

St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

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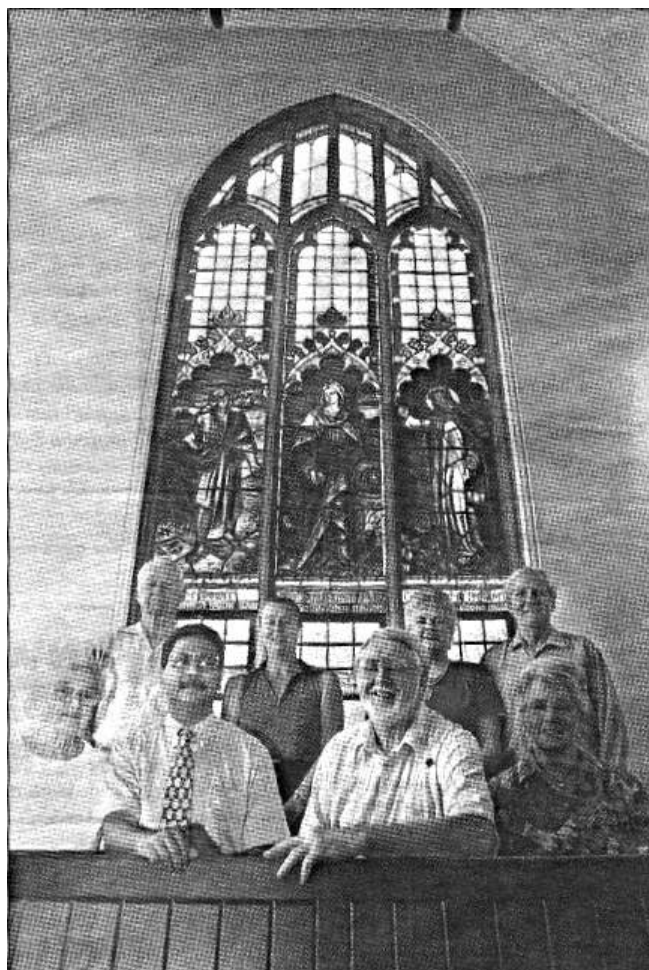


Photo Courtesy of
St George & Sutherland Shire Leader
Page 24 on February 8, 2001

The 75th Anniversary of Bexley Uniting Church

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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

April 10th

“Hurstville Bakery Museum”

At this meeting you can expect to hear from a representative from the Hurstville Bakery Museum about its history.

May 8th

“Peter Sage”

At this meeting you will have the pleasure of listening to Mr. Peter Sage who is prepared to give a talk about a different slant on Rookwood.

April 22nd

Heritage Week at Lydham Hall

OUTINGS/EXCURSIONS

Apology

Due to unforeseen medical problems Mrs. Doral Lenane had to cancel the mystery outing to be held on Friday, March 30th, 2001. We hope members were not too disappointed.

May 17th

“Vaucluse house”

How long since you have visited this wonderful home?

Well this is your opportunity. We will be having a Picnic Lunch in the grounds.

Meet at Circular Quay at 10:30am to catch 325 Bus.

Bus fare: Unknown Entry cost: \$3.00 for Pensioners. \$7.00 for Adults.

Additional donations are always welcome.

Contact Dora Lenane on (02) 9181-2121

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Lydham Hall's 30th Anniversary

Sunday, February 18th, 2001 a number of Society Members gathered at Lydham Hall to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Lydham Hall being opened to the public after its purchase by Rockdale City Council.

The weather was splendid, the food excellent, and a special thanks must go to all those who bought a "plate" along, well done. There were a number of visitors who came for the occasion of the particularly attractive and strong Bench Seat, which is to be used, for visitors on the back verandah. The seat is to commemorate Miss Bet Otton's "diligence, love and care of Lydham Hall" during her position as "Curator 1974 – 1995".

Mr. Ron Rathbone OAM, gave a speech outlining part of Bet's time and duties whilst at Lydham Hall as well as touching on its history. As usual he spoke interestingly, knowledgably and with appreciation of Miss Otton, and with his usual touch of humour. Bet responded, a few tears were shed and a round of applause resounded.

It was lovely that Bet Otton's niece, Margaret Wood and her husband David and their teenage family and a friend plus Mrs. Wood senior had come along to proudly support Bet and enjoy the occasion and company for the afternoon.

A special thanks must go to Gloria and Heinz Henke for the ordering of the Bench Seat and the chasing up (and the chasing up and the chasing up!) to see that it arrived on time! Followed by the engraving and attachment of the plaque on the seat by Heinz as this took up quite a bit of time.

Before finishing up I must say it was nice to see Dr. and Mrs. Pendlebury (who help out on the Volunteers Roster when they can with their busy schedule) and Mrs. Rawlinson once more and particularly Mr. Don Sinclair, who we were sorry to hear, had lost his wife recently. It was great to see you all and I hope you enjoyed the afternoon as well as I felt Bet Otton, her family and all the others attending did.

