

St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL
OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2006 EDITION



Merry Christmas

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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.

OCTOBER - DECEMBER EVENTS AGENDA

Dec 16th

Christmas Luncheon for the St. George Historical Society

The Christmas Luncheon for the St. George Historical Society will be held at the St. George Rowing Club , 1 Levy Street, Wollie Creek, NSW.

Their Phone Number is (02) 9567 - 1489.

A table has been booked for the Society at 12.00 PM and they have an extensive menu from which you may make your selection at your expense.

Hoping to see many of you there as this is our final get-together for 2006.

For any further information contact Bernard Sharah on (02) 9567 – 8989



We send our many thoughts and best wishes to Joan and Geoff Rankin, during this most trying time for them. We are glad to hear that Geoff is making a slow but sure recovery.



Our warmest regards and best wishes to Ron Rathbone who has taken up residency at Rockdale Nursing Home in Woodford Road, Banksia. Ron can now be contacted on (02) 9567 - 5953.



MANY THANKS



Upon the death of our Mother, Mother-in-law and Grandmother, Dorothy Hooper the many expressions of sympathy conveyed to us, have been of great comfort during our time of sorrow.

We deeply appreciate your thoughtfulness and thank you most sincerely.

We would also like to thank you for the many cards, flowers and well wishes received during the time of Heinz & Gloria recent illness.

Gloria, Heinz & Richard Henke.

OUR YEAR 2006

- February 19th 35th Anniversary of the Opening of Lydham Hall
A plaque was placed in the main entrance hallway now known as "The Rathbone Hall".
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- THE RATHBONE HALL**
In recognition of the invaluable contribution given by
Mr. R. W. RATHBONE. O. A. M.
to Lydham Hall and St. George Historical Society.
February 19th, 2006
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- March 12th Volunteers Service and Morning Tea at Bexley Uniting Church.
- March 19th Bernard Sarah conducted a History Walk in Arncliffe for the National Trust ending at St. Xavier's Catholic Church for after-noon tea.
- April 30th At Lydham Hall we held the launch of "Comeos of Bexley" Mr. R. W. Rathbone's latest book. We also had a display for "The Proclamation of St. George" as it was 171 years since it was first proclaimed.
- May 11th Lydham Hall was visited by 31 children from St. Gabriel's School Bexley.
- May 20th Rockdale City Cultural Festival was held in Firth Street, Arncliffe. The bookstall that we set up at this event was very successful.
- June 1st Bexley Public School on a tour of Lydham Hall. 61 children attended.
- June 3rd The Inaugural "Ron Rathbone Literary Award" was held at Lydham Hall it was very well attended. A very nice afternoon tea was served. The Council went to a great deal of trouble in setting up a large marquee with heaters as it was a very windy day. Mr. Rathbone was very pleased with the quality of the entries and the way it was presented by the Council.
- June 8th Kingsgrove Public School attended Lydham Hall. There were two classes in the morning then another two classes in the afternoon. There were 87 children in total.
- June 16th Penrith Red Cross toured Lydham Hall 48 people.
- June 25th Rockdale History walk conducted by Bernard Sarah ending at the Rockdale Uniting Church where refreshments were served. It was cold windy day, but all enjoyed the tour.
- June 26th Lydham Hall had a group of visitors from China, three in all, Mr. John Logue & Mrs. Heather Davis were also present. Afternoon tea was served by Gloria & Heinz Henke.
- July 9th Lydham Hall celebrated "Christina Stead's Birthday" with a display of local Writers with a listing of their works.
- July 20th Penrith Women's Auxiliary visited Lydham Hall 17 people.
- July 22nd St. Andrew's Uniting Church attended Lydham Hall after a History walk of Bexley and had afternoon tea with us.
- July 24th The "Out and About" group consisting of 35 persons were served morning tea upon arrival at Lydham Hall after being taken on a tour of the Hall we then went on a History drive around Carlton, Bexley, Banksia & Arncliffe.
- August 4th South Haven Nursing Home toured Lydham Hall. Ten people were in attendance.
- August 11th Another group from South Haven Nursing Home toured Lydham Hall and had morning tea. Another Ten people were in attendance.
- August 19th "Bexley Spring Fair." A book stall was set up at this event.
- September 10th A most interesting display of coins at Lydham Hall.
- November 15th St. Declan's Catholic School visited Lydham Hall. 61 children and teachers.

We, the Editors would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year. God Bless you all.

Gloria, Heinz and Richard Henke.

A FRIEND IN HIGH PLACES

One day in 1968 I received a frantic telephone call from the Town Clerk of Rockdale informing me that the following afternoon Rt. Hon. Edward Heath M.B.E. M.P., Member for Bexley in the House of Commons and Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition would be visiting Bexley N.S.W. and could I possibly act as his guide while he was here.

That night I went through my collection of coloured slides and put twenty of them into an album so that I had something to give him as a memento of his visit.

The next afternoon I was picked up in his chauffeur driven Rolls Royce complete with police escort and, seated beside his driver, took him to see Bexley Park, the Bexley Golf Course, St. Gabriel's Catholic Church, tree lined Salisbury Avenue, Victoria House, the Lucy Gullett Complex and Dunmore Street while he sat and chatted happily with the then Mayor of Rockdale, Alderman Ronald Thornycroft Gosling, in the seat behind me.

When we returned to the Town Hall for afternoon tea I made my presentation and he, in turn, presented the Mayor with a framed acquaint of the oldest known portrayal of a cricket match painted at Hall Place Bexley and one of only three similar acquaints in existence. Apart from the one he had brought with him, one is in the Committee Room of the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lords and he had the other. As far as I am aware, the Rockdale one still hangs on the wall in the Mayor's Office.

In 1973 I visited England and, anxious to off load a number of books, publications and presentation matter that I had been asked to deliver to the Mayor of the London Borough of Bexley, I rang the Mayor's secretary to see when it would be convenient to meet with her and give her the items in question.

In the course of our conversation she asked me if I would also like to meet Bexley's M.P.. By then Edward Heath was Prime Minister and half way through a tumultuous term that lasted from 1970 to 1974.

When I expressed some wonderment that he would have time to speak with a lowly colonial official visiting England on a holiday, I was assured Mr. Heath would be happy to see me once again.

Some days later I arrived at the Victoria Tower entrance to the House of Commons, was shown to a seat in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery and, after Question Time, was taken by his formidable secretary, Miss Rosemary Bush, to his private rooms overlooking the River Thames. I spent forty minutes with Edward Heath that afternoon during which time he told me how much he had enjoyed his period in Australia and how he hoped to make a return visit at some future date.

That time came in 1983, long after he ceased to be Prime Minister when, as an acknowledged celebrity among the world's yachting fraternity, he was invited to Australia to open the International Boat Show. He had raced his yacht "*Morning Cloud*" in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race earlier that year.

Again, I was contacted by the person organizing his itinerary and asked if it would be possible for him to have his photograph taken in front of something that had Bexley on it. As the E had fallen out of the name Bexley on the School and the Bexley on the Post Office was so small you could hardly read it, they were out of contention as was the Bexley R.S.L. Club building because the front was covered in scaffolding; so we settled on the sign at Bexley Park which I had repainted for the occasion.

The following Sunday morning, resplendent in my Mayoral Chain and accompanied by 87 year old Cecil Robert Beverley who had lived in Bexley all his life, we waited anxiously for Edward Heath to arrive. When asked by Heath if he had lived in the Borough a long time Mr. Beverley regaled us with the story of how, many years earlier, just across the road from

where we were standing, he had helped the sanitary carter unload his load when his cart and horses had become bogged in the unsealed Stoney Creek Road.

Each year thereafter I received a Christmas Card from Edward Heath usually with a photograph of "*Morning Cloud*" on it and a very friendly response when I wrote to congratulate him after he was knighted and made a Member of the Order of the Garter.

