

St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2001 EDITION



Casper Weiss (1820 – 1905)
Hamburg Harbour Pilot

Centenary of Federation

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REFRESHMENTS OFFICER	Mr. Allan Stahl	
AUDITOR	Mrs. L. Thompson	

Meetings are held 8:00 PM the 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 13th

Video on Nostalgia

December 2nd

Christmas Gathering at Lydham Hall from 12:00pm till 4:00 pm

Savoury Food i.e. Sandwiches, Pies, Finger Food supplied by Lydham Hall Committee as a thankyou to volunteers due to it being the “International Year of Volunteers”. Members may bring cakes, drinks, lollies, etc.

December 11th

Christmas Meeting

COMING ATTRACTIONS

November 19th, 2001

Auburn Botanic Gardens

The Auburn botanic Gardens consist of nine separate divisions:

1. The Japanese Hill & Lake,
2. The Central Formal Area, containing the reflection pool and pergola, sunken rose garden, scented garden and garden of trees,
3. Woodland Theatre and Billabong area,
4. Australian Rainforest,
5. Australian Woodlands,
6. Picnic and Barbeque area adjacent to Duck River,
7. Bonsai Garden,
8. Aviary,
9. Fauna Reserve.

Come join us for a visit to this set of Gardens followed by a Picnic/Sausage Sizzle.

We will be meeting near the lift to Platform 6 at Town Hall Station at 10:00 am. Cost \$5.00.

RSVP & Enquiries to Dora Lenane (02) 9181-2121 A.H.

Joan Fairhall (02) 9546-5555 A.H.

THE VICE PRESIDENT & 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.

A special note must be made with regards to our most recent celebrations of the St. George Historic Societies 40th Anniversary. For this Celebration the society had arranged a visit to Tempe House followed by a picnic. Approximately 20 Society members and Guests were present and a lady called Leonie McEntee took us on a very interesting tour of the premises. A good time was had by all.

This year, "The International Year of Volunteers" has been a very prosperous year for the St. George Historical Society Inc. with many events worthy of mention yet not enough space to detail them all. Anyone who has attended our Open Day's, Fete Appearances, Meetings or Excursions will know exactly what I mean and those who haven't have missed out on many a special occasion. This is not the end to it all as the year to come will be filled with many more.

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. It is not easy for a person to coordinate and arrange an outing and it is very disappointing for someone who has put a lot of hard work arranging an event to turn up on the day only to find that there are only a few people interested. Please make an effort to attend the events arranged, as they will definitely provide you with a memorable experience.

I would like once again to thank all people who have contributed their time, publications and attendance at functions and meetings and I would like to ask the members of this society and all of you who read this publication to tell all of your friends and relatives, young and old, about us over the Christmas break and invite them all to one of our meetings or events to see what we are about. We are always looking for new members and would hope that some of them may join our society.

A very special thanks must go to Mr. Arthur Ellis, one of our previous Research Officers, who has donated all of his research material to the society. We have obtained a filing cabinet to store it in and would also like to thank those who are spending their time cataloguing and filing it.

Help make this bulletin more interesting and suited to your interest. Have you visited a historic building or annual show which you thought would be suitable for us to arrange a trip to please let me know. I am always eager to hear from you and share your ideas with others.

To send me something you can:

Contact me by phone on (02) 9587 - 8307 or 0414 - 339 - 510

Mail your news to 27 Waratah Street, Bexley NSW 2207

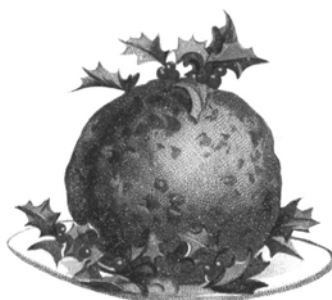
E-mail me at rwh19475@yahoo.com.au

Kindest regards,



Richard Henke

Vice President & Editor



Snippets from the Past or The Good Old Days

Historical Group Changes Name

At the annual meeting of the Rockdale Historic Society, held recently, it was decided to change the society's name to the "St. George Historical Society."

The Society will now extend its field of operations beyond the Rockdale Municipality.

The Members have also agreed that the society become affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society and the National Trust of Australia.

It was announced that the membership of the society had grown from the initial 16 to 63.

Source: The Propeller Newspaper 25/10/1962

Historical Society visits Old Residence

On a recent Saturday afternoon, Mr. G. Eardley, of Arncliffe took nearly 70 members of the Rockdale Historical Society on a conducted tour of part of the Wolli Creek Valley.

Commencing at Historic "Tempe House," the 134-year-old sandstone mansion of early Sydney merchant, Alexander Brodie Spark – now the Good Samaritan Convent – the Mother Superior showed members the graciously furnished reception rooms, the enclosed courtyard and the attractively laid-out grounds.

Also on the itinerary were "Bonnie Doone" formerly the home of the McRae family; "Kirnbank", the towering three storeyed home of Justin McSweeney, which abuts the Illawarra railway line, and the site of the recently demolished Primitive Methodist Church.

Whilst afternoon tea was taken in the Arncliffe Senior Citizens' Centre, by kind arrangement with the President, Mr. Nightingarl, Mr. Eardley showed members a number of his very fine pencil sketches of old Arncliffe buildings.

The next outing of the Society will be held at Captain Cook's Landing Place and a conducted tour is being arranged.

Source: The Propeller Newspaper 14/6/1962

Das Fischerhaus (The Fisher House) Blankenese, Germany



This photo is related to the following two articles

Excerpts from an article printed in the Norddeutsche Nachrichten (German Newspaper) printed on Wednesday, August 18th, 1937. Translation and article by Heinz Werner Henke (Society Member).

Catharina Weiss on her 80th Birthday.

In Germany a township called Blankenese is built high on the ravine, which follows the contours of the River Elbe, this river leads from the North Sea to the city of Hamburg.

There is a road, which pushes itself up from the bottom of the ravine named Elbeterasse it is upon this road at number 4-6 that Catharina Weiss lives. Her home is surrounded by a garden which includes mighty Lime trees with their crown shading and protecting the gable and the thatch roof in this silent setting, except when the untamed south western wind frequently blows from the “Blickberg” (Lookout mountain) with shrieking/whistling noises and in Winter the cold east winds find their way through the area. When in spring and summer the protruding gardens with shrubs and bushes form a sea of flowers.

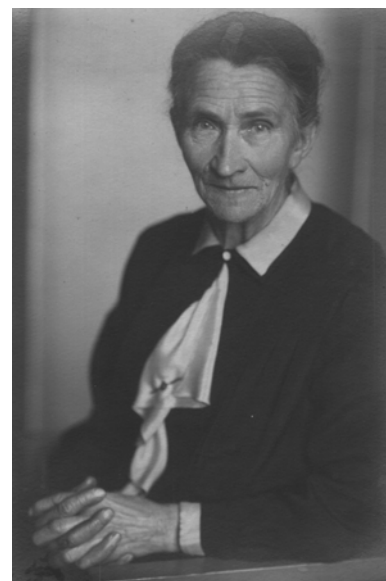
Looking through the open windows, when the perfume of carnations, roses and the lime flowers spread into the valley, you will hardly find a more secluded corner anywhere else on earth.

Within this home you will find Frau Catharina Weiss, nee Breckwoldt who was born on 19th August, 1857. She has lived all her life in her parent's house and is now enjoying her latter years.

Frau Catharina Weiss descended from an old Blankeneser Seafaring family. Her father, Captain Peter Breckwoldt did on Christmas Eve 1880, with his ship the “ Marie Elisabeth”, disappear around the Cape Horn area.

One year prior to this, she married the Blankeneser High Sea fisherman Peter Weiss.

He and his partner Johannes Büttner and their Fishing boat S.B.18 operated in the North Sea for many years.



