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Front Cover Image – The Mayor of Rockdale, Alderman Ron Rathbone, 1993. [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 – Dappeto, 171 Wollongong Rd, Arncliffe [3].

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St George Historical Society Inc.

The St George Historical Society Inc. was formed in 1961 with former Rockdale mayor, councillor and historian Ron Rathbone, OAM, as the inaugural secretary. First known as the Rockdale Historical Society, it was renamed in 1962 to serve the wider region.

The aim of the not-for profit Society is to conserve and encourage the recording of local history, raising awareness of the heritage of the St George District of New South Wales, Australia. The area includes the suburbs in the local government area of Georges River Council and part of Bayside Council, bounded in the east by Lady Robinson Beach in Botany Bay.

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Welcome

In our first issue for 2018, we celebrate the entries in the latest edition of the Ron Rathbone Local History Prize.

Since 1996, the competition has encouraged research into St George's history and in its 11th year, the scope was expanded to include the entire Bayside Council area, over 50 square kilometres.

Tapping into the insights of 21 local historians, the subjects range from our local personalities, in public service, commerce, education and sport, to distinctive landmarks and suburban life.

I encourage you to read these entries to discover new insights into the names and places we're surrounded with in our communities. The selections include:

The achievements of Peter Depena, an alderman with a name synonymous with local public service.

The Toyer Family, commemorated with an avenue in Sans Souci, and a legacy of achievement, beginning in the 1890s.

The debate regarding the future use of Moorefield Racecourse in the 1950s. The Rockdale Council Minutes became the formal record of this process. Anne Field has compiled these records of the deliberations.

The less enticing aspects of Botany's history, confirming that journalists have a sense of humour and that the most entertaining encounters in history are often omitted from tourism brochures.

Dappeto, now an aged care centre in Arncliffe, and one of 12 of the Rockdale district's state heritage listed sites. Examine the architectural features and the lives of the people associated with this historic home.

Daily life in Dolls Point. While our street names rarely change, our lifestyles have, with technology and development highlighting the value of personal recollections.

According to the 2016 Census, almost half of Rockdale's residents were born in Australia. People born in the Republic of Macedonia represent the fourth-highest proportion of the suburb, and the

story of Tode Kabrovski and many other Macedonians is recounted as they established the teaching of the Macedonian language in the NSW school curriculum.

Walz Street is much more than a thoroughfare beside Rockdale Station. It also commemorates the lives of one of our most pioneering German families.

2017 marked the centenary of a local public school. To celebrate this achievement, the history of a school, where thousands of local children received an education, has been comprehensively recorded.

The popularity of genealogy has inspired a new generation of 'family detectives', and one compelling case has been investigated by a member of the Saywell and Roseby families.

Films are now streamed into our homes with giant televisions and booming sound systems, but a night at the pictures in Ramsgate was a special occasion, and our final excerpt captures this sense of spectacle. While the original theatre was replaced with an apartment block, I'd like to imagine the residents of those apartments meeting in a lounge room as a classic film from the Golden Age of Hollywood is screened on their largest widescreen television to replicate the experience.

On behalf of the Society, I extend a warm welcome to our newest members, **Dustin Moore** of Arncliffe and **Alan Powditch** of Taren Point.

This PDF edition of our magazine is easily searched and includes additional video, webpage and email resources. If you would like to see new features to make the digital reading experience even more enjoyable, email your suggestions to barry.johnson@live.com.au

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 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.

Please update your calendars with our upcoming meetings in 2018:

- **17th February**
- **17th March**
- **21st April**
- **19th May**
- **16th June**
- **21st July – Annual General Meeting**
- **18th August**
- **8th September**
- **20th October**
- **17th November**

Special events:

- **Saturday, 3rd February 2018** 10am – 4pm – Tempe House Open Day. Free Entry.
- **8th March 2018** – Last day to submit your entry in the Kogarah Historical Society's Local History Awards. Three prizes of \$500 will be awarded to essays on any aspect of the history and heritage of Kogarah and the surrounding suburbs, including the environment, buildings, events or personalities. Visit the KHS [website](#) or call Beverley Earnshaw on 02 9546 1091 or Gill Whan 02 9546 4623 for entry details.
- **Saturday, 5th May 2018** 10am – 4pm – [Tempe House](#) Open Day. Free Entry.
- **Saturday, 4th August 2018** 10am – 4pm – Tempe House Open Day. Free Entry.
- **Saturday, 3rd November 2018** 10am – 4pm – Tempe House Open Day. Free Entry.

2017 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize

The prize was inaugurated in 2006 to honour Ron Rathbone OAM, a noted local historian and a Councillor and Mayor of the former Rockdale City Council. Entrants in the prize can submit a piece of research on any aspect of the Bayside Council area: its history, buildings, natural features, people or events.

In 2017, 21 entries were received and a selection of excerpts are featured in this edition. The complete collection is available to read at Rockdale Library, with several also available online at the [Bayside History Blog](#).

- Leonie Bell, *Memorial: Alderman Simon Peter Depena J.P. (1889 – 1964)*
- Dr Garry Darby, *The Terrific Toyers: a remarkable Sans Souci family*
- Anne Field, *Moorefield Racecourse Kogarah 1888 – 1951: Rockdale Council Committee and Council Minutes on Moorefield Racecourse*
- Dr Damian Gleeson, *The Rock of St George: celebrating the 125th anniversary of the first St Joseph's Church-School, Rockdale*
- Dr Graeme Gwilliam, *A History of Freemasonry in Kogarah and Lodge Kogarah, No. 305 of the United Grand Lodge of NSW*
- Robert H. Horton, *Botany Exhumed*
- Barry Johnson, *A Stately Presence: the story of the Rockdale district's 12 state heritage listed sites*
- Ada Kwok, *Mascot Memorial Park*
- Earl Kwok, *Lady Robinsons Beach*
- Silvia Kwok, *Brighton-Le-Sands*
- George Lianos, *AHEPA NSW Chapter Anatole No. 7: 60th Anniversary 1956 – 2016*
- Rhonda McKinnon, *Growing up at Dolls Point*
- Liljana Mitreska, *Macedonian School Council of NSW*
- Karen Pentland, *The Walz's of Walz Street*
- Alan Powditch, *Brighton-Le-Sands Public School Centenary*
- Mary Saywell, *Land south of Cook's River: the colonial lives of the Saywell and Roseby families*
- John Scott, *Early History Pictorial Narratives of Botany, Mascot & Pagewood, the Captain Cook Hotel and the Matraville Hotel*
- Olga Sedneva, *Giff: the story of the Railway Man*
- Michelle Steet, *The Palace Picture Theatre Ramsgate*
- Vicky Yan, *Ken Rosewall: St George's Tennis Star*
- Victor Yan, *The History of Lady Robinsons Beach*

Highlights at the George Hanna Memorial Museum

Mascot Bridge

As the centenary of Sydney Airport in 2020 approaches, Samantha Sinnayah, the Curator of the Mascot Library & George Hanna Memorial Museum at 2 Hatfield St, has researched the history of Mascot Bridge:

Before the Cooks River was diverted for the airport's expansion the river's mouth was located near the modern-day site of the BP/McDonalds service station. To travel to the Mascot Bridge you would have turned off Botany Road at [Ascot Avenue](#), which is now known as the [start of General Holmes Drive](#).



In the early 1930s, the South Sydney Bus Company operated the 237 bus service which connected Brighton-Le-Sands to Mascot (courtesy Bayside Council).

Prior to the bridge, a wharf, known as Puck's Wharf, was a well-known local landmark. It was a popular swimming spot with locals, especially for those who lived in [Lauriston Park](#).

Before the bridge opened there was much talk about what to name it. Some strongly believed it should be called Brighton Bridge as it increased access to Brighton-Le-Sands. Other ideas included General Holmes Bridge and Botany Bay Bridge. Confusingly, people also liked to call it Cooks River Bridge, Mascot. Regardless of its name, the NRMA predicted its opening would take in 'one of

the finest marine drives in Australia.'


Accidents that happened on or around the bridge give us a good idea of how local traffic has changed. For example in 1929, a car collided with a cart owned by a Chinese market gardener from Occupation Road, Kyeemagh. The accident occurred at 2 am as Sun Sing War was taking vegetables to market. The three occupants of the car, from Woollahra, Potts Points, and Elizabeth Bay, were badly hurt, primarily by flying glass.

In 1938, the bridge also made the papers after its span refused to lift for a flat-bottomed barge carrying Golden Fleece lighter fluid. Unfortunately, the tide caused the barge to crash into the bridge's concrete pylon and leak some of its load into the river. Fearing someone might set the river alight by throwing in a cigarette butt or match, the police guarded both sides of the river until the spill was cleaned up.

Despite the fact many travelled across Mascot Bridge, its future lay in the hands of the ever-growing airport. In 1937, just 12 years after it opened, pilot and engineer G. C. Johnson, B.E. presented plans to create a larger aerodrome by re-routing the river. 'Aviators from abroad unanimously condemn [Mascot] as being inadequate for present requirements, let alone for the needs of the future,' reported *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

By moving the river, Johnson planned to extend the airport's diameter from barely half a mile to one mile and a quarter.

Work to re-route the river eventually started [in 1947](#). To fill in the river's old course, huge amounts of sand were dredged out of Botany Bay. In 1951 Mascot Bridge ceased operation after [Endeavour Bridge](#) in Kyeemagh was opened to traffic. At the time Mascot Bridge was just 24 years old.

If you would like to know more about the exact location of the bridge, visit our current exhibition ['We Are Here'](#) to see a fascinating map which shows Mascot Aerodrome just before its dramatic expansion post-WWII. 

Highlights at the Hurstville Museum and Gallery

Award-winning exhibition: *St George Stories: people – places – community.*

One of Hurstville Museum & Gallery's most important objects from our domestic collection is a 2.5-gallon cast-iron cooking pot manufactured by Archibald Kenrick and Sons c. 1913.

The Kenrick Cooking Pot is an object of great significance in the collection due to its popular use in Australian kitchens throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The cooking pot is an excellent example of a key era in cooking technologies in Australia, demonstrating the adaptation of outdoor fire and camp ovens for stove-tops in household kitchens. These were

eventually replaced by lighter and more convenient enamelware and saucepans.

Though such cooking pots were everyday items and used continuously, the Kenrick Cooking Pot is a very good example for its type. It is very well preserved, the exterior is in excellent condition, and it is complete with a well-fitting lid and handle still attached. Our cooking pot is in fact one of the best preserved examples of its type in Australian collections. The pot can tell us many stories, illustrating changes to home cookware as well as highlighting domestic duties and consumer ideas.

See the Kenrick Cooking Pot at this award-winning exhibition.



Wanton, Wild and Unimagined 20 January – 13 May 2018

A playful exhibition of sculptured recycled plastics that stirs the imagination and evokes environmental reflection.

Townsville environmental artist, Alison McDonald, has spent many hours manipulating the humble plastic bottle, and collecting thousands of lids to make a variety of unimagined and impossible

creations inspired by plants, oceans and by John Wyndham's book, *The Day of the Triffids*.

"Humans have long had a love affair with plastic, believing it to be the answer to our eco-prayers. My artworks reuse plastic materials in an attempt to raise questions about the relationship we have with plastic, and about its supposed sustainability," says McDonald about the touring exhibition.

Hidden Gems


20 January – 8 April 2018

Hidden Gems is a selection of historical photographs sourced from the Georges River Council Local Studies collection that celebrates and acknowledges these rich and diverse collections. This exhibition is a testament to the importance of local studies collections, a reflection of times past and how events, lifestyle and individual perceptions have shaped our local region.

Donations

The St George Historical Society welcomes donations. If you would like to preserve items from

your history, please contact us via our [website](#), [Facebook](#) page, at one of our monthly meetings or during a visit to Lydham Hall.

The Hurstville Museum and Gallery also accepts donations. Current priorities include items associated with the heritage of the Georges River Council and the Bakery Building on 43b Bridge St, Hurstville. 

The Hurstville Museum and Gallery is located at 14 Macmahon St, Hurstville, one block east of Hurstville Central Library. Call (02) 9300-6444, [email](#) or visit the HMG [website](#) for more information.



Memorial: Alderman Simon Peter Depena J.P. (1889 – 1964)

Leonie Bell

Peter Depena Reserve is named after prominent Alderman, Master Builder and sporting identity Simon Peter Depena, known to all by his middle name. Having previously knocked back the opportunity to purchase parkland from the Shady Nook Estate, Rockdale Council purchased a parcel of land from the Norman Estate in 1930, bounded on the west by the creek and the north by Russell Avenue, with the idea that it would provide superior picnicking facilities. This added to the existing Cook Park which stretched along the sea front from Cooks River to the Sans Souci Ferry at Rocky Point. [2, 3*]

This addition to Cook Park was formerly known as Dolls Point Park, until August 1961, when Rockdale aldermen voted to rename the area 'Peter Depena Reserve' in honour of the man who had been instrumental in its creation. The reserve was in the process of renovation, with a new kiosk and picnic pavilion in construction, and the time was ripe to christen the rejuvenated park with a new name. The pavilion was also accorded the name Peter Depena, while the trendily designed kiosk with its distinctive, geometric tower was called Dolls Point Kiosk. The dedication plaque and signage describing Peter's contribution to the area has since been removed. [5*]

Located in Russell Avenue, Dolls Point, near the site of the late Peter Depena's home, the park features extensive grassy bayside areas with BBQs, playgrounds and picnic shelters, and is popular for group outings. Over the years, it has been the site

of many family picnics and exuberant Australia Day celebrations.

Peter was the kind of member that every sporting organisation or club loves – someone who was never content to be a passive onlooker, but threw himself into the organisation heart and soul, always available to fill a committee position or organise a fund-raising event. He was deeply community minded, campaigning for improvements to local infrastructure long before being elected to Rockdale Council in 1928. Alderman Depena was a skilled orator who could carry an argument with aplomb in a debate or public meeting. He was a

prolific letter writer, and the St George Call newspaper is full of his 'Letters to the Editor'. He was a man of openness, integrity and public spirit; the ideal local councillor.

Peter was a solid, reliable citizen, renowned for his modesty, honesty and good character, which was considered 'beyond reproach'. He once declared that his aim in life was to be "honourable and just to all". He was always ready to offer advice and assistance to those who solicited help. He was a handsome man, once described as energetic, a straight-goer and a ball of energy.

Although he retired from professional boxing around 1916, he was always ready to don the gloves for a good cause. A benefit concert was held in 1930 to aid St George residents who were suffering from the effects of the Depression, many of whom

were homeless and living in squatter's camps by the beach. Alderman Depena went three-rounds with Professor Russell, 'Champion of Scotland', as part of an entertaining, eclectic program of popular vaudeville acts, wrestling and boxing in the Rockdale Town Hall. [144*]



Simon Peter Depena and Lillian Irene Royall on their wedding day, 8 April 1914 (courtesy of Mark De Pena)


Peter's desire to help his fellow man resulted in friends pressing him to stand for election for Scarborough Ward in Rockdale as an independent candidate in the council elections of 1925, when he was a disappointing seven votes short of winning, pipped at the post by George Barton, who would later become Mayor of Rockdale. The result was so close that he felt success was in reach and he was encouraged to try again in 1928. [221*]

This time he was successful, and Peter's name appears regularly in Rockdale Council Minutes as either the proposer or seconder of numerous motions relating to infrastructure improvements, including public transport, street lighting, road surfacing, kerbing and guttering, public amenities blocks, footpaths and tree planting. He was a reliable alderman who rarely missed a meeting and represented the Rockdale Council as their delegate to the Local Government Association of NSW. [223*]

During his lifetime, Peter Depena was an inspiration to those around him. He showed that vigorous campaigning for improvements to the local town or suburb can reap far-reaching benefits

for all citizens. He participated in life to the full, demonstrating generosity of spirit. Peter was an enthusiastic example of the benefits of volunteering in local organisations; benefits both to oneself and to the wider community. One of his constituents claimed that, 'Alderman Depena is certainly the first male child to be born in Ramsgate and I will go one further, he will be amongst the last to die as far as memory is concerned.' [285*]

Understanding the achievements of our past can lead to greater understanding of who we are as citizens, and our place in the world today, both on a local scale and as Australians. Altruistic citizens like Peter Depena can continue to inspire us in the modern world and we should strive to maintain their memory.

It would be edifying to erect signage at sites that are named for local heroes, to explain their achievements and role in society and why the building or park is so named. Only in this way will their memory and deeds be preserved for future generations, inspiring others to follow their selfless examples of community service. 



Peter Depena stands out in the crowd at the opening of Rocky Point Road, the first concrete highway in the municipality, 1 January 1930. (courtesy of State Archives and Records NSW)

The Terrific Toyers: a remarkable Sans Souci family

Dr Garry Darby

The Sydney suburb of Sans Souci has a long and fascinating history. In the scheme of things it was seemingly better known and more important in the past than it is now.

How could this be the case? Even before 1840 when the advent of Rocky Point Road and the dam at Cook's River opened up the peninsula, the area was noted for its rustic and country charm. Visitors were attracted in their thousands to the beaches, bay and river - initially they came on horseback or in wagons. They came for the swimming, boating and for the unspoiled landscape which offered a "country" experience.

Entrepreneurs like William Rust, Thomas Holt, Robert Cooper Jnr., John Frater and others opened up the territory by recognising the attraction that sunshine, fresh air and bushland had for the residents of Sydney, which, in those times was, in many parts, a smoky, dank and polluted place to be.

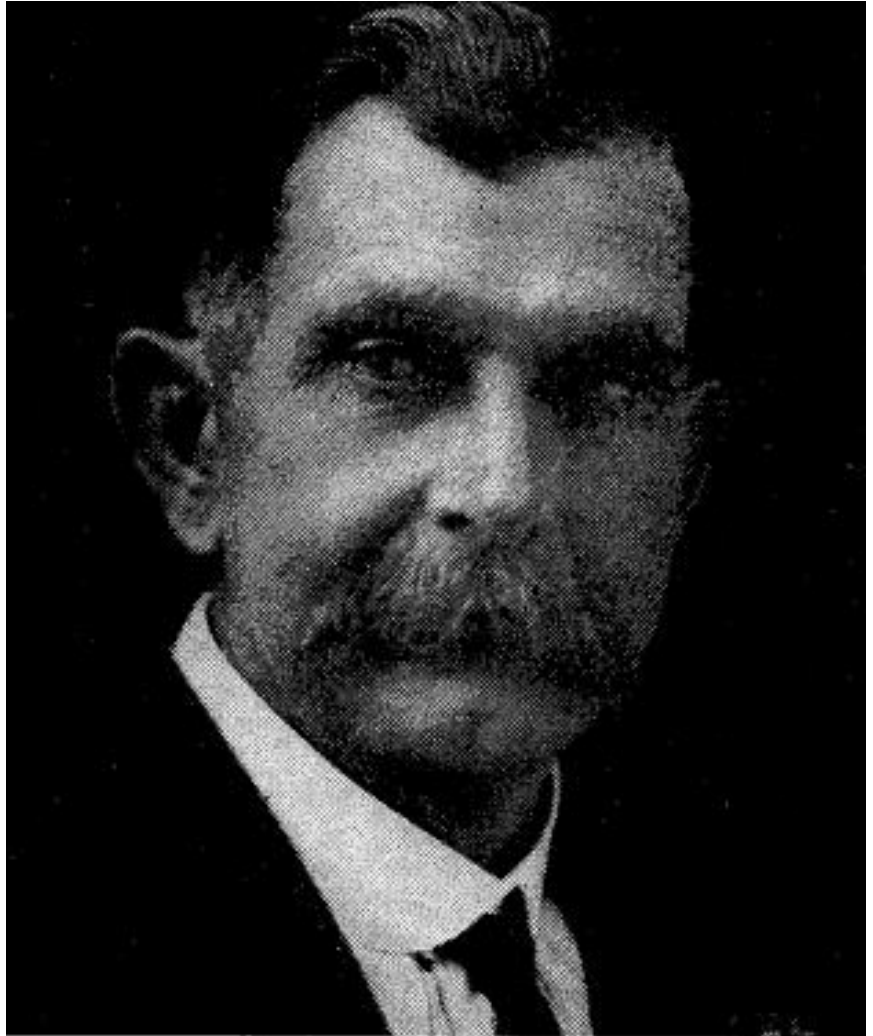
The sparkling waters of Botany Bay, George's River and Kogarah Bay with fresh fish, oysters and sea breezes was an engaging alternative and escape. But how to access these delights?

That question was partially solved in 1884 when the railway came south and Kogarah station was established. Horse buses conveyed passengers from the train station to the playgrounds in the nearby south. Jim Selmon, son of one of the original shell-gathering pioneers, Amos Selmon, was one such transport operator. A huge regatta was staged at Doll's Point to celebrate the arrival of the 'iron horse'.

Then, in 1887, came the steam trams - a wonderful innovation which further opened up the peninsula to both tourists and permanent residents. Large tracts of the area were subdivided for housing. The Depression of the early 1890s slowed progress for a

time but resilient folks progressed nevertheless.

The subject of the essay presented here is the Toyer family. Headed by James Toyer, they pursued a wide range of activities and business ventures which helped mould the developing character and history of the area after the 1890s.



James Toyer (1866-1946) was the patriarch of the Sans Souci family which is known best for their palm nursery in Evans Street and the nearby Toyer Avenue named in their honour. No history of the district would be complete without the examination of James' life and at least four or five members of this family for whom he was the guiding light.

The Toyer family was extensive and James Toyer was clearly one of the family's shining lights. Just read about his accomplishments. He was an entrepreneurial and energetic man with a wide range of ideas about business, sport, education and civic affairs. His accomplishments in the Rockdale Municipality are traced here.

This essay is not meant to be a complete family history. Rather it is designed to highlight some of the accomplishments of the Toyers who came to the area with and after James. Family members, George, Ned and Gladys Toyer were all, like James, pre-eminent in Sans Souci life.

George was to become the mainstay of a large plant nursery at Sans Souci which was operated in Evans St between 1908 and 1959. He was also a respected nurseryman on the wider Sydney scene. Ned Toyer was a young and enthusiastic motor mechanic who helped considerably in James' business ventures, particularly with early motor vehicles on the peninsula and in the nearby Royal National Park. Gladys Toyer was a talented soprano who sang at many concerts in Sydney and the local Sans Souci area. She was renowned, not just for her voice, but for her generosity in performing for war-time and hospital fund-raising events.

Frederick and Arthur Toyer are remembered for their shop which stood on the corner of Russell Avenue and Rocky Point Road. Initially a greengrocers and later a barber shop, this building is fondly remembered by older Sans Souci residents.

Currently, in 2017, David Toyer is Commodore of the St George Motor Boat Club at Kogarah Bay. David has had a long and successful career as a speedboat driver and is carrying forward the Toyer connection which began there in 1920 when his Great Uncle, James Toyer, was the club's first President.

Sans Souci would be a different place had not the Toyers chosen it as the location for their respective lives and work.

George Thomas Toyer (b1891) arrives at Sans Souci

James, was fortunate in having the financial backing that Agnes could provide and, although progressive, he was in no particular hurry. In that period prior to World War One, Australia's economy was strong. Agricultural and manufacturing capacities were strengthened and a bright future for the new nation seemed assured.

In these endeavours James was ably supported by his eldest son, George Thomas Toyer (1891-1967). In his early teens George worked at Beard's

Bedding factory in Camperdown but by 1909, when he was 18, had joined his father and was responsible for developing the virgin soil in Griffith St into the perfect horticultural nursery that, by then, his father envisioned.

George and other workers fenced the area and laid out the nascent nursery. They erected bush houses and storage sheds as well as beginning work on managing the water streams which flowed through the property. Parts of the nursery area were flood prone but from the beginning the problems caused were minimised and turned to the advantage of the nurserymen who needed a regular supply of water for the plants.


During the earliest period of the developing nursery George stayed with his Aunty, Mrs Ann Napier (nee Warner) (1862-1939). Her mother was Ann Toyer (c1830-1911), sister of George Toyer with whom she arrived in Australia on the "Blenheim" in July 1855.

Ann Napier lived nearby on the corner of Toyer Avenue and 1322 Rocky Point Road. Her house "Holmwood" was built 1900-1901.

Indeed, James Toyer was a man of very high standards and was not one to cut corners. Accordingly the progress and building of the nursery was slow but George ensured that all of his father's ideas were realised.

George was to spend the rest of his entire working life of 50 years at the nursery. Known as "J. Toyer & Sons", this enterprise became a landmark in the area and was the largest employer of labour on the Sans Souci peninsula for most of its existence.

The roads throughout the peninsula in the early days of the nursery were rough and ready, many merely tracks. However, this did not deter the Toyers from introducing motor transport to expand their already thriving business.

Most of the early promotional ideas for the nursery came from James who drew on his earlier experience at St Peters. From 1914 George divided his time between the National Park bus run and the nursery came next. The National Park involvement for George, had stretched over 6 years. 

The Terrific Toyers has been published in Three essays on Sans Souci history. [Email](#) Garry at to purchase a copy.

Moorefield Racecourse Kogarah 1888 – 1951: Rockdale Council Committee and Council Minutes on Moorefield Racecourse

Anne Field

The electronic copy of *The History of Moorefield Racecourse (1888-1951)* was launched at James Cook Boys Technology High School on July 14, 2016. July 14, 1951 was the date of the last race meeting at Moorefield.

The hard copy was launched at Moorefield Bowling Club French St, Kogarah on October 13, 2016. October 13, 1888 was the date of the first race meeting at Moorefield.

I had originally intended to include the Council and Committee Minutes, which were relevant to Moorefield Racecourse, in my hard copy. However, after discussion with my publisher, we decided to remove the Minutes.

This material must be recorded in a historical document, and it is for this reason that I am submitting it as an entry to the 2017 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize.

I have read the following Rockdale Council Minutes from 1951 until 1959. The Rockdale Council Minutes provide an accurate report of the events leading up to the sale of the Racecourse, subsequent construction of the residential estate and the three educational facilities.

Town Planning Committee – June 4 1951, page 1248

Alderman Docos pointed out that the St George Technical College had been promised that additional facilities would be provided at Moorefield. There is great need for such extended facilities in this district and the County Council could help by impressing this need upon the Department of Technical Education.

Alderman Carruthers pointed out that provision had been made for a secondary school site in Spring Street but the Council had planned this for a municipal golf course.

Alderman Jones pointed out that a burning question has been the existence of Moorefield Racecourse and the Council has awaited with interest the attitude of the County Council in regard to it. So far

the STC has had its own way and even the Southern Expressway has been diverted to suit them. The Racecourse is a stumbling block to development in this area and it creates a definite traffic problem. The higher area is most suitable for a secondary school and the lower areas could be developed as home sites and as recreation areas. Planning along these lines would be much better than the present set-up. Mr Fraser (Chief Planner Cumberland County Council) pointed out that the Moorefield Racecourse and Southern Expressway are County Plan features and he could not interfere with them in the Outline Plan.

Town Planning Committee – December 16 1952, page 2267

Acknowledging Council's letter after the lifting of the Moorefield Racecourse property from the County Plan wherein the Council asked that it be kept advised of any proposed development of rezoning in respect to Moorefield Racecourse.

The suspension of the County Scheme follows a recent resolution of the County Scheme to prepare an amending scheme in respect to the Moorefield Racecourse and other specified areas. The County Council is now about to commence the preparation of this amending scheme, but before doing so, it would be glad of advice as to how the Rockdale Council desires the land to be zoned in such scheme.

Note by the Town Clerk "I think that this enquiry now poses for this Council a difficult and awkward question. In the original plan Moorefield Racecourse was zoned Open Space. It was to avoid complications arising from this zoning that the Cumberland County Council sought a suspension of the County Scheme. Obviously therefore the County Council will not be prepared to again zone the area as Open Space. It is equally obvious that zoning as a Living Area or Industrial Zone would prevent the continuance of the Racecourse and give rise to the claims feared by the County Council when the area was zoned as open space. Disregarding the question of likely compensation, I

imagine that this Council would be prone to suggest zoning as Living Area. If there is agreement that the Racecourse should remain I think that the best approach would be for a partial rezoning to provide for a relocation of the proposed Southern Expressway more in a westerly direction on the Racecourse property. Frankly I do not like the question posed by the County Council. I think that it leaves Rockdale Council in the position that it must adopt the bold attitude that Moorefield Racecourse must go and the whole area be rezoned as Living Area or that it must bow to the continuation of racecourse activities provided Council can secure its reasonable desire in regard to re-location of the Expressway. I think that the matter might well be the subject of discussion with the Cumberland County Council before any actual decision is given by this Council.”

Town Planning Committee – August 24 1953, page 2871

At this stage by arrangement Messrs Beattie (Kogarah Golf Club), Adams (Moorefield Progress Association), Lewis (Trainers and Owners Association) attended to make representations to the Committee concerning Moorefield Racecourse. In extending a welcome His Worship the Mayor pointed out that the Council has already adopted a very determined attitude in regard to Moorefield Racecourse and that it has submitted a proposal to Cumberland County Council and taken steps to resist the STC proposal for zoning for “A” class industry. However should the members of the deputation have any fresh or further facts to put before the Committee the members of the Committee will be pleased to hear them.

Mr Lewis said that the STC had intimated that Moorefield is not to be used in the future as a racecourse and the question now arises as to what is to be done with it. Racing, he said had two responsibilities:

- a) To provide entertainment of a form which is necessary in our way of life
- b) To provide finance to the State by way of tax for the provision of State wide functions in the community.

There are various views as to what should happen if racing at Moorefield is to cease. Some people favour provision of local amenities but this will require a lot of money in acquisition of the course

and establishment. The Owners and Trainers are of the opinion that Moorefield can be designed to provide for racing, housing, and schools. It is suggested that a St George District Racing Club might be set up which could provide from the revenue from racing all the amenities desirable on that part of the area not used for racing. He asked the Committee to consider the position of the local racing fraternity. They live here and have invested their money here. This applies to 20 or 30 trainers, to their employees, and to the various businesses with which they are associated.

Alderman Barton enquired whether the suggestion is that the Council should take over the course and use it for racing and recreation.

Mr Lewis said that the suggestion is that either the Council take it over or some other responsible body capable of conducting racing.

Mr Adams said that there were two schemes to be considered

- a) The Council’s scheme of zoning which has been forwarded to the Cumberland County Council
- b) A proposal that the status of the racecourse be preserved with certain modifications

The Council’s Scheme if it meant abolishing the course would mean 100,000 pounds worth of existing assets would be extinguished. It would also mean the erection of homes on unsuitable land. He contended that the Rocky Point Road and President Avenue frontages could be developed by homes and the remainder of the land retained for mid-week racing and for golf. The UCV of the land is usually too high for ordinary working class homes. The State Labor Executive is opposed to the Council’s Scheme for this reason. The State Housing programme is not stinted for labour, materials or land. It is stinted for money and the Council’s Scheme does not help financially. Council’s plan of zoning would cause disaster to many people have been established in the district all their lives and the established trainers would have to go elsewhere. The Southern Expressway can safely be left in the blueprint stage, where it will always be, and it need not interfere with the racecourse as it could go through the western side of the swamp. Moorefield should be retained as an area for racing and recreation. 30,000 to 40,000 pounds could be gotten from the sale of the frontages and the area at the corner of Princes Highway and President Avenue could be set aside for a technical college. The residue is only suitable

for a racecourse or a golf course and is of no use for anything else. A St George United Charities Committee could be set up to run the Racecourse and be representative of the Council, the Hospital and all local charities. Racing could be conducted in twelve mid-week days each year and this should net a profit from 50,000 to 60,000 pounds for charity. Such a proposal is supported by local residents. Mr Adams says he already has a petition of 7,000 names and hopes to get 20,000 signatures supporting such a proposal. He knows that the Cumberland County Scheme has not altogether rejected the proposal but is considering it along with the Council's Scheme. Council's scheme for zoning is quite a good one but the Council did not take all the factors into consideration. There are 350,000 in the St George District and they have a right to expect that racing should continue at Moorefield. In the past protests have been made against the abandonment of racing but the STC has always brushed these promises off. The Council is to support the retention of the racecourse and the golf course under the foregoing conditions.

Mr Beattie said that the Kogarah Golf Club is only a tenant of the land. It has no statutory rights and although it has been a tenant for 25 years, and has spent many thousands of pounds on the course, it is always liable to one week's notice to quit. The Club has provided a good form of recreation for 470 golfers (men and women) who are mostly local people. Rockdale Council has done a good job in providing for sport in the district and the Club feels that it too is giving good service in the field. It would be a tragedy to the Club to lose all the money it has invested in the course. Last year it spent 2,900 pounds on maintenance alone and employs 11 people.


Ald. Barton asked whether it would be impossible to continue racing, houses are erected along the frontages, particularly if the parking problem is bad enough now. He also asked whether the bodies represented here tonight are prepared to buy Moorefield Racecourse.

Mr Lewis said that racing would be mid-week when the parking and the traffic problem is not so nearly as great as at weekends. The local bodies would be prepared to discuss with Council the matter of finance. If however another racing body is set up by the State Government would most likely be concerned in the finance?

Mr Beattie said that the Golf Club would be quite prepared to contribute towards the cost of acquisition but the extent of contribution has not been considered.

Mr Lewis said that if racing is to be retained it is quite possible that the acquisition of Moorefield over a period is by the issue of debentures in favour of the STC.

With permission of the Chair, Alderman Barton informed the members of the deputation that the Council is anxious to retain as much open space as possible. The owners of the course, STC, are the people who have a say as to whether the land is to be disposed of. The STC apparently desires zoning for heavy industry as the Council is strongly opposed to this. That is the real matter at issue at present. If the local Club can retain part of the racecourse as open space, even for racing, the Council would not be unduly disturbed.

The Mayor thanked the members of the deputation and reiterated the Council's deep interest in the matter. He assured them that the Council will give consideration to their representation. 

Botany Exhumed

Robert H. Horton

Botany – An exhumation of a nineteenth century community is an attempt to provide a flickering kaleidoscope of the senses, the sounds, sights, smells, touch and taste of the past, which we living in the sanitised and virtual reality of our present, are the lesser for ignoring. The somewhat vain hope is that this work might provide inspiration to others, such that Botany might become our Downton Abbey. That they both have at their core Lords, one Grantham, the other Simeon, might give us some hope.

Botany was dead to begin with. The Sydney Airport Authority had said so, and hadn't they provided a concrete slab of some enormity, tastefully bitumenised in black, which testified to the fact. The property developer having had any guilt assuaged by a suitably academic heritage study, provided monumental towers. The Cooks River, on recognising death was eminent, turned its face and sought refuge to the south, where it entered the sea.

To begin our exhumation. Botany is unique, the only community in our world to be given that name. It is however in its history that we should begin to see just how unique it is. The Botany we shall attempt to warm to life, is not the larger area of Botany Bay, neither the district of Botany, (a large area including Canterbury,) neither is it the Botany Bay, used as some sort of euphemism for the Colony of N.S.W. It is the relatively small area bounded on its east by the sea and enclosed in swamp and sand on its other boundaries. The advantages of its proximity to Sydney were largely negated by the slough of despond it inhabited.

Lt. James Cook, latterly Captain, on Thursday 3rd May 1770 journeyed up the river which now bears his name - *We landed and travel'd some distance inland. We found the country much richer, for instead of sand I found in many places a deep black soil which we thought was capable of producing any kind of grain, at present it produceth besides timber as fine a meadow as ever was seen, some few places were very rocky, the stone is sandy and very proper for building.*

Eighteen years later, when Arthur Phillip arrived with the First Fleet of convicts. He believed the bay

was too shallow and exposed, and the soil around its perimeter was sandy and unsuitable for cultivation. The supply of fresh water was inadequate. On 18th January 1788 he wrote – *Several runs of water were found in different parts of the bay in the northern part of it is a small creek, which runs a considerable way into the country, the sides of it are frequently overflowed and the low lands near it are a perfect swamp.*

Captain Watkin Tench of the Marines was even more dismissive. *A Survey of Botany Bay took place in September. - I was of the party, with several other officers. We were unanimously of opinion, that had not the nautical part of Mr. Cook's description, in which include the latitude and longitude of the bay, been so accurately laid down, there would exist the utmost reason to believe that those who have described the contiguous country had never seen it.*

This George Johnstone was he, of the 'Rum Rebellion' fame. Whether alcohol, or the state of the road was to blame for the accident we shall never know. Note that it is Andrew Byrne's servant that drives the cart. Byrne's address is O'Connell St. Sydney. The larger land owners or 'settlers,' at Botany, may well have, for the most part resided in Sydney.

August 1815; Yesterday evening as Mr. G. Johnstone, of the Commissariat, was taking an airing on horse back on the new road to Botany Bay, his ears was attracted by a moaning at the side of the road; where he found a man lying on his back, unable to move, and a mare and cart overturned, the mare with one of her forelegs broke short at the fetlock. The cart, which belonged to Andrew Byrne, at Sea View, was going thither with a lading of boards, the noise occasioned by which, as the poor man (who is Byrne's servant) conjectured, had frightened the mare, and occasioned the disaster. He was taken into the Hospital the same evening, and the unfortunate animal lay this afternoon on the spot where the accident occurred, incapable of removal.

Here we have clear evidence of Simeon Lord, an

often absent but nevertheless significant mover and shaker, in having land at Botany.

January 1816; NOTICE. Whereas many Depredations have been committed on the following LANDS, the property of the undersigned, viz.— And, One hundred and thirty five acres of land, called Johnstown, near Botany Bay, enclosed by the Creek and a ditch fence; which fence, together with the crops now growing on the said farm, have been damaged by Stock straying there-on without any Keeper. He hereby strictly forbids all persons whatever trespassing on the above LANDS, on pain of the most rigid Prosecution; and all cattle found thereon in future will be impounded. SIMEON LORD.

The difficulties of travelling to Botany:

June 1829; Ifyou should take the short cut to Botany, be careful that you keep a respectable distance from every thing in the shape of a bog. We give this caution from experience, as a friend of ours got into a strange predicament last season, by not paying attention to our advice on this head. For trusting to his own foresight, he advanced boldly forward, poor soul, till he could advance no further. In short he was hard and fast in a bog.he remained bellowing like a calf for the space of two hours, when he found himself on firm ground again. But, a la Highlands, he skulked into town after night-fall, as an embargo had been laid on the legs of his breeches.

In April of 1848, on his ordination the Rev. James Hassall began ministering at St. