

St George Historical Society Bulletin

March - June , 2015



New Home for the Society.

Secretary Laurice has announced that our meetings for the remainder of this year will be held at the newly renovated SANS SOUCI LIBRARY.

The library is at 104 Russell Avenue Sans Souci and is on the corner of Clareville Avenue. Parking is plentiful and there is a bus service which stops directly opposite.

The meeting room is a nice size, bright and sunny and will soon have modern video screen facilities up and running. The kitchen is very suitable for our needs - so our exciting the afternoon teas will continue !!! (Ed)

Proudly Sponsored by the Rockdale City Council

Office Bearers		
Patron	Councillor Shane O'Brien	
President	Mr Bernard Sharah	9567-8989
Vice President	Mr Wesley Fairhall	9546-1165
Secretary	Miss Laurice Bondfield	9599-4274
Treasurer	Mr Wesley Fairhall	9546-1165
Bulletin Editor	Dr Garry Darby	9583-9916
Lydham Hall Committee	Mrs Gloria Henke, Mrs Joan Rankin, Mr Bernard Sharah	9587-8307 9567-8641 9567-8989
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Publicity Officer	Miss Laurice Bondfield	9599-4274
Research Officer	Dr Garry Darby	9583-9916
Refreshments Officer	Mr Allan Stahl	9556- 2805
Lydham Hall Roster	Mr Bernard Sharah	9567-8989
Hon. Auditor	Mrs Joan Rankin	9567-8641

Meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month (Except December & January)

Welcome to 2015!

Here are our meeting dates for 2015

21st February, 21st March, 18th April, 16th May, 20th June, 18th
July(AGM), 15th August, 19th September, 17th October, 21st
November.

Note: Tempe House, Wolli Creek, will be open on the weekend of
11th-12th April.

Next Meeting: 21st March, 2015

Contributions to this bulletin, articles, photographs, news, notes, diary
dates, reviews etc., are always welcome - please contact the editor,
Garry Darby, 9583 9916 garry@garrydarby.com

"Words from the Treasurer"

Happy belated New Year! I am looking forward to 2015 being a year of renewed membership growth and interest in the local history by members of our historical society. In my capacity as Honorary Treasurer, I have more than a passing interest in the \$ and c that sustain the 'wheels of industry' for the 'nuts and bolts' of our society.

Our President, Bernard Sharah intends at some point this year to organize the second 'Lydham Hall Collectors' Fair'. The inaugural fair proved a great hit with all participants and the many interested visitors. Indeed, the income our society received from stall holders' fees, sales' commissions and morning/afternoon tea sales became the mainstay in our budget remaining 'in the black' for the last financial year. In addition both the society and Lydham Hall benefited from a greater public profile and interest from many members of the local community plus other history buffs. In fact, Garry Darby, one of the new members who joined on the day, has now become our Newsletter Editor!

As with any organization, consideration must be given to fund-raising initiatives. Most people would surely agree our annual Membership fees of \$10.00 Single and \$15.00 Family are modest and quite affordable. On this basis, may I challenge, perhaps even 'commission' each member to canvas their friends and family in the St. George municipality so as to encourage their joining our society. If we could all join a single new member, then we would obviously have a 100% increase in our membership this year; now that would be exciting! Members might even consider 'sponsoring' a friend or family member for a year's trial membership or even on an ongoing basis, perhaps as part of a Birthday or Christmas present.

I and other members of the Executive would only be too pleased to hear other members' views on possible fund-raising initiatives or 'outreach' opportunities to denizens of the greater St. George Municipality. Please write me, perhaps with your Membership Renewal or e-mail me at: wesleyfairhall7@gmail.com with your thoughts and recommendations.

I wish you all a very healthy, happy and historically rewarding 2015.

Let us all keep in the best possible sense of the term, 'dredging up the past'!

Kind regards, Wesley

**The St George Historical Society web site may be accessed
at**

<http://stgeorgehistsoc.org.au>

**The St George Historical Society Facebook page may be
seen at**

St George Historical Society Inc

News & Notes

🕒 A big vote of thanks must go to the Henke Family, Gloria, Heinz and Richard who have been editors of this bulletin for the past 14 years - a wonderful achievement.

