

*St George Historical Society*  
*Inc.*

*Bulletin*

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

JULY - AUGUST 1999 Edition



*Burdekin House*

9

PRESIDENT	Mr. Wesley Fairhall	9546 5555
SECRETARY	Mrs. Valda Beehag	9546 2819
TREASURER	Mrs. Dora Lenane	9181 2121
SENIOR -VICE	Mr. Bernard Sharah	9567 8989
PRESIDENT		
VICE - PRESIDENT	Mrs. Bettye Ross	9589 0229
RESEARCH OFFICER	Mr. Arthur Ellis	9529 4879
SOCIAL SECRETARIES	Mrs. Dora Lenane &	9660 2714
	Mrs. Joan Fairhall	9546 5555
PUBLICITY OFFICER	Mrs. Joan Fairhall	9546 5555
BULLETIN EDITOR	Mr. Wesley Fairhall	9546 5555
LYDHAM HALL	Mrs. J. Byrne	
MANAGEMENT	Mrs. D.Lenane &	
COMMITTEE	Mr. B. Sharah	
PUBLIC OFFICER	Mrs. Joan Fairhall	9546 5555
HERITAGE ADVISORY	Mr. Bernard Sharah	9567 8989
COMMITTEE		
REPRESENTATIVE		
AUDITOR	Mrs. L. Thompson	

Meetings are held 8 PM every second Tuesday of the month (except January) in the Meeting Room 1st Floor, Rockdale Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale. Members, please bring a plate. Visitors are welcome.

#### NEXT MEETING

##### July 13 Annual General Meeting

This is the Society's A.G.M. and represents a most important occasion via which all members have the opportunity to express their opinions about the running of the Society and/or stand for a position on the Committee.

A film of historical interest will be shown if time permits

##### August 10 Memories of a Marine Steward

Mr. Peter Sage, has graciously agreed to present another slide show. The life of a marine steward is anything but dull. This show will tell the story of his late father, Mr. George Sage's 50 years at sea. Come along and see what life on the high seas was actually like.

#### STOP PRESS\_\_

**Our Treasurer, Mrs Dora Lenane has changed her address. Please forward all future membership renewals and other correspondence to:**

**5/19 Collingwood Street  
DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047**



## FROM THE EDITOR...

Members, this edition represents the first in my third year as Editor of the Society's Bulletin - the time has certainly flown. I thank all members who have forwarded articles of interest for the benefit of other members, in particular, Bettye Ross (from whom the information about Burdekin House in this edition was received).

The next event at Lydham Hall is the annual *Christina Stead Day* scheduled for July 18, 1999. You will find a roster enclosed for this day as well as one for the regular Sunday openings. Please take the time to support your Society for even an hour or two; remember "...the workers are few but the harvest is great."

As promised in the May - June Bulletin, I have included details of the 'Arncliffe Heritage Walk' a brochure sponsored by the Rockdale City Council.

The main article to which I eluded above is an edited history of the famous Sydney colonial mansion *Burdekin House*. Read on and you will find why it is uniquely linked to Lydham Hall. Thank you once again Bettye for your efforts.

As always, articles for publication are greatly appreciated and currently are in very short supply!!

PS...

I apologise to Bettye Ross concerning an article in the **What's on Column** of the last Bulletin. The advertised family reunion should have read Chappelow and not Chappelar as printed.

Kind regards,

The Editor

## A Reflection

Accept surprises  
that upset your plans,  
shatter your dreams,  
give a different turn to your day and  
~~ who knows ? ~~  
to your life.  
It is not chance. Leave  
the Father free to weave  
the pattern of your days.

Contributed by B. Ross

Source: Dom Helder Camera - Archbishop of Recife, Brazil.

