

St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

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**THE YEAR OF MACQUARIE
Commissioned 1st January, 1810**

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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.

EVENTS AGENDA

July

CHRISTINA STEAD DAY (DATE TO BE DECIDED)

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm at Lydham Hall. 18 Lydham Avenue, Bexley, NSW 2207

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

Light refreshments provided.

For Enquiries please contact Gloria Henke on (02) 9587 - 8307



St George Historical Society would like to extend a warm welcome to its new member Mrs. Dorothy Kingston.



St George Historical Society can also pass on its congratulations to Mr Jeff Rankin who is now able to confidently drive his car again.

It has been a long battle for him and his family over the last three years and his recovery has been fantastic.

ARRANGED SPEAKERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS FOR 2010

- 20th February Beverley Earnshaw
"Princess Charlotte-Rebel of the Ribald Royals"
- 20th March: Colleen Morris
"Lost Gardens of the South"
- 17th April: Betty Goodger
"Lord Nelson – His Australian Connections"
- 15th May: (to be decided)
- 19th June: J Pelosi
" Rockdale Volunteer Fire Brigade"
Runner up in Ron Rathbone History Prize 2009
- 17th July : Chris Meader
"Shopping in Marrickville Road"
Followed by Annual General Meeting
- 21st August: Greg Blaxell
"People of the Parramatta River"
- 18th September: Janine Kitson
"Thistle Harris, David Stead and Wirrimbirra"
- 16th October: Daniel Macaloon
":Ramsgate Baths"(Soon after launching book)
Winner Ron Rathbone History Prize

The Father of Australia

By **James Spigelman, Chief Justice of New South Wales.**

This is an edited extract from an article first published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on December 26, 2009.

LACHLAN MACQUARIE landed in Sydney on 28th December, 1809 and assumed office on 1st January, 1810. New Year's Day was the 200th anniversary of his becoming our fifth governor.

With supervisory jurisdiction over the lieutenant governor in Tasmania, Macquarie served for 12 years as the chief political executive of modern Australia - a continent which he named by endorsing the suggestion of Matthew Flinders.

He is the second longest serving person in such office in our history, after Sir Robert Menzies.

Macquarie was the first head of the executive to strive to transform the colony from an open-air prison to a British settlement. During his period of office many of Australia's foundational institutions and social and physical infrastructure were established or the seeds sown for their development.

This included the full range of public facilities - schools, churches, hospitals, roads, lighthouses and other public buildings. Upon his retirement he was able to list 265 distinct public works constructed during his term of office.

Macquarie created a range of new institutions: for education, including Aboriginal education; for social welfare - the Benevolent Society; for child protection - the Orphan School at Parramatta; as well as creating our first coinage - the "Holey Dollar" and the "Dump"; the first commercial bank - now Westpac; and supporting the development of agriculture, industry, trade and the exploration of the continent for future growth.

His most dramatic and, in the event, only partially successful political intervention, was his modification of the severity of the convict experience and his attempt to eliminate completely any permanent convict stain.

His basic policy was that, subject to good behaviour, convicts who had served their terms or had been pardoned were entitled to be restored to the position in society that they had originally occupied. That policy was particularly focused on the convicts who had arrived with technical skills or manifested ability once here. This infuriated the local elite.

There was a widely held view among the lower orders in England that being sent as a convict to NSW was preferable to being unemployed in England. It probably was - especially as the economic depression after the final victory against Napoleon in 1815 led to a crime wave.

Perhaps the principal reason Governor Macquarie is remembered with a degree of fondness not afforded to any of the other early governors is his legacy of public buildings. His first major public building was Sydney Hospital in Macquarie Street - of which two wings remain - Parliament House and the Mint. It was built by private enterprise, at a time when he had been told not to spend any money on buildings, in exchange for a three-year monopoly on the import of rum. The "Rum Hospital", as it became known, was Australia's first private-public partnership.

At the time he was appointed in 1810, Macquarie was told by the secretary for the colonies to restrain any extravagance in public works and not to build anything without prior approval. He never obeyed.

Macquarie has left us, among numerous public buildings, some of our most graceful churches, an obelisk, the Government House stables, now occupied by the Conservatorium of Music, the Female Factory at Parramatta, the Hyde Park Barracks, and the South Head Lighthouse.

Macquarie has left an indelible imprint on the physical structure of Sydney and its immediate region. He brought a vision to the structure of the township and to its infrastructure and built form which has rarely been equalled, let alone surpassed.

In all of this his wife, Elizabeth, made a critical contribution. It was she who brought a book of building and town designs. Her role is recognised in the title of the road and point it leads to, Mrs Macquaries Chair, and in the not-well-remembered facts that Elizabeth Street is named after her and Campbelltown bears her maiden name.

Macquarie made a major contribution to Australia. His tomb in Scotland, with only some exaggeration and inadequate recognition of the critical role of Elizabeth, bears the inscription "The Father of Australia". His bicentennial is worthy of commemoration.

*Source: Edited & Presented by Mr Peter McCallum.
President of Waverly Historical Society.*

GO BACK IN TIME WITH BEXLEY

On Monday March 15th 2010, Rockdale City Council hosted a History Talk on Bexley at the Bexley Library.

Council's Local History Services Specialist, Kirsten Broderick, spoke on The History of Bexley and presented a range of photographs that highlighted the development of the area and the many changes it had witnessed over the past 150 years.