🕒 Our new Facebook page has received many 'Likes' since its recent inception - one prominent poster has been our President Bernard who has shared information about some fascinating local buildings and put up 5 photographs of Kevin Little's Glass Studio at Arncliffe - take a look. Bernard wrote ;



From time to time, the Society organises history walks and visits to places of interest. The Little family of Arncliffe have operated their leadlight business for three generations. Kevin Little the current proprietor has a reputation for leadlight restoration which is arguably the most highly regarded in Australia. The Society conducted a tour of his workshop and studio on Saturday 22 November.

🕒 Lew Bond is currently working with Garry Darby on a second edition of Lew's 1988 book "Memories of Aqua Flora Park" - this important book brings back memories of Albert Royce's park at Sandringham that he billed as "Australia's Wonder Park" - Lew & Garry are now looking for original photographs, memorabilia or memories of Aqua Flora Park - contact Lew Bond (9529 6504) or Garry Darby (9583 9916)

🕒 DID YOU KNOW ? - The St George Historical Society was formed in 1961 at the instigation of the late Ron Rathbone who became the inaugural Secretary. When first formed it was known as the Rockdale Historical Society. The name was changed to the St George Historical Society at the first Annual General Meeting on 17 August 1962. The aim of the society is to conserve and encourage the recording of local history, and to conserve and raise awareness of the historical heritage of the St George District.

🕒 St George Historical Society has 27 local history publications for sale at Lydham Hall - included is the wonderful 1986 updated 'Rathbone' version of "Rockdale - Its Beginnings & Development" by Philip Geeves & James Jervis: this book has an index, something that was lacking in the original version - a bargain : \$12.00.

🕒 Kirsten Broderick is currently finalising plans and arrangements for this year's Rathbone History prize. Our March speaker, Karen Pentland won this prize in 2014. Hear her talk about her winning entry on 21st March meeting.

🕒 The Rockdale Local History collection is currently housed at the Bexley Community Centre, 405 Bexley road, near the corner of Forest Road and Bexley Road - Kirsten and Chris are on hand to help with all research quests. A tip: the car parking is excellent - but take your own lunch.

🕒 The NSW State Records Office at Kingswood is an excellent research facility with plenty of help from expert archivists - worth a visit - but it is a long long drive - tip: take your own lunch.



From the "St George
Call", Saturday 12 July
1919. p5.

This piece is typical of
the type of historical
information that is now
available to us all - free -
on Trove.

REMINISCENCES.

The genial Squire of Moorefield, Mr. Peter Moore, when interviewed lately, gave some very interesting reminiscences of the genesis of Kogarah. Born at Moorefield in 1854, he has resided there continuously ever since. He stated that the aboriginal name for Moorefield is "Mundahmillah," and for what is now known as Kogarah—"Koograh," this on the authority of King Kooma, head of the tribe of blacks then inhabiting the locality, and with whom he was on very friendly terms, but he is unable to recall the significance of the words. In 1869, what was then known as the Koograh Post Office was situated on Mr. W. Blake's (father of the popular Ted of to-day) property at Blakehurst. In that year it was removed to just opposite the entrance to Moorefield Race course, from Rocky Point-road, in a building belonging to Mr. South, father of the present "Johnny," of that ilk.

