

# ST GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. BULLETIN

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2000 EDITION



*Edmund Barton at the height of his fame as  
leader of the federal movement*

Heading Towards  
Christmas, A New Year & The  
Hundredth Anniversary Of Federation

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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 MEETINGS

#### November 14th and December 12th

**November 12<sup>th</sup>**      “Video’s on Australiana”

At this meeting you can expect to see some fascinating videos on Australia

**December 14th**      **Mr. Peter Sage**

Nearing Christmas we will have the company of Mr. Peter Sage who will surprise us with something unknown. It could be a Film, It could be slides, It could be on anything. And I know that you will be impressed. No matter what he presents material and commentary are always informative and very well researched.

#### St. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS PARTY

Date:                      Sunday, December 3rd, 2000                      12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Location:                Lydham Hall - 18 Lydham Avenue, Bexley, NSW 2207

It is time for all of us to gather together at Lydham Hall and for a party before Christmas and New Years. A time for all to enjoy themselves. Ladies, please bring a plate of food and to all the Men please bring Drinks, Chips, Nuts, etc.

#### LYDHAM HALL WILL CLOSE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Lydham hall will not be opened on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> or Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>

Photo on the front page came from the 1996 Australian Encyclopaedia produced by the Australian Geographical Society.

## *THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT*

### YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MISSED!

Today six lucky members of our Society met Dora Lenane at the `Bus Stop next to Sydney Town Hall boarded the 500 `bus to Drummoyne and along Victoria Rd. Gladesville stepped out and into the Grounds of Gladesville's old Hospital, now used as an Administrative Office for the Department of Health.

We studied the map at the front and wandered along the enclosed roadways to a gateway at the end of all the wonderful old sandstone buildings and well kept lawns, turned left into what looked like a private road, actually Punt Road, and wandered down to an extremely well kept Cottage named Rockend Cottage situated in Banjo Paterson Park.

The Manager allowed us to wander through as we pleased, out to the back section which at some time had been added on to the building sympathetically. Some of us also ventured downstairs to look at the well, large grinding stone and huge bellows.

Rockend is now a Restaurant with the loveliest small garden for such a small frontage *possible* and has glorious views across the Parramatta River. It was owned from 1866 by Emily Mary Barton, the maternal grandmother of Banjo Patterson and it was here that he lived whilst attending Sydney Grammar School.

At the back of Rockend the Park continues with Picnic Huts, pathways leading to Barbeque facilities and other amenities.

Let me say to you, once again **YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MISSED** at another of the splendid outings arranged by Dora, especially as now she's just finished working as a Driver right through the Olympics! You also missed the unexpected sausages, sizzled by Dora's brother, Allan Stahl, along with the crisp, crunchy buttered bread rolls, salad and tea all bought along by Dora for her surprised companions.

WATCH FOR FUTURE OUTINGS IN **OUR FORTHCOMING BULLETINS** and we'd love to see you there..

A BIG "thank you" too to Member Jean Condon of Haberfield for all the Baby Booties and Bonnets she brought along for the Stall at Bexley Village Fair this coming Saturday (4th Nov.) half were sold before we even left the above Park!

Best wishes to all,

Bettye Ross

## *THE EDITORS REPORT*

Its getting near that time of year again and I'd just like to start out by wishing you all the best for Christmas and the New Year. I trust that all members are in good health, and for those who are ailing, the society sends its prayers and well wishes for a speedy recovery.

It would be wonderful to see more members at our monthly meetings, please make an effort to come to even one meeting during the year. The guest speakers always deliver an interesting talk on their area of knowledge. I would also suggest members to support Mrs. Dora Lenane and Mrs. Joan Fairhall by attending the outings organised by these ladies.

I offer a very special thanks to Mrs. Bettye Ross for her contributions towards this bulletin, without fine articles and information this bulletin would be pretty dull..

**WANTED** – Any ARTICLES of interest, SUPPLIED BY OTHER MEMBERS. Are you approaching a special Birthday, Wedding anniversary, or have visited a historic building which you thought would be suitable for us to arrange a trip to please put pen to paper and tell us about it. I am always eager to hear from you and share your ideas with others.