Bettye Ross

THE EDITORS REPORT

It's the start of a new year and 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 Dr. J. N Pendlebury for his article on Bexley Uniting Church, Mrs. Noreen Burns for her article on 75 years of Electric Trains, Mr. Howard Courtney for his Letter from the Antique Bottle, Ceramic & Collectables Club of Sydney Inc. and Mrs. Bettye Ross for her contributions towards this bulletin, without fine articles and information this bulletin would be empty.

WANTED – Any **ARTICLES** of interest, **SUPPLIED BY OTHER MEMBERS**. Have you visited a historic building or annual show 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 send me something :	Phone me on	(02) 9587 – 8307 or 0414 – 339 – 510
	Mail your news to	27 Waratah Street, Bexley NSW 2207
	E-mail me at	rw19475@yahoo.com.au

Kindest regards,
Richard Henke

75th ANNIVERSARY OF BEXLEY'S 1926 UNITING (METHODIST) CHURCH

The Bexley Uniting (formerly Methodist) Church stands on a generous block of land in tree-lined Gladstone Street, surrounded in the main by Home Units and villas where once comfortable homes existed. Its large expanse of lawn reminds one of how things used to be. At night its illuminated front stained glass window draws attention to its presence. This church building is the place of worship for 60 men, women and children under the leadership of Rev Manas Ghosh, a Congregation which is 99 years old.



BEXLEY UNITING (METHODIST) CHURCH

When this Congregation was commenced by the Rockdale Methodist Church for its 'Bexley Members' in 1902 there was no church building of any kind. Use was made of the Bexley Municipal Council Chambers, now Jack and Jill Pre-School, Queen Victoria Street for its Sunday Worship and for Sunday School. Clearly this was a temporary measure. It was soon agreed that a church was required. At the first meeting of the newly formed Bexley Methodist Trust at which Mr. Henry Barringham was elected Secretary and Mr. Swithin Berry, Treasurer, it was reported that an anonymous gift of £100 had been received for the Bexley Church Building Fund. This was followed by several other generous gifts.



Bexley's First Methodist Church

Early in 1903, a loan was negotiated to cover the cost of 2 blocks of land with a 66 foot frontage in Gladstone St. almost opposite the Rockdale College, later the Bexley Ladies College, and in June of the same year the Trust, having considered stone, weather-board and brick, agreed to erect a rectangular brick church, 34ft by 24ft with a small porch, centre front. It had a picket fence and double gates. Worship was conducted at 11:00am and 7:00pm and Sunday School was held at 3:00pm. The first Service in the church was held on July 3rd 1904.

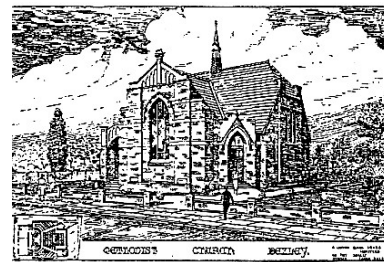
In a relatively short time, 1908, the Congregation had developed healthy growing pains and the Trust discussed the merits of extending or widening the church. After advice and serious deliberations it was agreed that a new and larger church was required. This led to the extension of the present land by a further two adjacent blocks providing an admirable site with a 132ft frontage and 200 ft depth. A New Church Fund was established immediately but its balance was small in those early years.

Late in 1924, the Congregation elected a committee consisting of "...Rev. H. L. Redman, Superintendent of the Arncliffe / Bexley / West Bexley Circuit, Messrs W. H. Dunsmore, T. A. Johnston, A. H. Frazer, E. Ashley and C. Laverty... empowered to secure plans and estimate of costs of a new church building." The Minister and Secretary "waited upon Mr. A. Lanyon Clark, Architect for the costings" and the committee and Trust were encouraged to pursue the matter.

PLANNING THE NEW CHURCH

The year 1925 was a very busy year for the Trust. Nine Meetings were held instead of the usual one to three. Most of the time and energy were spent planning the new church, although normal business did not suffer. Subscription lists were immediately opened and donations solicited. The volunteer collectors, Rev. Herbert Redman, Mr. T.A. Johnston, Mrs. Emma Martin and Mrs. Mary Neale did a splendid job, raising £500 to be added to the £200 already in the Bank. "In addition... 5 persons had each promised £5/5/- per year towards the funds."

