

St George Historical Society Inc.

Bulletin

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

MARCH - APRIL 1995 Edition

MEETING PROGRAM

14 MARCH *The Parthenon Marbles* (widely known as the *Elgin Marbles*) talk to be given by Emanuel Comino. An intriguing story lies behind these ancient stones. Their removal from the Acropolis to the British Museum by Lord Elgin has been a contentious issue with Greece and Britain since the 19th Century.

11 APRIL *Historical Aspects of St Vincents Hospital* a talk and slide presentation to be given by Sister Angela Burke, RSC, archivist for St Vincent's Hospital since 1991. Sister Angela will talk about the history of St Vincent's, one of Australia's great research hospitals, and give an outline of its future directions.

COMING UP

LUNA PARK - just for fun ***9 May***

Remember the Luna Park of old - Coney Island, the Ghost Train, the Big Dipper - well, at our May meeting, Sydney architect, Sam Marshall, will give a talk and slide presentation on the history of this amusement park which has become one of Sydney's cultural icons. Mr Marshall, who was in the forefront of moves to save the site from redevelopment, will also tell us about the new-look Luna Park and its bright future.

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All correspondence to the Secretary, 7 Lynwood St Blakehurst 2221.

SHORT ST, CARLTON

In a move that appears to be in direct conflict with its public image as a responsible administrator of our built heritage Rockdale Council has acquired a Victorian terrace and former shop in Carlton with the stated intention of demolishing them for "open space".

The properties earmarked for demolition, numbered 35 to 39 Short Street, are actually one building comprising 2 two- storey terrace houses and a former corner shop (number 39). Number 39 was the former Carlton Post Office for the period 1894 to 1909. The building retains most of its original features and is a good example of a Victorian shop. This type of building would perhaps not be significant in Dulwich Hill or other inner suburbs of Sydney but in Rockdale municipality they are few and far between. Certainly the examples that survive in Carlton contribute to its unique character.

A number of Carlton residents have expressed concern and dismay regarding the proposed demolition. It is hard to understand how the small additional area of open space created by the removal of this building will outweigh the substantial loss of character to the streetscape and the suburb as a whole.

TOUR OF MASHMAN'S POTTERY WORKS KINGSGROVE

Friday 24 March

This family-run business has been operating in Kingsgrove since last century and still produces a wide range of traditional lines of pottery. The chimney stack of Mashman's Pottery is one feature of the landscape clearly visible in early photographs of the surrounding district. Present day manager, Mike Mashman, has arranged for us to inspect the site. A highlight of the tour will be inspection of the old original kilns which are no longer used today.

This tour is a one-off and numbers are strictly limited so please book early!

**Meet 10am at Mashman's Pottery, Mashman Avenue
Cost Free but donations welcome.**

**Lunch at own cost at Illawarra Catholic Club (try the \$1 lunch - main course and dessert).
After lunch join us for a tour of Centennial Bakery
Contact Dora Lenane 660 2714**

A TOUR OF SYDNEY'S TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTRE & MARK FOYS BUILDING (THE DOWNING CENTRE)

Remember Mark Foys - it is now the Downing Centre. We will visit this unique building with its 16 courts, spiral stair, mosaic floors and original chandelier.

**Meet 10.15am corner Wentworth Ave and Oxford St
Lunch at the piazza Mark Foys Building
tour of Downing Centre starts 1pm
Book early because numbers are limited.**

Contact Dora Lenane 660 2714

SUSAN CLUNE & THE WEST BOTANY HOTEL

The Society has received a letter from Mrs Joan Clune, whose husband Paul is the great-grandson on Susan and Michael Clune, who were connected with the West Botany Hotel from 1895 or possibly earlier.

She writes

I obtained this photo from the late Mrs. Jessie Mills, who was the granddaughter of Mrs Susan Clune the first licensee of the Hotel..... Yesterday my husband and I went into the Archives to see if we could obtain proof of when the first Licence was issued to Mrs Clune. Unfortunately the government Gazettes between 1882 and 1895 have been lost or destroyed and the first official proof of her holding the Licence appears in the 1895 Gazette. I have taken the liberty of enclosing a copy of the information we obtained, for it does inform you when the name of the Hotel changed to the Arncliffe Hotel.