To get your information to me, call me, or any member of my family on (02) 9587 – 8307 or mail your news to me at the following address: 27 Waratah Street, Bexley NSW 2207

Kindest regards,

Richard Henke

# Footsteps Towards Federation

Taken From: Encyclopedia of Australia 1996. Published by Webster Publishing, 1995. Copyright Webster Publishing, and/or contributors.

## Federation Committee Formed



A select committee on Federation was formed in Sydney, to investigate the possibility of federating the colonies, which had just begun to achieve their own independence. The federation would of course recognise their new found self-government status.

In Victoria, the political leader Gavan Duffy established a parliamentary committee to investigate federation from Victoria's point of view, and this committee reported favourably urging future federation. Now two colonies were in favour in principle - New South Wales and Victoria - the two most powerful colonies.

When the British government also approved a federation of colonies in Canada in 1867, Australians were inspired to follow suit, as now there was a precedent; this Canadian model proved to be the perfect inspiration for all the hard working committees struggling with the challenge of federating all the different colonies.

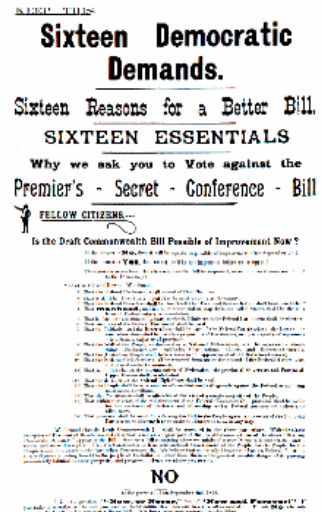
Picture: The committee for the drafting of the Constitution (Jonathan King)

## 1870 – Case Against Federation

Many political leaders opposed federation because they believed it would be too difficult to achieve for many reasons:

- ❖ the colonial governments would not want to give up their new found freedoms and powerful positions of leadership, which they had only just won after a long and hard fight,
- ❖ the smaller colonies were frightened the larger colonies like New South Wales would dominate them,
- ❖ the colonies were too geographically scattered and difficult to reach, let alone govern, from one central spot - the fastest way to get from Sydney to Melbourne was by ship, but that took one week,
- ❖ the new Labor movement was suspicious of federation, fearing that a conservative federal government's army might crush trade unions,
- ❖ different colonies wanted to protect their own trade, especially Victoria, which protected its industries with tariffs and duties payable at its border posts,
- ❖ the ten year drought, economic depression, and national trade union strikes crippled the economy in the 1890s, and undermined efforts to pull together towards one common cause,
- ❖ New South Wales did not lead the federal movement effectively and Sydney's lack of enthusiasm discouraged other colonies, and

Picture: The case against Federation (Jonathan King)



## 1870 – Case For Federation

Some of the reasons for federation were:

- ❖ the threat of external aggression, especially following French colonial expansion into the Pacific, and German annexation of North East New Guinea, frightened some politicians into campaigning for a federal army,
- ❖ the development of the telegraph, railways, and faster shipping, improved communication between the colonies which suddenly seemed closer,
- ❖ in the 1880s, there was an upsurge in nationalism, with the creation of the first Australia-wide publication, the Bulletin, which campaigned for federation; the Australian Natives' Association also began campaigning for federation,
- ❖ increased immigration to all the different colonies by Asian immigrants began to worry colonial parliaments who wanted a common federal policy to keep other races out of Australia,
- ❖ colonial politicians also argued for a common national policy on defence, foreign policy, tariffs, water conservation, and river control.

So, the arguments for federation began to outweigh the arguments against - especially the need to protect Australia from outside aggression.

Picture: The case for Federation (Jonathan King)



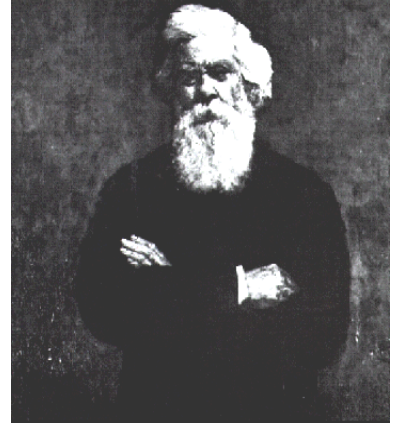
### Henry Parkes: The Father Of Federation

In 1880, the New South Wales political leader and premier from time to time, Henry Parkes, called for a Federal Council to deal with matters which might “be dealt with more effectively some federal authority other than the colonies separately”. He also called for the creation of a federal constitution.