As the fishing got poorer, he left the boat with his partner in 1891 to seek employment in Hamburg Harbour until in 1915 when God mustered this old seafarer on to his last voyage.

Their five children, four girls and a boy, then grown up, assisted her through many of life's chores and troubles.

Frau Catharina Weiss has worked hard all of her life, but she never lost her friendly, happy nature and her strong will to live, not even when her only son Casper Weiss, died slowly from a war injury.

Frau Weiss is physically and mentally very alert. Her daughters are doing their best to brighten her remaining years. She is well known and honoured in the Blankeneser society for her frank, polite and very friendly nature. She is held in the highest regard and on her birthday many will remember her with love and sincerity.

My Grandmother Catharina Wildung, nee Weiss was the oldest of the four daughters and I am in the picture on which all 4 generations are shown.

**Another article printed in approximately 1978.
Translation and article by Heinz Werner Henke (Society Member).**

**When on the Elbe (river) Blankeneser fishing boats were still travelling,
on the Süllberg Mountain, the tradition was upheld.**

In the Garden of the white painted, thatch roof, house in Elbe Street 4 and 6 lays a large rusty anchor. The clean swept pathway was leading to a green wooden door. Behind this door the kitchen of Margaretha Hirsch, nee Weiss and her husband August. She is 83 and he is 86 years old. "We look after our household ourself and do our own shopping." It is admirable to see, how close the past and present in the fisherman's house of 1750 appear. The fireplace (Mantle) reminds Margaretha Hirsch of grandmother and mother, a Schooner with the Danish Flag, against the wall and Grandfather Peter Breckwoldts' Sea travels to Messina.

Margaretha Hirsch belongs to the few direct descendants of the well known Blankeneser High Sea Fisherman and Captain. Their hard life on board of the ship, impressed on the family to be thrifty, thankful and traditional.

On the beautiful, light brown lacquered writing desk in the small comfortable room stands a wooden stamp from the year 1780, on which is engraved, in mirror image, the letters "P.B.W." Peter Breckwoldt. This was a stamp for the bread was baked by the high sea fishermen themselves or later they had it baked at the bakery. It belonged to her great grandfather of the same name as her father.

In the living room, accessible by a steep narrow staircase, in a cabinet are expensive gold-rimmed coffee cups. A birthday gift inscribed "2 January 1860 C. Holländer from P. & C. Breckwoldt" and the other "C. M. Weiss 30th April 1862."

Breckwoldt and Holländer are ancestors of Margaretha Hirsch. In 1894 she was born, the 4th child.

She was granted to live her life in the fisherman's house of her parents, which became a Museum of which her and her husband were curators when it was purchased by the Burgermeister (Mayor).

Just recently it was painted white and the thick thatch roof was repaired.

The 83 year old has a remarkable recollective ability. In her comfortable small living room she sits relating her past.

In those days we had no running water. We had to fetch it from two wells, which were situated on the Blankeneser main road, and carry the water up the hill. Not only our parents, but also the children had wooden carry frames, just like the Hamburger "Hummel" (A Famous Water Carrier in the city of Hamburg), and on the hooks were small home made wooden buckets.

In the kitchen stood a large green barrel and we had to fill it up for drinking water. As children we were forbidden to waste water, as every drop was precious. The laundry was washed in rainwater and the rinsing was done at spring water pumps on a lower terrace of the mountain.

My father was a High Sea Fisherman with his own Ship. Peter Weiss had on his boat, like all other Blankeneser boats it had the inscription "S.B." which stood for Schleswig-Blankenese.

We children, naturally, knew the numbers of the boats. My uncle had inherited his grandfathers long telescope and he would stand on the beachfront and call out the numbers of the boats, we would then run to the fisher women and call out "your husband is arriving", for which we would be rewarded with 10 pfennig (penny), at times these women would say to us "we know that he is coming", naturally we got nothing.

Live Sole (Fish)

Margaretha Hirsche's father returned often with very good catches. At times coming on high-tides he would dock at the Blankeneser wharf then the young boys would run into the village and call out "Live Sole, Halibuts and Cod."

