

St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

MAY - JUNE 2002 EDITION



Annual General Meeting

PRESIDENT	Mr. Wesley Fairhall	(02) 9546 – 5555
SECRETARY	Mrs. +Valda Behag	(02) 9546 – 2819
TREASURER	Mrs. Dora Lenane	(02) 9181 – 2121
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT	Mr. Bernard Sharah	(02) 9567 – 8989
VICE PRESIDENT	Mr. Richard Henke	(02) 9587 – 8307
RESEARCH OFFICERS	Mrs. Bettye Ross	(02) 9589 – 0229
	Mrs. Pamela Herrick	(02) 9529 – 4879
SOCIAL SECRETARIES	Mrs. Dora Lenane	(02) 9181 – 2121
	Mrs. Joan Fairhall	(02) 9546 – 5555
PUBLICITY OFFICER	Mrs. Joan Fairhall	(02) 9546 – 5555
BULLETIN EDITOR	Mr. Richard Henke	(02) 9587 – 8307
	Mrs. Bettye Ross	(02) 9589 – 0229
LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE	Mrs. Gloria Henke	(02) 9587 – 8307
	Mr. Bernard Sharah	(02) 9567 – 8989
	Mr. Robert McGarn	(02) 9587 – 4469
PUBLIC OFFICER	Mr. Robert McGarn	(02) 9587 – 4469
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.

MAY - JUNE EVENTS AGENDA

MONTHLY GUEST SPEAKERS

Tuesday, July 9th

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

EVENTS

July 15th CHRISTINA STEAD'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

12:00 pm – 4:00 pm at Lydham Hall. 18 Lydham Avenue, Bexley, NSW 2207

\$ 4.00 for Adults \$ 3.00 for Concession/Pensioners \$ 2.00 for Children

On this day we celebrate the Birthday of Christina Stead our famous International Authoress who lived at Lydham Hall, our local Historic Building.

Members please bring a plate of food. And guests if possible.

Come along for a day where people get together and enjoy themselves as well as having a look through the House.

August 4th ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH

A date to keep in mind as at 4:30pm when we are invited to their second winter concert at Princes Highway, St. Peters.

After the concert there is a "High Tea", and entry is by donation.

You will also enjoy visiting this very old historic church and joining in friendly fellowship together.

By Betty Williams (Society Member)

August 26th MYSTERY TOUR \$21.00

9:00 am the Community Bus will depart from Ormonde Parade, Hurstville

For enquiries ring Mrs Dora Lenane 9181-2121 or Mrs Joan Fairhall 9546-5555

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear members,

I hope that you are all well and living life to the full. To fellow members who are at present unwell, I extend on behalf of your "historical" friends our sincere best wishes.

Our members have been quite active in recent times, in particular, enjoying a bus trip south to view the Buddhist temple (unbeknown to the organizers of this social outing, Monday's are the one day in the week when the temple is closed...oops.) The day was nevertheless an occasion of fun and fellowship.

Lydham Hall, thanks mainly to the efforts of Mrs. Bettye Ross, has been a veritable hive of activity on a number of occasions of late. Most notably, Heritage Week was well received, if one was takes into account the steady flow of interested visitors.

Aside from being open for public inspection on Sundays, a number of pre-arranged group tours have been held. These visits range from school excursions to senior citizens' outings. Importantly, such visits serve a twofold purpose of both 'spreading the word' of Lydham Hall's existence and raising much needed revenue for maintenance of this lovely house. Aside from Bettye, it would be timely to thank the Henke family for their efforts at Lydham. Remember, volunteers are required each Sunday between the hours of 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm Please contact Bettye if you are able to assist on one or more dates.

Members, I commend to you the upcoming excursion to Parramatta (refer What's On). Mrs Dunne was the Guest Speaker at the Society's April meeting. I assure you that all members present were captivated with the talk Judith gave on the life of women in the early days of the colony, particularly pertaining to Parramatta and the Female Orphanage.

Take care for now,

President Wesley



Our deepest sympathies go to Joan and Geoff Rankin and their family, over the recent loss of Joan's brother, who recently passed away after a long period of illness.



Skericks

- ❖ We are very pleased to warmly welcome both Pam Taylor and Peter Edgar as new society members.
- ❖ Congratulations to our new member Pam Taylor who won our Heritage Doll Raffle.
- ❖ Many thanks to Dora Lenane and Joan Fairhall for organising our trip to Parramatta . Again we enjoyed a very pleasant outing

Vale - Dr. Joan Hatton

St George Historical Society members are saddened at the recent loss of another of its long-term members. Dr Joan Hatton passed away on 25 April 2002.