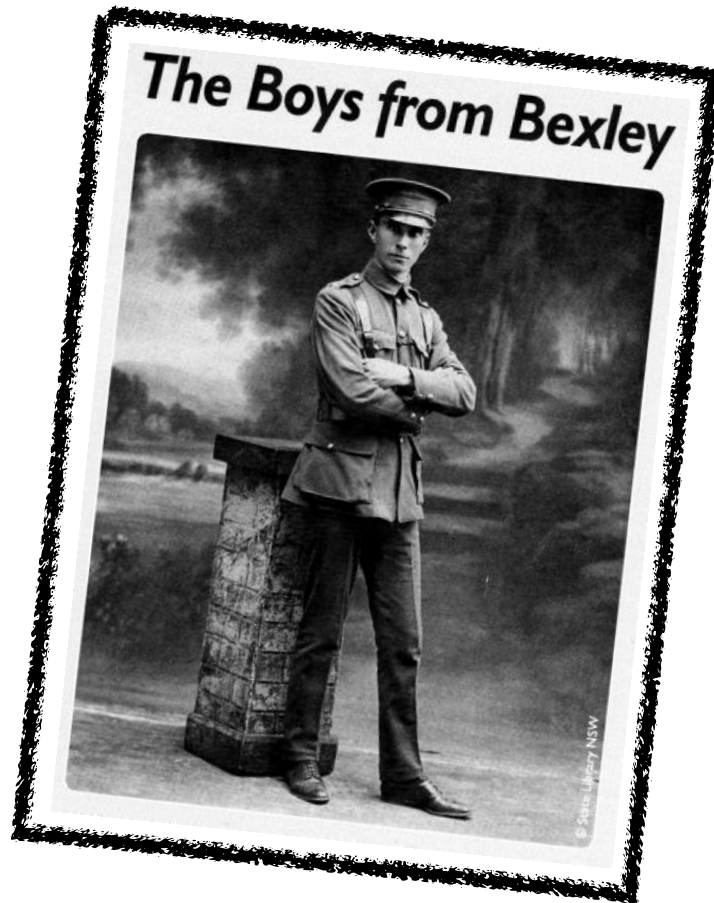
Early Mayors of West Botany/ Rockdale

1871-1872 Yates, Wm.
1872-1873 Beehag, Jas., Sr.
1874-1875 Godfrey, Elias
1875-1877 Beehag, Jas., Sr.
1877-1878 Collins, J.
1878-1885 Bowmer, J.
1885-1889 Judd, W. G.

1889-1891 Godfrey, Edwin
1891-1892 Carruthers, A. G.
1892-1895 Taylor, W.
1895-1898 Clayton, J. H.
1898-1900 Judd, W. G.
1900-1902 Hegerty, J. F.
1902-1904 Trevarthen, J. H.

WANTED

New Members - Introduce a friend now



Kirsten Broderick

Local History Services Specialist, Rockdale Library will be Guest Speaker at our
May meeting
(Sat 16th May at 2pm) (Sans Souci Library)

"The photograph is of Lieutenant William Christian Beeken, a draper, who enlisted in September 1914, age 25. William lived with his wife Muriel and their one-year-old daughter, Miriam, at their home "Woodley" in Godwin Street, Bexley. William was sent to Gallipoli where, on 7 May 1915, he was wounded, suffering shrapnel wounds to his left leg. He was transported to the military hospital at Lemnos for treatment; he recovered and rejoined his unit only to be killed in action on 6th August 1915 at Lone Pine. He's just one of the soldiers I'll be talking about."

Why not bring along some friends to hear this wonderful talk.

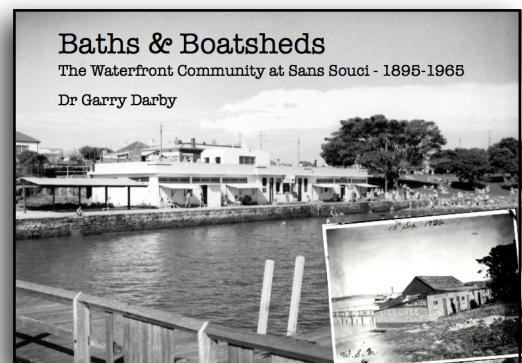
Our Guest Speaker for April (Saturday 18th) will
be Dr Garry Darby (member) who will speak
about his new book:



"Baths & Boatsheds"

The Waterfront Community at Sans Souci
1895-1965.

Sans Souci Library 2pm - all welcome



Sea Breeze Hotel

by Fred Scott

One of the many buildings that have not survived the march of "progress", and which are remembered by persons of a certain age, is the Sea Breeze Hotel at Tom Ugly's Point, situated on the Princes Highway just before the bridge over the Georges River.

