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Front Cover Image – Parry's Milk Bar with Theodore Parry (Panaretos) and staff, Rockdale, NSW, c.1965. See page 8 for further information. [1]

Front Cover Background – 1939 street map of Rockdale, NSW, showing administrative boundaries and physical features, scale [ca. 1:18,000]. [2]

Back Cover Image – Aerial photograph of Moorefield Racecourse in 1952. Rotated clockwise, with northern features including President Ave to the right on the track and western features including Princes Hwy, Rocky Point Rd and Kogarah Train Station to the top of the image. Courtesy of the Kogarah Local Studies Collection.

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Welcome

In this edition, we begin with highlights from 3 recent guest presenters to our meetings. The topics – Greek cafés and milk bars in Australia, horse racing in Kogarah and art awards in Rockdale, demonstrate the eclectic range of ideas discussed at our meetings. The variety continues throughout 2017, with the details listed in the calendar on page 5.

In our last issue, we reported the sale of Primrose House at Dolls Point and the protection in the medium term for this historic site. In February, Scots College, the new operators, hosted an Open Day on the site, attended by many of our members. I hope to bring you updates as the restoration and renovation prepares the building for its next role as a preparatory school.

Bexley Aquatic Centre recently opened to the public, less than 3 years after the original pool was closed. Our update on page 15 also looks back at the opening of the original in 1976.

With the recent council amalgamations, St George is benefiting from the shared cultural resources offered by Georges River and Bayside Councils. On pages 17 and 18, you can read about the exhibitions hosted by 2 of our councils' museums.

Another benefit of council support is access to dedicated specialists as they document our region's history. Beginning on page 21, we feature an excerpt from Katherine Grant's book about our local battalion. In the first of a 3 part series, Kirsten Broderick reveals St George's history via its maps, as the council's collection is progressively digitised.

A new rugby league season has just begun and on page 28, we reflect on our local team's fortunes 50 years ago, during the Dragons' 1967 season.

After our special January – March 2017 edition dedicated to the adult and junior entries in the 2016 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize, our regular articles return with ANZAC Centenary reflections, silent film, law and order and satire.

For more local reading, we end this edition with an excerpt from one of Christina Stead's novels and a list of the publications offered by the SGHS.

As well as the print version of this magazine, we also publish a digital version in PDF format with clickable webpage and email links. It's accessible on most computers, tablets and smart phones and it's an environmentally friendly alternative. If you'd prefer to receive this new version instead, please let me know at barry@stgeorgehistsoc.org.au

On behalf of the society, I extend a warm welcome to our newest members, **Tina Workman of Arncliffe** and **Heather Campbell of Monterey**.

Our website and Facebook page receives a range of local and family history queries from visitors around the world.

Recently, we received a photo of a painting (below), titled 'Shack West of Wyong' from a Facebook visitor hoping to reunite it with the artist. On the back, we could decipher the contact details for Sue Green, a painter in Taren Point. Although she has passed away, the painting is now returning home to Sue's husband.

Do you have any local stories, newspaper clippings, objects or photographs that you've always wondered about? Please email me or let me know at our next meeting. We can help you reveal the answers from the past.

Barry Johnson
Editor



Calendar

Our meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month (except December and January) at 2pm at Level 3, Rockdale Library, 444-446 Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Visitors are very welcome to enjoy presentations by guest speakers and discuss local history with our friendly and knowledgeable members during our afternoon tea. Please visit our website or Facebook page, check the Events pages of the *St George Leader* published on the Wednesday preceding the meeting or contact our Secretary, Laurice Bondfield on (02)9599 4274 to confirm the details. Our upcoming meetings:

- **22nd April 2pm** (the week after of Easter Sunday). Guest speaker: Catherine Bishop, author of *Minding her Own Business*. Catherine's book reveals Sydney's colonial female entrepreneurs, from milliners and dressmakers to ironmongers and booksellers; from publicans and boarding-house keepers to butchers and taxidermists; from school teachers to ginger-beer manufacturers, with fascinating details of their successes and failures, their determination and wilfulness, their achievements, their tragedies and the occasional juicy scandal.
- **20th May 2pm** Guest speaker: Leonie Bell, winner of the 2016 Ron Rathbone History Prize with her essay 'History of the Rockdale Opera Company'. The oldest amateur opera company in Australia celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2018 after hosting some of our country's most talented singers in the most beloved operas, including Faust, Carmen and The Mikado.
- **17th June 2pm** Guest speaker: Alan Powditch – Centenary of Brighton le Sands Public School. After his essay in the 2015 Ron Rathbone History Prize, the ex-pupil from Taren Point has been preparing for the centenary celebration with reunion photo sessions, a sundial unveiling, time capsule storage and tree planting amongst the activities at the school located at 35 Crawford St.
- **15th July 2pm** Annual General Meeting.
- **19th August 2pm** Guest speaker: Pauline Curby, author of *Independent Minds*. To celebrate the centenary in 2016 of the St George Girls High, Pauline Curby's book documents the history of this selective school with alumini including Christina Stead and Patricia Brennan, a medical missionary.
- **16th September 2pm** Guest speaker: Therese Murray – 1956: The Year That Rocked Kingsgrove. In 1956, Kingsgrove literally rocked. It was a time of explosions, car bombs, excitement, murder and suicide. Who knew sleepy Kingsgrove was such a hub of excitement and intrigue?
- **21st October 2pm** Guest speaker: Kirsten Broderick, Bayside Council Local Historian. Kirsten's previous presentation in 2015 about the “Bexley Boys” was thoroughly enjoyed by our members, as she recounted the personal stories of WW1 veterans and their families. Topic to be confirmed.
- **18th November 2pm** Guest speaker: Glen Op den Brouw – A Liverpool Hero: Frank Hagney. After returning from the Boer War, Frank Hagney, a Liverpool local, sought new adventures, acting opposite John Wayne and competing in various international sporting championships.

Special events:

- **18th April - 21st May** – National Trust History Festival <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/ahf/nsw/>
- **30th April** – Regional History Conference. 1pm – 4pm. St. Magdalen's Chapel, Tempe House Estate. Free, although donations gratefully received. Enquiries: Wesley Fairhall - 0408 182 685.
- **30th April** – Angelic Voice in Gothic Splendour concert. 5pm – 6pm. St. Magdalen's Chapel. Tickets \$25, 10% of proceeds to SGHS. Book at <https://www.stickytickets.com.au/51281>
- * **Sunday, 23rd April** – Lydham Hall Special Open Day. 10.30am – 4pm. Gold coin donation.
- * **Sunday, 7th May** – Tempe House Open Day. Lydham Hall will also open from 10am – 4pm.
- * **Sunday, 14th May** – Lydham Hall Special Open Day. 10.30am – 4pm. Gold coin donation.
- * **Sunday, 6th August** – Tempe House Open Day.
- **2nd - 10th September** – History Week <http://historycouncilnsw.org.au/history-week/>
- * **Sunday, 5th November** – Tempe House Open Day.

* The Tempe House Open Days may be rescheduled. Please check our Facebook page for updates.

Selling the American Dream: the Greek Café and Milk Bar

Leonard Janiszewski & Effy Alexakis

Macquarie University

During our February meeting, Leonard Janiszewski & Effy Alexakis presented a treat for history lovers with a sweet tooth, prompting guests to recount their own fond memories of the Greek café in Sydney. This is an excerpt from their book, with links to purchase at the end of this article.

Greek cafés in Australia provided British-Australians with their familiar meal of steak and eggs, chops and eggs, mixed grill, fish and chips, and meat pies, but more importantly, they cemented the growing popularisation of American food-catering ideas which had been instigated through Australia's earlier Greek-run food-catering enterprises – the oyster saloon or 'parlor' (American spelling was usually used) of the late nineteenth and

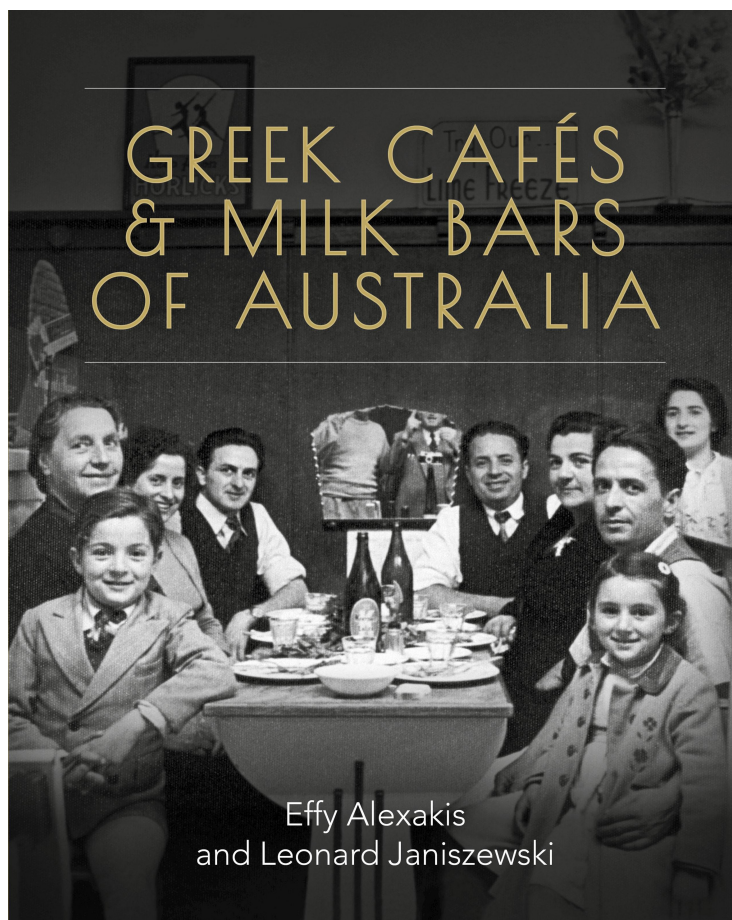
early twentieth centuries, the 'American-style' soda bar/sundae 'parlor' which had appeared by the mid-1910s, and the 'American-style' milk bar which had emerged by the early 1930s. The introduction of American food-catering ideas to Australia through the nation's early Greek food caterers should not be surprising. Quite a number had relatives and friends living and working in the United States, or had been there briefly themselves working for Greek-American food caterers; the US remained as a major drawer of Greek immigrants until the early 1920s.

