last Bulletin.

THE ESDAILES

The Esdailes were friendly with my maternal grandfather, John Charles Walker, who was bandmaster of Rockdale Municipal Band for over 50 years and also a businessman in Rockdale. Mr and Mrs Esdaile were very fond of band music. Who isn't? Band music is always so lively and exhilarating.

Some Christmas Eves and some New Year's Eves Mr and Mrs Esdaile would ask the Band to come to their place and give them a concert. After the Band had finished playing, Mr and Mrs Esdaile would have a magnificent supper laid out for them which the bandsmen certainly appreciated after huffing and blowing on their instruments.

ST ELMO

Yvonne Palmer, daughter of Mr and Mrs Claude Palmer, was a close friend of mine. She was a girl with a great sense of humour and full of fun. She thought her initials were hilarious and had them painted in large letters on the side of her school case.

On the day of the tragedy I was walking home from school with another friend who also lived in Harrow Road. Her name was Elsie Swainton and she lived opposite the St George Bowling Club in a house with three tennis courts.

Normally I did not go that way as I lived at the Hurstville end of Bexley but I was on my way to my piano lesson with Miss Winifred Dennis, who lived in a delightful Federation house surrounded by a beautiful rose garden and manicured lawns in Monomeeth Street. Elsie and I crossed from Watkin Street to Stanway's house and shop in Harrow Road. We walked along to Elsie's place where we said goodbye and I continued up the hill. I had not gone very far when I noticed a crowd milling around on the footpath outside St Elmo. So I crossed over and asked what was going on. They said they did not know but something had happened at the house. Then I noticed a policeman at the entrance gates.

As it was getting on to 4pm when I was due for my piano lesson I went on my way. Miss Dennis informed me of the tragedy.

The Palmers were very nice people and Mrs Palmer worked hard for charity and did many charitable things such as giving the nephew a little holiday when the superintendent of the mental hospital said he was stable. I was told that nobody knew he had the guns and the ammunition, but people who are unsound of mind are often cunning and stealthy.

They say the mad dog bites the hand that feeds it. This poor fellow killed those who loved and cared for him most.

Wishing the Society every success and kindest regards.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Faulkner

Foundation and Life Member.

Our thanks to Jean Faulkner for taking the trouble to write such an interesting letter.

THE TOLL BAR COTTAGE, MOUNT VICTORIA

A Proclamation issued in the NSW Government Gazette 14 November 1848, states "Now I, the Governor aforesaid ...hereby appoint that on and after the first day of January next ensuing : Turnpike Gates shall be established at the following places ... on the Bathurst Road between Penrith and One Tree Hill at a spot one hundred yards east of the fifteenth Mile Stone known as the old 17 Mile Hollow Stockade, and one the Bathurst Road between Penrith and One Tree Hill at the thirty-fifth Mile Stone at a spot known as "Broughton's Waterhole."

The Toll Bar Gatehouse was built in 1849 at a cost of £224.16.0 and the Toll became known as "Sheppeard's Toll Bar" because a George Sheppeard continued to acquire the lease for so many years. He built the first hotel thereabout next door to the Toll Bar and was engaged also in running a butchery, bakery and store. Unfortunately, he failed in business and the lease was bought by William Read.

In 1868 the name of the township was changed from One Tree Hill to Mount Victoria on the suggestion of the station master when the railway line was opened to that point, and a

second Toll Bar was erected a short distance west of Sheppard's to catch the traffic to the railway.

A Toll Bar was also opened at the foot of Boddington Hill known as The Weatherboard.

As the railway extended westward the business of the Toll Bars fell away and finally they were closed by Proclamation in 1876.

The first, and probably the most elaborate, toll gate was erected on Brickfield Hill, on the site of the present waiting sheds in Railway Square in 1811. Its purpose, Governor Macquarie said, was to pay off the newly constructed Parramatta Road. Built by convict labour the road, according to present standards, was no highway, but it shortened the journey to Parramatta to a mere two days.

Other toll gates were established at the junction of College and Oxford Streets; at Rushcutters Bay, Waverley and Newtown. The late Mr Tom Sutton of Lithgow and Bowenfels worked here as toll collector in 1856 when he was 14; from Newtown he sent to The Weatherboard and from there to Randwick. Finding this place too lonely he returned to the Mountains to work for Ryan and Dempsey, One Tree Hill, leaving them after about twelve months to take the job at Sheppard's Toll Bar when he was 19 years old.

It was reported to the police at Penrith that at 9 am September 11, 1862, the son of the toll keeper at Broughton's Waterhole, Edward Sheppard and John Lewis Meades were stuck up by four armed men and robbed of a cheque for £8 drawn on the Bank of New South Wales by Roberts and a gold Geneva watch and other property. It is not recorded whether the thieves were captured.

The original Cox's Road down Soldier's Pinch from Mount Boyce ran close to a permanent spring at the head of Fairy Bower Gully and about 370 yards east of the Toll Bar cottage. This appears to be Broughton's Waterhole, formerly a camping ground. Before water was laid on to Mount Victoria it was carted from this spring in dry times.

by Beryl Strachan.

originally published in The 1788-1820 Pioneer Gazette, February, 1993.