A loan of £500 was obtained from the Bright Bequest Fund and an overdraft of £1,500 was secured at the Commercial Bank. This encouraged the Congregation and Trustees to consider favourably a building cost of about £2,500 and Mr. A. Lanyon Clark was unanimously appointed Architect for the new building. His plans were modeled on the Methodist Church he had recently designed for Macksville, though different in a number of respects; E.g. Bexley has no tower. However, in a report in 'The Methodist' it spoke of Bexley's diagonal door "which it is proposed some day to extend skywards in the form of a tower." (3/10/1925). Mr. Clark's plan was accepted by the Trust, with several modifications. The cross-aisle was removed, for example, and the centre aisle was replaced by 2 side aisles. and the Front Window Tracings were in cement and not wood. These changes increased the quotation of Parkinson Bros, Hurstville, by £32 to £2,569, £50 was allowed in this price for electric lighting! A brick front fence with single and double gates was also included in the quotation. Fred Parkinson, the senior partner, was very active in the Hurstville Methodist Church. However it was his lowest quotation which won him the contract!



The Architect's Sketch of the New Church - 1925

The Building Committee, together with the Minister, architect and contractor, decided that "... the new church building should be built on a front line with the old church and 12ft from the fence on the Northern side."

WORK BEGINS

The two Foundation Stones were laid by Rev. Harold When, President of the New South Wales Conference and Mr. T. A. Johnston, Secretary of the Bexley Trust, on 3rd October 1925. Children were delightfully included. "... three little boys and three little girls were called from the gathering to assist and each child gently tapped the stones declaring them to be well and truly laid."



"Beautiful silver trowels, suitably inscribed, were presented by Rev. H. L. Redman to Rev. Harold When and T. A. Johnston."

The face bricks selected for the church at the Carlton Brick Yards were found not to be of uniform quality and so bricks at the Austral Brick Co., St. Peters, were inspected and accepted. The contractor declared that, if the St. Peters bricks were used, he was not prepared to pay the extra charge for carting, amounting to £11 and asked that the Trustees bear the expense. He was wasting his breath! The Trust "... left the matter in the hands of the architect, Mr. Clark, promising to see that the Austral Bricks were used and that the contractor paid for the extra carting charges."

The architect, too, had a minor 'run-in' with the Trust. He asked that "... an expert acoustician be employed at a fee of £5/5/- to test the new church for tonal and sounding purposes."

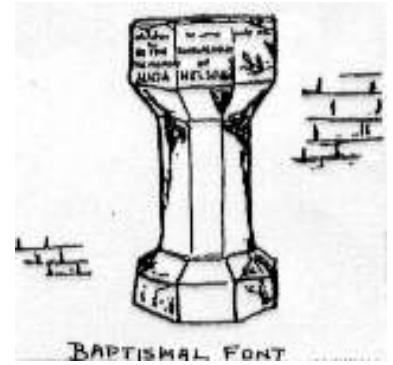
After considerable discussion, it was felt that this was a matter for the architect himself to deal with and bear the necessary expense "... as they looked to him, to have erected and handed over to them, as their architect, a church that would be free from echoes or overtones."

The delays were only slight and the church of simple beauty and intimacy, seating 265 persons, was dedicated on Saturday, 13th February 1926, by the Circuit Supt. Minister, Rev. H. L. Redman, and the 'most inspiring Dedicatory Sermon' was preached by Rev. H. E. Andrews, Chairman of 2nd Sydney District. Rev. H. L. Redman was asked to perform the Official Opening "... in recognition of the most valuable services he has rendered in forwarding the new church scheme."

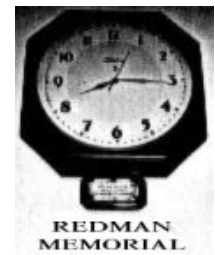
He was presented with a suitably inscribed silver Souvenir Key, by the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. T. A. Johnston "... in the presence of the largest gathering ever seen in the Circuit."

The Program for the Official Opening indicated that the new Church "... commanded a lovely view of the historic Botany Bay."

At the Dedication of the new church a number of memorials were unveiled in "an impressive and inspiring ceremony"; a beautiful polished maple *Pulpit*, the gift of Mr. & Mrs. T. A. Johnston and Miss. Gladys Johnston in memory of the soldiers who fell in the Great War; a *Pulpit Chair* given by Mrs. E. W. Laverty MBE in memory of Rev Robert M. Laverty, "an outstanding preacher and great Scholar", who retired to Bexley and died in 1914; a choice Baptismal Font (now in storage because of weakness), the gift of the Kindergarten School in memory of Alicia Nelson, a 4 year old S.S. pupil who died in 1925 ; two beautiful stained glass windows facing Gladstone Street "*The Sower*", in memory of Rev. George Martin (d 1905), a former President of the NSW Conference and Editor of 'The Methodist' given by his widow, Emma Martin, who herself was memorialised 5 years later by the centre window and "*The Light of the World*", the gift of Mrs. Mary Ann Napper and family in memory of Mr. James Napper (d 1919), a lay preacher, a Trustee, an inaugural Circuit Steward of the Arncliffe-Bexley Circuit and a highly respected Rockdale businessman. The stained glass artist in both cases was Alfred C. Handel who created seven additional windows in this church before his untimely death in 1946. The Congregation has been blessed that in the 75 years since the Dedication of this building and its 75th Anniversary, all its sanctuary windows have been completed, the most recent two by Mr. Philip Handel, Alfred's son; a gift from Mrs. Ethel Noble, one of the Church Members, now living in an Aged Care Centre..