The Greek café was essentially an evolutionary amalgam of its three predecessors. In names such as the Niagara, Monterey, Californian, Astoria, New York and Golden Gate, the American component of the Greek café's creation is well suggested, but more so in its provision to customers of American sundaes, milkshakes, sodas

and freezes or crushes (iced drinks), American confectionery (hard sugar candies and milk chocolate bars), and another popular product, American ice cream. Although the Greek café did not introduce traditional Greek dishes, as catering to the established tastes of their overwhelmingly British-Australian clientele was paramount, steak and eggs could be purchased with an 'American Beauty' fancy sundae for dessert, and a 'Spider' soda drink or flavoured milkshake to wash it all down. The union proved commercially successful, and to a degree, the Greek café became a 'Trojan Horse' for the Americanisation of Australian eating habits well before the second-half

of the twentieth century. Greek-run oyster 'parlors'/saloons, soda bars/sundae 'parlors' and milk bars had pointed the way towards the successful merger between British-Australian preferred tastes, and American food-catering ideas, technology and products.

Greek-run oyster saloons or 'parlors' were pioneered by the **Comino (Kominos) family** (originally from the island of Kythera) in Sydney. Initially these were fish-and-chip outlets, and although they maintained a focus on oysters



Effy Alexakis
and Leonard Janiszewski

(bottled and fresh), they soon acquired a wide diversity of foods (cooked meat and sea food, fruit and vegetables, chocolates and ice cream). These enterprises had men's and women's lounges and welcomed families. In contrast, British-Australian run oyster saloons traditionally limited their food selection (almost exclusively oysters), as well as their range of customers (essentially working class males). The diversification of foods attracted a broader range of clientele echoing American influences reflected by Greek-run oyster saloons. The introduction of the American 'front service' soda fountain as well as American candy, ice cream and ice drinks through these enterprises further heightened their popularity.

Although the leading protagonists of the Comino family seem not to have had food-catering experience in the United States, some members of the extended clan who arrived in Australia most certainly did, as well as a selection of other Greek proprietors of oyster 'parlors'. In 1912, three Greek migrant/settlers from the United States, **Peter and Constantine Soulos** and **Anthony Louison (Iliopoulos)**, formed the '**Anglo-American Company**' in Sydney. Based upon the American drugstore soda bar, the company's shops (five by the mid-1910s) exposed Sydneysiders to the 'front service' soda fountain – these fountains were installed into customer service counters and created effervescent water through impregnation with a gas under pressure, to which flavours/essences were added, and if desired, ice cream. **Angelos Burgess (Tarifas)**, yet another Greek who had been to the United States, installed a 'front service' soda fountain in his '**Niagara Café**' in Newcastle, NSW, well before 1910.

The public appeal of these fountains was such that many Greek oyster 'parlor' proprietors quickly incorporated the new food-catering technology (compressors and pumps were initially imported from the US) and commenced producing a wide range of 'exotically' flavoured soda drinks – from pineapple, and strawberry, through to sarsaparilla and hop ale. American ice cream sundaes also appeared around this time, with the titles of some clearly declaring their American origin: 'American Beauty', 'Monterey Special', and 'Yankee Doodle Dandy'. Moreover, Greek-run oyster 'parlors' now began to evolve into soda bars/sundae 'parlors', whilst retaining the sit-down meals and diversity of foods of the oyster saloons.

In 1932, **Mick Adams (Joachim Tavlarides)**, opened Australia's first modern 'American-style' milk bar, the '**Black and White 4d Milk Bar**' in Sydney. The 'milk bar' was created by Adams based upon his observations of American drugstore soda bars – he had visited the United States two years earlier. In Australia, the Greek-run oyster saloon and soda bar/sundae 'parlor' had placed prime importance on sit-down trade for meals, drinks and desserts. American drugstore soda bars emphasised quick stand-up and bar-stool bar trade (soda drinks, milkshakes and sundaes) over sit-down meal trade. Adams firmly took up the American soda bar catering emphasis and highlighted the milkshake.

Seating capacity in Adams' premises was restricted to just six small two-seater cubicles along one wall, the main feature being a long hotel-style bar with soda fountain pumps and numerous Hamilton Beach electric milkshake makers (imported from the United States). No cooked meals were offered. On the first day of opening 5,000 customers frequented the milk bar, and as many as 27,000 per week then began to patronise the establishment. Other food caterers were quick to adopt the idea and within five years of the opening of Adams' original Black and White Milk Bar there were 4,000 milk bars in Australia; most were Greek-run.

While soda fountains were retained in the milk bars, by the mid to the late 1930s, the diversity of sit-down meals, take-away items and broad customer range of the earlier Greek-run oyster saloons, had combined with the popularity of soda drinks, sundaes and milkshakes, into the classic Greek café. In the Greek café, the melding of British-Australian tastes and American food-catering ideas was firmly cemented, and found its clearest and most popular long-term expression. Of course, new American food-catering ideas continued to impact on the Australian Greek café throughout its 'golden age' of existence (1930s to 1960s), most notably the hamburger – a meat patty popularised in the United States and introduced to Australia around the mid to late 1930s.

In their heyday, Greek cafés and milk bars were an eating and social focal point for rural and urban communities, a significance which was reinforced through their relationship with local picture theatres – a mimicking of the working relationship between popular food-catering establishments and cinemas in the United States. **Margaret Harrison**

(nee Clancy), who waitressed at the **'Blue Bird Café'** in Lockhart in southwestern NSW during the 1930s, recalls that when the pictures were on, "the shop was packed!". Quite a number of cinema operators were Greeks who had been, or simultaneously continued to be, café or milk bar proprietors.

Many picture theatres and Greek catering establishments in Australia expressed another shared association: their architectural style. The international aesthetic style known as Art Deco flourished between the wars. It celebrated ' [the] machine, travel, [and] speed'. Art Deco utilised in Australian Greek cafés and milk bars appears to have been influenced directly from the United States rather than Europe. Proprietors and customers would refer to the style as the 'Hollywood style', the 'American style', 'the ship style' or 'ocean liner style', and one major Greek-Australian shop-fitter of the 1930s — **Stephen C. Varvaressos** — based his designs on American Art Deco cafés. Stylistically, American Art Deco architecture — or more specifically, California's 'Streamline Moderne' — favoured the curvilinear in contrast to the general angular interest of European Art Deco. A few fine examples of his café work in NSW have survived, including the **'Busy Bee Café'**, Gunnedah (a selection of its fixtures and fittings was purchased by the National Museum of Australia in 2012), the **'Yenda Café'**, Yenda, and the **'White Rose Café'**, Temora.

The Americanisation of Australia by the Greek café and milk bar also affected popular music: by the early 1940s, jukeboxes had begun to appear in them. American and British popular music were heard in these establishments well before their broad acceptance on Australian radio. Consequently, in the late 1950s, the rock'n'roll generation embraced the top 40.

Unfortunately though, the Australian Greek café and milk bar's link to America also assisted, in part, with their demise in the final decades of the twentieth century — American led fast-food corporations began to replace family-based food-catering concerns. Combined with the impact of rural economic rationalisation, the by-passing of country townships by arterial inter-urban highways upon which road houses developed, the advent of supermarkets and convenience stores, and counter lunches at pubs and clubs, most Greek cafés and milk bars were forced to transform into take-aways or be relegated into memory or oblivion. A greater

diversity of employment choices for the well-educated younger generation of Australian-born people of Greek heritage, further compounded the demise.

Front page image - During the 1940s Jim Parry (Zacharias Vretos Panaretos) acquired a shop near Kogarah Station and established the first Parry's milk bar. The shop had been bought from a Cecil Parry — whose surname Jim adopted to assist in being accepted into his new host society. In 1958 he opened Parry's at Caringbah, which still serves 'old-fashioned' milkshakes, sundaes and sodas, now with candies and chocolates.

***Greek Cafes & Milk Bars of Australia* (Halstead Press, 2016), by Effy Alexakis and Leonard Janiszewski, is available from leading bookstores or online from**

<http://www.cafesandmilkbars.com.au>

For more information, visit the Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/cafesandmilkbars/>

The History of Moorefield Racecourse

by Anne Field

My research on Moorefield Racecourse started in 1993. This research, which took me over 20 years, was instigated from a chance meeting with a former Moorefield Racecourse groundsman in mid-1992. He phoned me in my capacity as the Third Ward Alderman to make a representation to Council in respect of a footpath. The *St George Leader* newspaper printed an article on my planned research in mid-1993. Elderly residents then wrote letters to me containing some Moorefield stories, another left me an old race book, another a race field guide which was found underneath lino which was being removed; another an old Gregory's Street Directory.

Moorefield was not just a racecourse. Kogarah Golf Club was located in the middle of the course; the Club leased the land from 1929 to 1955.

Moorefield's history abounds with personalities – whether they be jockeys, golfers, SP bookmakers, or punters. It is all these people who can be credited with

Moorefield gaining the affectionate name, "The Goat Track".

The land on which the racecourse was situated was originally granted to Patrick Moore on August 25, 1812 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

A descendant, Peter Moore, established the racecourse and its first meeting was held on October 13 1888. In 1909, title was transferred from Peter Joseph Moore to Moorefield Racecourse Limited. In 1920, Moorefield Racecourse Limited transferred the land to The Moorefield Race Club. They in turn transferred the land to the Sydney Turf Club in 1947, who had leased the land from 1945.

In the early years there were 9 or 10 meetings; in the latter years there were only 4 or 5 meetings. The last race meeting was transferred from Canterbury as it was in a blackout zone. No mention was made in the press that it was the last Moorefield meeting. Chief Pontiac, ridden by Arthur Ward, won the last race on July 14, 1951.

Course amenities included a Member's stand; behind the winning post were the Paddock and Leger grandstands; paddock, leger and member totes; refreshment and rest rooms. "Moorefields", which faced President Avenue, was the Moore family home.

Declining numbers of race meetings, the high cost of maintaining the racecourse, interest from the Education Department for schools and the Department of Technical Education for a college were all factors which contributed to the sale. The STC also wanted to build up Canterbury and

Rosehill Racecourses.

The course remained open for barrier trials and finally closed in mid-1955 to be used for educational institutions, and a residential area.