Some proverbs to ponder:-

*"A cherry year, a merry year, a plumb year, a dumb year";*

*"A covetous man is good to none, but worse to himself";*

*"A tyrant's breath is another's death";*

*"A little house well filled, a little land well tilled, and a little wife well willed are great riches"; and*

*"A deaf husband and a blind wife are always a happy couple"*

## LYDHAM HALL VOLUNTEERS' ROSTER

Would all members kindly consider volunteering in the capacity of Lydham Hall guides. Guide work is not onerous, requiring two hours on a Sunday from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. For convenience and security purposes, at least two volunteers should staff Lydham Hall each Sunday. New volunteers are welcome to come on the first or second weeks of the month, to learn from some of the more experienced guides. The following table indicates the days requiring extra volunteers. Direct enquiries to Mr. Wesley Fairhall on 9546.5555 or 9220.5145 or Councillor Anne Field on 9588.6553

JULY	SUNDAY	SPECIAL DAYS
	11th W. Fairhall & J. Fairhall	
	18th Refer opposite & roster for the day	<b>CHRISTINA STEAD DAY</b> Time: 11.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. A. Field, C. Welsh, J. Fairhall, B. Ross and other volunteers requested
	25th ??	
<b>AUGUST</b>	1st A. Field & C. Welsh	
	8th W. Fairhall & J. Fairhall	
	15th ??	
	22nd ??	
	29th	



# LYDHAM HALL DUTY ROSTER 18 JULY, 1999

TIME	FRONT DOOR	DRAWING ROOM	DINING ROOM	BEDROOM	KITCHEN	UPSTAIRS IF IT CAN BE MANNED
11.30 - 1.00PM						
1.00PM - 2.30PM						
2.30PM - 4.00PM						



## BURDEKIN HOUSE.

On June 17, 1995 Councillor Ron Rathbone gave seven members of the St. George Historical Society Inc. a talk on Lydham Hall, its beginnings, its contents and other interesting facets of this fine building. Cllr. Rathbone mentioned that the grey clock which stood in the alcove between the front door and the Drawing Room was donated by Mr. Thomas Kenwood and was reputedly made from the stone of Burdekin House when it was demolished. I believe this clock was made by this gentleman's father, William Kenwood, who at one time had done some architectural work on Burdekin House.

So what was Burdekin House? Where was it? Who owned it and why was it of note?

I would like to answer these questions (and hopefully I am correct in my research and assumptions, although a detailed history of the Burdekin family is not adequately answered in this paper). Firstly, I believe that Thomas Burdekin was the first member of this family to arrive in the Colony - possibly on the '*Australian*' in either 1826 or 1828. He had been born in Sheffield circa 1798 and had met a Mr. Busby in Scotland who subsequently became the Australian agent for the Burdekin family. Shortly after Thomas Burdekin arrived in Sydney at 30 years' of age, he established himself as a general merchant, chiefly in ironware. His family were said to be wealthy people of Sheffield. Perhaps it was a coincidence, but at that time there was a Thomas Burdekin at 55 Goodge St. Tottenham Court Road, London, who was the only Burdekin in this great city on the Thames.

Later the new arrival established a branch of the firm *Burdekin & Hawley*, Ironmongers and General Merchants, of London. He was engaged to a Mary Ann Bossley of Derbyshire who arrived in the Colony in 1833 with her brother Dr. John B. Bossley. The couple married and had four sons and one daughter. Their daughter unfortunately died in infancy in 1843 and her father, who was by now an Alderman, died on August 14th the following year at Burdekin House, leaving his wife, Mary Ann with a young family but very comfortably situated.

In 1841 Thomas Burdekin built his magnificent mansion opposite Parliament House, on the highest point in Macquarie St. at a cost of eighteen thousand pounds.

Burdekin House, together with Elizabeth Bay House and later, Sydney's Government House, constituted the epitome of gracious living in the antipodes. The three storey sandstone house was recorded by a contemporary as being "built in the style of many of the mansions at the west end of town, and to no part of London would it do discredit". The symmetrical facade was well executed and adorned with a fluted wooden *Ionic* colonnade and centrally placed front door surmounted by a most elegant oval lunette. Principal rooms such as the library, dining and double drawing room were spacious and elegantly appointed. The double drawing room was particularly noteworthy, as the decor was of the Louis 14th style, with stencilled ceilings, two richly carved white onyx fireplaces and matching gilt overmantels. Furniture for the house was in keeping with the Louis 14th style and was imported from the continent.

However, not long after its completion, a stranger from overseas presented himself with a map and papers of ownership of the land on which Burdekin House stood. After much wrangling and legal interference, it was found that the stranger had purchased the parcel of land, gone overseas and after a time was presumed dead; hence Thomas Burdekin's purchase of same. The family had to leave the home but were reinstated after agreeing to pay the rightful owner six hundred pounds per annum for the rest of his life! The agitation of the affair allegedly contributed to Thomas Burdekin's death whilst in his early forties.

7/

So here was Mary Ann Burdekin after the loss of her husband and only daughter with four sons to rear, namely:-

Lloyd born 1834 who studied medicine. He did not marry and died aged 26 in 1860;  
Bossley born 1835 died 1884. He married and had five sons and one daughter;  
Marshall born 1837 died 1886 in England. He did not marry; and  
Sydney born 1839 died 1899, married Catherine Byrne of Attunga in 1872.

Sydney became a pastoralist, landlord and politician and was articled to Mr. W.W. Billyard a leading solicitor but did not follow the profession. He was more interested in pastoral pursuits which he undertook in northern NSW and Queensland in partnership with his mother Mary Ann (nee Bossley) Burdekin. He served almost continuously in the Legislative Assembly between 1880-1894, representing in succession Tamworth (he had land at Attunga nearby), East Sydney and Hawkesbury.

Sydney became Mayor of Sydney for 1890-1891. He and Catherine had eight children, but at his death only two sons and three daughters were living. One son, Second-Lieutenant Sydney Burdekin of the Royal Field Artillery was killed in France during WW1. Catherine, widowed for fourteen years, died in January 1914 when just 57 years' of age. She left her youngest son Beaufort in the care of his sister, Mrs. Florence Hay.

Mary Ann (nee Bossley) Burdekin on behalf of her husband Thomas, supported Ludwig Leichhardt financially in his exploration and he named the Burdekin River in Queensland after her. She died in October 1889, and like her daughter-in-law Catherine (wife of Sydney), is buried at the Rookwood Church of England Cemetery.

So on looking at the very substantial clock in the hall of Lydham Hall, perhaps the readers of this article will visualise the very lovely home from which it came, the occupants, their early beginnings in the Colony and their contributions to its politics, civic promotion and exploration.

Burdekin House was sold in April 1923 for fifty five thousand pounds and again in August 1924 to a Mr. E.T. Rofe, who in 1933 sold it for fifty thousand pounds to the *United Presbyterian Church*. This denomination's original church was a victim of the Martin Place extension programme. The foundation stone of *St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church* was laid on the site of Burdekin House on August 4, 1933.

Bettye Ross.

NB: There is a plaque set into the pavement outside St. Stephen's Uniting Church that illustrates the appearance and briefly outlines the history of this legendary house.

Sources:

Old Chum various dates;  
Truth various dates;  
Sydney Morning Herald various dates;  
Australian Dictionary of Biography 1851-1890;  
The Australian Encyclopaedia, Australian Geographics Pty. Ltd. Edit. 1996;  
Beautiful Sydney, 1895-96, Robertson and Co; and  
Sydney in 1848, Fowles J.  
Lost Glories, Latha D.



## 1. Arncliffe Railway Station

Starting at this Victorian style structure built in 1883, walk to Firth Street, which contains groups of shops built about 1900.

## 2. Arncliffe Post Office

This Federation style building was opened in 1906, and originally contained the residence of the postmaster upstairs.