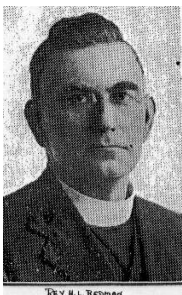


This Anniversary Service captured people's imagination, there being 200 in attendance. This number included large representations of the descendents of Rev. Herbert and Mrs. Alice Redman, including their son, Keith, now a retired Baptist Minister living in Queensland; of the Architect, A. Lanyon Clark, including his daughter Kathleen Steele and son, Thomas, now living in Melbourne; of the Napper family, including 6 grandsons and 2 granddaughters. Two lay members of the "Church Building Committee", Enoch Ashley and Colin Laverty by 3 grandsons and a son and daughter respectively. Colin Laverty , at the time was at Medical School, Sydney University. He later became Medical Superintendent of St George Hospital. After his marriage to Dr Beryl Plummer he set up in private practice at the family home in Oriental Street, Bexley.



In the company of a large gathering and in the presence of God the members of the Bexley Uniting Church, on 11 February 2001, celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the Dedication of the 1926 church building, conscious of the heritage which is theirs, thankful for those who laboured in the Lord in days past, praising God for what has gone before and trusting Him for what lies ahead.

Dr. James N. Pendlebury



Rev. H. L. Redman



Rev. H. E. Andrews



Rev. G. Martin



Rev. H. When



Alfred Handel



A. Lanyon Clark



M. & J. Napper

Source: Article and Illustrations provided by Dr. James N. Pendlebury.

75 Years of Electric Trains

On Saturday, March 3rd, 2001 there was a celebration to mark the event of 75 years since Electric trains started operating in Australia.

The following section was written by Mrs. Noreen Burns with photos taken by Mr. Richard Henke.

With Bettye Ross, our esteemed President, I arrived at Platform 1 at Central Station to be greeted (with lost of others) with a delicious morning tea, a rousing repertoire from a very good band, a speech from our new Governor General, Professor Marie Bashir, and a short talk from Mrs. Beryl Godfrey of Oatley who, as a young girl, had been a passenger on the first electric train to Oatley. She recalled that with much determination she had got the much desired window seat.

We departed on the, now restored first electric train, which, compared with modern trains was extremely comfortable, airy and with a Traditional Jazz Band serenading us all the way to Oatley I enjoyed an extremely pleasant journey.

On arrival at Oatley we were ushered across the road to the Park by an accommodating Policeman, who stopped all the traffic for us, which chuffed us up no end.

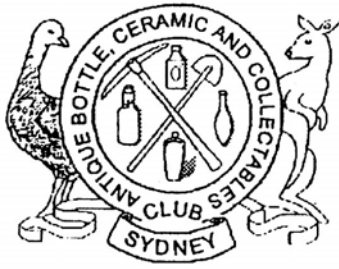
From here in the Park we encountered other members of the St. George Historical Society and there was plenty of eating, drinking and merrymaking. `hic`

A splendid day was had by all



The "First Electric Train" on the Left
The Modern Day "Tangara" on the right

Many people gathered at Oatley Station to see the
First Electric Train Arrive



ANTIQUÉ BOTTLE, CERAMIC & COLLECTABLES CLUB OF SYDNEY Inc.

March 7th, 2001

To St. George Historical Society

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Antique Bottle Ceramics & Collectables Club of Sydney is a group of people who are dedicated to the collecting and recording of early Australiana and meet monthly at Peakhurst School of Arts. This year the Club is hosting a show on August 3rd, 4th and 5th at Rockdale Town Hall.

The show historically takes the form of competition in various collectable categories i.e., Convict Bottles, Hotel Memorabilia, Australian Pottery etc. There is also provision for Buy & Sell Collectables which attracts interest Australia wide. This year we are adding a special prize (the Rockdale Prize of \$500) which is for projects or displays centered on the history of Rockdale Municipality - past or present.

Entries are open to the general public and need to be of a form that is suitable for display and can be reproduced or photographed for inclusion in historical magazines for local groups, libraries and local newspapers. Entry fee is \$6 and covers a 120 cm (4') width table with equivalent space above and, if needed, below the table. The Rockdale Prize will be presented on the afternoon of Saturday, August 4th, 2001.

For further information please contact Steve Cross on (02) 9642-5359 or myself on (02) 9533-1240.

Yours faithfully,

Howard Courtney

Chairman - Exhibition Committee
108 Moons Avenue, Lugarno, 2210.