Edward Heath was not widely liked by the people of Great Britain but I found him a warm and very approachable individual. He continued to represent the seat of Bexley until May 2001 - a period of 51 years - when he was made an Honorary Member of the House of Commons having resisted all attempts to raise him to a peerage with a seat in the House of Lords. He died aged 89 in 2005.

RON RATHBONE

SUMNER LOCKE ELLIOTT

Whilst we have gone to some pains in recent times to acknowledge the literary genius of Christina Stead, her associations with Lydham Hall and the Bexley Primary School which she attended we have completely ignored one of her contemporaries who enjoyed even greater recognition and success on the international stage.

Sumner Locke Elliott was born into a dysfunctional and warring family in October 1917 and was raised by a series of aunts. His mother died three days after he was born and his alcoholic father left immediately for Victoria never to return. Elliott senior abandoned his son to his Aunt Lily and Uncle George in Canton and from the age of five he became the centre of a custody battle between them and his fearsome Aunt Jessie who lived at Vacluse. This left his childhood scarred and confused. He attended Bexley Public School between 1923 and 1928 before going on to Cranbrook where he was a boarder and Neutral Bay High.

After a brief career in journalism and as a radio actor he first came to notice in 1948 with his controversial play "*Rusty Bugles*". This play, set in the war time ordnance camp of Mataranka in the Northern Territory, dealt with the frustrations of men sidelined from active service and included in the text such swear words as "*bastard*" and "*bloody*". As a result, the play was declared obscene and banned from performance by the Chief Secretary in New South Wales. The literary world was scandalised.

His theatre career began in 1934 under the patronage of the formidable Doris Fitton but it was in writing rather than acting that he found his calling and he had already written 24 one act plays before "*Rusty Bugles*".

The same year he left Australia for the United States and settled in New York where, over the next fifteen years, he became the author of more than 50 T.V. plays which enjoyed enormous popularity on the American networks.

Apart from his plays, Sumner Locke Elliott wrote a number of novels the best known of which was "*Careful He Might Hear You*" an autobiographical account of his childhood set against a background of his squabbling aunts.

In 1963, it won the prestigious Miles Franklin Literary Award sold more than ten million copies, was translated into seven languages and made into a successful film in 1983. In 1977 he had also won the Patrick White Award for his novel "*Water Under The Bridge*".

Although he ultimately became an American citizen he always regarded Australia as home.

Sumner Locke Elliott died in New York in 1991 at the age of 73 after a two year battle with cancer.

RON RATHBONE

AN INTERESTING CONNECTION

Most St. George residents know that Tempe House, home of Colonial entrepreneur, Alexander Brodie Spark and the oldest building standing south of Cooks River, was designed by the early Australian architect, John Verge, but what do we know about John Verge.

John Verge was born in 1782 in Hampshire, England and trained as an architect and builder. He married twice but ill health caused him to retire to a country estate where he lived the life of a gentleman farmer.

In 1828, accompanied by his son, a shepherd and a flock of Hampshire sheep he decided to migrate to Australia and in January 1829 received a land grant near Dungog in the Hunter Valley. Over the next few years he added to this grant with purchases on the Macleay River and at Kempsey.

Verge's second wife did not accompany him when he migrated to Australia preferring to remain in the relative comfort of his English estate but when she died in 1858, Verge married a third time.

He appears to have prospered as a farmer but in the early 1830's when the New South Wales economy was undergoing a period of unprecedented expansion; he re-activated his earlier profession as an architect at the invitation of Governor Darling and in the decade which followed designed some of the most significant domestic buildings to be constructed in the Colony.

Among the most important of these were Denham Court at Ingleburn (1833), Subiaco at Rydalmere (demolished 1961), Rockwall at Potts Point, Elizabeth Bay House for Colonial Secretary Alexander Macleay, Tusculum at Potts Point for Alexander Brodie Spark, Toxteth Park at Glebe for solicitor George Allen and Lyndhurst, also in Glebe.