Walk beside the Post Office up **Coronation Lane** across the carpark to **Union Street**. In this area a number of Victorian cottages can be seen, particularly in nearby **Stanley Street**. Houses built at a later date complete the streetscape. A walk up **Tower Street**, note this section includes steps, which will bring you to:

## 3. Towers Place Lookout

From this bluff there is a panoramic view over Arncliffe, adjacent are two very fine examples of early architecture, a large Federation house and a 1930's textured brick cottage.

Walking back to **Forest Road** note **Esdale Place**, one of the most attractive streets in the City of Rockdale which has won many garden awards.

Turning right into **Forest Road**. Originally Sir Thomas Mitchell's New Line of Road to the Illawarra formed in 1842. The road built on the ridge has commanding views of Botany Bay and was an attractive site for the grander houses built in the district.

## 4. No. 105 Forest Road

This house was built for Thomas Lawless in 1890, it was acquired by Edward Esdale in 1910. Edward was an optical goods manufacturer and a prolific photographer, taking many magnificent shots from the Tower. Copies of these photographs are now in the Rockdale Library.

From **Forest Road** you can see:

## 5. No. 58 Roach Street

"MERTON". A building contractor, Alexander Fell erected this house in 1883. The house includes a Captain's Walk, and retains its very fine cast iron on the verandahs and leadlight glass in the entrance way.

## 6. Nos. 134 and 136 Forest Road

"GLADSTONE" & "WENTWORTH" built in 1886 were built of rendered brick with double storey verandahs and lavishly decorated with cast iron lace featuring angels in the design.

## 7. No. 184 Forest Road

"COBURRA", an ornate rendered brick home more typical of the late Victorian era, than the period in which it was built (1905).

Turn right into **Wolli Creek Road**. To the left notice the extensive views over Botany Bay. Turn right again into **Wollongong Road**.

**Wollongong Road** was part of the original road to the Illawarra. It contains significant houses and still retains much of its Victorian sandstone kerb and guttering and also brick kerbing built in the 1930s.

If time permits allow an extra hour for the short return walk and visit to **Lydham Hall**.

## 8. No. 18 Lydham Avenue

"LYDHAM HALL", is one of Rockdale's most important pioneer buildings built in 1860 of materials quarried locally by Swedish stonemason, Sven Bengtson for wealthy master butcher, Joseph Davis. The building is now owned by Rockdale Council and is open each Sunday 2-4 pm, phone 9588 6553.

## 9. No. 215 Wollongong Road

"BELMONT", built in 1884 by two Irish brothers Thomas and Alexander Millsop, who made their fortunes

in the goldfields near Forbes. They built identical grand Victorian homes, the other is No. 197 Wollongong Road.

## 10. No. 197 Wollongong Road

"FAIRVIEW".

## 11. No. 171 Wollongong Road

"DAPETO", one of the finest examples of High Victorian architecture in Sydney, built in 1885 by oyster merchant Frederick Gibbins (1841-1917). It is constructed of sandstock face bricks which were mixed with whale oil to protect the building against dampness, and had a patterned slate roof surmounted by an ornate Captain's Walk. Note the bandstand is recent.

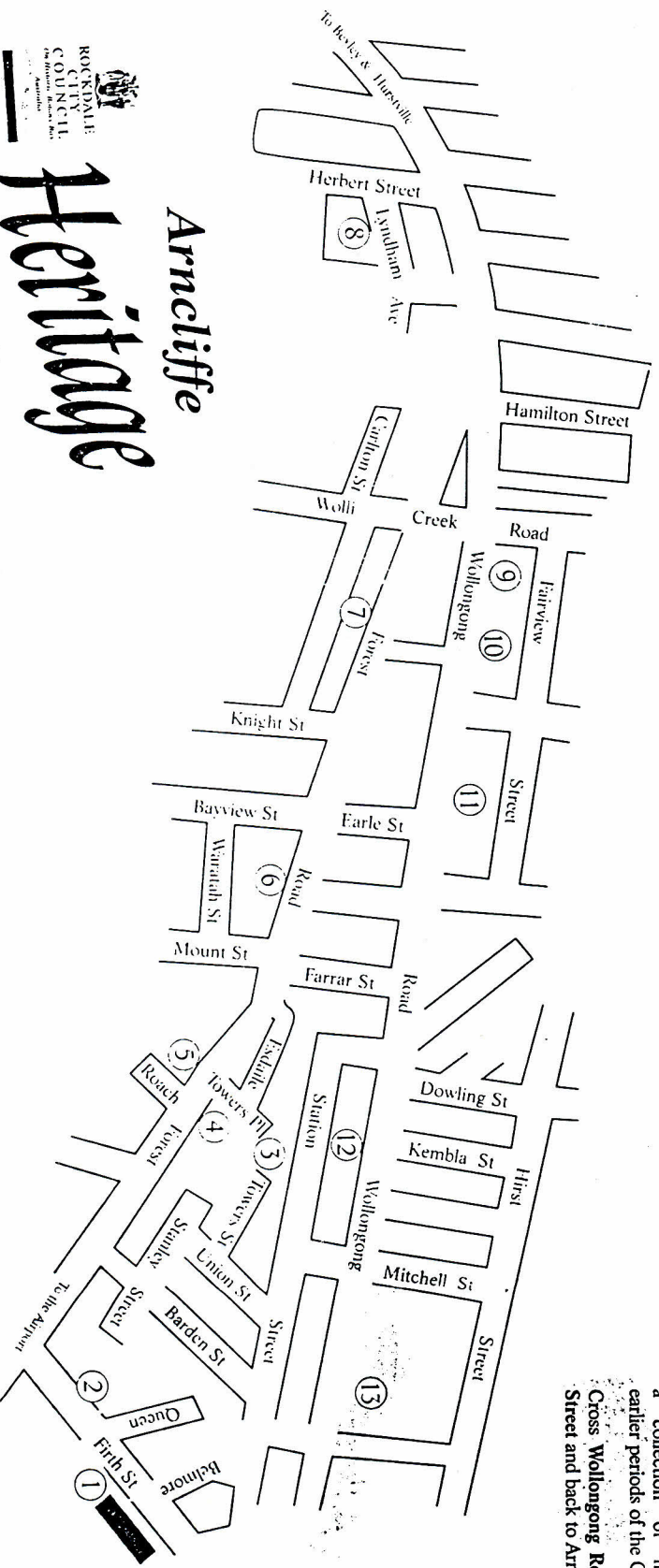
## 12. No. 148-150 Wollongong Road

"STONE COTTAGES", these rare and unusual stone and face brick Federation style cottages were built around 1910. One retains its original chimneys.

## 13. Arncliffe Park

This park was originally the property of Mr Kim Too and was cultivated as a market garden. In March 1889 the garden was officially proclaimed as a public park. About 1904 the avenue of trees was planted about where the War Memorial is now situated. The park is edged with a fine stone wall and the four surrounding streets contain a collection of houses representative of the earlier periods of the City's development.

Cross **Wollongong Road** up **Broe Street** and **Station Street** and back to **Arncliffe Railway Station**.



Arncliffe

KEY

Walking Tour

Tour Highlights

ROCKDALE  
CITY  
COUNCIL  
Heritage  
Walk

9.

**WHAT'S ON.....**

**Winter Concert**

**DATE:** Sunday 26/07/99. Time 4.30 p.m.

**VENUE:** St. Peter's Anglican Church, St. Peters.

This concert will feature the well-known young flautist Sally Treloyne and the St. Mark's Players led by the distinguished cellist Brian Strong. A further distinguished artist, the pianist Tony Baldwin will accompany Sally Treloyne as she plays the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* by Carl Vine and *Poem* by Charles Griffes. Brian Strong will lead the St. Mark's Players in Handel's famous and delightful *Water Music*.

