

St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

MARCH - MAY EDITION



Heritage

Week

2005

PRESIDENT	Mr. Bernard Sharah	(02) 9567 – 8989
SECRETARY	Mrs. Valda Beehag	(02) 9546 - 2819
TREASURER	Mr. Wesley Fairhall	(02) 9546 - 5555
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT	Mrs. Bettye Ross	
VICE PRESIDENT	Mr. Alf Edwards	(02) 9521 - 4459
RESEARCH OFFICERS	Mrs. Bettye Ross	
	Mrs. Betty Williams	(02) 9868 - 1989
	Mrs. Norrene Burns	(02) 9546 – 1165
SOCIAL SECRETARY	Mrs. Joan Fairhall	(02) 9546 – 5555
PUBLICITY OFFICER	Mr. Bernard Sharah	(02) 9567 – 8989
BULLETIN EDITOR	The Henke Family	(02) 9587 – 8307
	Mrs. Gloria Henke	(02) 9587 – 8307
	Mrs. Joan Rankin	(02) 9567 - 8641
LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE	Mr. Bernard Sharah	(02) 9567 – 8989
PUBLIC OFFICER	Mr. Robert McGarn	(02) 9588 – 1097
REFRESHMENTS OFFICER	Mr. Allan Stahl	(02) 9556 – 2805
AUDITOR	Mrs. L. Thompson	

Meetings are held 2:00 PM the third Saturday 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.



VALE



It is with deep regret that we have to inform you of the passing of Mrs. Betty Williams, a long standing member of our society. Betty passed away on Thursday, April 28th, 2005 after a long illness. Her funeral service was at Chatswood Baptist Church on Friday, May 6th, 2005. Our thoughts and sympathy go to her family and friends.

MARCH – MAY EVENTS AGENDA

April 10 – 17 HERITAGE WEEK

On Sunday, April 17th, 2005 we had a beautiful day weatherwise for this occasion. Our president Bernard Sharah met a group of 11 people at Banksia Station and proceeded on a walk around Banksia to view the historic homes of the area. The walk ended at Lydham Hall where they had afternoon tea.

I would like to thank the members who helped at Lydham Hall for Afternoon Tea, especially Mr. and Mrs. G. Rankin for driving to Sutherland for our cakes.

The proceeds of the walk and afternoon tea will be donated to St. George Historical Society Inc. The amount being \$150.

Gloria Henke.

May 21st Historical Society Meeting

At this meeting **Peter Sage** will be coming to give us a talk and slideshow on “*NSW Railways – The First 50 Years*” in this, the Sesquicentenary Year of the NSW Railways, we’ll look at their development through their first 50 years – 1855 to 1905. We’ll study the network, infrastructure, locomotives and rolling stock during those formative years.



SKERRICKS



- * Please remember we have a roster for Lydham Hall on Sunday Afternoons between 2pm & 4pm. Help is always needed for Lydham Hall to have members participate at these times. Please contact Mr. Bernard Sarah on (02) 9567-8989.
- * Again we would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. G. Rankin for their donation of a microwave oven for Lydham Hall.
The Griller Oven we had on the premises was no longer safe to use and has been disposed of.
- * On Saturday, 23rd April, 2005 we had a Naming Day at Lydham Hall for Anisha Georgia Sully, again we had beautiful weather and a really nice gathering of people. The day went extremely well and Anisha's mother Mrs. Sully has now booked Lydham Hall for Anisha's first birthday on the 30th July, 2005.
I would like to thank those members who helped on this occasion.
- * Our Many thanks go to Rockdale City Council Depot for the repair of the wall in the dining room at Lydham Hall. They did a marvellous job.
The Depot have also constructed 2 ramps at the rear entrance on Lydham Hall for the use of visitors in wheelchairs and with walking frames.
We recently had a group of aged people with carers visit Lydham Hall and the ramps were most successful.

ROCKDALE COUNCIL

BURROWS, John Banks

1931-1941

Company Secretary

Represented the Arncliffe Ward from 1931 until his death in September 1941. Mayor of Rockdale 1939-1940. Deputy Mayor 1937-1939. President, Arncliffe Progress Association. Patron, Arncliffe Sub-Branch Member, Arncliffe Bowling Club. President, Rockdale Patriotic Fund during World War II. Member of the Executive of the Local Government Association. Was responsible for the removal of the Tram Tracks and the reconstruction of Wollongong Road and the linking of Bardwell Park and Earlwood by road (Hartill-Law Avenue). Sponsored the First Immunization Clinic's against diphtheria. Keen to promote the Tourist Potential of the District. Was continually absent through illness during 1940 and 1941 and could not preside at the Opening of the new Town Hall in 1940. Burrows Street, Arncliffe is named after him. Lived in Athelstane Avenue, Arncliffe.

