St George Historical Society Inc.

Bulletin

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1999 EDITION
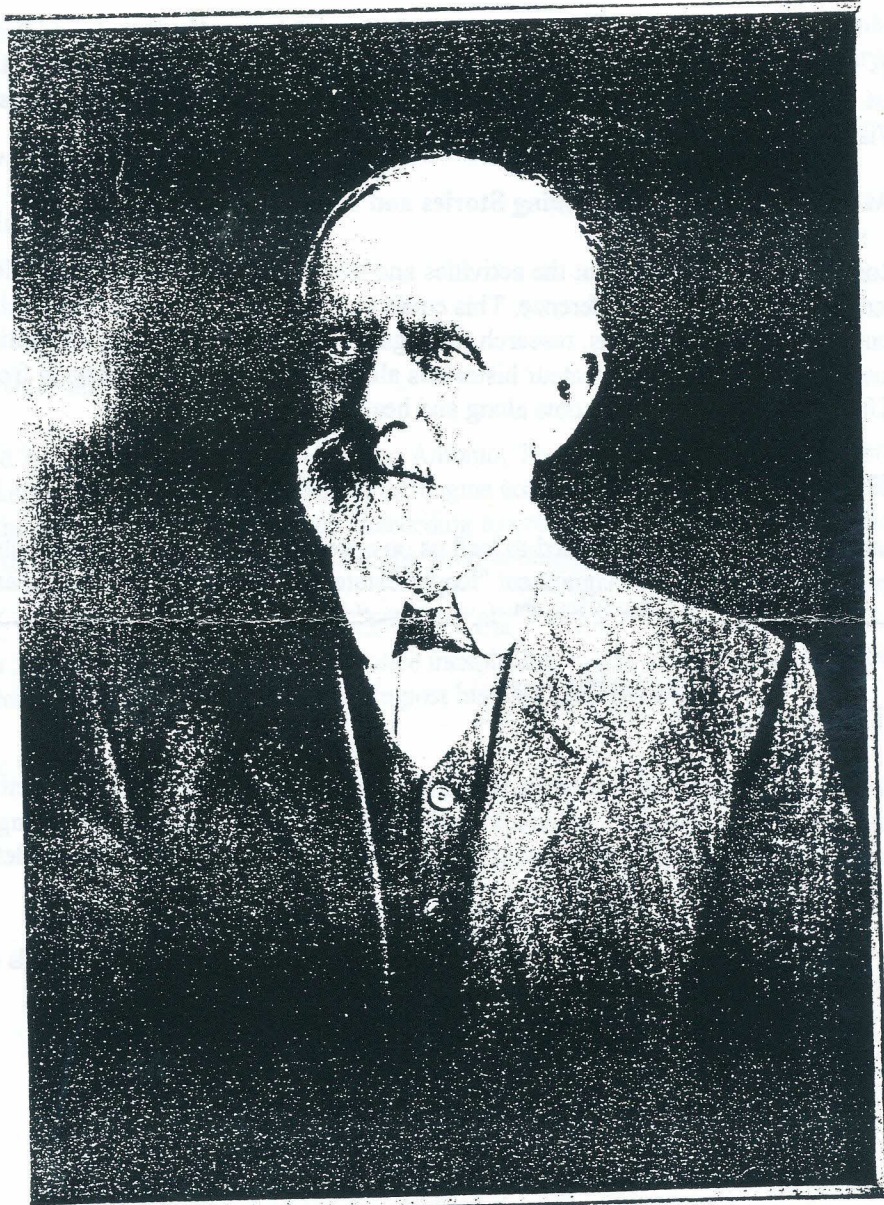
FREDERICK JOHN GIBBINS

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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 November 9 **Telling Stories and Making Histories**

Bettye Ross is going to speak about the activities and lectures delivered at the recent Royal Australian Historical Society conference. This conference serves as an important mechanism for the exchange of information, ideas, research findings and projects from across the nation being undertaken by professional and amateur historians alike. Mrs. Ross was a delegate from the St. George Historical Society Inc, so come along and hear what she has to say.

December 14 **Castles Fit For a King**

Once again, Mr. Peter Sage has agreed to lead us on a journey of discovery and delight. His slide show tonight will focus on the magnificent "Royal Estates of England". Come along and see just how the other half lives. As this is our Christmas meeting, kindly bring a plate with you on the night.