The establishment of this hotel is but one episode in the story of Albert Russell Emerson, the youngest of three brothers who migrated from their England home to Sydney in the mid 1800s.

Albert was born at Kings Lynn, Norfolk in 1840 and was the last of three brothers to migrate to Sydney, arriving as a crew member of the *Eagle* in 1860. Albert followed his two brothers into the oyster business, successfully operating an oyster saloon in the city for many years. Oysters were a popular and affordable food source at the time, with the Georges River oysters being particularly favoured.

But the oyster gathering was not controlled and no attempts were made to grow new oysters. The Government was concerned that a valuable food source was in danger of extinction so a system of licensing was introduced. After an initial ban on oyster harvesting for three years, ten year leases were established in 1873, with eleven individuals gaining control over all the oyster areas along the coast. One of these was Albert, for the "whole of Botany Bay and its tributaries". This was actually in partnership with his brother John, although the official records only mention Albert.

Albert's oyster business was successful and was praised by Mr. Langham, the Inspector of Oyster Beds, for his successful cultivation of new oyster beds and the high quality of the oysters being harvested.. However it was becoming obvious the oyster gathering industry could not continue in its current form. The new licensing system had not eliminated all the problems in the industry, so after four years another Royal Commission recommended that all existing leases be cancelled and all new leases be for 50 years and all oyster dealers be licensed. Albert did not apply for a new lease.

Anticipating a development of this nature, Albert had leased land at Tom Ugly's Point from Thomas Holt and by January 1878 a wooden house had been built to provide comfortable accommodation for holiday seekers and fishermen. This became the first Sea Breeze Hotel, for which Albert was granted a publican's licence in November 1878. He operated the hotel for the first seven years of its history.

The Sea Breeze occupied a strategic position on the main road to the South Coast and was surrounded by pleasure grounds. Picnics and fishing were advertised, boat races which finished at the Sea Breeze were sponsored, a brass band was engaged on special occasions, and a wagonette service was provided from the city, described as "without a doubt the most comfortable convenience as yet provided for street travellers in our metropolis". On special occasions, the steam launch *La Belle* ran every hour to and from Sans Souci and Sandringham (the locations of similar hotels).

The local seafood was heavily promoted as a major attraction, particularly the oysters and bream. Sir Joseph Carruthers once remarked on the fine oysters and the many black bream to be seen feeding on the oysters when he visited the Sea Breeze. Then there came a time when there were no fish to be seen, and on being questioned Albert said that campers had recently

dynamited the water and since then the fish were scared away. Albert was careful not to mention that he himself had recently been prosecuted for dynamiting fish in the Georges River.

Following the death of Albert's wife, the hotel was advertised for sale in 1883. The advertisement described it as having a 400 ft frontage to Woniora Rd and also to Georges River, contained 10 rooms, large bar, cellar, kitchen, bathroom (with water laid on to bath and bedrooms), and stabling for 20 horses. Other buildings on the property were used as a General Store and Post Office, Steamer's Wharf and Boat Shed.

With a sale not eventuating, Albert continued to operate the pub until his death on 30 December 1885. His brother John was an undischarged bankrupt at this time, and it took four months for the executors of Albert's estate to get special permission for John to run the business until a buyer could be found.

Towards the end of 1887 Azarias Cook purchased the hotel for the sum of £1,350, which he operated for two years before leasing it. The next licensee was a well-known cricketer Nathaniel Thompson in 1889, followed by William Matterson (father of Neil Matterson, the well-known sculler) in 1890 and 1891. The next licensees were the renowned Bennetts, starting with Charles Bennett until his death in 1898 at which time his wife Sarah took over until she retired in 1915. The Westbrook family were the next proprietors, starting with Charles Westbrook then, after his death in 1920, his wife Florence Jessie Westbrook took over, assisted by her son Harold.