Source: They Also Served. Written by R. W. Rathbone O.A.M.

The article on the next page was written by this gentleman's son also named John Banks Burrows as part of an autobiography for his daughter.

JOHN AND MATILDA

It was in October 1918 that John Banks Burrows married Matilda Irene Handel at the Church of England church in Erskineville, Sydney.

John was born in Workingtown Town, England on September 18th 1895 and migrated to Sydney with his three brothers.

In 1912, he took up residence in Erskineville and worked and studied accountancy in his younger years.

John was the secretary of the waterfront engineering firm of Nicol Bros. In Sussex Street, Sydney. James was the head carpet layer / curtain salesman of Grace Bros, Sydney. Thomas was the store manager of Fosseys and moved to many of their country stores in that capacity. Frank followed in Tom's footsteps and also became one of Fosseys store managers but stayed mainly on the South Coast and in particular the Wollongong Area.

All four of the brothers were fortunate to hold down jobs right through the depression years. Frank, Thomas and James were keen bikers (not bikies as we have come to know some of these fellows) and Frank later owned and trained greyhounds, hence his reluctance to leave the Wollongong / Dapto area which were and still are strong greyhound areas.

Matilda was born at Erskineville Sydney on July 6th 1889, one of ten Handel children, six girls and four boys. We still smile at all of the abbreviated names of the girls all whom were to us prefixed by Aunty... Annie, Suzie, Fanny, Aggie, Minnie and Tillie (that's Mum). The boys were David, Harry, Richard and Alfred. It seemed fairly obvious that the mother of this brood did not have the time to go to work as many modern day mothers do.

However Mum was a milliner before she married and worked in an industry that was very popular as most ladies of that era wore hats to almost every function that they attended. Keep in mind so did the gentlemen of that time.

Mum had a very good soprano voice and was a member of the church choir at Erskineville. When Dad settled in Erskineville he joined the church and it was not long before he also became a member of the same choir. I guess it was fate that they met and even though Mum later said that he had a terrible singing voice he certainly must have impressed her in other ways.

When they married in the Anglican Church in Newtown in October 1918 she was 29 and he 23 and so commenced the Burrows Dynasty. The newlyweds spent a short time in Erskineville before moving further south to Ramsgate.

Once in their own home in Rocky Point Road it was just 14 months when their first born arrived - Ruth Wilkinson was born at Ramsgate Private Hospital on Christmas Eve 24th December 1919.

The actual year that the family of three moved from Ramsgate to Arncliffe is a little obscure however they took up residence at "Clifton" 12 Athelstane Avenue where the family increased from three to five.

John Banks junior (the writer) was born on 21st October 1924 followed by Joan Bourne on 23rd March 1929. Just as a matter of interest all three second names were family names which with the passage of time has now become a little unfashionable. I came into the world at Nurse Robinson's Private Hospital in Fairview Street Arncliffe.

It was to be another four and a half years before Joan arrived in Rosslyn Private Hospital, Forest Road Arncliffe - the family was now complete, Mum, Dad, two girls and one boy...

As we grew older the folks decided that an extra bedroom was needed so another room was added at the back of the house which became mine with the two girls in one front bedroom and Mum and Dad in the other. The rest of the house consisted of a very comfortable lounge room, dining room, kitchen / breakfast room, hall, and large back verandah. The toilet and laundry were at the bottom of the four steps off the verandah.

Dad was a bird fancier and built a very large "walk in" aviary in the back yard. Also kept poultry in another section so we had our own egg supply. There were apple and apricot trees with beautiful fruit in season. I remember it well because of my friends regular attendance to play in our yard whenever it was time for the fruit to be ripe, hence I suspect this was a major reason that our yard was so popular.

Thoughts of the street families do come back when I hear the youngsters of today complaining that they have nothing to do because the authorities don't build things for them to occupy their leisure time. Well as I remember it that was never mentioned or expected in my earlier days.

We played cricket on the tarred road with garbage tins as wickets - had to suspend play if traffic came along but remember there was not the traffic we have today. Our street had palm trees between the tar and footpath in front of every house. These palms had vicious spikes at the base of the trunk and during one of our games I ran into a palm and came out with a spike broken off in the calf of my leg. Many months later it worked its way out of the other side of my leg. It had been long forgotten and was quite a shock when the point of the spike was identified. Our doctor took it out much to everyone's amazement.