A 19TH CENTURY EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE ON AUSTRALIA

The following excerpt is from an English school text book entitled "A Class Book of Modern Geography" by William Hughes. Published in 1861 it provides an interesting insight into the way in which Australia was viewed by and presented to 19th century Europeans if only for the rather jaundiced and narrow perspective it takes.

METAL AND MINERALS

Australia has proved, within recent years, to abound in mineral resources. The gold fields of Victoria rival those of California in abundance of produce, and the copper-ore of South Australia is of unsurpassed richness.

Gold is found in Australia along the inland base of the Australian Alps, and at various localities within the basin of the upper Murray and its tributary streams, as well as in other parts of the province of Victoria. Some of the gold-fields are within New South Wales, but those of Victoria are of far greater value.

VEGETATION:

The native vegetation of Australia is altogether different from that of other parts of the globe. Australia is the only one of the continents that has no characteristic food plants of its own - neither grains, fruits, nor esculent roots of any value. With scarcely an exception, the plants that are indigenous to its soil are valueless as food. Many of its trees, however, yield valuable timber: they belong chiefly to the orders known as gum trees and acacias.

All the grains and fruits that belong to southern Europe and similiar regions of sub-tropical temperature flourish, however, in the Australian soil. The vine, orange, fig, olive, peach, and numberless fruits of like description, grow in unsurpassed luxuriance. Both wheat and maize return abundant crops.

ZOOLOGY:

The native animals of Australia present no analogy to those of other regions. The largest of its mammalia is the kangaroo, which belongs to an order (the marsupial) that is scarcely found elsewhere. There are numerous varieties of the kangaroo differing greatly in size from one another. The most formidable among the carnivorous animals of Australia is the native dog, or dingo, which is fast diminishing in numbers, and will probably soon become extinct.

The animals native to Australia, like the plants indigenous to that region, are of no obvious service to man. At least, they include none which can supply the same uses to man as the domesticated cattle of other regions - no oxen, sheep, goat, horse, deer, camel or elephant. All the domestic quadrupeds of Europe, however, have been introduced into Australia. Sheep and oxen are now reared there in almost countless numbers. Herds of wild oxen, descended from strayed members of the settlers' stock, are occasionally met with in the distant interior.

The native birds of Australia, and indeed all the members of the animal world, are unlike those of other lands. The emu (or Australian ostrich) is found within the arid plains of the interior. Snakes and other members of the reptile kind are not generally numerous, nor is the general aridity favourable to their development.

POPULATION:

The chief part of the present inhabitants of Australia are of British descent. The colonisation of this distant region by Great Britain commenced less than three-quarters of a century since (in 1788), and has progressed with greatly accelerated speed since the discovery of its rich gold-fields, in 1851. There are now upwards of a million British subjects in the settled provinces of Australia, speaking the English language, and following the ordinary usages, in all essential respects, of the Anglo-Saxon race. A few settlers from other European lands, chiefly Germans, are intermingled with the British population.

The aboriginal natives of Australia are among the most degraded members of the human race. They are few in number, and are rapidly diminishing. They are now, indeed, seldom seen in the neighbourhood of the towns. The scattered tribes that wander over the vast interior obtain a scanty subsistence from such means as the forests or river-beds of their native land affords. A few roots and berries, with shell-fish, insects, grubs, and other objects repulsive to civilised tastes, are the sole native resources of the Australian savage in this respect.

The aborigines of Australia belong to what ethnologists distinguish as the Papuan (or Austral-Negro) race. Their skins are of dark-colour - almost black, and their stature below the average of Europeans.

ST GEORGE HISTORICAL

SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE YEAR

ENDING 30th JUNE, 1993

INCOME

EXPENDITURE

Members' Subscriptions	369.00
Donations	88.00
Sale of Society Books	121.40
Christmas Get-Together Contributions	400.00
Consumer Affairs: Refund of overpayment	18.00
Sydney University Farm Tour - Profit	20.00
Rozelle Hospital Tour Charges	240.00
" " - Profit	27.00
" " - Raffle	25.50
St George Bank Tour - Profit	11.00
Bank Interest	23.38
	<u>1,343.28</u>

Postage	357.30
Incorporation Application Fee	78.00
R A H S Conference: Deposit	52.00
Repay: 2 Xmas Get-Together Bookings	20.00
Catering Expenses: Xmas Get-Together	380.00
R A H S Public Liability Insurance	140.00
R A H S Subscription 1993	60.00
R A H S Workshop (4 people)	25.00
Rozelle Hospital Tour Charge	240.00
F I D .92 cents D T \$7.05	7.97
Outstanding Cheques Presented:	<u>18.00</u>
	<u>140.00</u>

Balance in Bank 30.6.1992

928.76

Less Unpresented Cheque, June: 548394

52.65

\$2,272.04

1,465.62

Balance in bank 30.6.1993

806.42

\$2,272.04

I have examined the Books, Bank Statements, Vouchers and Cheque Butts presented by Mrs Persen, Treasurer of the above Society and this presents a true Statement of its financial affairs as at 30th June, 1993.

L. Thompson
Auditor