Permission to sell the racecourse was granted on December 14, 1953. James

Cook Boys, Moorefield Girls and St George TAFE were to be built and the remaining 53 acres was auctioned by Oakdale Pty. Ltd., a subsidiary of L.J. Hooker on August 9, 1955 at 118,50 pounds for 270 home sites.

Well known jockeys who rode at Moorefield included Ted Bartle, Edgar Britt, Billy Cook, Billy Lappin along with Maurice McCarten, Arthur and



Jockey George Podmore with horse trainer Bob Mead (with spectacles). Courtesy of Anne Field.

George Podmore, John Rincheval , Ray Selkrig, Teddy Swinton, Arthur Ward and Jack Waterhouse.

Moorefield jockeys alive today are Cliff Clare, Mick Hood, Frank (Johnny) Hudson, Ray Selkrig, and Jack Waterhouse. Edgar Britt died in late January 2017.

Some Moorefield jockeys rode in Ceylon, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Ireland and England. The Maharajas In India, who engaged Australian jockeys by all accounts, looked after these jockeys well.

I have listed jockeys who rode on January 9, 1909 at Moorefield and for the November 8, 1930 and January 6, 1951 meetings I have included horses, jockeys and trainers. I have also listed all the Moorefield race dates from 1888 until 1951. This makes it easier for family historians, who can then use Trove to check the *Sydney Morning Herald* race reports listing their ancestors.

Well known and successful trainers from the 1920s onward were Roy Barker, Bill Clancy, Arthur Croall, W. Kennison, Jim McCurley, Son McKinnon, Bob Mead, Mick Polson and Bob Ryan. There were many other small-time hobby trainers who may have had only a few horses.

Well known horses which raced at Moorefield included All Love, Annie Laurie, Black Cat, Brazier, Cavedweller , Codicil , Columnist (owned by Sir Frank Packer), Dashing Cavalier, Decorate,

Fort Denison , Fujisan, Grey Boots, Grey Nurse, High Jip, Hiraji , Journalist, Le Dauphin, Magnificent, Nightmarch , Nizam's Ring, Radical, Reading , San Domenico, St Elmo and Tactician.

Nizam's Ring was a grey filly trained by Jim McCurley, owned by F.W. Hughes. In 1947 she won the Wakeful Stakes and Oaks at Flemington, the Flight Stakes and Mersey Stakes at Randwick and the One Thousand Guineas at Caulfield.

Magnificent won the 1945 AJC and VRC Derbies. The horse was owned by Mrs McLauchlan from the Brighton Hotel, Brighton Le Sands, trained by Arthur Croall from Sans Souci.

Horses like Cavedweller were Moorefield specialists, who did well on this uphill and down dale course. The back straight called for an uphill gallop to the home turn. Three chutes however provided straight runs from their barriers.

There were a number of horses trained at Moorefield who ran in the Melbourne Cup, including Westcourt (1917), Windbag (1925), Nightmarch (1929), Old Rowley (1940), Russia (1946), Hiraji (1947), stabled in French St, Kogarah, and Foxami (1949).

***The History of Moorefield Racecourse (1888-1951)* by Anne Field can be purchased at Rockdale Plaza Newsagency for \$30 or as an ebook via <http://annefield.net.au> for \$15.**



Amounis with his strapper, George Phillips, in 1926. He won 33 races, including the Three Year Old Handicap at Moorefield and 2 against Phar Lap. [3]

Rockdale Art Award: people and places connected

by Olga Sedneva

In 1947, the Mosman Art Prize was introduced. By the mid 1950s, over 30 local councils in NSW hosted artistic competitions. Just a handful survive today.

The Rockdale Art Award was considered one of the most prestigious, along with Mosman and Hunters Hill for its leading role in promoting Australian art, displaying local creative trends and movements, and connecting talents from all over the country.

Even though the lists of adjudicators, participants and celebrities at the openings of exhibitions were almost identical, the work behind the scene, public activities and approach to the acquisition of artwork differed. Only the Rockdale Art Award offered migrants an opportunity for assimilation.

I hope my talk on the Rockdale Art Award at the meeting of the St George Historical Society Inc was a lively journey back in time. A few members of the St George Art Society were present amongst the audience. Artists Bruce Sharp and Ian Dodd were happy to recall those times with personal memories. During that period, to have an artwork selected for display in Arncliffe's

Coronation Hall was considered prestigious and engendered recognition of the artist's talent. The President of the St George Art Society, Mrs Jean Harrow described the competition that "provided a stimulus to existing artistic groups in the

community like the St. George Art Society" and advanced undoubtedly "towards a civilised community." [25]

The talk was dedicated to the connections of the Rockdale Art Award with museums and galleries, some public clashes of opinions, and even criminal

activities. In these records, renowned Australian artists such as Pro Hart, Margo Lewers, Carl Plate appeared, leading to further details. The children's competitions introduced talents such as Imants Tillers and Pamela Griffith.

For Guy Warren, the 'Father of Australian watercolour,' this prize was the first he had won.

When the Rockdale Art Award was mentioned, his face lit up and he said "Oh, the Rockdale

Prize was really big. It was the first one I won." (1962, 1963, 1966).

Ms. Jennifer Baxter, a new member of our society, recalled how at the age of 6 she received an award



Pottery and ceramic presentation in the 12th Rockdale Art Award in 1966. [1]

as Overall Winner of the Rockdale Art Award in the children's competition for her painting of "A Crowd."

I shared my own and a very straight forward approach to the research. Only local newspapers, exhibition catalogues and entry forms were available as a starting point. Later, the *White Pages* provided contacts for former participants of the contest, including Otto Kuster, Kevin Allan, Mimi Jacksin-Berger and Ian Dodd. The interviews, photographs and personal memorabilia added valuable information and illustrations.

While the works were distributed throughout Council premises, including libraries, the collection is not listed as a Council asset and its future is uncertain. Members of the audience shared my concern.

2017 marks 40 years since the last Rockdale Art Award exhibition. Seeing the collection in an exhibition would be a good way to celebrate.

Afterwards I had a question about a connection between our society and the Art Award. The catalogue listing of the Second Rockdale Art Award exhibition (1956), stated 'Historical sketches by Mr Gifford Eardley on display.' The name puzzled me for some time.

Eadley's archives in the State Library of NSW provided me with the answers for which I was so desperate. Over 3,000 pencil sketches produced by this member of the St George Historical Society and author of several illustrated booklets, including six for the society. Rarely seen without pencil in hand, Eardley drew sketches of hundreds of buildings throughout Australia, many that have since disappeared. The works created until the 1950s were presented at the Rockdale Art Award. Gifford Eardley's booklets were published in a joint effort by the St George Historical Society Inc and are available for purchase.

And my journey continues.



Exhibition of entries. [1]

Primrose House Open Day

by Barry Johnson

In November 2016, the Presbyterian Church Property Trust became the owners of Primrose House after the NSW State Government sold the site by tender.

The new operators, Scots College hosted an open day on Saturday, 25 February at the site. Over 500 people, including many members of our society, explored the building, its historic features, the renovation plans and the proposed schooling activities.

Male students from kindergarden to year 4 will attend the new school in 2018, with dozens of interested parents discussing enrolments with staff from the college.

The construction plans include replacement of the first floor southern verandah, a more recent addition which now has a distinctly unnerving slant, with a balcony lining the whole building in the original style. The original vaulted ceilings, marble fireplaces, floorboards and doors will be restored.

The college has promised to hold another open day when the restoration is complete.

While the efforts of our society, the local community, Bayside Council and Garry Darby helped secure the preservation of Primrose House, it is timely to note the effort by Rockdale Historical Society during a similar situation 55 years ago in an excerpt from the 2nd edition of the official bulletin, in April 1962:

“At the suggestion of Mr. Eardley, the Secretary recently wrote to the Rockdale Council to ask if there was any possibility of removing the historic Prince of Wales Hotel at Sandringham to some other position when it is pulled down in a few week's time.

The Council received the suggestion sympathetically and is investigating the cost of such a removal and suitable sites for its re-erection.

If the cost is within the bounds of possibility it is believed that this building could be the basis of Rockdale's first Historical Museum and possibly a

permanent home for this Society.”

At that time, the Prince of Wales Hotel on the corner of Clareville Ave and Lena St was demolished, replaced by the Hotel Sans Souci or “Moylan's”, a more 'family-friendly' establishment. In the 1980s, it was replaced with a gated housing estate.



2 former nurses returned to this room in Primrose House on the Open Day. They both resided in this room while working and training at the site when it was an annex of St George Hospital. Courtesy of Olga Sedneva.



The enclosed verandah in the upper right corner will be replaced. Courtesy of John Veage, the St George Leader.



The vaulted ceiling and light fitting will be retained. Courtesy of John Veage, the St George Leader.

Bexley Aquatic Centre

by Barry Johnson

On Australia Day 2017, the Bexley Aquatic Centre at 98c Preddeys Road opened to the public. This excerpt from an article in the 22 April, 1976 edition of the Rockdale Historical Society newsletter, written by A.F. Day, details the opening of the original pool over 40 years ago:

The new Bexley swimming pool in Rockdale Municipality is situated in an open area at the beginning of what old residents knew as the "first gully". It is close to the source of Stoney Creek now known as Bardwell Creek. In earlier times when the water of the creek was unpolluted youngsters had a favourite swimming hole there. The creek now runs in a brick channel.

The flat area where the pool is situated is surrounded on three sides by rising ground, which on the south and east has been attractively landscaped. This work involved a large amount of earth movement, particularly on the east side. Here the old quarry (below the end of Highgate Street) used by the "Small-bore" Rifle Club since 1940, had to be filled. Nearby the derelict Bexley incinerator was almost completely reconstructed for use as a store for the Rockdale Emergency Service.

The Health Inspector of the old Bexley Council recommended the building of a swimming pool on Bardwell Creek in 1932, the entrance to be in Stoney Creek Road, and a Baths Committee was formed to handle the scheme. The Great Depression was then at its worst and efforts to get a grant of £10,000 for the work from the Unemployment Relief Council was unsuccessful. It was then decided to wait until results of the newly opened Enfield Pool's operation for the season were known. Subsequent to 1934 nothing further was heard of the proposal until recent times.