Another of our self made activities was billy cart races in carts made by ourselves or our dads. These were held in Fairview Street, just one street away and quite a decent hill. There was a cross street at the bottom of the hill and one of the boys with a red flag was stationed there to warn the racers if any traffic was coming as they neared the intersection. If the red flag was used it was the drivers job to run off the road into the gutter where generally the result was some gravel rash to the arms or legs or both and a cart that needed repairs.

Most of us were avid St. George District Rugby League Football Club supporters when their home ground was Earl Park at Arncliffe. As this was after the depression years and money was still in short supply we used to lever palings of the ground fence and crawl through the space to get into the ground without paying. At that time the players from all of the district clubs had to be residentially qualified. As there were always and means to get around these rules as there still is the present salary cap we saw one of the committee men (a former player and at this time a well known radio commentator Tiger Black) had any number of players up to six or seven players sleeping at his house at the bottom of our street for three nights a week to make them residentially qualified. These were the days of those well known players such as the Lindwall brothers, Brian Clay, Ken Kearney, Doug McRitchie and many other well known at club and international level.

Some time later Earl Park was sold and became an industrial area hence the football club had to find a new ground. They moved to Prince Edward Park located on the Princes Highway at Kogarah / Carlton but after some years changed again this time to Hurstville Oval. Change was soon to happen again and they eventually finished up at Jubilee Oval not far from the Prince Edward Park site of previous years, and which is now the site of the very successful St. George Leagues Club and practically opposite their home ground. There is

one more difference now - the St. George club has now amalgamated with the South Coast Club to become St. George / Illawarra Dragons. The tradition continues but they now share two home grounds. Jubilee Oval and W.I.N. Stadium at Wollongong. I suppose with a background like this it is only natural that I am still a one eyed Saints supporter.

The family's schooling became an important project for Mum and Dad and my sisters and I all attended Bexley Public School. There was no co-education schooling there at that time and the Girls and Boys schools were on opposite sides of the Forest Road near Bexley township.

Ruth went to Bexley Girls Public and then to secondary education at Sutherland Intermediate High. After finishing her Intermediate Certificate she attended Stotts Business College in the City after losing a lot of time due to the Scarlet Fever epidemic at that time. On completion of her college course she started work in the office of the R.S.P.C.A animal shelter. Her next and final employment move was to the office of the Mercantile Mutual Insurance Co. now ING Insurance where she stayed until she married Alexander Bankier. Alex was at that time in the Ordnance Section of the Australian Military Forces. He passed away in 1994.

Young sister Joan also went to Bexley Girls Public and then continued her secondary education at Bexley Domestic Science School. On finishing school she went into the costing department and later selling at Farmers Department Store in Sydney. Her next move was to Fassett and Johnson Pharmaceutical Co. where she worked in Importing and Distributing as well as Stock Records Departments. Her last move was in a similar position in Stock Records at the Betta Shoe Co. in Sydney.

She married Stanley Kimpton on 10th July 1948 at St. Davids Anglican Church in Arncliffe. Stan was at that time an instrument fitter at Qantas Airlines and on retirement was an instrument supervisor still with Qantas. Stan and Joan are still in happy retirement.

Ruth and Alex had three children, Steven, Jan and Andrew and Joan and Stan produced three also Yvonne, Jennifer and Lynette.

John (yours truly) went to Bexley Boys Public and then on to Kogarah Intermediate High School to complete my schooling before starting an apprenticeship as an electrical fitter with Coupland and Waddell Pty. Ltd. in Day Street, Sydney. I well remember my best schoolmates were Doug McRitchie and Stan Root who both later played Rugby League for St. George and Australia after a very successful school football career.

To go to Primary School we mostly traveled by motor bus from the end of our street or walked depending on the weather. The buses took the place of the steam tram, a fair while before, but strangely I do remember the steam tram although I can't remember ever traveling in it. I do remember that the tram lines were still in the road for quite a number of years and they were hell for push bike riders of which I was one. They produced a lot of gravel rashes to a lot of kids.

Dad served on the Rockdale Council as an Alderman representing the Arncliffe Ward from 1931, then as Deputy Mayor 1937 to 1939 and Mayor 1939 until he passed away after a massive heart attack in 1941. He could not preside over the official opening of the new Rockdale Town Hall in 1940 although he attended with his doctor and was sitting in the front row. He was responsible for the removal of the aforementioned tram tracks from Arncliffe to Bexley, was President of the Arncliffe Progress Association, Patron of the Arncliffe RSL. President of the Rockdale Patriotic Fund during WW2 and a member of the executive of the