FROM THE EDITOR...

I am indebted to the Local History Librarian of Rockdale City Council, Mr. Niall Pettit-Young and Librarians Messieurs Laurence McConnell and Howard Boyle for graciously allowing me to use the Library's facilities (whilst I am without a computer) in the production of this bulletin. Thank you all very much.

Have you ever thought that the years are going just too quickly? Here we are towards the end of another year and another century - soon to welcome in a new millennium.

As time races ever onward, it is essential for all Australians to take where possible, an active interest in preserving this country's precious natural and manmade heritage. So much has been lost. The principal article in this, the last bulletin for the current millennium, concerns Mr. Frederick John Gibbins. This fellow as you will soon read, played an important role in the history of two notable homes of the St. George area that thankfully remain to this day as survivors of a more gracious era.

Thank you Bettye Ross for researching and collating the above article. Many thanks to all other members who have contributed articles or items of interest to this your society's bulletin, it is very much appreciated.

Members, please make an effort to attend the Society's Christmas party on Sunday December 5, 1999 - further details appear under the **What's On** section of this bulletin.

Finally, on behalf of the St George Historical Society Inc, I wish all members and their families a safe, healthy and fulfilling Christmastide and the very best wishes for the new millennium. I look forward to chatting with as many members as possible at our Lydham Hall Christmas Party.

P.S. 1999-2000 Membership Renewal forms have been enclosed for all non-financial members for the 1999 – 2000 year. Please complete and return as soon as practicable so that our records and finances can be improved!

P.P.S. The membership year runs from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000.

Kind regards,

The Editor

Hapless Criminals

45 year - old Amy Brasher was arrested in San Antonio, Texas, after a mechanic reported to police that 18 packets of marijuana were packed in the engine compartment of the car that she had brought to the mechanic for an oil change. According to police, Brasher later said that she didn't realize that the mechanic would have to raise the hood to change the oil.

Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Police charged Gregory Rosa, 25, with a string of vending machine robberies in January when he 1) fled from police inexplicably when they spotted him loitering around a vending machine and 2) later tried to post his $400 bail in coins.

Source: The Internet

Judgment Day

It seems a bishop one Sunday morning was paying a visit to a parish in his diocese, but was livid to find only a handful of people in the congregation had turned out to see him.

In the vestry later, the bishop exploded to the parish priest: " Did you tell them that I was coming?"

"Well, no bishop", replied the priest, ", "but word" seems to have got around".

Height of rudeness!

An Australian parson recently in the UK sent back this story of another particularly rude Australian parson who was visiting Lincoln Cathedral.

A verger told him to take off his hat.
"Why?", he asked.
"You're in church, sir" came the reply.
"I am a priest", the parson replied.
Verger: "You should know better then".
"I do", said the parson, "but, just for you. I'll take it off anyway."

PROBING...

Do you remember the one about the 7-year old who came home from 'Children's Church' with a question: "Mum, where did I *come* from?"

Mum wonders how this topic came up during a Bible story, but smoothly goes into a heart-to-heart on how babies are made, all bodily parts suitably named in Latin.

"Why I asked", came back her son, "is because we have a new boy at church and he comes from Junee."

<u>Source:</u> Marketplace Newspaper - national newspaper of the Anglican Church of Australia.

BACKGROUND TO FREDERICK JOHN GIBBINS - OWNER OF "DAPPETO" AND SECOND OWNER OF "LYDHAM HALL"

Frederick Meredith was the Great Grandfather of Frederick John Gibbins (known as "Old Dad') of *Dappeto* fame.

Frederick Meredith was born in Denham, England C1764 and arrived in the Colony as a steward to the Captain, John Marshall, January 1788 on board the First Fleet ship *Scarborough (1)*. This ship was to have left England on 12th May 1787 with the other ships of the First Fleet, but due to the intoxication of a good number of the seamen who had gone ashore for one 'final visit', the feet anchored again and left at 3 a.m. Sunday 13th May and by 10 a.m. had cleared the Isle of White. There had been an earlier delay due to rumours that there was to be a mutiny, but this proved fruitless.

The *Scarborough (1)* was 111- 1/2 ft. long, had an extreme breadth of 30 ft.2 inches and height between the decks of 4 ft. 5 inches. It was a two decked, 3 masted vessel, rigged as a barque and owned by three brothers, Thomas, George and John Hoppre. She had been built at Scarborough in 1782 and she had not lost one prisoner en route.

In February 1788, a month after her arrival here, Frederick was charged with giving a bottle of rum, some bread and beef to James Stow in exchange for a possum which was against government orders. He was sentenced to 100 lashes but through the intervention of 'several gentlemen', who respected him and believed that the punishment didn't fit the crime, the sentence was reduced to 50 lashes.

In May of the year of his arrival at Port Jackson, Frederick Meredith transferred as an Able Seaman on the *Sirius*. The crew of this ship had been given the use of an island in the harbour to cultivate vegetables and Frederick Meredith carved the year 1788 and his initials on what is now known as Garden Island. (Editor's note: perhaps Australia's earliest graffiti?) His actual trade was that of a baker. The *Sirius* sailed a few months' later for the Cape of Good Hope to obtain supplies, as the Colony was in difficulty due to extreme lack of provisions, and returned to Port Jackson in May 1789. In March 1790 he sailed to Norfolk Island where the *Sirius* was wrecked and all returned to Port Jackson aboard the *Supply*.

In May 1790, a child Charlotte was baptised to Mary Allen, a convict. Frederick Meredith was given as the father. John Palmer, the Commissary, gave Frederick 25 sheep and lambs for which to care, but one of the lambs was stolen by a Hugh Low who appeared before the Court Of Criminal Jurisdiction. Frederick and the convict woman, Mary Allen, gave evidence.

Judge-Advocate David Collins said no leniency could be extended to Low as the preservation of stock was an object of much consequence to the Colony. Low was sentenced to death and hanged the next day. The child Charlotte died in Sydney during April 1791. Frederick returned to England aboard the Waaksamheyd, arriving at Portsmouth on the 22nd April, 1792. Mary Allen in the interim had formed a relationship with an Edward Pales.

In July 1792, Frederick Meredith, having received his discharge from the Navy, boarded the *Bellona*, as a Settler, bound once again for Port Jackson. Convicts were also aboard and one, Ann Case/Keys, bore him a daughter, Amelia in May 1793. This child unfortunately died in infancy the following year after Frederick and Ann had separated. He then formed a liaison with Mary Kirk, who had been transported during 1792 on the *Royal Admiral*. Mary Kirk in April 1794, bore Frederick's third daughter, again named Charlotte. Mary Kirk in December 1800 married Robert Inch, so obviously none of Frederick Meredith's relationships could have been regarded as stable.

Robert Inch perished in his colonial sloop *Charlotte,* when he was caught in a squall returning to Port Jackson from the Hawkesbury with a load of grain. Mary (Kirk) Inch also died in a shipping incident in March 1809 and Frederick Meredith was named as Executor of her Estate.

Around July 1788, Governor Phillip had written to England requesting Free Settlers and this was the position under which Frederick Meredith arrived, on the *Bellona* in January, 1793. The British Government paid the passages of the settlers, granted free land along with tools and other necessities, two years' provisions, and also convict servants along with two years' food ration and one year's clothing.

Meredith was granted 60 acres at Liberty Plains that he called *Charlotte Farm*. Another 60 acre grant named *Charlotte Field*, located at what is today part of the suburb of Concord, was received in 1794. In 1800 he joined the *Loyal Sydney Association* under the civil command of William Balmain. This was an armed body formed to guard against insurrection by 'seditious' Irish convicts.

In 1800 Meredith was in a stable relationship with Sarah Mason, a convict who had also come out on the *Bellona*. Sarah had received 14 years along with another young woman for their part in pawning goods stolen by a young man who was sentenced to only 7 years. She came from Walsall, Staffordshire and was 24 years old. She had a son in September 1798, the father being John Peake, who had arrived on the *Active* in 1791. The father of this child disappeared soon after the birth.

Frederick Meredith and Sarah Mason married in 1811 and their children were as follow:

Frederick	born March 1801
Sophia	" June 1803
Elizabeh	" 1806
Willliam	" March 1807
Ann	" June 1811
Eleanor	" Nov. 1813

Frederick Meredith had sold his land by 1809 and had a bakehouse in Chapel Row. He was however, granted 120 acres at Salt Pan Creek on the George's River. During September of that year, he was clearing the land when a band of Aborigines, led by Pemulwy's son Tedbury, attacked a neighbouring farm. In defence of his neighbour, William Bond, Frederick's ear was grazed by a spear and they were forced to abandon the farm. In 1815, Frederick sold 90 acres of his property after having earlier sold another 30 acres. Frederick had become a constable in the regular police force at Liverpool in 1822, where he had moved two years earlier. In 1831 he was granted a 60 acre lot that he named *Gunsborough*, at Banks Town on the Liverpool Road where he lived for 5 years. The grant had been promised 10 years earlier.