The talk was followed by a delightful afternoon tea and the opportunity for people to ask questions and view the Libraries collection of Historic Photographs of Bexley.

Kirsten was assisted by librarians Georgia Lewsley and Carolye Bourke.

Notable Residents **Beatrice Bush** **'The Duchess of White Bay'**

For 25 years Beatrice Bush sold newspapers seven days a week from the traffic island at the intersection of Victoria Road and The Crescent, White Bay, Sydney. As the traffic lights changed red Beatrice would spring to her feet with a stack of daily papers under her arm to sell to stopped motorists. Her weather-beaten face, small stature and eccentric attire were known to the estimated 70,000 vehicles which passed daily. Her resilience and endurance to constant traffic, petrol fumes and extremes of weather endeared her to locals and passers-by. Beatrice was a favourite with the media who gave her the nickname the 'Duchess of White Bay'. To her husband Frank and Rozelle locals she was known as Beattie.

Beatrice Olive Bush was born on 18 January 1925 in Rozelle and spent her early childhood in White Bay. Beatrice was one of eight children. She left school at age 14 to work in a handkerchief factory in Rozelle, later working as a machinist and seamstress. In 1957 she married Frank Bush and they had two sons, Glen and Phillip. Beatrice worked as a dressmaker until her teenage son Glen quit his paper run in 1971. Aged in her late 40s, Beatrice took over the White Bay run to earn extra money. Each day Beatrice rose at 3.15am to begin the first of two daily shifts. From 4.30am-8am and again from 1pm-5pm Beatrice would walk the pedestrian island at the start of Victoria Road selling papers with her catch phrase "erolds [Sydney Morning Herald], small ones [Daily Telegraph], Suns 'n Mirrors". After finishing the round about 11am Beatrice would go to her Annandale home to do housework before returning to sell the afternoon papers. On three separate occasions Beatrice was hit by a car. Beatrice is estimated to have sold 5 million papers.

On cold days Beatrice would wear up to five jumpers, several skimpy cotton dresses or skirts and several pairs of socks all topped by an old fur or jacket. She wore sandals or boots and carried a money bag and coin dispenser around her waist. Beatrice's layers of second-hand and over-sized clothing resulted in strange, mismatched outfits. Beatrice rarely spoke, instead smiling and waving to her regular customers. It is thought that her shyness was caused by a speech impediment derived from a childhood accident. Beatrice could not read the papers which she sold but each day she took home a Telegraph for her family.

After her husband died Beatrice moved in with her son Glen who lived at Macquarie Fields, near Liverpool. She continued to get up at 4am so as to catch the first train into the city and her work. According to White Bay news agency owner Steven Chan, Beatrice loved to work and used the money to supplement her pension. Beatrice continued selling papers until she was aged 72. She sold her last paper on 19 September 1996 and died six days later of heart failure. Beatrice's coffin was surrounded by newspapers and her newspaper trolley. Her funeral was attended by family, locals and former customers. Her ashes were thrown from a walkway over Victoria Road, White Bay.

Beatrice's life inspired songwriters, filmmakers, sculptors and painters (see blue file). In 1984 folk-singer Judy Small wrote the 'The White Bay Paper Seller' in honour of Beatrice Bush. The words of the chorus are:

*And the pennies that she makes will help to fill the pension void
For it's not the love of working keeps her constantly employed;
Seven days a week she's there just to earn her meagre pay
By selling daily papers on the corner at White Bay.*



This trolley was owned by the White Bay newsagency and given to Beatrice Bush for use in her job as a paper seller. Beatrice used this trolley from approximately the late 1980s until shortly before her death. Filmmaker Julie Nebauer met Beatrice two months before she died. After Beatrice's death, Julie approached the paper shop to obtain the trolley for Glen and Phillip Bush who donated it to the Museum.

In 2005 a new cycle bridge crossing Victoria Road at the intersection of The Crescent was named the Beatrice Bush Bridge in her honour. Her newspaper trolley, hat, gloves and other clothing items are held in the Powerhouse Museum collection in Sydney.

Source: Extracts from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Bay_\(New_South_Wales\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Bay_(New_South_Wales))

ANZAC Day

**I saw a kid marchin' with medals on his chest.
He marched alongside Diggers marching six abreast.
He knew that it was ANZAC Day - he walked along with pride.
He did his best to keep in step with the Diggers by his side.**

**And when the march was over the kid was rather tired.
A Digger said "Whose medals, son?" to which the kid replied:
"They belong to daddy, but he did not come back.
He died up in New Guinea on a lonely jungle track".**

**The kid looked rather sad then and a tear came to his eye.
The Digger said "Don't cry my son and I will tell you why.
Your daddy marched with us today - all the blooming way.
We Diggers know that he was there - it's like that on ANZAC Day".**

**The kid looked rather puzzled and didn't understand,
But the Digger went on talking and started to wave his hand.
"For this great land we live in, there's a price we have to pay
For we all love fun and merriment in this country where we live.
The price was that some soldier his precious life must give.**

**For you to go to school my lad and worship God at will,
Someone had to pay the price so the Diggers paid the bill.
Your daddy died for us my son - for all things good and true.
I wonder if you understand the things I've said to you".**

**The kid looked up at the Digger - just for a little while
And with a changed expression, said, with a lovely smile:
"I know my dad marched here today - this is ANZAC Day.
I know he did. I know he did, all the bloomin' way".**

D. Hunter

(A veteran of Shaggy Ridge with the 2/12 Battalion in WW2)