His masterpiece was and is Camden Park which he designed for John Macarthur in 1831 and supervised the building of three years later.

Verge was also responsible for additions to St. James Church King Street, the Sydney Grammar School and the Kings School at Parramatta.

His work on Tempe House House dates from January 1834 when he was commissioned by Alexander Brodie Spark to design a palladian villa as a country residence and a place to entertain his many business associates. Spark had acquired the land on the southern bank of Cooks River from furniture maker William James Packer in August 1826. Because of the pressure under which Verge was working it was April 1836 before construction of the house began. So pleased was Spark with the result that he leased his city residence, Tusculum, as the Official Seat of the Bishop of Sydney and made Tempe his principal residence.

Verge returned to his farming activities in 1841 shortly before the 1843 Depression and died at Austral Eden on 9 July 1861 at the age of 79. He is buried at St. Thomas's Burial Ground Port Macquarie.

Apart from Tempe House John Verge had one other connection with the St. George District. His great great grandson, Will Verge, a bank manager, lived for many years in Harrow Road Bexley opposite the St. George Bowling Club.

RON RATHBONE

**BEXLEY UNITING CHURCH
ITS STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS
by James N Pendlebury**

The charm and beauty of Bexley Uniting Church are greatly enhanced by its stained-glass windows, of which there are thirteen, to which may be added a stained glass Hymn Board. Their installation spanned 73 years. The two outside windows of the set of three at the front of the church were installed at the time of building in 1925/26 and the final two in the eastern wall, in 1999. The beauty of the windows also lies in the message they portray visually and textually. Historically, stained-glass windows were a Christian teaching medium, when few people could read.

Most windows were given by family and friends in memory of a loved one, usually someone who served the Bexley Church faithfully and well. However, each one has its own unique story, which is briefly outlined below.

A casual glance at the names of the Stained Glass Artists reveals that the Handel family is strongly represented, first by Alfred and later by his son, Philip. The three windows and Hymn Board installed in the 1960s were crafted by Martin Van de Toorn. Alfred Handel was the artist who created the two beautiful stained glass windows, "The Last Supper" and "A Living Christ for a Dying World", first installed in the original Wesley Chapel in Castlereagh Street and then relocated into Wesley Church in Wesley Mission, 220 Pitt Street Sydney on the demolition of the old Vickery building and the construction of the new Wesley Centre. The "Last Supper" was the first stained glass window in Sydney to be 'backlit' by incandescent lights rather than by natural light and both windows are 'backlit' in Wesley Church by fluorescent tubes. These windows may be inspected at most times during the week and refreshments may be enjoyed at the Restaurant in Wesley Centre.

**The Set Of Three Widows Facing Gladstone St
(These are illuminated at night)**

1926	"The Sower" (Matthew 13:3)	Stained Glass Artist : Alfred C Handel
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Given by Mrs Emma Martin in memory of her husband, Rev George Martin, who died in 1905, having ministered in the Rockdale Circuit during 1874 -76. George Martin served as the Editor of "The Methodist" for several years. Following his death Emma Martin was an active worshipper at Bexley until her death in 1929. Emma Martin, her sister, Mrs Mary Neale and their brother, Mr J Conley, whose home was "Fairmont" in Dunmore Street N. (now a Nursing Home), all played the organ for Services over a period of time.

1926	"The Light of the World" (John 8:12)	Stained Glass Artist : Alfred C Handel
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Given by Mrs Anne Napper and Family in memory of Mr James Napper who died in 1919. He was a lay preacher, a Trustee and an inaugural Circuit Steward of the Arncliffe-Bexley Circuit. The name Napper is a very honoured one in the Rockdale and Arncliffe-Bexley Circuits, in which this family made a significant contribution, over many years, through many of its members, both men and women. James Napper founded Napper's Produce Store and later his several sons operated similar stores in the district.