Sarah (nee Mason) Meredith died during July 1832 and Frederick died June 23rd, 1836 - both are buried at St. Luke's Anglican Church, Liverpool. He had remarried three years before his death to Mary Ann Day.

Of Frederick and Sarah Meredith's children, the eldest child Frederick, born in 1801, also became a constable at Liverpool. He married Sarah Morgan and their children were as follow:

Ann	born 1823
Frederick William	" 1826
Lucy Sophia	" 1828
John Richard	" 1831
Charles Henry	" 1835
George Augustus	" 1836
Charlotte Elizabeth	" 1842
Alfred James	" 1844
Edward	" 1846

Of the above families, Ann Meredith, born in 1823 to Frederick Meredith Jnr. and his wife Sarah Morgan, married <u>John Gibbins</u> on March 16th, 1840 at St. Luke's Church of England Liverpool, with the permission of her parents when aged 17. This <u>John Gibbins</u> had arrived as an 18 year old butcher's boy from London aboard the *Claudine* on December 6th, 1829 to serve a 14 year sentence for picking pockets. He was the son of Thomas Gibbins/ Ann Hantz and had no previous offences. He had brown hair, hazel eyes, no marks on him other than 'much pock pitting' and was assigned to Lucy McMann of Eastern Creek.

The *Claudine (2)* left London on August 24th, 1829 with William Heathorn as Master and William H. Trotman as Surgeon Superintendent and took 104 days to reach Port Jackson. She was a ship of 452 tons and had been built in Calcutta during 1811. Her class was 'E1' and she carried 180 males, 2 of whom died en route. In the 1837 muster of convicts John Gibbons/Gibbins was at Liverpool and his Master was G. Blacket. He received his Convict Pardon in 1838.

John and Ann (nee Meredith) Gibbins children were as follow:

<u>Frederick John</u>	born 1841
Sarah A.	" 1844
Mary J.	" 1846
Adelaide A.	" 1852

Of the above, <u>Frederick John Gibbins</u> married in Brisbane Waters during 1864 to Catherine Louisa Pickett and their children were:

Alfred J.	born 1865
Emma	" 1867
Ernest	" 1869
Amy	" 1870
Frederick	" 1872
Walter	" 1874
Edwin	" 1876
Unnamed (Ada)	" 1878 born July 12th, 64 Kent St. Sydney
Percy	" 1880 died 1885 at Kent St. Sydney

<u>Frederick John Gibbins</u> was baptised at Liverpool but grew up at Dapto, where it was thought he was born. Dapto, just south of Wollongong was sometimes called Mullet Creek, and its Aboriginal name was *Dappeto*. He owned oyster leases, a pearling lugger in the Torres Straits, timber mills at Terrigal and also had been a Commission Agent among other positions.

Frederick's wife Catherine Louisa Pickett, was the daughter of William and Ann (nee Humphreys) Pickett from the Kincumber area. William was baptised at St. Phillip's Church of England, Sydney in August, 1804. His mother had arrived free with her husband Henry Pickett, a prisoner, on the *Glatton* on March 11, 1803.

William and Ann had nine sons and four daughters and also raised two other children whose parents were drowned as well as an aboriginal child named 'Black Sally'. This child's mother was killed by her tribe for disloyalty to a neighbouring tribe. Ann Pickett was a midwife, nurse and beneficiary to many in the area even though she and William had to keep such a large family.

William took up 69 acres of land adjoining his wife's family, sold his whaling vessels and settled down to raise crops, fruit and vegetables.

Returning now to Frederick John and Catherine Louisa (Pickett) Gibbins. Their youngest daughter, Ada, married on New Year's Day 1907. Her husband was the widowed marine biologist and naturalist David Stead, who had a four year old daughter Christina Ellen Stead. They moved about half a mile away from Ada's home *Dappeto* to *Lydham Hall* that Frederick J. Gibbins had purchased in 1889. Frederick had rented *Lydham Hall* until Ada's marriage to Stead.