Margaretha Hirsch can remember the year 1901. A one "Stieg" Sole, which was 20 pieces, cost only 1 Mark (approx. 10 shillings). What they could not sell in Blankenese was taken to the Fish Market in Altona (Hamburg). There, the fishermen would also obtain their rations and supplies for their next voyage.

In Gustav Kirsten's Book "Many interesting things in Blankenese" was mentioned that the Blankeneser fishermen at good sales would have eaten and drank a large amount. White bread with butter from a stone pot was much loved but best of all was stiff "Grog".

Casper Weiss, Margaretha Hirsche's Grandfather on her father's side, was a legend.

Once he sampled at "Rohrs" on the "Süllberg Bowle" (A Local Hotel) straight from the bucket and drunk it all.

Casper Weiss would not drink Grog and he would say to the bartender, who knew him well, "No I will not have any grog but give me a glass of sugar water instead"

The bartender would give him a water glass full of clear high potency Arrack.

His face is still today known among the older generations.

In 1921 he was portrayed on a Blankenesers' 50 Pfennig Bank Note ("Emergency Money"). It showed him in his south-wester with well marked face and white beard. (Photo on the Front Cover)

On the note, in old German (to the best of my ability of translation) "When the ship lunges to and fro and the storm blows hard and strong, it is beneficial to have a good Pilot on board as he will bring you home"

There in 1921 Blankenese printed "Emergency Money" of a 20 Pfennig Note with the Süllberg and Steamer upon it and a 10 Pfennig Note with a full sailing boat, as title picture. The emergency money had to be issued because in the period of high unemployment, people would hoard the coins and not spend them.

Margaretha Hirsch is smiling today, remembering the then difficult times. What remains with her is the admiration for men like Peter Breckwoldt, her other grandfather, who would sometimes spend 18 month at sea.

His wife waited for 17 years and on the 29. May 1897 she received the official death notice from the King's court.

"Blankeneser Speck."

The life was not easy, but we always ate well, especially fish was always plentiful. In front of the old Fischerhaus, lines were strung-out to dry a special salted fish. (I remember them to be "Sole", since I had some in approx. 1941 or 42. Sent by Margaretha Hirsch to my Grandmother, Catharina Wildung, her oldest sister.)

In Winter we cut them into small strips off and ate them with black bread. "That was called the Blankeneser Speck." Today the dried Sole is sold in special fish shops only, but it is not very often available.

The sails of the Blankeneser High Sea Fisher are long gone. Remaining is only the unwritten knowledge passed over by the old Fishermen and Captains.

The descendents are upholding the past and the old houses of Pilots and Captains along the Elbe Ravine are very much admired.

Margaretha and August Hirsch admiring the Schooner of Peter Breckwoldt, the other grandfather of Margaretha Hirsch. From 1880 he was missing with his ship for 17 years. In 1897 the Kings Court officially announced his death. —————→



Margaretha Hirsch's grandmother, Katharina Ariana Breckwoldt, nee Hollander, in front of the Fischerhaus on the Elbeterasse. Around 1900 she was wearing the traditional Fisherwoman outfit worn on special occasions. ←



That is the wooden frame belonging to her long passed away brother Casper Weiss. Margaretha Hirsch has placed this frame in the kitchen on her shoulder for the remembrance of water carrying in her childhood. This frame was made in 1890. —————→



Relationship of these people to the editor, Richard Henke:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| * Heinz Werner Henke | Father |
| * Katharina Ariana Breckwoldt | G. G. G. G. Grandmother |
| * Capt. Peter Breckwoldt | G. G. G. Grandfather |
| * Casper Weiss | G. G. G. Grandfather |
| * Catharina Weiss | G. G. Grand Mother |
| * Caper Weiss Jnr. | G. Grand Uncle |
| * Margaretha Hirsch | G. Grand Aunt |