The completed pool and surrounding park were opened for use on December 24th, 1975. The plaque at the Preddeys Road entrance reads as follows:-

"Unveiled by His Worship the Mayor, Alderman H.E. Kibbey, on Saturday, 6th March, 1976, at the official opening of the BEXLEY SWIMMING CENTRE and its dedication for the enjoyment of the Citizens of Rockdale."

Heating was subsequently installed in this outdoor pool, however by the turn of the century, costly water leaks of up to 20,000 litres each week, heating issues and unstable tiling led to its closure on 30 April, 2014.

In 2008, Rockdale Council began investigations to construct a new swimming and leisure facility of national standing. The project was funded by sales of three council owned car parks and five residences in Chapel St, Rockdale for \$48 million. A councillor stalemate regarding the sale received broad media coverage and the ire of the State Government.

Initially budgeted to cost \$30 million, the cost was reduced to \$24 million after councillor and community debate. The original figure was defended as potentially resulting in lower ongoing maintenance costs.

The new centre, managed by BlueFit, contains a 50m outdoor pool, a 25m indoor pool and play pool. There is also a gymnasium, spa, sauna, steam room and creche.

Although the street has been renamed from Preddeys to Preddy, it is still in recognition of George Preddey's contribution to local church, school and civil infrastructure groups. A former resident of Forest Rd, Bexley, he was a convict shipped to Australia in 1827 for stealing from homes. He tried a number of trades before making his fortune selling timber.



Bexley Pool at the opening in March 1976. [1]



Bexley Aquatic Centre at the re-opening in January 2017. Courtesy of Chris Lane, the St George Leader.

Exhibitions at The Hurstville Museum and Gallery

The Hurstville Museum and Gallery hosts permanent and temporary exhibits of curated selections of artefacts, photographs and audio and video recordings concentrated on the history and culture of the St George region. 2 new exhibitions offer personal insights into our British and Indigenous heritage.

Until 9 July – Bring out a Briton. Between 1945 and 1983 over one million Britons migrated to Australia. This exhibition tells the story of the Rees family and their migration from Britain to Australia in the 1950s.

As a result of the Rotary campaign to help 'Bring out a Briton', 61 families sailed in the Rotary liner ORSOVA from Southampton on March 26, 1958. The Rees family were nominated by the Rotary Club of Hurstville, supporting them as they settled into the community with a job and a new home. The Rees were chosen from a list provided by the Australian High Commission in the United Kingdom, London's Australia House.

Until 13 April - Home on Country. An exhibition of works by Sydney-based photographer Sarah Rhodes featuring Indigenous Elders wearing their language group's possum skin cloak. The images celebrate the role of the possum skin cloak in strengthening cultural identity, connection to Country and the Elders' pride in the revitalisation of this traditional cultural symbol. The exhibition consists of photographs, a baby possum skin cloak from Yorta Yorta artist Trehna Hamm and a video portrait by Sarah Rhodes.

Coming soon - St George on a Sunday. Would you like to be photographed as you demonstrate your favourite spare time activity (perhaps history researching)? Contact the museum to participate!

The Hurstville Museum and Gallery is located at 14 Macmahon St, Hurstville, one block east of Hurstville Central Library. Call (02) 9300-6444 or email museumgallery@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au for more information.



Exhibitions at the George Hanna Memorial Museum

Do you have a family portrait taken outside your house, or a family heirloom that your parents brought with them when they immigrated to Australia?

The George Hanna Memorial Museum is preparing an exhibition titled “**Where I Live**” with a selection of stories and portraits connected to the Bayside Council area.

The museum is now looking for volunteers to be photographed holding a photograph or object that is important to them. Participants will also be interviewed about their selection.

If you would like to participate, please contact Sam, the museum's curator, on (02) 9366-3802 or via email at museum@bayside.nsw.gov.au by 31 May, 2017.

The museum's current exhibition is “**Our A to Z**”, 26 local stories with subjects ranging from the sand hills that once dominated this area, the infectious diseases register, the killer cyclone that claimed 98 cows and the home of the local snake catcher, Snakedomia.

Featured in the exhibition is a wedding photograph (below) from Jean Dunn, taken in front of

Beckenham Memorial Uniting Church.

In 2015 the church was resumed by the State Government in order to improve the flow of traffic between Wentworth Avenue and General Holmes Drive. The resumption brought to an end just over 100 years of history at this site.

‘People think church is dull but in those days that was your fun’ recalls Jean Dunn, who attended the Beckenham Memorial for 78 years.

Before cars became common place, the church hosted a packed schedule of activities that included Sunday School, sporting contests, picnics and fundraisers. Jean met her husband, Jim, through such events and was married here.

The Beckenham Memorial held its final service on 21 June 2015. Though some might lament the loss of this church, Jean acknowledges, “The church is the people” not the buildings where they meet.

Today the original congregation remains united and meets at Horner Memorial Church, Mascot.

The George Hanna Memorial Museum is located in the Mascot Public Library at 2 Hatfield St, Mascot.



Anniversaries - April

by Barry Johnson

4 April 1910

Sir John Grenfell Crawford is born in Hurstville. After completing primary school at Bexley Public, his high school education was interrupted when his father became unemployed. When he did return to his studies, he excelled, completing a Masters degree in economics with honours, before returning to Sydney University as a lecturer and then as an economic advisor to the NSW Rural Bank for a decade. Having briefly experienced unemployment during the Great Depression, he, on behalf of Australia, advocated for trade within the Asia Pacific region at a time when our economic prosperity was strongly bound to our ties with Britain and Europe. During and after World War 2, he held advisory positions, including to the then prime minister Ben Chifley. Crawford remained dedicated to developing policies to improve Australia's agricultural trade with its neighbours, including new agreements with Japan which lessened Australia's dependence on British trade. He received a knighthood in 1959 for his services to economics before reforming the Australian National University as its vice chancellor. He also served overseas, often at the urgings of the sitting prime minister, with roles to lead research and cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific, particularly in Papua New Guinea. [4]

4 April 1913

David Michael Brown is born in Kogarah. At age 20, while working as a clerk, he was selected in the Eastern Suburbs first-grade Rugby League team. Known for his trademark leather headgear, he was named captain of the team only 2 years later, also

representing NSW against England and Queensland. Playing in the centres, he set point scoring records, some still unbeaten today, including 38 tries and 65 goals in 1935, when Easts won the NSWRL title. They remained undefeated throughout 1936 to claim another title. At 26, he married Ellen Wilson in Hurstville and became the youngest Australian captain before joining an English club side for a record amount at the time (£1000 plus £6 per game and a job at £3 per week).



Dave Brown during the 1930s.[7]

Returning to Easts as captain and coach in 1940, the team won the competition but were beaten in the following year's grand final by St George. Brown then retired, with fans dubbing him the "Bradman of Rugby League". After periods as a publican, and a school liaison officer for rugby league, he sought to develop the game in South Africa as its national coach. In 2000, he was named in the Sydney Roosters team of the century alongside Dally Messenger and Arthur Beetson. [5]

12 April 1902

Edward Henry Rembert is born in Hurstville, the youngest of thirteen children. Schooled locally, he played first grade cricket for St George, before developing his skills as an architect in the

Department of Works, mentored by the talented theatre designer Cobden Parkes. Influenced by the conservative Samuel Coleman but also the Dutch modernist W. M. Dudok, Rembert designed an array of public buildings, from schools and hospitals to police stations and court-houses. Amongst his most significant works are the engineering building (now Block C) at Newcastle TAFE and the Hoskins Block at Sydney TAFE. His own home, melded into the landscape of the Blue Mountains, inspired the next generation of the city's architects. [6]

The 45th Battalion – The St George Regiment

by Katherine Grant for Georges River Council

In 2016, a century since the formation of the 45th Battalion at the height of World War One, Hurstville Library Museum & Gallery published *The 45th Battalion 1916 – 1960*, providing a complete history of a military unit associated with our region. The book records the military campaigns during WW1 and WW2, the personalities, including John Hines, the “Souvenir King”, the sporting achievements and training regime during the interwar years and the civic honours bestowed upon this group of local volunteers.

An excerpt follows from the book, which is available online at <http://img.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/Local-History.html> and in the Local History Collection at Hurstville Central Library where a DVD, *Memories of the 45th Infantry Battalion*, is also available to view.

“When the 45th Battalion was first raised in Egypt in 1916 the majority of its members were from New South Wales, but the unit was not affiliated with a single region. It was not until the 45th was raised again after World War I that it became officially linked with St George. However, by the time it adopted the title ‘45th Battalion (The St George Regiment)’ in 1927, the Battalion was a fixture of the region. The 45th first

distinguished itself on the battlefields of France and Belgium, winning battle honours at Pozières, Bullecourt, Passchendaele, Messines, and Amiens, among others. In the interwar years, the 45th became known as the ‘crack regiment’ of its division, winning the 2nd Division Efficiency Trophy three years in a row, as well as the Mrs H Gordon Bennett Cup for Ceremonial and the Vickers Machine Gun Cup. When war arrived again in 1939, the 45th was called upon to defend the coast of New South Wales. Upon its re-formation in 1948, the unit’s new recruits preserved the 45th’s record by winning the 1953-1954 Heath Trophy, which was awarded to the most efficient Citizen Military Forces (CMF) unit. “

“We have a cricket team, we have a football team, we have a tennis team, and most of all - we’re always talking about war - we have a war team. It’s a wonderful team, it has never let the district down...If you look at their record...they’ve been the top CMF and AMF unit...they’re wonderful...and they deserve recognition.”

- Lyall Booth, 4 May 2015



The 45th Battalion at the Singleton Camp, mid 1950s. Courtesy of the 45th Infantry Battalion Association.

Bayside Library Services' Map Collection – Part 1 of 3 *

by Kirsten Broderick, Local History Services Specialist

After the amalgamation of Rockdale and Botany Councils, Bayside Library began working on a plan to digitise its map collection, making it easily

accessible and with the George Hanna Memorial Museum launching a new exhibition of local maps, the invitation to write an article for the St George Historical Society magazine seemed a good opportunity to talk about the different types of maps Bayside Library has in its collection and the uses that can be made of them.

Our maps can give us an overview of the history of the area, of its gradual growth in population and residential development, show changes that have taken place in infrastructure such as transport facilities and dramatically illustrate geographical changes.

