

St George Historical Society Inc.
Bulletin

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1995 Edition
MEETING PROGRAM

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to all our members

14 November - a 'show and tell' night

12 December - Peter Sage

Peter Sage and his wonderful slides at the St George Historical Society's Christmas meeting are almost a tradition so join us for an enjoyable evening with old friends.

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

Christmas Party
3pm Sun. 3 December

If you're someone who can't get to our monthly meetings we would love to see you at our Christmas party to be held at Lydham Hall. Ladies please bring a plate. Gentlemen - chips, peanuts or the like would be appreciated. The Society will supply drinks. Cost - free.

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 SECRETARY | Mrs Dora Lenane | 660 2714 |
| PUBLICITY OFFICER | Mrs Joan Fairhall | 546 5555 |
| BULLETIN EDITOR | Bernard Sharah | 567 8989 |
| LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE | Mrs B. Ross, Mrs V. Beehag, Mrs V. Garner | |
| PUBLIC OFFICER | Mr Noel Beehag | 546 2819 |
| HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE | Bernard Sharah | 567 8989 |
| AUDITOR | Mrs L. Thompson | |

NEW ERA FOR LYDHAM

After much deliberation Rockdale City Council has appointed a new caretaker to Lydham Hall. Alan Garvey, a young man in his thirties, has taken over the position vacated earlier this year due to Bett Otton's ill health. Unlike Bett, though, his duties will be purely that of caretaker. The responsibility of guardianship and management of the exhibits as well as promotion of the museum rests with the Lydham Hall Committee which has recently been reinstated by Council. Composition of the Committee, too, may well be different, as other interested organisations and individuals will be invited to take part. Under consideration for the new Committee will be a conservation plan for Lydham Hall which will look at ways in which the house can be presented to more accurately reflect its historic significance, in light of the changes in approach to heritage conservation that have taken place over the last twenty years or so. In the meantime the Society wishes a warm welcome to Alan Garvey.

A Tour of Moorefields Cemetery

(Kingsgrove)

2pm Sunday, 19 November

This may be your only opportunity to visit Moorefields Cemetery (unless you bought a plot there years ago). As access is through the grounds of the Arabic Baptist Chapel it is normally closed to the public. Moorefields is a small and comparatively little known cemetery but it does have some of the pioneers of the St George District, the most well-known being the Peakes of Peakhurst. Our guide will be **James Kane**, who for a number of years conducted history walks for the WEA, and has made a detailed study of Moorefields. The tour lasts just over one hour so please be early. The cemetery is located at the rear of the Arabic Baptist Chapel in Moorefields Road, Kingsgrove, near the corner of Glamis Street. Cost \$5. Booking is essential as numbers are limited, phone Bernard Sarah 567 8989.

How to know your are growing old!

Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt doesn't work
The gleam in your eye is the sun hitting your bifocals
You feel like the morning after but you haven't been anywhere
Your black book contains only names ending in M.D.
You get winded playing cards
Your children begin to look middle-aged
You join a health club but don't go
A dripping tap causes an uncontrollable urge
You know all the answers but nobody asks the questions
You look forward to a dull evening
You turn out the light for economy rather than romance
You sit in a rocker and can't make it go
Your back goes out more often than you do
You put your bra on back to front and it fits
Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles

The Bexley Ladies' College and Environs

Looking from Monomeeth Street - the College was founded Rev. C.T. Forscutt in 1895. It was situated on a block of land running between Gladstone and Monomeeth Streets, Bexley. The house and original school faced Gladstone Street and later the school building was erected facing Monomeeth Street.

My parents came to 33 Monomeeth Street in 1904, their home, *Kenilworth*, having been built in 1900. The College next door was then a boys school, later it was changed to the Bexley Ladies' College about 1905.

The school was a two-storey brick building situated about 4 feet from our side fence. It was only about 18 feet from the front fence, which was a fairly high picket one, reddish brown in colour. On the front gate was a brass plate bearing the words *The College*. To the side was a pair of matching double gates. It had a tiled verandah running the full width, just above ground level, with a corresponding balcony with an iron balustrade. The front door was in the middle, with an arched brick porch. The school rooms, music room and drawing room were on the lower floor and the dormitories on top. There was no front garden, but four or five prickly pine trees and two chilli bushes along the verandah.