1931	"She hath been a Succourer of Many (Phoebe) (Romans 16:2)	Stained Glass Artist : Alfred C Handel
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Given by her sister, Mrs Mary Neale and by N Stephinson and E&H Butcher in memory of Mrs Emma Martin who died in 1929. Emma Martin was a very compassionate, caring person and hence the choice of the text upon which the window was based. Dorothy Butcher was the eldest daughter of Stan Fergusson whose sister, Violet, was Principal of Arncliffe Primary School in the 1930s and a faithful member of the Bexley Methodist/Uniting Church until her death in 1980.

The 1940s was a decade which kept Alfred Handel closely in touch with Bexley Methodist Church in the twilight of his career.

1941	"Love" (1 Corinthians 12: 4-7)	Stained Glass Artist : Alfred C Handel
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Given by Mrs AC Marshall in memory of her mother, Mrs Jane Larbalestier, a member of the Ladies Church Aid, who died in 1940. It speaks eloquently of her nature.

1943 "The Good Shepherd" (John 10:11) Stained Glass Artist : Alfred C Handel

Given by Rev GAS Woodhouse, Minister in the Arncliffe-Bexley Methodist Circuit, from 1931-35, in memory of William and Eva Hills who died in 1932 & 1943 respectively. William Hills was killed on the railway and it was his Minister, Rev Woodhouse, who was asked to identify the body. Eva Hills was a Chorister and Treasurer of the Choir, a Comrade and a member of the Ladies Church Aid. It appears that Rev Woodhouse had a warm affection for this couple since he donated the window 8 years after having left the Circuit.

1944 "Suffer the Little Children" (Mark 10:14) Stained Glass Artist : Alfred C Handel

Given by family and friends in memory of Mrs Ellen McKellow who died in 1941. She was a greatly loved and long serving Bible Glass teacher. The Sunday School placed on record its appreciation for Mrs McKellow "who, for about 27 years has been actively associated with our Sunday School. We can truly say that her zeal in the Master's service has been a great victory and her influence will remain with those associated with her. A life well run and a service well done." Several times each year she formed her Senior Girls Bible Class into a choir and took them to sing to the patients on the verandah of St George Hospital. Her daughter, Miss N McKellow was a gifted singer and a Choirmistress of the Bexley Church Choir.

1947 "Thy Will be Done" (Matthew 26: 42) Stained Glass Artist: Alfred C Handel

Given by Mr Ken Brent in memory of his father, Mr Thomas Brent, who died in 1922 and his brother, Mr Robert M Brent, who died in 1945. Thomas Brent was the first Superintendent of Bextey Sunday School and a long serving Property Steward and Church Steward. In 1962 Ken Brent added his mother's name, Ann Elizabeth Brent (d1961) at the foot of the window. Ann was a long serving Treasurer of the Ladies Church Aid. The alteration to the window was made by Philip Handel, Alfred Handel's son, who by this time had taken over his father's business.

1948 "My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord" (The Magnificat— Luke 1: 46)
Stained Glass Artist : Started by: Alfred C Handel Finished by: Philip Handel

Given by the family in memory of Mrs Mary Ann Napper, the wife of James Napper. Mary Napper died in 1944, having served the Church, particularly the Ladies Church Aid, faithfully and well. Sickness and death prevented Alfred Handel from completing this assignment and it was left to his 17 year old son, Philip, who was apprenticed to his father, to complete his first stained glass window.

Eight windows had been completed by the end of the 1940s, each being the artistic expression of Alfred C Handel. Only 5 windows remained and in 1950 Philip Handel was selected to design, make and install the ninth stained glass window.

1950 "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14: 6) Stained Glass Artist: Philip Handel

Given by Mrs AD Southwell and Family in memory of Mr Alfred D Southwell who died in 1946. Alfred Southwell, a retired Public School Principal, served the Bexley Church long and well, in retirement as a Local Preacher, Secretary of the Bexley Trust, Circuit Steward and Circuit Auditor.

Then, for a reason unknown to the author, the next 3 installations were created by Martin Van de Toorn.