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30th, 2000

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Bank Balance on 30/6.2001	1598.42	Postage of Bulletin	367.45
Membership	481.00	RAHS Conference	93.00
Donations	149.00	Conference Accommodation	138.60
Sale of Publications	217.80	Bexley Festival Stall	33.00
Raffles	59.00	Purchase of 2 Teapots	32.00
Tours	20.00	Presentation Gifts	63.60
Sale of Craft	8.00	RAHS Public Liability Ins.	401.00
		RAHS Annual Subscription	80.30
		Expenses of V. Beehag.	16.15
	<u>2533.22</u>		<u>1225.10</u>
		F.I.D. \$ 0.52 GDT \$ 5.55	6.07
Bank Interest	8.51	Balance in Bank	1310.56
	<u>\$ 2541.73</u>		<u>\$ 2541.73</u>

I have examined the Books, Bank Statements, Vouchers, Cheques and Butts presented to Mrs. Dora Lenane, Treasurer of this above Society, and this presents a true statement of these financial affairs as at October 3rd, 2001.

Audited and found correct 3/10/2001
L. Thompson

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

✂ -----
Membership dues for the period from July 1st, 2000 to June 31st, 2001

PLEASE PRINT IN CAPITALS

Name: [Mr.][Mrs.][Miss][Ms.][Dr.] _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Post Code: ____ Telephone Number: () _____

Annual Individual Membership \$ 8.00

Annual Household Membership \$ 11.00

TOTAL: \$ _____

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please make your cheque/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.

Centenary Celebrations of the Bexley Uniting Church, 2002

The Bexley Congregation is celebrating its Centenary over the full year of 2002 to express its gratitude to God in a variety of ways. Our hope is that you will share in our celebrations during the coming year.

The Bexley Uniting Church is located at 29 Gladstone Street, Bexley, NSW 2207

Services and events are as follows

3/2/2002 (Sunday) 9:00 am "Jack & Jill" Preschool QV St. & Bexley Uniting Church	Celebrating the 1 st Service of the Bexley Cong. on 26/1/1902 in Bexley Council Chambers	23/2/2002 (Saturday) 2:30 pm Bexley Uniting Church Refreshments	Music by 'Choralaires' Ladies Choir. Admission \$8.00 for Bexley UC Centenary Project
10/3/2002 (Sunday) 9:30 am Bexley Uniting Church Morning Tea	Celebrating Community Service My Wayne Kolvu, GM of Com- munity Services, Wesley Mission	24/3/2002 (Sunday) 2:30 pm Bexley Uniting Church Refreshments	Easter Music by Bexley Choir & Nerelle Fraser. Offering for Christian Edu. Board & Project.
28/4/2002 (Sunday) 9:30 am Bexley Uniting Church Morning Tea	Anzac Service with RSL members in attendance. Speaker: Mr Frank McInnes.	19/5/2002 (Sunday) 2:30 pm Bexley Uniting Church Refreshments	Music by Wesley Institute Choir & Instrumentalists. Offering for Wesley Institute & UC Project.
22/6/2002 (Saturday) 2:30 pm Bexley Uniting Church Refreshments	"Peter Dawson Revisited" by Tim Collins. \$10 Admission for Bexley UC Centenary Project	4/8/2002 (Sunday) 9:30 am Bexley Uniting Church Morning Tea	Celebrating 100 yrs of Worship Rev. Dr. Gordon Moyes AM Supt. of Wesley Mission, Sydney
13/10/2002 (Sunday) 2:30 pm Bexley Uniting Church Afternoon Tea	Choral Service with Masonic Centenary Ensemble & Rose Croix Speaker: Rev. Ray Green	3/11/2002 (Sunday) 9:30 am Bexley Uniting Church Morning Tea	Celebrating 100 Years of Sunday School. Speaker: Mr. Stuart Pendlebury

RSVP for services on March 10th, August 4th and November 3rd by preceding Wednesday.

Enquiries and RSVP: Dr. Jim Pendlebury, 64 Verdun Street, Bexley, NSW 2207. Phone: (02) 9587-6619