Below on page 24

is the earliest original map that Bayside Library has in its collection. Titled *Tracing of portion of West-Botany Municipality*, this map was donated to the library by the late Ron Rathbone OAM in 2006. Although undated, Mr Rathbone believed it was

created just after the Municipality of West Botany was proclaimed in 1871.

The map is difficult to take in at first glance because it is 'upside down'. All the other maps we have of our area show the Cooks River on the top and the Georges River on the bottom. This 1871 map is the sole example we have in our collection of a map being drawn from south to north. A much more typical example of an early map is the parish map below on page 25.

This map is undated but was created prior to the formation of the three St George municipal councils. These two maps have at least one thing in common with each other and with many other early maps - they show the early land grant portions and some of the early land holders. The parish map shows Sir Thomas Mitchell's New Line of Road to the Illawarra and Rocky Point Road is shown on the 1871 map, but other than indicating these major roads, neither map shows houses or indicates any other built feature. There is one exception: both maps show the location of "Tempe". This is a reference to Tempe House, the beautiful home built originally by Alexander

Brodie Spark and an early major landmark.

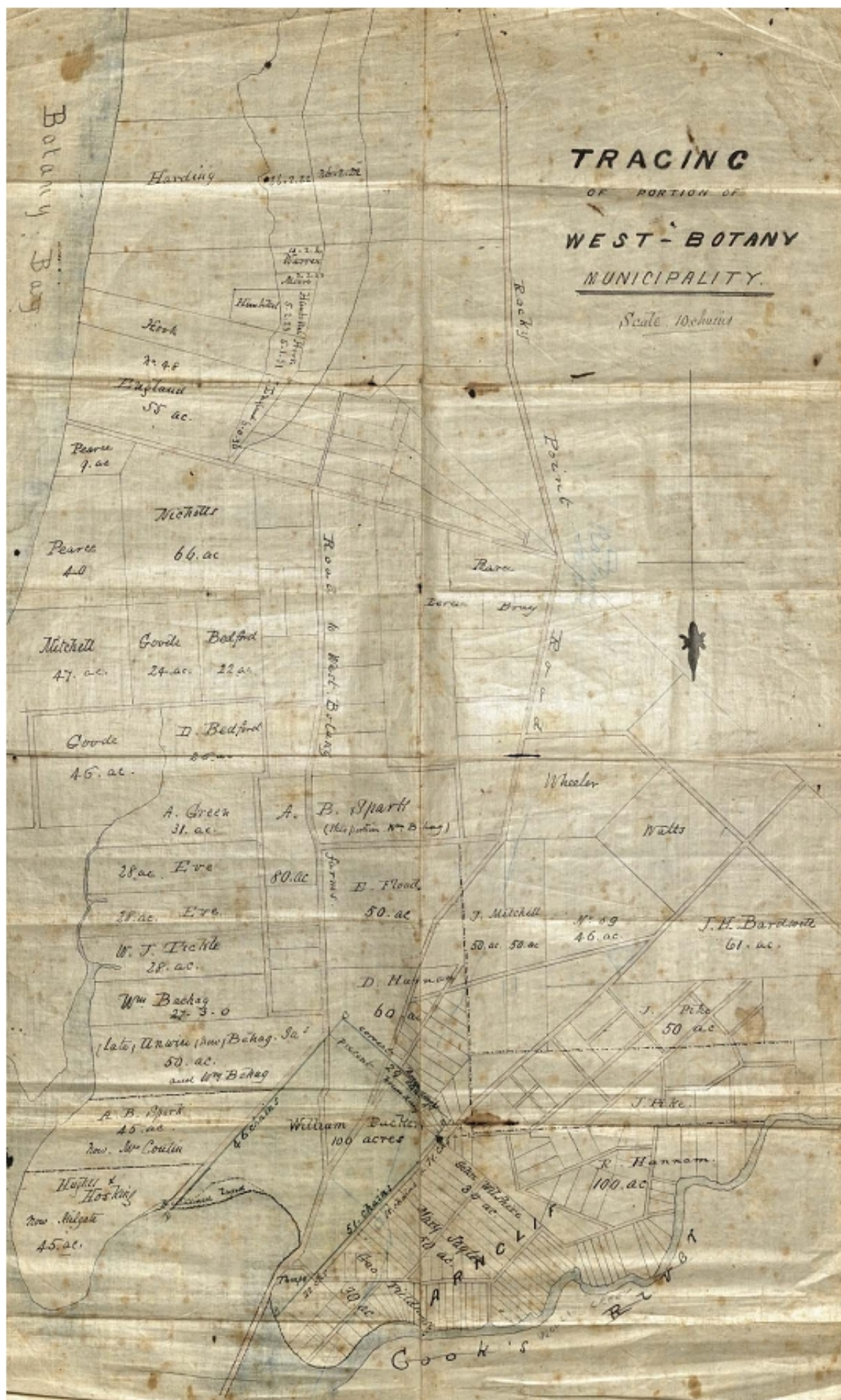
* References and details of online and print resources are in the References section.



Tempe House, built in 1836. [8]



Tempe House, built in 1836. [8]



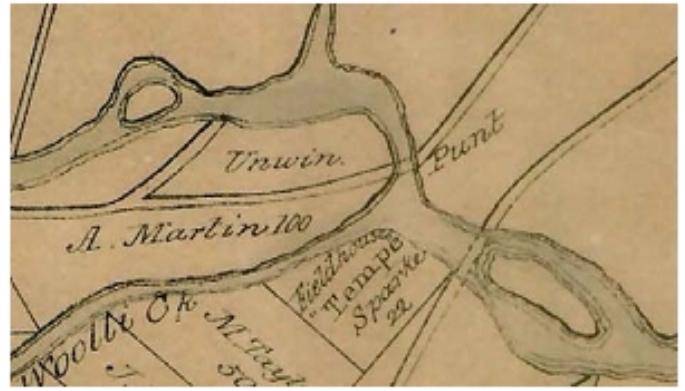
Tracing of portion of West-Botany Municipality. Bayside Library Map Collection, circa 1871.



Parish of St. George, County of Cumberland, District of Sydney. Bayside Library holds a copy of this map. It is available in digital format from the National Library of Australia at <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-229950367>.



Detail from the circa 1871 map of West Botany



Detail from Parish of St. George map

Many maps in our collection are undated; however, it is usually possible to give an approximate date to early maps. We know that any maps that are labelled the Municipality of West Botany were created between 1871 and 1888 (after this date the municipality changed its name to Rockdale). The

first stage of the Illawarra Railway Line opened in 1884. These two facts alone make it possible to date the map below to between 1884 (since it shows the railway line) and 1888 (since it is labelled West Botany rather than Rockdale).



Detail from: John Bartholomew and Co. *Map of the City of Sydney and the adjacent municipalities.* Sydney, N.S.W.: John Bartholomew & Co.

Early maps such as this one often show details and places that have completely disappeared. Many early maps give the name of “Gum-an-nan” (or “Cum-an-nan”) to a small area of land near the mouth of the Cooks River. Gum-an-nan is presumably an Aboriginal name, but although you will often see the name marked on early maps and sometimes referred to in early documents, the origins of the name remain a mystery; the site itself

is now covered by the airport. Just to the east of Gum-an-nan you can see a tongue-shaped spit of land marked “Government Sewage Farm”. Perhaps this area of land is the section of our district that has undergone the most change and that illustrates most clearly how useful our maps can be.

The three maps below show this section of land and how it changed between the 1870s and the early 1940s.



Detail from an undated map in Bayside Library's collection, *Plan of Sydney and Suburbs. Shewing the position of proposed intercepting sewer.* Sydney, N.S.W.: Government Printing Office.

The first map shows the land when it was known simply as “Webb’s grant”. This land - 300 acres in total - was granted to John Webb in 1837. The official announcement of the grant in the *New South Wales Government Gazette* (12 April 1837) is typical of its time. John Webb was granted land: *Bounded on the south by a line commencing at a Mangrove tree marked on four sides at the head of Muddy Creek, bearing east 41 chains to Botany Bay, southerly and easterly by Botany Bay; northerly by Cook’s River to Muddy Creek; and westerly by that creek to the Mangrove tree above-mentioned.*

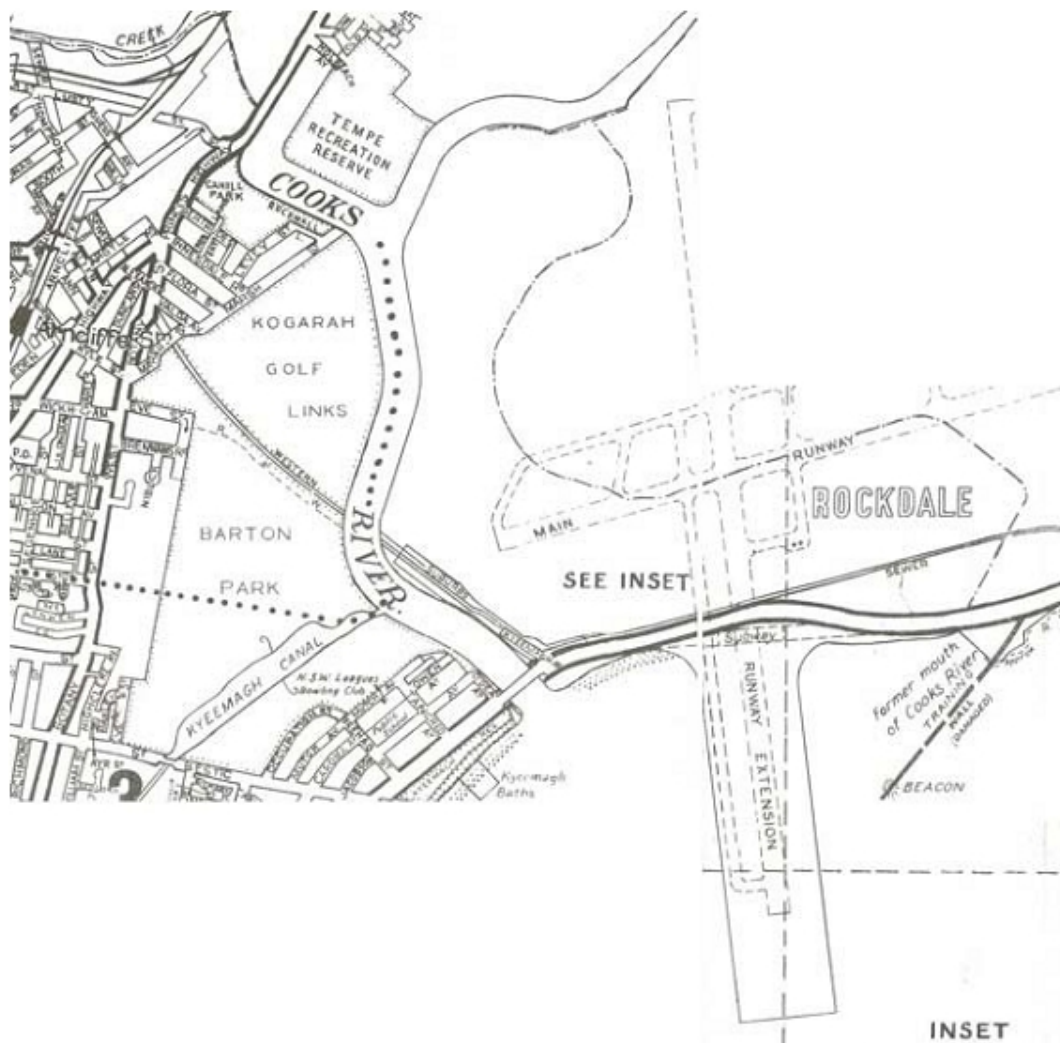
Alas, we have no knowledge of what became of that Mangrove tree.