Dr Hatton's passing is not only the Society's because the St George District has lost one of its finest local historians. Joan had written a number of local histories of the area and was working on a master's degree in history at the University of Western Sydney.

While Joan's historical research was more focussed on Hurstville and Kogarah she was interested in the history of the District as a whole and her contribution to the area has been significant.

Joan's quietly spoken demeanour belied a woman of remarkable determination. The establishment of the Hurstville's Centennial Bakery Museum was in large part due to her single mindedness in the face of formidable opposition. The battle to save one of the most attractive examples of Victoriana in an area awash with undistinguished and colourless modernity was long and, at times, bitter but ultimately successful. Not only was the building saved from demolition but also the community gained a museum, which is in some sense a memorial to Joan and Hurstville Historical Society's determination.

On a more personal level, Joan was a regular attendee of St George Historical Society meetings – usually in the company of close friend, Arthur Ellis. When Arthur passed away late last year Joan wrote a wonderful tribute for her dear friend. It is sadly ironic that the Society has lost both members within the space of a few months. Vale, Joan Hatton.

Reprinted below is an article from the St George and Sutherland Shire Leader, Tuesday May 7, 2002 which gives some interesting biographical detail.

By Bernard Sharah

Dr Joan Hatton, historian, dead

KOGARAH Council proposes naming its local studies room the Hatton Room in memory of Dr Joan Hatton who died on April 25.

Dr Hatton was the secretary of the Kogarah Historical Society as well as the Hurstville Historical Society - posts she held since the early 1970s.

Kogarah mayor Councillor Jim Taylor said Dr Hatton did not live in the past but she remembered it well.

"She was constantly searching out the interesting and obscure," he said.

Cr Taylor said Dr Hatton was a regular visitor to Kogarah Council and a familiar sight in the library.

"She contributed greatly to the local studies collection and was the author of a number of booklets on the municipality," he said.

"She was a tireless supporter of council's involvement in historical matters and her untimely passing will leave a void that will be challenging to fill."

Cr. Taylor presented Dr Hatton with a Premier's Community Award during Senior Citizen's Week earlier this year.

Dr Hatton was born in Brisbane and moved to Sydney with her parents in 1946.

With a degree in accountancy and economics behind her, she began work at the Australian Taxation Office.

But the death of her younger brother soon after he had completed his medical studies inspired her to study science.

She was head of serology at the Australian Blood Bank

when she decided to pursue a career in medicine.

At the time of her retirement she was staff pathologist at Sutherland Hospital.

Dr Hatton was best known for her campaign in the late 1980s to save the Centennial Bakery Museum in Hurstville and gain a permanent conservation order for Carss Cottage in Carss Bush Park.

At the Hurstville Council meeting on May 1, Cr. Merv Lynch said Dr Hatton's passing was a "big loss" to the area.

"She was a dedicated local historian and had several books printed," he said.

Dr Hatton was also a keen sports fan and never missed a home game of the Cronulla Sharks rugby league team.

She was working on a master's degree in history at the University of Western Sydney when she died, aged 76

A BLAST FROM THE PAST.

Sixty years ago on the night of 31st May 1942 the war was brought to Sydney with 3 Japanese Midget Submarines having been launched from their mother submarines off the Coast, entered Sydney Harbour through the Boom Defences with the intention of wrecking havoc to any of the vast fleet at anchor. The most obvious target was the American Cruiser USS Chicago. The raid was unsuccessful with one of the subs getting entangled in the boom net & the crew of two blowing the vessel and themselves up. The second sub fired its torpedoes at the American Warship and missed it, but unfortunately one of its torpedoes traveled on to hit the HMAS Kuttabul (a former Sydney Harbour ferry), which was tied up at Garden Island and used as a depot ship. This resulted in the unfortunate death of 19 sailors asleep on board. That submarine was destroyed by depth charges and was later recovered with the bodies of the two crew still aboard.

The third submarine was never found and it is thought that it escaped out to sea again. Despite a lot of controversy at the time, the Japanese Sailors were accorded full naval honours at their cremation, their remains having later being returned to Japan after cessation of hostilities.

These were dangerous times and Sydney had actually been observed by a Japanese Naval Seaplane from another Mother Submarine just prior to the bombing raid on the night of 7th June 1942. Nine residences in the Rose Bay and Bellevue Hill area were hit by shells, which in most cases were "duds". Some of the buildings were badly damaged by the resulting blasts.