1962 "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (Hymn Board) (Hymn by Cecil F Alexander, 1823 – 95)
Stained Glass Artist: Martin Van de Toorn

Given by Miss Margaret Dunsmore in memory of her father, Mr Walter Dunsmore, who died in 1960 and of her mother, Mrs Harriett Dunsmore, who died in 1953. Walter Dunsmore was a stalwart of the Bexley Church, serving as a Trustee for 37 years, Trust Steward for 18 years and a beloved Superintendent of the Sunday School for 22 years. Harriett Dunsmore was a Vice-President of and pianist for the Ladies Church Aid and a representative for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Margaret Dunsmore, until her move from Bexley in 1981, worshipped and served in Bexley Methodist/Uniting Church. Her training was in the legal profession, becoming a Solicitor. She was, in 1965, one of the two first women to become a member of the Methodist **Trust, a male dominated domain, serving as a Trustee/member of the Property committee until her move

from Bexley in 1981. During her final 4 years at Bexley she was the inaugural Secretary of the Bexley Uniting Church Congregation. She was a gentle, gifted and conscientious servant of God.

1965 "Let Everything that hath Breath Praise the Lord" (Psalm 150: 6)

Stained Glass Artist: Martin Van de Toorn

Given by Mrs Margaret Bow in memory of her father, Mr Allan W Elvery, who died in 1963. Allan Elverv was a generous Trustee of 'outstanding ability and tremendous devotion to his Church', the designer of the smaller 'gothic gates', the conductor of the Sunday School Choir for many years and, was himself, a fine baritone. The selection of 'The Boy David with Harp' for his memorial window was a most appropriate choice.

1966 "We Preach Christ: Paul" (1 Corinthians 1: 23)

Stained Glass Artist: Martin Van de Toorn

Given by Mrs Gladys Bassett in memory of her father, Mr Thomas Johnston who died in 1932, and her mother, Mrs Rose M Johnston, who died in 1957. Thomas Johnston, over a period of 13 years, was a Local Preacher, a Choir Member, a Circuit Steward and Secretary of the Bexley Trust when the new Church was built. The subject of the memorial window was a thoughtful choice. Rose Johnston was a conscientious worker for the Ladies Church Aid.

There followed a period of 33 years before the final 2 windows in the eastern wall joined the other 11 windows to complete the full set of 13 windows commenced 74 years earlier Technically the group of 3 'windows' is regarded as one window with 3 'lights'. So the final two 'lights' of the window were added to the centre 'light' which had been 'alone' for 51 years.

1999 "You are the Christ" (Peter) (Mark 8: 29)

Stained Glass Artist: Philip Handel

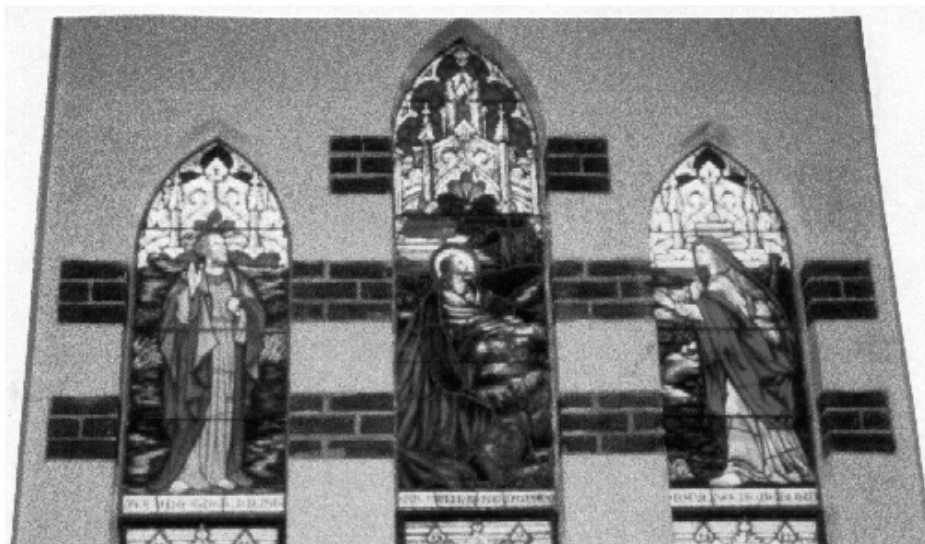
1999 "I have seen the Lord" (Mary Magdalene) (John 20: 18)