John Webb’s land, which was never built on and which remained uninhabited by European settlers, was resumed by the Government in 1882 for the building of a sewage farm. The farm was operating within five years and “Government Sewage Farm” is usually all that is marked on maps dating from

the mid-1880s to 1916 when the farm finally closed - the second map is a typical example. The third map shows what happened to the land after the Government Sewage Farm closed - it was redeveloped into a massive recreational area containing golf links, sporting grounds and a polo field. Bounded by the Cooks River, Botany Bay and Muddy Creek, it was an extraordinarily beautiful location, and as it adjoined Barton Park it naturally became a centre of sporting and leisure activities for the district. That is, until it was once again resumed by the government - this time so the Cooks River could be diverted to allow Kingsford Smith Airport to expand. This massive undertaking, which took almost a decade to complete (the work was carried out between 1947 and 1956), saw that whole section of land utterly demolished.

The map below shows the area after the work was completed.

Read part 2 - aerial photographs, street directories and architectural plans – in our next edition.



A circa 1960 map from Bayside Library’s collection titled: *Map of Rockdale Municipality*. Sydney, NSW.: H.E.C. Robinson Pty. Ltd.

St George Dragons – The Year After

by Barry Johnson

In our July 2016 edition, there was an article celebrating the world record achievement of the St George Dragons Rugby League Football Club, winning 11 premierships in a row.

In that article, three factors were suggested as reasons for their dominance – the unlimited tackle rule, a once-in-a-generation squad, and revolutionary strategies, training and recovery practices. The streak of season victories ended in 1966. Were these factors the cause?

Perhaps the most significant rule change in the game's history was implemented in 1967. The flow of the modern game is influenced by the 6 tackle rule, in place since 1971, specifying that “A team in possession of the ball shall be allowed five successive play-the-balls” [9]. Since the game's inception in 1908 until 1966, a brilliant attacking side like St George, supported by an imposing wall of front row players to provide a wall of support, could dominate possession of the football. Although this rule change did encourage a momentum shift between teams, with a winless Eastern Suburbs from 1966 finishing 4th in 1967 to qualify for the finals, St George still reigned as minor premiers in both years as they quickly adapted their attacking gameplay.

Winning successive premierships is a rare feat, last achieved by the Brisbane Broncos in 1998 after the Super League season of 1997. A salary cap stipulated the total funds available to each club to recruit their top 25 players. In place since 1990, it prevents wealthier clubs from outbidding rivals for a team of the most talented players, with the aim of providing a more level competition. In 1967, St George also faced selection challenges. Many of its squad were reaching the end of their playing careers, with Reg Gasnier, Ian Walsh and Brian Clay retiring at the season end and Graeme Langlands, John Raper and Billy Smith playing with injuries. Recruitment offers from the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks and Penrith Panthers as they entered the competition in 1967, drew future talent from St George's junior ranks.

Sports science and performance analysis has become inherent in rugby league as teams search for an edge. Exercise programs, diet plans, specialised skills training, sports psychology and match video review sessions are some of the factors

in a club's success. St George were pioneers in the area of heightened performance in an era where long 'strategy' sessions in the pub were commonplace. Training was deliberately intense, aimed toward making a match day experience seem effortless by comparison. Former St George forward, Kevin Ryan, was lured to Canterbury-Bankstown in 1967 as captain and coach, employing those same methods to defeat St George in the semi final, as did South Sydney, learning from their defeat in 1965.

Before the season began, these factors prompted bookmakers to place St George at long odds of claiming the premiership.

While the team suffered a surprise loss to Penrith in round 4, they were consistent performers, losing only 5 games in the regular season of 22 matches, claiming the minor premiership, and averaging almost 20 points per game, including scoring 42 points each in 2 games against Newtown and Cronulla-Sutherland.

By the semi finals, the team was hampered by injuries, with players taking the field with pain killers and John Raper wearing a back brace. After losing the major semifinal against South Sydney 13-8 in front of almost 52,000 spectators, the Dragons would have a second chance to challenge in the grand final in an elimination preliminary final the following weekend. During the match against Canterbury-Bankstown, a team they'd lost to in round 21, Kevin Ryan, former teammate, sensed victory when the Dragons fullback, Graeme Langlands, was forced from the field with injury. Although the Dragons didn't relent after a penalty goal placed their opponents one point ahead, the full time siren sounded with Canterbury-Bankstown winning 12-11 in front of almost 50,000 at the Sydney Cricket Ground. [10]

Some of the key players in that season were:

- Dennis Preston, winger, the Dragon's top points scorer with 7 tries and 83 goals for the season.
- Brian Clay, five-eighth, from Sydney. An imposing defender, pressuring opponents and controlling possession. He played 200 games for the Dragons.

- John Raper, lock, from Revesby, NSW. Still considered the game's best in that position, scored 12 tries against Britain in a single game.
- Elton Rasmussen, lock forward, from Maryborough, QLD. Played for Australia, and both Queensland and NSW.
- Johnny King, winger from Gilgandra, NSW. He scored 143 tries for the Dragons, and coached the Western Division to a grand final victory in the first Amco Cup in 1974.
- Graeme Langlands, fullback, from Wollongong, NSW. A Rugby League "Immortal" and considered by many as the greatest to have played. He represented Australia as captain-coach, score 1,554 points in 227 games for St George and received the MBE in 1976, the year he retired, for his contribution to the sport.
- Billy Smith, halfback, born in Fremantle, WA. The local junior joined the Mortdale Mighty Midgets during his childhood in the suburb before playing 296 matches for St George. He was mentored by Norm Provan and partnered with Langlands in a series of club victories.
- Reg Gasnier, centre, born in Mortdale. He remained a one-team player and was named one of the game's inaugural "Immortals".
- Ian Walsh, front row, from Bogan Gate in Parkes, NSW. He was captain-coach, both in the premiership winning 1966 and subsequent 1967 seasons.
- Norm Provan, second row forward, from Urana in the Riverina of NSW. He was one of the core squad of players in 10 of the team's grand final wins. He was captain-coach for 4 of those victories and played 256 first grade games for St George, the club record.



John Wittenberg, St George forward, in 1968, "looking like a gladiator of old, taking on four Souths defenders". He was blocked by Queensland from joining the 1967 squad. [11]

Our War, Our Words – Summer 1917

By Barry Johnson

Herbert Henry Holyoake was 39 and living with his wife in Hermann St, Kogarah when he enlisted on 9 February 1916. Before enlisting, he was a coal lumper, tasked with shovelling the 'black diamonds' from colliers docked at the Sydney waterfront to fuel the city's power stations. One year later, a letter home while fighting in France was published in *The St George Call*. He reflects upon the local devastation and the exploits of a friend, George Frederick Congdon, a safemaker from his street, one of 3 brothers serving abroad. George survived to see the Armistice with Germany, effectively ending the war, but died a week later from pneumonia while in France. His brothers survived the war. Herbert returned home in April, 1919.

"I am going to try and outline my experiences since we left. You know we went to Cape St. Vincent near St. Helena. Well we got to Plymouth, and went up to Salisbury Plain to a place called Param Downs. I was about three months there on the Provo. Staff, then went into training, where I met Harry Congdon. He had just come over from the front, and was going, to Ledworth, as head instructor to the Lewis Machine Gun Corps. He has kept his end up well, for his age. He arrived in Egypt as Sergeant Major. When I met him, he was first lieutenant. Since then I heard he is Commanding Officer.

Lieut. Colonel Mal Lamb was at Lark Hill, about ten miles from where I was. I also met young English, Tib Delaney, A. Templeton, and Sergeant Harold Murray.

I left there about three weeks ago, and went into the trenches. Had a lash - out again for a spell.

I met young Stokes where I am billeted now. While up at the line, I met George Congdon. He is just as big a knut. When we were coming out I met Harry Farr, who was previously one of your staff. Stokes is a lad, he was buried with shells three times. We had to dig him in, but he got a bit of shrapnel in his hip, and is still going strong. France has been knocked about a great deal. Where there were fine towns once, there is now nothing but shell holes - some size too - they make fine places to wash in.

Do not think for a moment that the papers surmise things that happen. I did at one time. When I saw for myself I was satisfied. I have been through Ypres and Pozieres, also Albert. Nothing but ruins

now! There is a Church in Albert worth looking at. They knocked the tower about to such an extent, that there is an image on the top standing out at right angles. The tower is about as high as the Sydney Town Hall. All the other towns are flat. There is one more town we want to get, and --- then we won't be long." [12]

Herbert Green, born in Leeds, England, was 27 and living in Belgrave St, Kogarah when he enlisted in August 1915. He was a Methodist Minister, serving in this capacity as a chaplain. He writes a particularly moving tribute for Private Vinton 'Vin' Battam Baker, an iron moulder from Bruce St, West Kogarah, killed during the Battle of Fromelles in France, aged 31. With over 200 others, Vinton was buried by German soldiers on the night of his death. In 2008, the burial site at Pheasant Wood was discovered and his remains were identified using a range including DNA testing. He remains were reburied during a ceremony in 2010. Herbert returned home in 1919.