In 1883, the premiers met at an intercolonial conference and decided to create the Federal Council after a call from the Victorian Premier James Service.

In 1885, an Imperial Act from the British Parliament set up this Council as a purely legislative body. It could draft new laws for the whole of Australia, but the different colonial parliaments had to agree on each proposed law. In 1886, this Federal Council first met in Hobart, and each state except New South Wales sent a delegate - so the start of a federal parliament had been achieved. New South Wales demanded a stronger Federal Council before it would join in, and although this Council lasted till 1899, it never had the teeth the new federal parliament had from 1901 onwards.

Picture: Henry Parkes (Jonathan King)



by

### 1899 – Off To Britain for Permission

Once the people of Australia had passed the Constitution Referendum, the leaders who had framed the document sailed to England to persuade the British Parliament to ratify the new federation - Alfred Deakin, Edmund Barton, and Charles Kingston led this important delegation.

The British Secretary for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, tried to water the document down, but the Australian political leaders stood firm. The main concession the Australians made was to allow the British to have the final legal control through their powerful Privy Council in London, which Chamberlain said the Australian High Court would have to allow appeals to if necessary. Otherwise the document was accepted by Britain.

### 1900 – The Queen Approved



The British Parliament then passed the Constitution Bill, much to the pleasure of the waiting delegation of Australian lawyers who had spent so many years drafting this document.

Queen Victoria then signed the Act to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia on 9 July, giving the Australian Federal Constitution royal assent. The official proclamation was made on 17 September 1900. Now it was final and there was no going back. The Australians were lucky to get this famous signature as Queen Victoria died within the year.

The British Parliament appointed the Queen's Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Hopetoun, to be the first Governor-General and commissioned him to supervise the transfer of power from colonial governments to federal.

Picture: Queen Victoria (RAHS)

### 1901 – Proclamation Of The Commonwealth Of Australia

On 1 January 1901 at an official ceremony in Centennial Park, Sydney, the Governor-General read out the Proclamation for the Commonwealth of Australia, authorised by the new Federal Constitution. The Governor-General appointed Edmund Barton, who had worked long and hard on creating federation, to form the first government until the first election, which was to be held in March 1901.

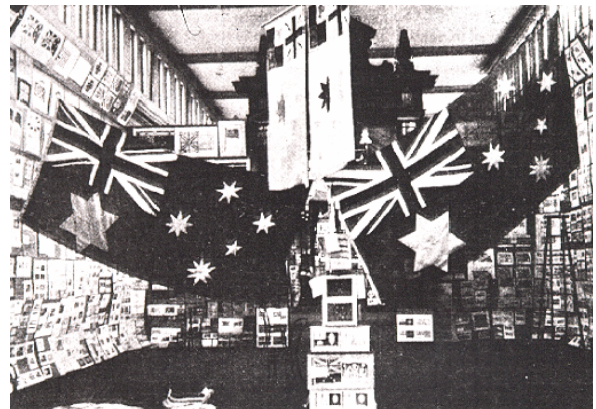
### 1901 – First Election Establishes First Federal Government

On 29 March 1901, the first federal elections were held and Edmund Barton was elected prime minister, leading the largest political grouping the Liberal Protectionists - who defeated Labor and the Free Traders.

And so the political world of federal politics was born. Even though the first parliament started operating in Melbourne on 9 May 1901, and the political parties changed over the years, the scene is still the same as that today in Canberra, where the federal parliament moved to in 1927 as the capital for the Federal Government of Australia.

It had been a long hard fight, but the visionary founding-fathers had created a federal structure out of all those different convict colonies, 120 years after the first prison ships had arrived in the new land.

Picture: September 1901 - Federal flag competition (Mitchell Library)



# Two Early Pioneers

## James Oatley

James Oatley arrived in Sydney Town as a convict on January 27, 1815. Before his sentence, he had been a little-known watch and clockmaker living in Stafford, England.

Upon arrival, he was permitted to set up in business in George Street, on a site opposite the present Town Hall. He was soon commissioned by Governor Macquarie to make the turret clock in the prisoners' barracks, a building now in use as law courts but then being constructed by fellow convict and architect Francis Greenway on the corner of King and Macquarie Streets.

While waiting for land grants offered for this service, he continued his trade and is reputed to have made at least six outstanding grandfather clocks.

In 1831, he settled on 175 acres of land in the Beverly Hills-Kingsgrove district. He and subsequently acquired more land in the area,

## Hannah Laycock

Hannah Laycock came to New South Wales as a free settler in 1791. She was the 32 year old wife of Quartermaster Thomas Laycock of the New South Wales Corps. However, she was able to make a highly successful career for herself in the new colony.

In 1804, she received a grant of land (500 acres) on the south side of Cook's River, for which she was to pay a rent of 10 shillings a year. She called the property "King's Grove Farm" after Governor King, who made the grant. The grant extended from Stoney Creek Road to William Street and from Kingsgrove Road to Bexley Road.

By 1814, Hannah Laycock was supplying 2000 lb of meat to the Government – a business venture which expanded rapidly.

In 1829, she sold the Kings Grove farm. However she did not live long after the sale, and died in Sydney Hospital on May 12, 1831, at the age of 73 years.

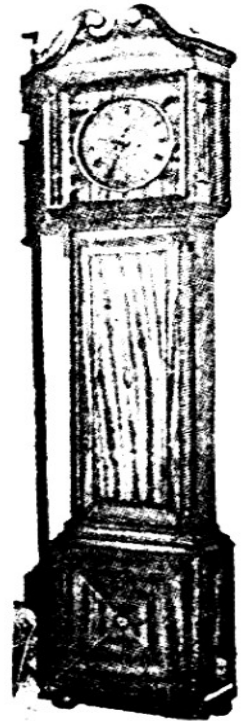
combined farming with his clock business until he died in 1839. He was buried on his farm, his grave being near the present Ponyara Road - Pallamana Pde. intersection.

James Oatley's grave lay forgotten for many years, and his name stirred few memories.

However, in May, 1921, an anonymous report appeared in the "Truth" newspaper. It read:

"While out for a stroll yesterday, I came across an old grave, near what appears to have been a farm many years ago. This farm is situated in the country between Peshurst and Lakemba. On the slab of stone covering the grave is the following inscription: 'Sacred to the memory of James Oatley. Obit. October 8th, 1839. Aetat 70 years.'"

In addition to the headstone (which is now in the Hurstville Historical Museum), and the general name for the suburb, James Oatley is also commemorated in the district by Oatley Bay and Oatley Park.



A clock built by James Oatley in 1822.

She was buried in the old Devonshire Street Cemetery. After the removal of this cemetery to make way for Central Railway, her remains were transferred to Botany in 1901. The headstone could be seen until a few years ago, but cannot be located now.

The suburb of Kingsgrove includes most of what was once Hannah Laycock's farm. The railway line from Sydney bisects the original grant as it approaches Kingsgrove Station.

The family name survives in the district in Laycock Street, Bexley North, and also in Laycock Road, Peshurst.

Governor Macquarie spoke kindly of Hannah Laycock as "the good old lady". She has left her mark on the country as a pioneer settler and landholder, owner of a considerable number of cattle, and supplier of fresh meat for the early colonists of New South Wales.

# Our Olympic Stars



**Mrs. Dora Lenane**



**Mr. Jeff Rankin**

**Both of these people stand with pride in their Australian Olympic outfits,  
Though they received no medals they should still receive our praise,  
Everybody who was involved in these events was definitely a winner.**

**Mrs. Dora Lenane & Mr. Jeff Rankin were both drivers in the Olympics and Paralympics.**

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IF YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID YOUR MEMBERSHIP THIS YEAR PLEASE DISREGARD THIS NEXT SECTION  
✂ -----

Membership dues for the period from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 to June 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001

**PLEASE PRINT IN CAPITALS**

Name: [Mr.][Mrs.][Miss][Ms.][Dr.] \_\_\_\_\_

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<b>Annual Individual Membership</b>	<b>\$ 8.00</b>
<b>Annual Household Membership</b>	<b>\$ 11.00</b>

TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make your cheque or money order out to St. George Historical Society Inc. & Mail it to  
Mrs. Dora Lenane 5/19 Collingwood Street, Drummoyne, NSW 2047  
Or bring it with you to the next meeting.