Stained Glass Artist: Philip Handel

In February 1999 the 2 'lights', a gift of Mrs Ethel Noble, were dedicated during a Service of Worship with 112 persons present, including the artist, the donor, her family and friends and former members, some of whom were family of the donors of and those honoured by other stained glass windows in the church. It was a time of great celebration. Rev Manas Ghosh's address was appropriately "Let the Light of Christ Shine through You". The subjects of the 2 lights, a male and a female, were specially chosen to complement the centre light, 'Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane' with Peter and Mary Magdalene both looking at Jesus.

Ethel Noble gave both windows in gratitude to her Lord Jesus Christ whom she worshipped and served joyfully within the Bexley congregation, having transferred her membership from Kincumber in 1985. Ethel greatly appreciated the warm affection of the members of the congregation and regarded them as dear friends.

Bexley Congregation is greatly blessed by a beautiful sanctuary in which to worship our God and our Lord Jesus Christ. May the windows continue to speak to us about the love of God and His gift of Jesus and of some of the faithful men and women, both in Biblical times and within the life of the congregation over the years.



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

I would like to thank all those who supported me this last year, my seventh term as President since I joined the Society sometime in the early 1990's, although the last two terms have not been in consecutive years but with a term or two between. I feel I was not quite ready to be President of St. George Historical Society Incorp this last year when I accepted nomination as I had just moved to Sutherland - my fourth move in three years. However after settling in I hope it's felt I did a reasonable job.

I have enjoyed most of our activities this last twelve months especially the 35th Celebration in February of Lydham Hall's opening to the Public as the Museum of St. George Historical Society after its purchase by Rockdale Council. There was a good turn up of Members and Visitors. The same applies, only in double or perhaps triple or even quadruple for the 171st Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Parish of St. George, County of Cumberland of 16th May 1835, held at Lydham Hall Sunday the 30th April.

On both the above occasions our Patron Ron Rathbone OAM was able to be present and it was great to see him and to hear the many anecdotes he shared with us. On the latter date his latest book 'Cameos of Bexley', which reached fruition with the help of his friend Jennifer Lee, was launched and the enthusiasm it was greeted with on the day by his many acquaintances, friends old and new, must have helped make this occasion one of pleasure for him. The Society has a huge Thank You to make to Ron for being present on both these occasions as his health is not all he deserves but he seemed to enjoy seeing many he'd not seen for some time and on this note it was also great to see some not seen by Members for some time too, especially Don Sinclair a long term Member who has also not been enjoying good health of late.

I would at this point like to wish our new President Bernard Sharah well, and to thank him for standing in with the speeches on the above occasions as I said to Bernard on both days "I don't do Speeches" and asked him to do the honours as he is much more at ease than I in these instances and his command of the Queen's English presents no problem for him.

Before farewelling you as Immediate Past President I have a further Thank You to make to Ron Rathbone in that he has passed his 'Cameos of Bexley' book to St. George Historical Society Incorp. and the Lydham Hall Committee at no cost and so sales of this book will enable the Society to publish, among other things, its up and coming:

Index to Articles of Historical Interest St. George Historical Society Bulletin April 1962 to June 2006

As soon as its Keyword list is finalised, in this 45th Anniversary year. This Index of Articles with Keywords listed will be a great asset to Librarians, Students, Family History researchers and Local Historians for the content of some of these Articles is extraordinary and the history therein produced by the many early Members of St George Historical Society and others in printed form will be more easily accessible.

Again I would also like to thank our Past Secretary Mrs. Val Beehag for the dedication and diligence with which she has filled this position held by her for the last sixteen years and wish her better health in the future.

Bettye Ross