Mr Forscutt used to drive an old single buggy with a poor old horse we called 'Bag of bones'. Inside the double gates and to the right, was a coach house and stables where an old handyman lived. He was known to us as 'Baggy britches'. There was a row of pines with an odd gum tree and some pittosporums along the fence line to Queen Victoria Street.

The Rev. Forscutt lived in a large two storey house facing Gladstone Street. It was surrounded by trees, gardens, tennis courts, summerhouse but no lawn that I can remember. It was hardly visible from either Gladstone or Monomeeth Street because of the trees. Some of the boarders were in the main house and the kitchen and dining room for the pupils were there also, the students being called to meals by bells.

Between the school building and the homestead was the sports ground for basketball, etc. It was really a hard gravelly clay patch. To the left, facing Gladstone Street were three small brick cottages. In one of these Mrs Mellhuish (Mr Forscutt's daughter) lived when she married, about 1916. The front fence was a fairly high galvanised iron one and a row of pines extended down the cottage in which Mr and Mrs Humphreys lived, they being members of his staff. There was a row of cottages, or land subdivided for cottages facing Queen Victoria Street. The land between the school and the back fences of this land formed a large paddock in which the horse and a couple of cows were kept.

The attached sketch will give some idea of the layout in those days.

The houses in Queen Victoria Street were built between 1900 and 1920. The portion of the school grounds facing Monomeeth Street was built on in 1927 and the Hudson's block was built

on about 1930-31. A block of home units was built on the site of the old school in 1958-59 and those next door, on the site of our old home, number 33, in 1964.

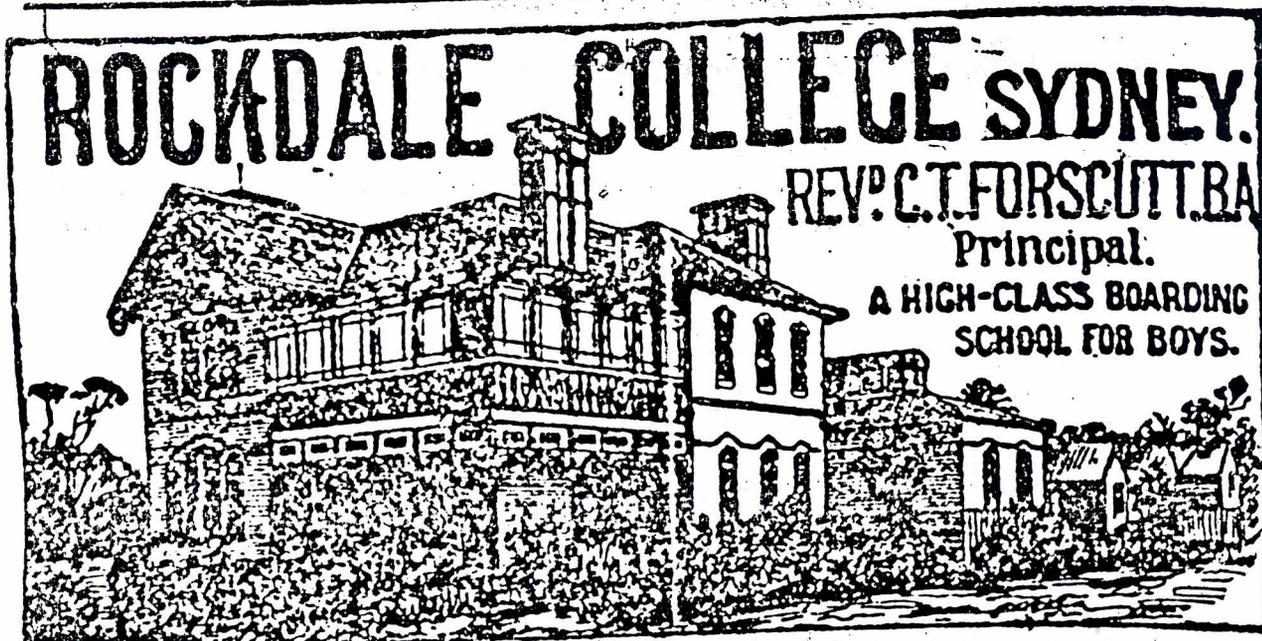
When Mr Hudson purchased *Auderly* from the Tidswells there were a large number of trees. Tall pines extended round the perimeter along Gladstone Street, along our side fence and across Monomeeth Street side. There was a big variety of trees: pinus insignis, bunya pine (prickly pine) stone or Roman pine (the one that had the round cones with nuts we liked to eat), pittosporum, cedar, Illawarra flame, Camphorlaurels, also quite a number of fruit trees on the Monomeeth Steet end. Mr Hudson had the trees removed about 1920. the land landscaped and a beautiful stone and rail fence with an imposing gateway erected facing Gladstone Street. He had a beautiful lawn tennis court, a flagpole and spacious lawns in front. It was later taken over for wedding receptions and was known as *Margaret House*. There are home units there now.