Doug Cumming OAM

*Source: Permission given by Mr. Doug Cumming OAM. – President of Waverly Historical Society
To reproduce their article written by him that was printed in their Monthly Bulletin
Volume: 14 Number: 5 May 2002*

A GRAVESTONE, NO GRAVE AND A RIDDLE

from Bettye Ross

Just over two years ago an article appeared in the St. George & Sutherland Shire Leader titled "The Grave Mystery of Will and Eliza's Death"

I thought it was a pretty eye-catching headline and on reading through it, found that a Headstone had been found in bushes in a backyard in Como which is the next suburb to Oyster Bay where I live. Now the headstone had been thrown over the fence of this property some years before, presumably as a party piece, and had ended up in the bushes. New occupants clearing the block had found it and wondered where it came from, why and whose was it?

Its inscription read: "*William Jonathon Johnson
Died, October 3, 1866, aged 55
This sweet remembrance of the
just shall flourish when he
sleeps in dust. Psm CXII.6* "

underneath in smaller letters a smaller tribute stated:

" Eliza Harris who died on December 8, 1878, aged 65 "

Eliza's name and tribute had a pretty insignificant tone about it compared to William's. Was Harris her surname? The Leader asked this as well as wondering whether the pair were sister and brother or "star-crossed lovers who thwarted convention by not marrying more than a century ago?"

This threw me into a mood of this has got to be solvable so I set to looking up newspapers of the time and found a nice long obituary to William and other notices of his occupations and abilities in various other articles, but so little about Eliza it amounted to nothing. But was she Eliza Harris or was she Eliza Johnson or was she Eliza the de facto of William Johnson or had she remarried after her husband William Johnson died? It didn't matter what or where I looked she was not there. So if she wasn't there, when and where had she come from? I was fairly certain of one thing - she had been "lying in state" wherever that headstone had originally stood - I hoped! There was not even a birth registration for an Eliza Harris or Johnson if she'd been related before marriage to William Johnson. There was only a Marriage for a William Johnson to an Eliza Tompson. No way you wrote Harris could it look like Tompson!

There were two deaths registered who possibly could have been her, so I sent for both Certificates, one didn't fit because it was a death of an Eliza Johnson before the above date, but the other one did have a possibility although it was for a burial for 2nd January, 1879 - 25 days after she died! Not only that but between Eliza and Johnson was an H.! That certainly could stand for Harris. Naturally this Death Certificate didn't have any more helpful details than that - no date of death, she was a female and she had been buried 2.1.1879 at Camperdown by Mrs. Kinsella & Sons of Sydney and witnesses were Henry Kinsella and William O'Dwyer. No date of death as I said, no age, no birthplace, no husband and no children!

Well I swung into research action - I eventually found where Kinsella's Burial registers were but they were scant and some years missing, but Eliza Johnson was there no date but round about 1879-80, no more details than I had. So I started looking around the date of burial instead of death, nothing. I was starting to get to know Eliza - she appeared in my mind as a pathetically lonely lady, living on her own, her children gone or estranged from her, alone since her husband's death! Perhaps she'd fallen, lay injured on the floor with no one to hear her cries, no one to come and comfort or cover her emaciated body. Perhaps she'd died of thirst, exposure and loneliness! I knew she was emaciated because I'd now worked out how pathetic were her circumstances! If it wasn't 120 years ago I'd probably have considered going and forcing her door open to find her!

I didn't though - I went back to the old Registers looking for more clues and decided to follow all the indexes of William Johnson marriages. The one that fitted was Eliza Tompson because the groom had the second initial of J. When hooked it up they had married 21st July, 1838 at St. Philip's, Sydney, her name given as Eliza Harris Tompson and the groom as William Jonathon Johnson. The witnesses were Charles Tompson, Richard Johnson, James Johnson, Jane Ann Armytage and Mary Ann Johnson.

A lot of Johnson's to say the least and who was Jane Ann Armytage, was she a relation?

This took me back to the 1828 Census and I found Charles Tompson aged 44 who had arrived Free on the "Coromandel" in 1804, his wife Jane aged 34 and children Charles Jnr. 21, Frederick 14, Eliza H. 11, Edwin 9, Alfred 7, Emma 5, Ferdinand 3 and another Eliza H. aged 18 months, but how could wife Jane aged 34 years have a son aged 21? All except Charles Stir had been born in the Colony.

Then when I looked under the Census for Armytage I found it stated Charles aged 12, George 9 and Jane Ann aged 10 months were the children of Mrs. C. Tompson and in the Appendix it states "Children of Jane Morris by former husband".