The concert will commence at 4.30 p.m. and conclude at 5.30 p.m. Following the recital there will be a light fire-side meal of home-made soups, rolls, cakes and slices before a simple evening service at 7.00 p.m. for those who would like to stay. The proceeds from this and other concerts is being used in the restoration of the church's historic pipe organ.

**COST:** No designated admission fees - DONATIONS gratefully received.

**CONTACT:** Joan Fairhall on telephone number 9546 5555 or Joanna Warren on 9557 3795 **ASAP**.

**A Tour 'Down Under'....**

**DATE:** Saturday 21/08/99. Time 12.45 p.m.

**MEETING PLACE:** St. James Station

Do you enjoy adventure? Do you like exploring? Would you like to see Sydney from a different perspective? If the answers to these questions are YES, then join our A.R.H.S. guided tour of some of the unused and disused sections of St. James railway tunnels. The tour lasts for approximately two hours and will require you to bring a reliable torch, don old clothes and waterproof footwear (as a small section of the tour involves walking through ankle-deep water, climbing ladders and negotiating a narrow tunnel).

Although this tour requires some physical exertion, others that have done the tour felt it was well-worth the effort involved. Book early, as there are restrictions on the number allowed in the tour group.

**COST:** \$12.00 - there are no concessions.

**CONTACT:** Dora Lenane on telephone number 9181 2121 **ASAP**

**An Artistic Day's Outing**

**DATE:** Wednesday 15/09/99. Time 10.30 a.m.

**MEETING PLACE:** Martin Place - near the seats at the top of the station.

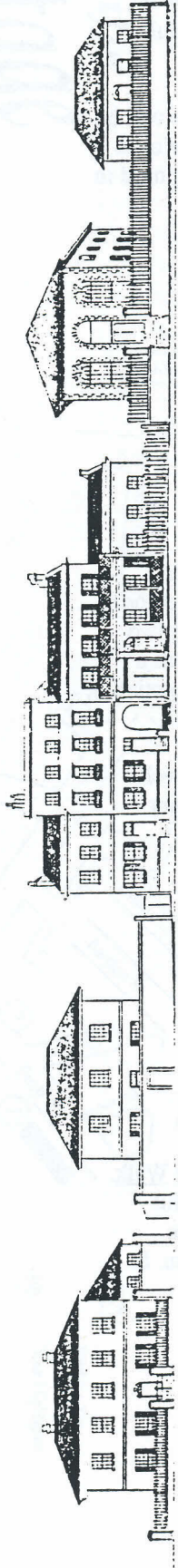
This outing will involve a visit to the State Art Gallery followed by the new Sydney Sculpture Walk. We will commence the day by proceeding to the Art Gallery to view some of the many beautiful displays on exhibition, followed by a light luncheon at own expense. We will then undertake a leisurely walking tour of Sydney's sculpture, finishing in the Pitt Street Mall at about 3.30 p.m. St James and Town Hall stations are both conveniently located near the Pitt Street mall.