R. Dunsmore

Ed. Our thanks to Margaret Dunsmore for permission to print this article which was written perhaps 20 years ago by her late brother, Ralph. The accompanying sketch is nicely detailed and adds much to the story. Mr Dunsmore mentions the fact that the Bexley Ladies' College was originally a boys school. Well thanks to Val Garner who some time ago sent the following advertisement we have been able to tie both pieces of information together. The advertisement which was printed in the Newcastle Herald in 1904 says the Rockdale College, a 'high class boarding school for boys' was administered by Rev. C.T.Forscutt and was established in 1894.

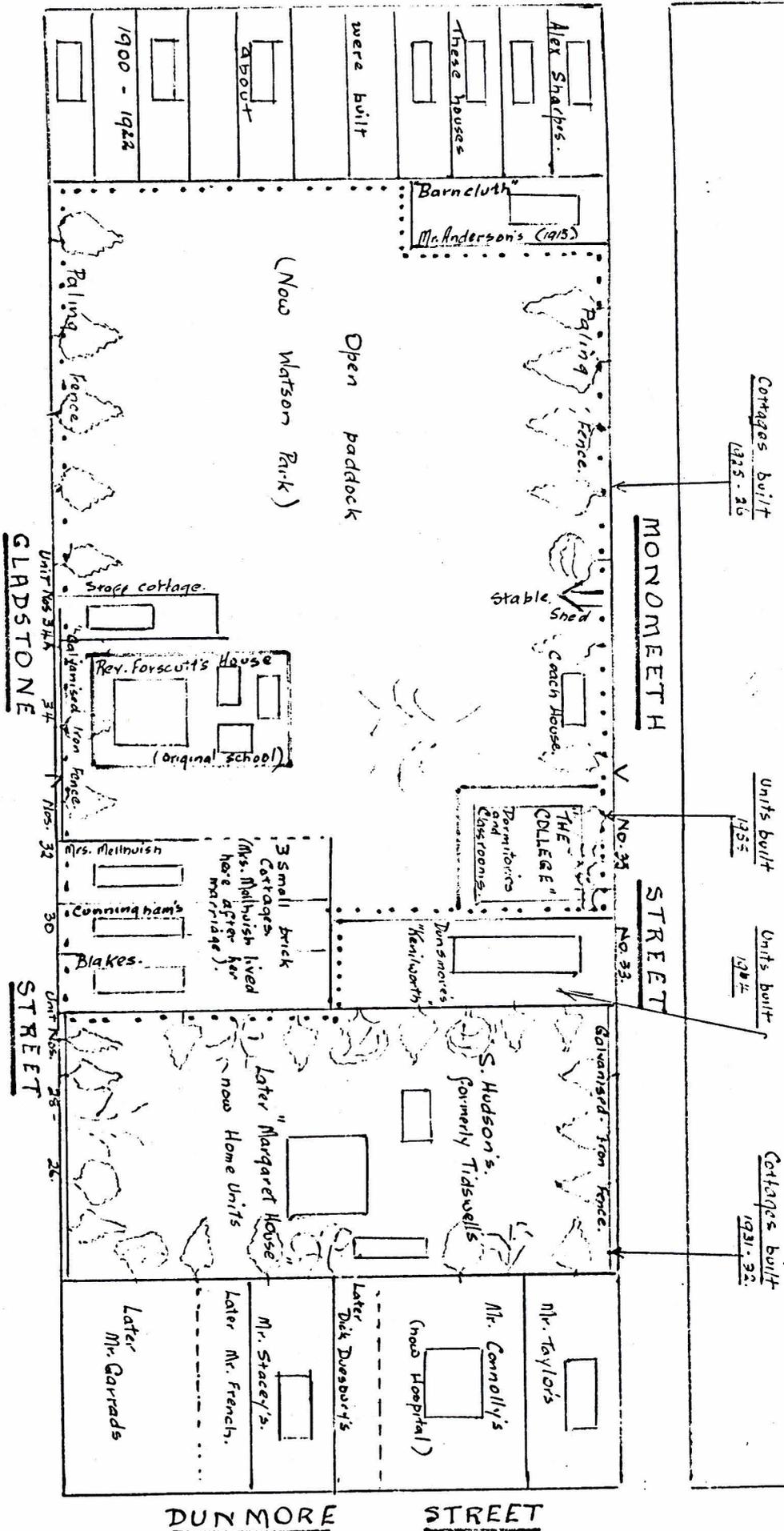
EDUCATIONAL.