Sarah Bennett brought to the Sea Breeze a parrot known as "Cocky Bennett" who became a great attraction. The sulphur crested cockatoo was over one hundred years old and had lost almost all of its feathers. Having been owned previously by a sea captain, and having spent most of its life at sea, it had acquired a wide vocabulary and reportedly entertained patrons with outbursts such as "If I had another feather I'd ____ fly". A very quiet Cocky Bennett currently resides at the Carss Cottage Museum.

Many additions were made to the building over the years. The Sea Breeze was described in 1905 as "a building of brick and wood containing Bar and large Dining Hall, 22 Sitting and Bedrooms, Kitchen, Laundry, Lavatories, Bathroom, Slab Stable, Coach House and all necessary outbuildings. The property is 3½ miles from Kogarah Station. The buildings are in a very bad state of repair. It is let at £3 per week. Present market value £1,500." A photograph in the Daily Telegraph, taken in 1927 during the Westbrook occupancy, shows a pleasant colonial building with a shady veranda, bedecked with many ferns across the front.

The modern brick building that most people would remember was built in 1939.

In 1959 the Sea Breeze was acquired for £240,000 by the Air Force Association which offered it as first prize in an art union. More than 600,000 tickets at £1 were sold and the winners, a syndicate of 14 people, sold it for £191,000.

The hotel was demolished in 1995 and the site is now occupied by residential accommodation.

Government Gazette 6 December 1878 Page 4841

Australian Town and Country Journal 19 January 1878 Page 25

The Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer Friday 8 April 1921 Page 8

Australian Town and Country Journal 16 August 1879 Page 26

Sydney Morning Herald 4 April 1883 Page 15

Land Titles Office book 844 no 377

The Life and Times of Azarias Cook, 1998, Warren Duff, self published

Estate of Azarias Cook, State Records 2017088, 216891

Daily Telegraph 12 August 1985

Book Review

Laurice Bondfield

THE ABORIGINAL STORY OF BURKE AND WILLS.EDITED BY IAN D. CLARK AND FRED CARHIR. CSIRO PUBLISHING. 2013. 303 PAGES & INDEX

The subtitle of this book of articles is: "Forgotten Narratives" but as Dr. Peter Thorne, Vice President of the Royal Society of Victoria points out in his introduction "Few episodes in Australia's history have received as much attention as the Victorian Exploring Expedition of 1860-61". Books, films music paintings, poems and memorials have been dedicated to commemorating, mourning, explaining or satirising the Burke and Wills expedition. Why another book? Dr Thorne is Chair of the Burke and Wills Anniversary Advisory Committee, which was set up by the Royal Society of Victoria in 2008 to critically examine the historical and other studies of the expedition in order to identify any areas that had been overlooked previously. Two areas stood out. First, no study had been done on the scientific work carried out during the expedition. This oversight has been rectified and a book published. Second no careful study had been done on "the interaction between Indigenous people and the expeditioners and their potential and actual contribution to the expedition." This book is the result of a symposium on the topic held at the University of Ballarat under the guidance of the editors and contributors Ian D. Clark and Fred Carhir.

Before I go on to discuss the actual contents of the book, I would like to say what a beautiful production it is. A hard backed copy (including bookmark ribbon!) with clear, well set out text and beautifully reproduced photographs and prints or drawings made on the expedition, it is a delight to look at and read. Congratulations to CSIRO publishing!

Some of the articles may present a few difficulties for the non-specialist reader - perhaps the linguistic and anthropological studies use some unfamiliar technical terms - but most are straightforward historical studies.

Two articles that I found extremely interesting concerned the German members of the expedition. Both scientists, Ludvig Becker and Hermann Beckler were concerned to understand the land and the Aboriginal people. Both produced carefully documented and beautifully illustrated journals. Beckler even annotated some music he heard at a corroboree. Reproduction of these illustrations in the book are one of its pleasures. One article by Peta Jeffries shows how the land around Mootwingee influenced Ludvig Becker, how he began to get an idea of how Indigenous people regarded their country.

Some of the other fifteen papers discuss: the prior experience of members of the expedition working with Aboriginal people, the different groups that the expeditioners encountered and their protocols for dealing with visitors to their land, the way the Yandruwandha were able to live well in their lands while the expedition failed, the criticism by contemporaries of Burke's lack of use of Indigenous guides and distrust of the Indigenous people he encountered and discussion of the follow up treks to discover what had happened. One paper by Darrell Lewis discusses the story that Burke was shot rather than died of exposure.

A Yandruwandha man, Aaron Paterson, writes of his knowledge of the way his ancestors perceived members of the expedition passing through their lands and how they lived well in what to others was forbidding country. Interestingly he counts as part of his family a descendant of Alice King, a daughter fathered by John King when he was living with the Yandruwandha before being found by the Howitt relief expedition.

For the casual reader, this book of seventeen articles can be dipped into and out of. It is aimed at an audience used to reading closely argued and annotated historical papers but is still not difficult to read. I had to renew my Rockdale Library copy to complete reading it! Nevertheless I can recommend it to you, not only for the interesting insights it provides into a disaster so often discussed before, but for the excellent maps, illustrations and general layout which greatly enhance the text.

“A Look Back - West Botany Municipality”

During the late 1880's the Sydney Morning Herald ran a series of articles on the the Municipalities of Sydney. In January, 1888 the article below was dedicated to West Botany. It is reproduced here because of its great historical value to students of the local area. The article was found on “Trove”, digitalised newspapers, the initiative of the National Library of Australia. (see below)(Ed)

Sydney Morning Herald Thursday 5 January, 1888, p4

THE SYDNEY AND SUBURBAN , MUNICIPALITIES. WEST BOTANY. 1888.

The borough of West Botany was incorporated on the 13th of January, 1871. It has an area of about six square miles, and is bounded on the north by Cook's River, on the south by George's River, on the east by Botany Bay, and on the west by Wolli Creek and Rocky Point-road. A little more than twelve months ago a large additional area was annexed to the original area, and the borough was then divided into the three existing wards, viz., Rockdale Ward, Arncliffe Ward, and Scarborough Ward.

A bill is now before Parliament for the purpose of changing the name of the municipality. Two substitutes are suggested, Scarborough and Rockdale, but on account of certain objections to the former it being, in fact, the name of a post town in another part of the colony it is considered probable that the latter will be adopted.

At the present time there is no system of sewerage in the borough, but a combined movement is on foot to devise a system of drainage to accommodate the whole of West Botany, Kogarah, and Hurstville. The water supply is obtained from tanks and wells but, in consequence of

the Nepean scheme being now available, a petition has been prepared for presentation to the Sydney Corporation asking that the mains be extended to the municipality.

According to a census recently taken, the population of West Botany amounts to 3267, which includes 195 Chinese. The sanitary condition of the borough is stated to be good. The aggregate length of the streets is about 50 miles, of which 20 are made and 30 unmade. Kerbing and guttering of footpaths have only just been commenced, but asphaltting has not yet been introduced. Some of the streets have been aligned, but those in the new subdivisions have not, neither have they been formed or improved.

It should, however, be remembered that until the opening up of the district by the construction of the Illawarra railway line, the bulk of the inhabitants were market gardeners, poultry breeders, &c., and it is only during a comparatively short period that the land occupied by them has been utilised for building purposes, notably at Rockdale and Kogarah, which are fast becoming thickly populated.

Independently of the numerous contracts for road making now in hand, the council employ on an average about 20 day labourers; but they have for the second time taken advantage of the Government subsidy by employing 50 of the "unemployed" class on public works of a permanent character. The council have just entered into a contract with the Australian Gaslight Company for a period of five years for the supply of gas at the rate of £6 per lamp per annum, and 5s. 6d. per thousand cubic feet for gas supplied by meter to private consumers. The mains are now being laid down, and 27 lamps have been ordered as the first instalment.