**COST:** Own expense - donations welcome!

**CONTACT:** Dora Lenane on telephone number 9181 2121

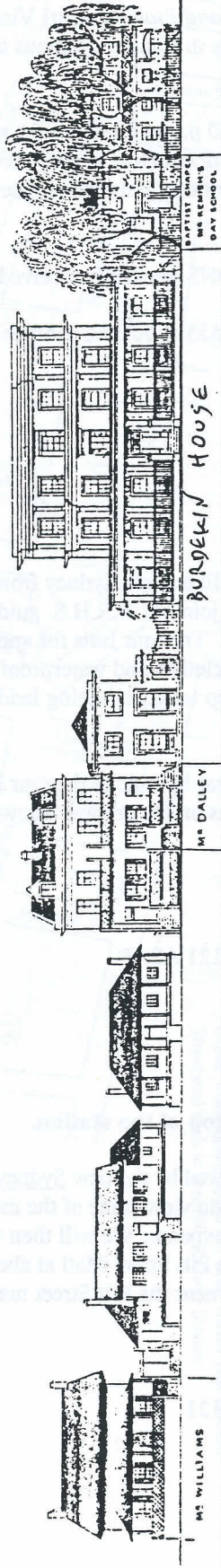


# SYDNEY.



MACQUARIE

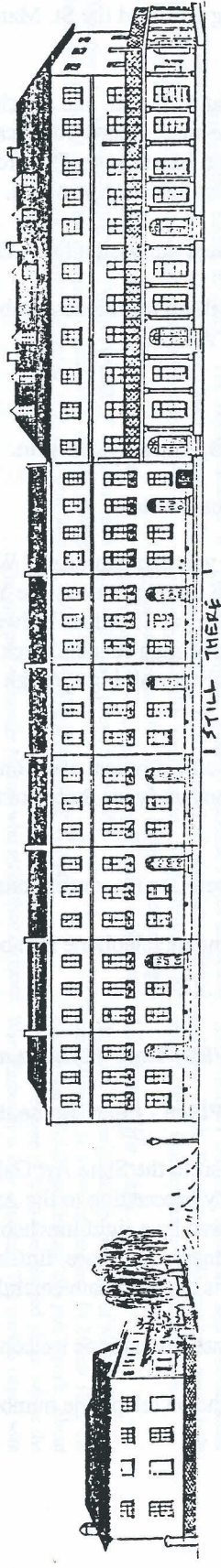
STREET



BURDEKIN HOUSE

MACQUARIE

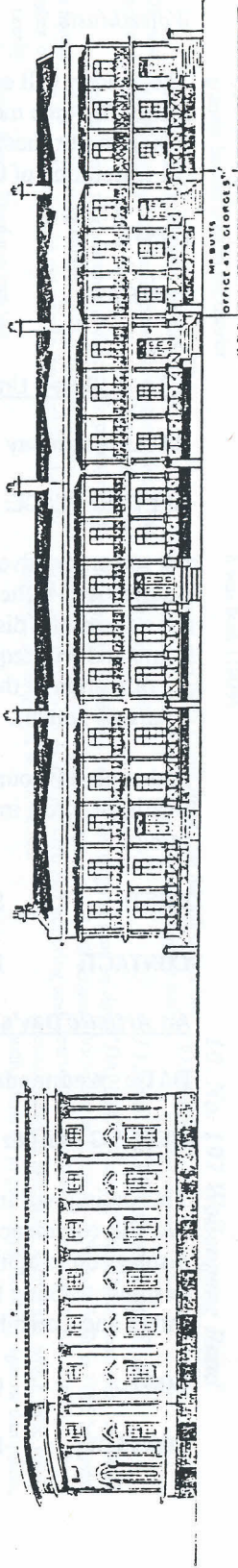
STREET



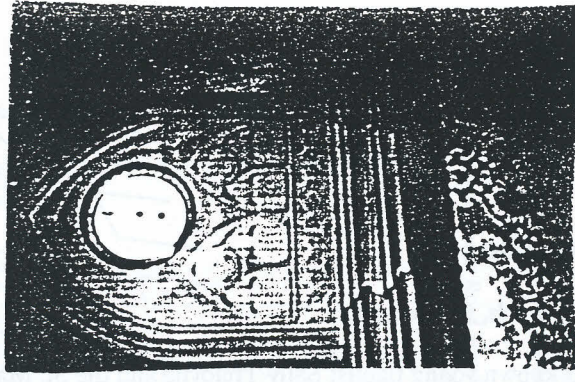
MACQUARIE

TREASURY TERRACE

STREET



STREET



The "Burdakin House Clock"

Macquarie Street - 1848. Copied from Joseph Fowle's book "Sydney in 1848."