

# *St George Historical Society* Inc. *Bulletin*

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

JULY - AUGUST 1995 Edition  
MEETING PROGRAM

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **11 July**

This is your opportunity to have a say in the running of the Society. All positions are declared vacant and nominations are called for. Following the election of officers, a short video will be shown. *Achievement in Service* was commissioned by Rockdale Council in 1951 and what a different world it shows. What a safe, harmonious and homogenous world we lived in! It has some interesting footage of streets and buildings of the area and some shots of Lady Robinson Beach which are a striking contrast to the Brighton of today.

### ***The Restoration of the Queen Victoria Building - 8 August***

Mr Neil Glasser, former Director of Restoration for the Queen Victoria Building, will give members some insight into this enormous project which gave back to Sydney a magnificent landmark and tourist attraction.

Meetings are held 8pm every second Tuesday of the month (except January) in the Council Chambers, Rockdale Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale. Members, please bring a plate.

### **OUR 34TH BIRTHDAY- SUNDAY 16 JULY**

The Society will celebrate its 34th Anniversary with afternoon tea and a display of memorabilia at Lydham Hall. Come along for an enjoyable afternoon with friends.

### **NEW GLEBE ISLAND BRIDGE TOUR - SAT 26 AUGUST 11.15 am**

How about a tour of something brand new! The cable-stayed design of the new Glebe Bridge has been the centre of much public debate over its aesthetic impact. Get a first hand look at this engineering achievement and make up your own mind. There is special viewing platform and display area for visitors. Buses leave Queen Victoria Building for Ryde. Parking available near Wheat Silos. Children welcome. Donations appreciated. Contact Dora Lenane 660-2714 for further information.

## OFFICE HOLDERS

PRESIDENT	Mrs Bettye Ross	589 0229
SECRETARY	Mrs Val Beehag	546 2819
TREASURER	Mrs Margaret Persen	771 5461
SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT	Mr Bernard Sharah	567 8989
VICE-PRESIDENTS	Mr Noel Beehag and Mr Wesley Fairhall	
RESEACH OFFICER	Mr Arthur Ellis	529 4879
SOCIAL SECRETARIES & PROMOTIONS OFFICERS	Mrs Joan Fairhall and Mrs Dora Lenane	546 5555 660 2714
BULLETIN EDITOR	Bernard Sharah	567 8989
LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE	Mrs B. Ross, Miss B. Otton, Mrs V. Beehag	
PUBLIC OFFICER	Mr Noel Beehag	546 2819
HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE	Bernard Sharah	567 8989
AUDITOR	Mrs L. Thompson	

## NEWS OF LYDHAM HALL

Society members will be sorry to hear that Miss Bett Otton has been hospitalised after suffering a mild stroke. Bett has provided 24 years of unfailing service in the role of caretaker and curator since the establishment of the museum in 1971. Since her recent discharge from St George Hospital she has moved into a nursing home. We wish her continuing progress in her health and I'm sure when Bett gets settled in she will be glad to see the familiar faces of those able to visit.

Council will engage a caretaker to take care of the cleaning of Lydham Hall and the role of the Society will be to cover the hours of opening of Lydham Hall between 2 and 4pm weekends and public holidays and to care for and maintain the exhibits. Naturally more volunteers will be needed for this process and as you look at the Roster Chart included in this Bulletin you will see the same names crop up over and over. Even if a member could say they would be able to volunteer to be at Lydham Hall once every six months this would prove very helpful and a relief to those there more frequently.

Bettye Ross

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the second year of my Presidency of St. George Historical Society draws to a close I would like to say how very pleasant this time has been. When my friend, Val Garner, and I joined possibly just over four years ago, we were immediately greeted by friendship which has progressed along the way. For this I thank everyone and a particular thanks goes to the other Office Bearers who either agreed with some of the ideas put forward or steered me along a better course.

Together many of us have enjoyed the Social outings of the Society to such places as Historic Parramatta by River Cat, the Jewish Museum, Mashman's Pottery, The Hut, University of Sydney along with The Macleay Museum of Natural History, Loftus Tram Museum and Sydney's Traffic Control Centre along with the Downing Centre (Mark Foys Building). I missed the latter I'm sorry to say, but we've been educated in many ways by these outings both historically and emotionally - thinking in particular of the Jewish Museum.

We have also had some excellent Speakers. All have been great to hear - some have brought back many happy and fun-regaled moments for instance Sam Marshall who brought us a talk and slides on Luna Park of days gone by, Will Newton who took us back in time to our wireless listening days with excerpts from Jack Davey, Bob Dyer, "Mo" and many others. A particularly enlightening Speaker, I found, was Colleen Callaghan who spoke on Arncliffe's Sewage Farm, which I did not know had ever existed.

Guest Speaker Beryl Simpson spoke to us at the last Meeting of our 1994 programme on The Order of St. John and our most recent and enjoyable Speaker was Margaret Fleming, a dear sweet, gentle lady with a most engaging Scottish accent who in a most humorous way told us of "Grave Moments in History". I hope we hear this lady again.

A thanks to those who organised these outings and Speakers and also to those who worked so hard selling Books at Tempe House's Open Day - when I was in Melbourne - and on Heritage Day when the Society had a Stall, and I was unable to assist due to illness. The outcome of both days, financially, was excellent towards the St. George Historical Society's finances through the hard work of those who manned both days.

At the beginning of 1995 eight letters were sent out to Historical Societies inviting them to visit Lydham Hall, and at the same time whilst in the area to call in at the Hurstville Centennial Bakery and Carrs Cottage. By July, five of these Societies will have visited Lydham Hall by Coach, mostly in parties of 50, so naturally helpers are needed at Lydham when they arrive. Due to Miss Otton's incapacity a year ago and her most recent Hospitalisation the members have been called on to man Lydham Hall during its Opening Hours from 2 pm. to 4 pm Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays. If you can assist, whether when Coach Tours arrive, or other opening hours please get in touch with me. Any isolated time at all, that you can help, would be more than appreciated.

Betty Ross  
1589.0229

## LYDHAM HALL ROSTER

The last Lydham Hall Roster appeared in Dec.-Feb.'95 Bulletin and showed 14 gaps where no Volunteer was rostered, however during that time we had 2 Coach loads of Visitors and 29 Members filled their names in those gaps covering the time opened beautifully. Thank you for that. Due to being ill I did not draw up a roster between April 9 and May 20 but thanks also goes to those who covered Lydham Hall's Opening times during this time.

Below is a Chart showing the Volunteers from that date. The blank spaces indicate help is needed on those occasions. Contact me if you can help at any of these times.

May	27	Saturday	Bettye Ross	
	28	Sunday	Norrene Burns, Ron Rathbone, Bettye Ross, Joan Fairhall	
			COACH GROUP	
June	3	Saturday	Joan Byrne	
	4	Sunday	Dora Lenane	
	10	Saturday	Val & Noel Beehag	
	11	Sunday	Val Garner	
	12	Monday	Bettye Ross	
	17	Saturday	Ron Rathbone gave 8 Helpers Tour of Lydham Hall	
	18	Sunday	Val Garner	
	24	Saturday	Lena Moncaster	
	25	Sunday	Norrene Burns	
July	1	Saturday	Joan Byrnes	
	2	Sunday	Dora Lenane	
	8	Saturday	.....	
	9	Sunday	.....	
	15	Saturday	.....	
	16	Sunday	2..pm..Celebration..Lydham Hall - Society's Birthday	
	18	Tuesday	COACH TOUR - Val Garner, Bettye Ross, Joan Fairhall, Norrene	
	22	Saturday	.....	
	23	Sunday	COACH TOUR - Val Garner, Alison Edsall, Bettye Ross	
	29	Saturday	.....	
	30	Sunday	Dora Lenane	
	26	Wednesday	Bettye Ross - one helper needed.	20 Group History Walk.
August	5	Saturday	.....	
	6	Sunday	Norrene Burns	
	12	Saturday	.....	
	13	Sunday	.....	
	19	Saturday	.....	
	20	Sunday	.....	
	26	Saturday	.....	
	27	Sunday	.....	

*Bettye Ross*  
589.0229

# THE MUNICIPALITIES OF THE ST GEORGE DISTRICT IN 1888

*These descriptions of West Botany [Rockdale], Kogarah and Hurstville are taken from 'The Aldine Centennial History of New South Wales by W.F.Morrison, 1888. An interesting point is the author's perception of Rockdale's limited potential for becoming a sought-after residential area, particularly when compared with neighbouring Kogarah and Hurstville. What factors would have influenced such a negative view? Certainly the presence of the many boiling down works and other noxious industries on the low-lying areas of Arncliffe and Rockdale was a disincentive to prospective residential development. It was a problem West Botany Council was inclined to ignore, largely because many of the aldermen of the day were proprietors of such establishments. Perhaps there is a lesson for us today?'.Ed.*

**WEST BOTANY** is a borough within the electorate of Canterbury, and was incorporated in 1871. It includes La Perouse, Little Bay, Sandringham, and Sans Souci. It is bounded on the north by Cook's River, on the south by George's River, on the east by Botany Bay, and on the west by Holl [Wolli?] Creek and Rocky Point Road. Its area is four square miles, or about 2,550 acres. It is divided into three wards, namely, Rockdale Ward, Arncliffe Ward, and Scarborough Ward. A large portion of this area lies contiguous to Botany Bay, and is swampy, and occupied by the Chinese for vegetable gardening. The residents are at present seeking to have the name changed to Rockdale, and doubtless before we go to print it will be effected. They have few buildings of any prominence, save some excellent private residences. They are building at present a fine town hall which, among other rooms, will have one with a seating capacity for 600 persons. This municipality is remarkable for its pleasure facilities. Lady Robinson's Beach (now called Cook Park) is a reserve skirting the water front, seven miles in length, affording pleasure-seekers ample opportunity to drive or ride on one of the most lovely beaches in the world. There are large comodious baths erected here for the accomodation of the health and pleasure seeker.

Scarborough Park is another large reserve, of 100 acres, further south, and when fully completed according to design, it will be an additional attraction to the excursionists who flock from the city on Saturday and Sunday, after a week's labor, for the fresher sea breezes, especially in the summer months. The following gentlemen have served as Mayors:- William Yates, in 1871; James Beehag, 1872 and 1873; Elias Godfrey, 1874; James Beehag, 1875 and 1876; James Collins, 1877; John Browner [Bowmer], 1878 to 1884; W.G.Judd, 1885, 1886, and 1887. Mr. Thomas Leader is Council clerk.

Botany West (or Rockdale) will no doubt come to be, in the near future, one of the places of fashionable resort, as it has many natural advantages suitable for these purposes; but as a suburb of permanent residences, we scarcely think it will equal many other places. It is about eight miles distant from the city, and in easy communication therewith by tram and 'bus.

**KOGORAH** [sic], alongside of Botany West, was incorporated in 1885, and as a municipality, it is in its infancy. Its area is about 7,000 acres, and is bounded on the north by the Illawarra railway line, on the south by George's River, on the east by West Botany, and on the west by the Illawarra Railway line. It is at present new, and sparsely settled. Its great extent of territory, and the rolling character of its lands, with its easy communication with Sydney and its relation to the Illawarra line that runs along the coast country south, must tend to make it a very desirable suburb. There are at present 1,500 electors on the roll, which is sufficient evidence of the favour with which the municipality is looked upon by the citizens of Sydney as a place of residence. The streets are all wide, and surveyed, only about one-tenth of which is yet completed. The revenue last year was £2,243 8s. 7d., and the expenditure £2021 19s. 8d. The following gentlemen have filled the office of Mayor: - Edward Hogben, 1886, and part of 1887, J.B.Carroll, balance of 1887. This suburb will be purely residential, and, although new, will before many years become a favorite place of abode.

**HURSTVILLE** is equally well situated for residential purposes. In general features it is very much like its southern neighbour, Kogarah. It is bounded on the south by the Illawarra line, on the east by Arncliffe and railway line, on the north by Wolli Creek, and on the west by Salt Pan Creek. It is divided into three wards - namely, Bexley Ward, Hurstville Ward, and Peakhurst Ward. The population of this suburb is 2,163. It has a rural appearance. Having only been incorporated a few months, there has not been time to effect any substantial improvement of a public character. It occupies a fine country, and will be chosen for residences by many doing business in the city, from which it is seven miles distant by railway line. Alexander Milson [Milsop] is mayor, and Mr George William Leader is clerk.

### **OUR VISIT TO THE TRAMWAYS MUSEUM** **Sunday 18 June**

In spite of a bitterly cold day Society members thought the visit to the Tramway Museum was excellent. The museum was immaculately maintained and contained many very interesting items including a San Francisco tram which American collectors would like to retrieve (but can't!) and a tram used by Long Bay Gaol to transport prisoners and from which there has been only one successful escape (when the notorious Darcy Dugan cut his way out through the roof). We must revisit the Tramway Museum when the weather warms up so we can make use of the very pleasant picnic area.

ST GEORGE HISTORICAL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE YEAR

INCOME

Members' Subscriptions	476.00
Donations	103.00
Donation - Proceeds of Raffle (B Ross)	12.30
Donated Goods & Raffle - Lydham Hall Stall	114.40
Sale of Society Publications	348.60
Tour Fees	216.00
Tour Profits	109.50
Musical Evening	135.00
Christmas-Get-Together	110.00
Bank Interest	32.61
	<u>1,657.41</u>
Balance in Bank 30.6.1994	1,064.08
	<u>\$2,721.49</u>

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, 1995.

*L. Thompson*

Auditor

SOCIETY

ENDING 30TH JUNE, 1995

EXPENDITURE

PURCHASE OF ESDAILE COLLECTION PRINTS	150.00
INCORPORATION REGISTRATION (Y1587502)	30.00
Bromides	85.00
Tour Expenses (D Lenane)	10.10
RAHS Conference Fee (B Ross, President)	57.50
President's Expenses	32.95
Treasurer's Expenses Dec.'93 - June '95	86.33
Bulletin Editor Expenses	29.87
" Postage	247.50
Musical Evening Expenses	67.26
Christmas-Get-Together Expenses	93.65
Opera House Tour Fees	33.00
RAHS Annual Subscription	65.00
RAHS Public Liability Insurance (2,000,000)	143.00
RAHS Personal Accident Insurance (\$20,000)	65.00
FID \$1.12; GDT \$7.10	8.22
	<u>1,204.38</u>
Balance in Bank 30.6.1995	1,517.11
	<u>\$2,721.49</u>