I now had two Eliza H.'s, two Charles' and a Jane Ann Armytage - back to the Drawing Board and after a few more delving's into Archives I came up with Eliza Harris Tompson daughter of Charles Tompson and Jane Armytage (nee Morris) marrying William Jonathon Johnson. I'd solved it!

My findings were sent off to the Leader a couple of months later and it was inserted under the heading "Mystery of Como Tombstone Known" BUT, wait till the next Bulletin to find out how I fell on my face, and the stories and twists this riddle took me into!

BELL BIRDS - HENRY KENDALL AND WOOLLI CREEK

Did you know Henry Kendall had an affinity for Woilli Creek? Bell Birds was probably his most well known and loved poem but in December 1864 The Sydney Morning Herald published one of his works named hereunder:

WOOLLI CREEK

One I see with thirsty lips,
[Passion filling in his eyes]
Sitting where the Woilli slips
Darkling slips, and falls and flies.

Let me say it! Love hath crowned
Him with what we envy so,
And he wears the flush renowned -
Ah, "the days of Long Ago!"

Ah, "the days" - the old, old theme
Never stale, but never new,
Coming like a pleasant dream,
Back to me and back to you.

Friend, beyond the happy sea,
Waiting on from year to year -
Faithful face at watch for me,
Selfish sorrows draw you near.

Since we loitered on these rocks
Alien clouds have gathered down,
Winter sleets and thunder shocks,
Winds that beat and rains that drown.

Faith is faint, because of Truth;
Truth shines dead, because of Faith;
Youth is strong, yet even Youth,
Strong in Life, is scared for Death.

But believe me, still mine eyes
Often fill with all that springs
From the deep delight that lies
Ever at the root of things.

Though some hasty impulse led
Thought to thought awhile ago,
And I link'd the chain, and said,
"Rivers form and rivers flow -

"Rivers rise and rivers fall;
Sweetness smothered in the sea
When the wave comes over all
What is left for you and me?"

"What is left?" I said to him
Wearing what we envy so,
[I that leapt to Passion's hymn
Thirty golden years ago!]

"Oh, the lips that never give
Half their wealth of honey forth;
Oh, the lights that laugh, and live
East and West, and South and North!

Ah, the darkness here and there
Blotting out each happy scheme!
Ah, the revelations fair
Passing, like a broken dream!

"That is what I used to feel,
This is what I since have found:
Shine and shadow on a wheel
Turning round and round and round.

Therefore be not over glad
For the flush which shows and goes:
Therefore be not over sad,
Waiting for a dubious close.'

So I spake, and so I sinned -
While the soft unconscious wind
Blew the sorrows from my cheek.

Let him go, and let him trust;
Life is short and Love is sweet! -
Woilli, sick of drift and dust.
Here I turn to rest my feet.

Woilli, loud and lonely gales,
Dearer for its ghostly glade
Than the sleepy Grecian vales,

Or the slopes of Syrian shade.

Down amongst the whistling flags,
Ho! the torrent twists and swims,
Slipping under shining crags,
Sliding over shallowy rims!

Skirting shadows deep as Death,
Wailing oak and turpentine,
Down it flows, and flies beneath
Rusted rock and rifted chine -

Rusted rack and splintered cleft,
Rough with broom and red with
fern;
Haunt of snake and home of eft;
Hills that bake and sands that
burn.

So the river takes its stares -
River still, and deep, and grave,
Sailing slow by sodden shores;
Face far aye towards the wane.

Where the ships go warping free,
And the flaming headlands run
South and East, to meet the Sea,
East and South to meet the sun!

Why should I love Woilli so?
Faithful watcher far away,
Ask the winds that come and go
What hath brought me here
to-day.

Evermore of you I think
when the leaf begins to fall,
Where our Woilli breaks his brink
And the dark comes over all!

Evermore, on stormy lands,
Friends of mine beyond the Sea,

Memory wrings her wasted hands,
Turns to you, and sings for me.

You may well wonder how Henry Kendall came to write of Woolli (now Wolli) Creek but the family had moved from Newtown to Cook's River when Henry's young unmarried sister Jane had been engaged as a pianoforte teacher by Caroline Chisholm at Newtown 1862 and moved with her to this lady's new school called Green Bank. Green Bank was the name given this school by Caroline Chisholm when she opened it in 1864 in the area of the St. George district.

Green Bank had been named prior to and after the school closed a few years later as "Tempe" and which today we know as Tempe House.