The localities to be supplied are starting are Rocky Point Road and, Gannon's Forest - road, Arncliffe street, Illawarra-road, Wollongong-road, Harrow road, Bay street, and West Botany-street; and next Anniversary Day will be celebrated in the borough by the first lighting of the public lamps. Up to the present time a small building at Arncliffe - a freehold property belonging to the council - has been used as the council chamber; but the increasing business of the municipality has long since outgrown the accommodation afforded. The council some time ago secured a more central site on the Rocky Point-road, near the Rockdale railway station, for a new and commodious town hall.

This is now in course of erection, the contract price for the building being £2495. The town hall will contain a large meeting room, with sitting accommodation for 600 persons; a spacious council room, together with suitable rooms for all the municipal officers; a free public library and reading-room; an apartment for friendly, society meetings, and quarters for the caretaker. It is also intended to arrange a portion of the building to meet the requirements of a post-office.

A large portion of the low-lying lands is still occupied as market gardens, the Chinese paying much higher rents for such land than Europeans. West Botany is amply provided with reserves and water frontages. Cook Park, better known as Lady Robinson's Beach, skirt Botany Bay, and is about seven miles in length. Its width varies from 100 ft at Webb's Grant to 15 chains at Doll's Point, and it is one of the most picturesque beaches in the world.

Scarborough Park, which is about 100 acres in extent, is situated a few chains back from the beach, at the southern portion of the district. About 80 acres have been already laid out and planted with between 1100 and 1200 ornamental shrubs and trees. The trustees intend converting the greater part of the swampy portion of the park into a large lake, which will have a depth of at least 8ft. in the driest seasons.

The park is almost entirely surrounded by wide streets - notably, the Boulevard, 3 chains in width; Frederick-street, Lawrence-street, and Walter street, each 2 chains; Park-street, 72 feet; and Tonbridge-street, 1 chain. About 30 acres forming the best portion of Scarborough Park was a free gift to the public by the Hon. Thomas Holt, and is, with the rest of the reserve, now dedicated and placed under the control of trustees.

West Botany is easy of access by train from Sydney, there being two stations within its boundaries. From Rockdale, a tramway, built by Mr. T. Saywell, runs to Lady Robinson's Beach,

where commodious baths, for both ladies and gentlemen, have also been erected by the same enterprising colonist A Government tram runs from Kogarah station to Sandringham and Sans Souci. This line is three miles long, and the other one mile, and both have done much towards opening up most delightful health resorts.

The total number of houses in the municipality in April last was 650, and the number of ratepayers on the municipal roll 1128. The total capital value of rateable property is estimated at £754,810, and the total annual assessed value is £17,137. The only rate levied is the general municipal rate of 1s. in the pound, which produced during the year £2350. The total revenue from all sources last year amounted to £2394, and the total expenditure for the same period £3330 (the revenue and expenditure accounts of the annexed area are not included in these items). The Government endowment was at the rate of 5s. in the pound.

Two loans of £3000 and £10,000 respectively have been raised in Sydney, each bearing interest at the rate of 6 per cent per annum. The rapidity of the progress of West Botany may be gathered from the fact that in 1882 the total estimated capital value of rateable property was only £102,315, the estimated annual value £7153, the total annual revenue from all sources £724, and the total expenditure £847, while the total number of ratepayers on the roll was only 199.

But notwithstanding the much smaller revenue previous to 1882, many good works in the shape of roads and bridges were carried out by the pioneer ratepayers, who rendered assistance occasionally by lending their horses and carts, and doing manual labour themselves voluntarily. The following gentlemen were the mayors during the years named ; Year. William Yates .. 1871 James Beehag .. 1872\1873 Elias Godfrey .. 1874(1875\1876 James Collins .. 1877 Mr. Thomas Leeder is council clerk. Year 1878 John Bowmer .. to 1884, 1885 W. G. Judd .. 1886 1887. (reproduced with minimal changes to the text and spelling - Ed)



The 'St George Call' for 1914-1924 has been digitalised and is now searchable on "Trove" - this is a continuing project and it is hoped another decade of this important, local paper will be processed in 2015. Nice to see the **Australian National Library** using "The Call" to publicize their magnificent web site.

About Trove

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