You will see from the above information that the Licence of the Hotel in 1898 was granted to Edward Downey and again in 1899. At this stage I am not sure when the Hotel was actually sold by Susan Clune or perhaps her Estate, from what information I have at the present time I was under the impression it was many years after this date. The late Mrs Jessie Mills' daughter is sending me the details of when the Hotel was actually sold. I understand she could have still owned the Hotel property and someone else have the Licence to it.

The other information I have enclosed is about Mrs Clune's marriage and her issue. Thought you might like to read it, seeing I mentioned she was a Dolan.

If I remember correctly, when we were reading the ["Early Settlers of the St George District"] book it mentioned a Mrs Clune, wife of Dr Clune of "Mimosa", Bexley.

We were particularly interested in this as Michael Joseph Clune's Death Certificate shows that the doctor who attended him was a Dr Clune. We tried to trace this at the Archives yesterday from the registration records of doctors. We did find two Dr Clunes, one who was registered in 1873 whose name was Michael Joseph Clune, exactly the same name as Susan Clune's (or Sarah as your publication shows) husband's name. We feel this must have been the Dr Clune referred to on Michael's Death Certificate as the other Dr Clune, Thomas Benedict Clune was not registered until 1883, 2 years after Michael's death.

I was wondering if the St George Historical Society might have any more information on the Dr Clune mentioned in the book that would enable us to verify the conclusions we have arrived at. Even the Dr Clune's christian name or initials would help.

When I was talking to Mrs Ross on the telephone she did mention to me that a Michael Joseph Clune died at North Sydney on 3.1.1902 and she did remark about my husband's great-grandfather and this gentleman having exactly the same name. I do intend to try and find out more about the Michael Joseph Clune who died in 1902, as I feel he could have been the Dr Michael Joseph Clune we traced in the Medical Registrations yesterday.

Although the photograph Mrs Clune mentions in her letter is not clear enough to publish in the bulletin it does reveal some quite interesting detail. It shows a two-storey brick building with cast-iron balustrading. In the foreground is a stone pillar upon which is inscribed "S. Clune West Botany Hotel 1899"; standing at the entrance are three women and a boy, either side of this group are two cockatoos in cages. In the background are the shops which presently occupy the corners of Firth and Forest Road and Eden Street and Forest Road. The proprietor's name over the doorway is clearly "Susan A. Clune" and begs the question where did the name "Sarah Clune" come from?

If anyone has additional information about this family could they please contact Mrs Joan Clune on 8697244.

LITTLE KNOWN PIONEERS OF ROCKDALE

This is an excerpt from St George Historical Society transmission on 2NBC -FM 1986 talking about some of the early settlers of the Rockdale Municipality.

John Andrews was born in London in 1828 - at 21 years of age he came to Sydney and made Rockdale his home, eventually. For 50 years he was a member of the Wesleyan, later Methodist Church in Bay Street. Mr Andrews lived in a two-storied house in what is now Princes Highway, opposite the present ambulance station.

He made a significant contribution to public life in that for 23 years he successfully conducted the school in Bay Street, under the old denominational school regime, and until public school education became available to all children.

At the time of his death in 1904, it was written -

"There are hundreds of people scattered over the state who as boys or girls were taught by the good old veteran - John Andrews - and who cherish for his memory a reverent and affectionate regard." That tribute is taken from "The Methodist" of 29 October 1904.

William Berghofer is another little known pioneer of West Botany. William, aged 44 years of age, came to Australia with his wife Anna and their 6 children in 1852.

He was a farmer and acquired land in Rocky Point Road in what is now known as Kogarah. On his death certificate, the location is called Scarboro - spelt - S C A R B O R O.

An incident is recorded concerning the Berghofer's trip out to take up residence in this area. Apparently they came out from the city, or Sydney Town, by waggon, but were forced to detour through the bush at Cobblers Pinch - known to us as Arncliffe Hill - and suffered the capsizing of the vehicle with all their possessions. Not a pleasant journey at all.

Three more children were born to the Berghofers, and in 1869 he is head of the committee which was formed to organise the building of St Paul's Church of England at Kogarah. Prior to that there was a small Church of England community in the Rocky Point area, who met in the Berghofer home for divine services. Yes, I am aware that the phrase Church of England has been used, and rightly so for that period of time. The Anglican Church of Australia was a long way in the future in 1869.

William died on 31 May 1890, about 82 years of age and was buried in the Kogarah Cemetery, probably St Paul's Churchyard.

Another little-known early settler was Konrad Franck. He also was a German settler. Konrad aged 25 years, with his wife Catherine, had heard of Australia and decided to emigrate in 1849. Their first child Anthony was born during the voyage out. They had 4 more children born at Cooks River - namely Frederick, Joseph, John and Elizabeth. Konrad Franck became an Australian (sic) citizen on 25 April 1857.

On 8 May 1857, Konrad purchased 6 acres of land from James Beehag bordering Beach Street. On 20 September 1865, he was given a grant of land at the eastern boundary of James Street, and here he built a weatherboard home. He was a member of the West Botany Trust. He also purchased a further 9 acres, part of an earlier grant given to Thomas Holt. Here he established an orchard and became well known for supplying first class fruit to the merchants of Sydney. The fruit was taken to Sydney by horse-drawn carts. Konrad had some fine horses but a pair of dapple greys were his favourite and his youngest son John, derived much pleasure from driving them in their buggie, all over the district.

A stone and brick house was built on the next property bought by Konrad Franck on 12 April 1869 - 4 acres of Sydenham Farm. This bounded by Unwins Bridge Road, Swan Street and Hogan Street - all then called Marrickville. The Department of Railways purchased part of his property and built Sydenham Railway Station.

Konrad had an eye to development, and purchased more land in 1875, within what we know as the vicinity of St George Girls High School.

Catherine Franck died on 25 July 1884, aged 59 years, and Konrad passed away at his Unwins Bridge home on 7 June 1886, aged 62 years.

Australia was kind to this hard-working German couple.

Read by Michael Fleming on Tuesday 11 March 1986

LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

I hope everyone enjoyed the Festive Season and entered the New Year in good health and company.

We have commenced this year with fairly moderate summer weather and trust we can soon say "our Dams are full".

Those who were able to attend our Christmas Party at Lydham Hall partook of a most enjoyable Party Afternoon Tea and if you were not there - we missed you and look forward to seeing you next Christmas and hopefully before that at our evening Meetings.

The last Meeting for 1994 was a splendid night's entertainment when most of us felt like booking for the next trip on the QE2 after watching Peter Sage's Slides of his trip on the vessel accompanied by not only a full description of the ship and it's many lounges, dining rooms and cabins, but also a song and dance from Peter. After much discussion, laughter and fellowship amongst one another we adjourned for a very pleasant Christmas Supper.

We have well and truly entered into 1995 now being in our third month and trust that I shall hear from many Members who are able to assist at Lydham Hall Saturdays or Sundays from 2 to 4 pm. If more helpers offered the lot would not fall on the same shoulders all the time.

A letter was sent out to a number of Historical Societies (about eight actually) the first week of January and Miss Otton and myself were delighted to receive one reply two weeks later, before that particular Society had even had its first Meeting of the year. The result was a bus-load of 50 Members of the Liverpool Historical Society arrived for a tour of Lydham Hall Saturday the 25th February and we are expecting another bus-load of 50 from Bankstown Historical Society Saturday the 25th March. Two of the other Societies are also interested in a tour later. Of course we need at least six helpers when these tours take place. Some contacts later may prefer a Wednesday so if you could advise of your availability for mid-week visits please 'phone me.

We are going to once again hold a Stall on Heritage Sunday, 9th April, with our Books and other goods for sale. So if you can donate anything in the way of jams, pickles, aprons or whatever it would be gratefully received. This day will be held at Lydham Hall from just before lunch until 4 pm. in conjunction with the Rockdale District Heritage Society who will have many displays outdoors whilst the St. George Historical Society is responsible for manning the Hall indoors, so once again volunteers needed. Last year's Heritage Sunday was a great success with many interested visitors and financially the Stall was a very pleasant surprise.

Bettye Ross
589-0229