"The other day Gunner Crawley passed me a number of copies of 'The St. George Call' which I have read with much interest. The one dated April 15, has a good photo of the late Private V. B. Baker, who fell in battle on the 19th July. You may remember me as the Methodist Minister of Kogarah. I have been the Quarter Master Sergeant of the Companies in which Private Baker served throughout the campaign, and no one has seen more of his glorious service, for I have been privileged to be his companion throughout. Those who were his chums in the Kogarah Congregational Baseball and Cricket Clubs, know what a good sport he was, and in the long desert marches, in the fatigue of trench life, and in the heat of battle, I have admired his indefatigable endurance and cheerfulness.

For King and Country he always gave his utmost and best. He truly adorned and honoured the flags you entwine over his head. In our long desert marches from Tel-el-Kebir to the Suez, and from the Suez to the first line of trenches in the desert, he marched in my party. We shared together the agonies of thirst, the blistering of the sun, and we encouraged each other with forced jokes for many a sandy mile, and I never knew his cheerfulness to fail him. Once I started with a party of eight, and

Viv was the only one to finish with me.

In France we manned the same trench. His coolness and pluck was unsurpassed. My duty takes me out into the open every night where bullets fly thick and fast. Viv was with me several times as we ran the rations into the trench under heavy fire from machine guns and he was always the same. I never knew him to do anything but joke at close shaves.

But one day we were called on to take our part in a terrible fight. We had against us some of the picked troops of the Bavarian Guard which had been brought up specially to withstand us. Our battles have often been described to you in the daily illustrated papers and journals. You know what we faced. We had been under heavy shell fire for some time when the order came to charge. As we leapt the parapet into 'no-man's' land, Viv was caught by the machine gun fire and fell with his head on his pack, peacefully and gloriously. We feel his loss keenly to our goodly Company and extend to his friends and family circle the sympathy of his chums. Let his name be well inscribed on the Kogarah Roll of Honour, for he is worthy.

I was privileged to conduct a memorial service with the few of us who remain, in his honour, and I have done what I can to beautify and adorn the grave of our Kogarah hero.

Other Kogarah men with my Company are H. J. Brightfield, J. Broadhurst, R. Frost, G. Perryman, and all are well. P. W. Larbalestier was wounded in the trenches, but I hear is doing well." [13]

Malcolm St. John Lamb, a school teacher born in Armidale and living in Marine Drive, Sandringham with his wife Ethel, was 40 when he embarked as captain in 1914 to serve with the 3rd Battalion, having served in the Boer War 12 years earlier. He was shot in the right arm while in battle in Gallipoli in May 1915, returning home to recuperate and share stories of his exploits to captivated students. One year later, he returned as commanding officer of the 34th Battalion to fight in France, returning home in 1918. In this letter, he proudly describes meeting King George V.

"Just a line to let you know that I am still in the land of the living. The work has been most strenuous, and the weather wet, cold, and slushy. By the time you receive this we will have spent several weeks in the trenches. My men are in great "nick" and are a splendid lot. It takes us all our time to keep our fellows from trying their bayonets on the German prisoners (there are hundreds of them)

working in our camp, making roads and digging drains, etc., I took a photo of a gang of them. They are a strong hefty looking lot. No weaklings or starved ones amongst them.

We are very busy at present and will soon be across the water. It is very cold but it will be better in the trenches than here.

Had a couple of trips to London, put up at Savoy once and at Cecil once, both mighty grand hotels, and had a pretty good time. London is awfully expensive, cannot stay at Savoy, Cecil, or Carlton, and live up to a Commanding Officer or Brigadier General, under £5 a day. Dinner for two at Savoy or Carlton, is £2/5/0. Peaches 25/- per dozen, which was worse still. By the way you will be pleased to hear that I am now Acting Brigadier General. I had four days at Lord Warrington's country home, in Wiltshire (Cliffe Hall). Both Lord and Lady Warrington treated me splendidly. Cliffe Hall is a glorious home, plenty of partridge, pheasant, grouse and duck shooting, to say nothing of rabbits and hares. I also had the honor [*sic*] of being presented to the King, after a big review. Photos were taken of it. I suppose some will be sent to Australia. The King is facing the camera and our backs are turned to it. It was a magnificent sight. For two hours the King sat on his horse, while platoon after platoon of grand big, hard Australians marched by him. He turned round after the first hour, to General Monash (our Divisional General), and said to him, "And yet I said I had no Empire," meaning the Germans, I suppose.

When we had all marched past, we formed up in a Division in mass, which was a mighty big body of troops, and the King rode down our front on his way to the railway station. As he passed, each battalion took off hats, and gave him a wild yelling cheer. He was greatly moved, and turned to General Monash and said "This makes a lump come in my throat." After it rained heavily and we all got wet.

I put in a good deal of time at the School of Instruction, at several places, I have learnt how to blow other human beings to little pieces, with about a dozen different kinds of infernal machines. Next I was almost smothered with several different kinds of gas. After being almost suffocated several times, I learnt to wear gas-helmets properly. We are wonderful looking birds when we have all our ordinary gear on.

Remember me to all friends." [14]

For King and Country – April 1917

By Barry Johnson

During World War One, the local newspaper, *The St George Call*, published photographs and brief biographies of local volunteers to the Australian Infantry Force when they departed for foreign battlefields. The portraits published in April 1917:

A - Percy William Larbalestier, a 23 year old farmer living in Webbers Rd, Kogarah. Enlisting in mid 1915, he served throughout the war, returning home in mid 1919 but dying only 3 years later. [15]

B - Walter Herbert Claydon, a 24-year-old seaman living in French St, Kogarah. He sailed for the Western Front via Egypt in November 1915, one

week after celebrating his sister's wedding as a groomsman. [16]

C - Private John Hugh McLennan, a 41 year old St George Rugby Union footballer and labourer, living with his wife Margaret in Ocean St, West Kogarah. He served in the 30th Battalion for 8 months after enlisting in August 1916. [17]

D - Private George James Sydney Cooper, a fisherman living in Sanoni Ave, Sandringham. Killed in battle at Gallipoli, Turkey in May 1915, 6 months after joining the 13th Battalion. [18]



In the Courts

By Barry Johnson

Although the currency has changed to decimal, crime and its punishment remain a regular source of interest. Prosecutions in the Kogarah Police Court were colourfully reported in *The St George Call*. During the first half of 1917, the most noteworthy cases were:

- Emily Walters, of Cronulla, proceeded against Mrs. A. Myers (her sister) for using the following words to her :- "I will shoot you, you dirty trollop. Come outside and I'll knock your brains out." From this the complainant incurred a charge of apprehended violence.

After a quantity of family linen had been washed, Mr. King dismissed the case, and ordered the complainant to pay £2/2/0 costs or face 14 days hard labor [*sic*]. [19]

- Frederick G. Cooper (34), and May Miller (23) were charged with breaking and entering the house of Clement Hempstead, Kogarah, and stealing a Gladstone bag, suit, coat, boots, panama hat, postal notes and stamps worth £1, cash £3 - in all £13 worth; clothes, boots, and specs., valued £4, various articles of clothing, valued at £10, the property of Victoria Hempstead, and clothing of Alma Hempstead - total value £28.

Evidence was given by the arresting police officers, when Cooper admitted the act and took the whole blame.

Roy Levy said she bought a pair of boots and a suit for 5/- from Miller.

Sarah Hempstead said she left home at 8 p.m., and returned at 10 p.m. on September 2. She gave a list of goods missing and identified several articles produced.

Accused Cooper said he committed the robbery and Miller knew nothing about it. May Miller pleaded not guilty.

Both were committed for trial. [19]

- John Harvey (63) and Arthur Burke (58) itinerant tinkers, were charged with stealing an umbrella, the property of C. A. Pain, of Carlton, and also with using indecent language to Const. Gilies. The plea was guilty, and as the deposition clerk noted they had a "long official history," the sentence was two months hard. [20]

- Morris Zimmerman proceeded against James Kemp for removing sand from his property in Villa Street, Kogarah.

The defence was that Kemp had a permit to remove sand twelve months ago, and when asked to put it back, he did so. Fined £1, damage 4/6, and 11/ costs. [20]

- James Lovett was charged with driving a motor in Kurranulla Street, Cronulla, without a light, and in another case of allowing James Alexander, his son, to drive without having a license to drive a public motor. Fined 15/- or seven days in each case. [21]
- James Alexander Lovett, 18, was charged with driving a public motor vehicle without a license. Defendant had a license, but had evidently not made himself acquainted with the fact that it was issued subject to Public Vehicles Regulations. Fined 10/- or three days. Twenty-four hours allowed to pay. [21]
- E. Smith and L. Smith were relieved of 7/6 and 10/- costs for allowing horses to stray. [21]
- Charles Gleeson was committed for trial at next Quarter Sessions on a charge of stealing four rings, two brooches and locket and chain, the property of Theresa Holland. [21]
- For removing sand from a public place, William McCanly was poorer to the extent of 20/- and 18/8 costs. [21]

A Night At The Pictures

By Barry Johnson

Kogarah Pictures

DERBY STREET, KOGARAH

Monday, April 9

The Divorce of the Daughter

A Tip-top 4000ft. Tannhauser Production

Tuesday, April 10

The Lost Chance, 4300 The Man they could not Hang

A Splendid Film, 3500 ft.

Wednesday, April 11

The Farewell Night

The 7th series, featuring Billie Burke, 6000ft. of

Gloria's Romance

Love's Reward

Thursday, April 12

The Final Flutter

20th Series of THE IRON CLAW

Third Series of The Secret Kingdom

THE COURAGE OF SILENCE

Saturday, April 14

W. S. Hart Feature, 4400 ft.

THE DEVIL'S DOUBLE

and the Sparkling Comedy

THE BATTLE OF LET'S GO

Children 3d, Adults 6d and 1/1

In April 1917, our picture theatre in Derby St, Kogarah hosted these silent films [22]:

The Divorce of the Daughter - Starring Florence La Badie, one of the earliest stars of silent film. Her character's family move to an artist's colony at the urgings of her father, eager to pursue his creative dream. When a widow feigns romantic interest with an early example of a romance scam, La Badie uncovers the truth, whacking the widow's son with

a statuette in a dramatic resolution. Produced by the Thanhauser Film Corporation, one of the leading independent studios in the early 1910s with over 1,000 films. In 1916, La Badie quit the studio and as new competitors emerged, the studio floundered. La Badie died soon after in an automobile accident, making her the first movie star to die at the height of her fame.