The couple lived there rent-free until Frederick's death in 1907 when it had to be sold along with the Gibbin's fine and beautiful home *Dappeto* due to financial ruin through investment in a gold mining venture. Ada bore six children whilst living at *Lydham Hall* and her seventh was born at *Boongarre,* Watson's Bay, where she and David G. Stead moved in September 1917.

Sources:

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Musters and lists NSW & Norfolk Island 1800-1802
Musters of NSW & Norfolk Island 1805-1806
General Musters of NSW, Norfolk Island & Van Diemen's Land 1811
General Muster and Land & Stock Muster of NSW 1822
Census of NSW, November 1828
General Return of Convicts in NSW 1837
Shipping arrivals and Departures, Sydney 1788-1825 by J.S. Crumpton
Settlers & Convicts of the *Bellona* 1793 by Megan Martin
The Convict Ships 1788-1868 by Charles Bateson
Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages 1788-1837
Convict Indents *Royal Admiral* of 07/10/1792, *Bellona* of 16/01/1793 & 04/04/2003
Convict Indent *Claudine (2)* of 06/12/1829 and 04/04/1815

Some proverbs to ponder:-

"A dripping stone in June sets all in tune":

"A covetous man makes halfpenny of a farthing and a liberal makes sixpence of it":

"Ambition knows no gorge but the grave":

"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish. and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day":
Source: Marketplace Newspaper - National newspaper of the Anglican Church of Australia
and

"There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered."
Source: Nelson Mandela

THE TOWERS OF SYDNEY

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, 19th century society was radically altered and Australian cities, as with most of Western Europe and North America, witnessed a host of new and changed institutions, ranging from railways and factories to the post office, police, banks and all levels of government.

These required buildings, plenty of them, and with wealth derived chiefly from industry and commerce, money was lavished on structures whose magnificence would proclaim to all, rich and wretched alike, the new found civic splendour and progress of their city. "Where there's muck there's brass" and from the mid-19th century onwards, town halls, opera houses, art galleries and railway stations vied to out-do each other, often incorporating a tower or some other vertical feature to assert their importance.

It is said that there is little true originality in architecture, that artists are merely plagiarists, skilfully adapting past achievements of others to solve their own problems. However this may be, such skill was certainly needed by Victorian architects, as they confronted the vast range of new building types for which no past prototypes existed.

Their skill in applying the architectural style of cathedrals to railway stations or of palaces to post offices, was matched only by their alacrity in combining several sources in one building.

Take the Sydney Town Hall for instance, erected between 1868 and 1888, whose clock tower is so successful a feature in the streetscape of central Sydney. The building is a melange of the *French Baroque* (Vaux-le-Vicomte and the Mansard-type roofs) with a front façade derived from Wren's St. Paul's Cathedral, London, its tower also borrowing from Wren, but capped with a fashionably elongated cupola of the Victorian period.

James Barnet, for 25 years the NSW Colonial Architect, designed three of Sydney's finest towers, on the Lands Building in Macquarie Place, the North Sydney Post Office and the GPO in Martin Place, all done between 1875 and 1890.

English Palladianism and the work of Wren, acknowledged to be England's greatest architect, were the sources upon which Barnet drew for inspiration.

His Lands Building clock tower shows his debt to Wren, with a delightful *Regency* flourish in the onion dome.

Source: John Haskell, Sydney Morning Herald, 11th June 1980.

WHAT'S ON......

LYDHAM HALL CHRISTMAS PARTY

DATE: Sunday 05/12/99.

VENUE: Lydham Hall, Lydham Avenue, Bexley from 12 noon to 4.00 p.m.

This day as always is set aside for St. George Historical Society Inc. members and friends to get together, have a chat and partake of light refreshments. So members, do please attend, especially if for whatever reason, you are unable to attend our monthly meetings.

We would like ladies to bring a plate and gentlemen to bring some chips, nuts or drinks. The more the merrier. Please do not feel unable to attend through lack of transport, as members with cars will happily pick-up those members in need of 'wheels'.

COST: No charge but please bring a plate, nibblies or a drink!

CONTACT: Joan Fairhall on telephone number 9546 5555

*means hope, love and peace sent
from above.
May these same blessings be yours
each day to brighten your journey
all the way*