1894



PROSPECTUS SENT ON APPLICATION TO THE PRINCIPAL. ESTAB. 10 YEARS

QUEEN VICTORIA STREET



THE BEXLEY LADIES' COLLEGE

And ENVIRONS.

As it was about 1915-16.

R. D. ...

DUNMORE STREET

Society News

To our Vice-president, Noel Beehag, who is seriously ill and having a very tough time of it, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Battling a rare form of cancer is three-year old, David Moncaster, grandson of Lena and Neville Moncaster. David was recently featured in an article in the *St George Leader*. We're hoping this brave little boy wins his fight with this dreadful disease.

To Arthur Ellis who is due to undergo a cataract operation anytime now we hope all goes well.

Dear Members and Friends,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one for helping to make our social outings such a pleasant success and hope you will continue to attend. It's only with your co-operation that we can succeed. We really need lots more active members to help keep our Society together. Our last outing was different and great. We had a lovely day at Kiama, members catching the train at various stations en route as arranged. After arriving at Kiama we took a pleasant stroll down to the park by the water, having a delicious lunch (shared with the seagulls) we continued to the Blow Hole. That was a bonus as it was very active that day and the spray was spectacular, a magnificent sight! Have a Happy Christmas and looking forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

The Social Committee.

LYDHAM HALL

Below is a chart showing Volunteers who have been at Lydham Hall over the last two months and showing blank spaces where a Volunteer is needed. I'm pleased to say the last day we had a group visit (58 children and 3 teachers) I did not have to ask, plead or otherwise for helpers, in fact even had to pass one Volunteer up (as Val Beehag will agree) though the three who offered for that day and myself I'm sure felt another helper would have made things more comfortable.

You will also notice we're having a Street Stall in Bexley Saturday morning 11th November and any donations of articles, cakes or biscuits would be appreciated. We hope to publicise our Society and Lydham Hall more at this venue. That same afternoon 5.45pm. there is to be a wedding at (note time change) Lydham Hall (booked some time back with Bet Otton) with up to 80 guests attending before leaving for the reception. Volunteers to help keep the gardens clear etc. would be appreciated at this time. Please 'phone me on 589.0229 if you can assist at any time with the above. My thanks to those who have helped so much in the past or who have apologised that due to other commitments they are not available.

| 1995 | Saturday | Sunday | Week Days |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|---|
| August | 5 Bettye Ross | 6 Val/Noel Beehag | Wednesday 10th Noel Beehag, Alison Edsall, Bettye Ross |
| | 12 Val/Noel Beehag | 13 Norrene Burns | |
| | 19 Bettye Ross | 20 Dora Lenane | |
| | 26 Bernard Sharah | 27 Bettye Ross | |
| SEPTEMBER | 2 Val/Noel Beehag | 3 Dora Lenane | Wednesday 6th Dora L., Jean Condor Norrene B., Bettye |
| | 9 Bettye Ross | 10 M. Persen Sick Bettye Ross | |
| | 16 Dora Lenane | 17 Arthur Ellis | |
| | 23 Margaret Persen | 24 Dora Lenane | |
| | 30 Norrene Burns | 1 October -Arthur Ellis Sick -Bettye | Monday 2nd Bettye |
| OCTOBER | 7 Joan Byrne | 8 Joan Byrne | |
| | 14 Bettye Ross | 15 Betty Robinson | |
| | 21 BETTYE ROSS | 22 Dora Lenane | |
| | 28 BETTYE ROSS | 29 Norrene Burns | |
| NOVEMBER | 4 BETTYE ROSS | 5 JEAN WOODS | * UNFILLED - VOLUNTEERS PLEASE! |
| | 11 Les Kell | 12 ALISON EDSALL | |
| | 18 * | 19 MARYANNE HALL | |
| | 25 * | 26 * | |
| DECEMBER | 2 B. SHARAH | 3 3pm Xmas Party | |

17 DORA LENANE