Man They Could Not Hang – An Australian film, based on the life of John Babbacombe Lee, convicted of murder in Britain and sentenced to death by hanging. After his execution was aborted 3 times as the trapdoor failed to open, his sentence was commuted. After his release from prison 22 years later, he began a speaking tour as he argued his innocence and recounted the moments where 'God's hand' intervened. The film cost £300 to produce, earning approximately £20,000 at the box office, making it one of Australia's most profitable movies. The original has been lost.

Love's Reward – An episode in *Gloria's Romance*, a 20 part film series. Now lost, this short serial film was released in chapters and is a precursor to soap operas. It featured Broadway star Billie Burke in the lead, as she adventured in the Florida Everglades, finding romance but also encountering pirates and alligators. Other excitedly named chapters included *Caught by the Seminoles*, *The Murderer at Bay* and *The Tell-Tale Envelope*.

The Iron Claw – Also a chapter in a 20 part serial. The "Laughing Mask", a mysterious avenger and precursor to the radio dramas starring Batman and Superman, rescues a "damsel in distress" played by Pearl White with lavish costumes. The pair featured in exhilarating stunts, including an escape from a tram crash and a torrid flood.

The Devil's Double – In this western, a gambler warily agrees to an eccentric couple's invitation to pose as the devil for a painting. After the gambler murders intruding bandits, he flees into the desert, seeking penance as the new widow hopes for his return. William S. Hart, the John Wayne of silent westerns, directed and starred in the lead role.

The Battle of Let's Go – A slapstick comedy about 2 feuding generals.

* To measure approximate durations, the length of each reel was printed. 3,500ft is approximately 52 minutes.

St George Satire

By Barry Johnson

The editorial cartoon, satirically commenting on community issues, has existed since the early 18th century. Our earliest examples are surprisingly familiar, resembling the present-day artistic styles and highlighting enduring concerns.



Tomkins: “And what will Kogarah do now, since Rockdale have blocked all use of the sanitary depot?”

Jobkins: “Have to fall back on the old site I suppose, and run the risk of an action at law.” [23]

This cartoon from 1912 demonstrated the concerns of frustrated letter writers to the St George Call as the odour from “nightsoil” treatment facilities became increasingly fraught for local councillors. Alternative solutions were investigated, including incinerators and eventually, the transfer to ocean outflows.



He sits at the table a-smoking.
While some pour their wrath all around
Nor is he behind with the joking,
In the arguments that abound.
He looks upon things out at Penshurst
As needing special attention;
And when a word is wanted he's first-
Hurstville's Alderman Sam Aston [24]

This poem about Samuel Aston, Hurstville's mayor in 1908 and for 2 weeks in 1911, appeared shortly after his brief 2nd term.

Book Extract – Christina Stead's *House of All Nations*

While Christina Stead, born in Rockdale in 1902 and living in Lydham Hall as a child, is best known for her Miles Franklin award winning book, *The Man Who Loved Children*, she wrote many other works of literary fiction known for the visceral scenes, flawed characters and a satire which still appeals to contemporary concerns.

House of All Nations unpacks the complex world of international banking, pre-dating Gordon Gecko's famous proclamation "Greed is Good" by half a century. The novel, published by Melbourne University Press in paperback and e-book form, is available from the Local Studies collection of Rockdale Library.

Scene One: He Travels Fast But Not Alone

They were in the Hotel Lotti in the Rue de Castiglione, but not in Léon's usual suite. Léon's medicine case in yellow pigskin lay open, showing its crystal flasks, on a Louis XV chair. The Raccamonds, man and wife, bent over this case and poked at it.

'He always travels with it: cowardice of the lion before a common cold, eh?' Aristide reflected.

Marianne sniffed. 'He's afraid to lose his money, that's all.'

The white door opened a few inches and an immense head, with long black hair carefully brushed over a God's acre of baldness, appeared in the crack. Clear brown eyes sunk in large sockets searched them, forgave them. 'Hello, Aristide! Just having a bath,' said the head. 'Wait a few minutes, will you? Sit down, Marianne. Ring if you want anything. Excuse me.' The door shut. In a moment, it reopened. 'Excuse me. How are you, Marianne? Do you want some tea, some—a cockta', sherry? Ring, on the telephone. I'll be with you in a minute.'

The door shut. Water was running behind several doors. Marianne fingered the curtains. 'Why did they give him a suite at the back this time?'

'Perhaps they're full up?'

'So early in spring? No. He must be economizing.' They waited. The water stopped running and they heard distant splashing.

Persuasively came the edged voice of a woman. Marianne pricked her ears and looked at Aristide. 'Then Mme. Léon is here?'

'No: one of his women, it must be.'

Léon's traveling library was on the table: three dictionaries; Cook's handbook; *Winter Sunshine*; the *Revue de Transylvanie*, and *Polish Up Your French*.

'She must be taking a bath, too.'

Aristide shook his head vigorously. 'Léon never lets his women use his bed or his bath: modesty.'

Beside his bed was a faded breast-pocket photograph of a solid woman in ostrich plumes and kid gloves—his mother.

Marianne laughed. 'Fear.'

In a moment more the door opened and Léon appeared, fully dressed and very fresh. Behind him was a dazzling young woman, a Ukraine blonde, with a long plump face, a complexion of radishes in cream, hair in page curls. Her eyes, large as imperial amethysts, roved in an indolent stare of proud imbecility. For a full minute after the sudden splendor of her entrance, Aristide Raccamond found himself bathed in her glare. In the exalted fashion of Paris, she singled out and courted the husband in the presence of the wife.

Henri Léon waited for her a moment and then hurriedly introduced her: 'My friends, Mr. and Mme. Raccamond, old friends, good friends: Mme. Vera Ashnikidzé, an old friend of mine.'

She advanced with studied insulting vanity. 'Charmed, I am sure.' Her manners were perfect, that is, she flouted the Raccamonds outrageously, stirred the eels in their souls, while she went through the polite ritual minutely and coaxingly. Léon allowed them another gasp at his swan and then spoke to her in Russian. With a little frown and a lascivious smile, a short cooing broke out of her throat and she passed to the outer door, wallowing in the swelling air, not giving a second glance to the Raccamonds.

Léon came back from shooing her off, with a bashful family smile. 'What do you think of her, eh? Eh, Marianne?' He flushed. 'I value your opinion, Marianne.'

'Russian, eh?' asked Aristide, somewhat embarrassed.

'Very beautiful: I admire your taste,' croaked Marianne.

Léon made a wry face, recovered himself, expostulated, 'She's a lady.'

SGHS Publications

The Society has many books and pamphlets for sale covering many areas of the St George district, including well-researched books by Ron Rathbone.

Items can be purchased at Lydham Hall, 18 Lydham Avenue, Bexley on most Sundays from 2pm to 4pm, or by contacting Mrs Gloria Henke on (02) 9587-8307.

1. The Wolli Creek Valley – Early History – \$2.50
2. The Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway – \$2.50
3. Saywells Tramway 1887-1914 – Rockdale to Lady Robinson's Beach – \$2.50
4. The Arncliffe to Bexley Steam tramway – \$4.00
5. Our Heritage in Stone – \$4.00
6. All Stations to Como – \$4.00
7. Tempe and the Black Creek Valley by Gifford Earley – \$4.00
One of our society's oldest publications with sketches of Tempe's topography and early settlement.
8. Early Churches of the St George District – \$4.00
9. Early Settlers of the St George District – Volume 1 – \$4.00
10. Early Settlers of the St George District – Volume 2 – \$4.00
11. Guild Theatre – 30 Fabulous Years – \$4.00
12. The Illawarra Railway – Hurstville – \$4.00
13. Rockdale Beginning and Development – \$12.00
14. Sutherland Shire Pictorial Memories – \$25.00
15. Christina Stead by Jennifer Gribble – \$10.00
16. History of the Rockdale Uniting Church – 150 Years Anniversary (1855-2005) – \$15.00
17. Kingsgrove The First 200 Years by Brian Madden – \$20.00

Books by R.W. Rathbone:

18. A Village Called Arncliffe – \$25.00
Named after the “prettiest village in Settle, North Yorkshire”, this book records the settlement and development of the suburb.
19. Brighton Le Sands – \$25.00
20. Cameos of Bexley – \$25.00
21. The Bardwell Valley – \$25.00 (also available to purchase at Rockdale Library)
22. The Bexley Book – \$15.00
23. The Carlton Book – \$7.00
24. The Glen Village – its first 25 years – \$7.00
25. The Sans Souci Peninsula – \$26.00
26. The Lydham Hall Booklet – \$6.00
A history of one of our oldest homes, from the 1860s until its Council purchase in 1970, with descriptions of architectural features and the antique furniture and porcelain.

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References for the article *Bayside Library Services' Map Collection* on pp 23-29:

- All journal and newspaper articles referred to can be found on Trove: <http://www.trove.nla.gov.au>.
- There are numerous online and print resources on Tempe House, the Arncliffe Sewage Farm, the diversion of the Cooks River and Sydney Airport. A good place to start for all four is Ron Rathbone's book on Arncliffe: R. W. Rathbone, *A Village Called Arncliffe*: Arncliffe, NSW, 1997.
- For more information on Moorefield Racecourse see: Anne Field, *The History of Moorefield Racecourse*: Kogarah, Sydney, 2016.
- All of the maps in this article are from the Bayside Library Service Local Studies Collection housed at Rockdale Library, 444-446 Princes Highway, Rockdale. For more information, or to view any of these maps, please contact Kirsten Broderick: kirsten.broderick@bayside.nsw.gov.au or 9562 1821.
- The George Hanna Memorial Museum located at Mascot Library, 2 Hatfield Street, Mascot, will be holding an exhibition of Bayside maps. The exhibition is scheduled to open in mid-May; for more information see the History at Bayside blog: <http://historyatbayside.wordpress.com>.

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