Henry did not marry Charlotte Rutter until 1868 so he would have spent a great deal of time with his mother and sisters in the Cook's River area for he appears to have carried responsibility and provision for them, though at times this provision was indeed sparse for he had accrued small debts and drink had taken a hold on him at this time.

His works have provided a great deal of descriptive poetry for our souls and though the following poem is critical of those who should have known better it is a tribute to Caroline Chisholm who he evidently admired much for the compassion and benevolence she bestowed to those in need, for *The Empire* published this poem, written by Henry Kendall, 14th October, 1862:

CAROLINE CHISHOLM

"A perfect woman, nobly planned,
"To warn, to comfort, and command:"

The priests and the Levites went forth to feast at the courts of the kings;
They were vain of their greatness and worth, and gladdened with glittering things;
They were fair in the favour of gold, and they walked on, with delicate feet.
Where, famished and faint with the cold, the women fell down in the street.

The priests and the Levites looked round, all vexed and perplexed at the cries
Of the maiden who crouched to the ground, with the madness of want in her eyes.
And they muttered - "Few praises are earned when good hath been wrought in the dark:
While the backs of the people are turned, we choose not to loiter nor hark"

Moreover, they said - "It is fair that our deeds in the daylight should shine,
If we feasted you, who would declare that we gave you our honey and wine?"
They gathered up garments of gold, and they stepped with their delicate feet,
From the women who, famished with cold, were left with the snow in the street.

The winds and the rains were abroad - the homeless looked vainly for alms;
And they prayed in the dark to the Lord, with agony drenched in their palms.
"There is none of us left that is whole," they cried through their faltering breath;
"We are clothed with a sickness of soul, and the shape of the shadow of death."

He heard them and turned to the earth! - "I am pained" said the Lord, "at the woe
Of my children so smitten with dearth; but the night of their trouble shall go."

He called on his Chosen to come: she listened, and hastened to rise;
And He charged her to build them a home, where the tears should be dried from their eyes.

God's servant came forth from the South: she told of a plentiful land;
And wisdom was set in her mouth, and strength in the thaws of her hand.
She lifted them out of their fear, and they thought her their Moses, and said:
"We shall follow you, sister, from here to the country of sunshine and bread:"

She fed them, and led them away, through tempest and tropical heat.
Till they reached the far regions of day, and sweet-scented spaces of wheat!
She hath made them a home with her hand, and they bloom like the summery vines;
For they eat of the fat of the land, and drink of its glittering wines.

Sources: * *Ackland Michael "Henry Kendall" pub. 1995 Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria.*
* *The Empire 14.10.1862*
* *The Sydney Morning Herald 19.12.1864*

Supplied by Mrs Bettye Ross

CAPTAIN COOKS LANDING

On Monday 29th April I went along with friend Peter to Kurnell for the 232nd Anniversary of Captain Cook's landing there. We were to meet Bettye Ross along the way, but owing to train troubles we missed each other.

On arrival I notified the Organisers I was representing the St. George Historical Society and thanked them for their invitation. After the ceremony we all enjoyed a delicious morning tea that had been specially prepared for us.

After the refreshments a young Aboriginal man who had played the didgeridoo at the ceremony gave some of us a demonstration down on the beach. It was such a good day weather-wise - the lawns had been mown and were so green, we strolled along after with others looking at the various interesting memorials and monuments, and a very pleasant morning was enjoyed by all.

PARAMATTA BUS TRIP

On Monday 26th May we met at Hurstville Station and we proceeded by bus through Rosehill where we met our guide Judith Dunn who took us on a most interesting tour around the Parramatta area. Firstly we stopped at the Lake for morning, then taken to view many historical buildings. On learning the sad history behind most of them we were so grateful that we were not living in those days. The conditions the convicts lived under, particularly the women in the Female Factory were heartbreaking when we were told of their plight.

We saw many building built in beautiful sandstone which we appreciated in being able to see them now as they are steeped in history, as in some cases we were informed that Developers have their eyes on them for future development.

Later we stopped at Rosehill Bowling Club and enjoyed a very nice meal. It was a warm sunny day that made it more pleasurable, and we appreciated having such an acknowledgeable guide as Judith Dunn from the Parramatta Historical Society.

Source: *BETTY WILLIAMS* *St. George Historical Society Inc. Member.*

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

✕

Membership dues for the period from July 1st, 2002 to June 31st, 2003

PLEASE PRINT IN CAPITALS

Name: _____

Address: _____

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

Annual Individual Membership \$ 8.00

Annual Household Membership \$ 11.00

TOTAL: \$ _____

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

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.

Members are reminded that our financial year commences July 1st 2002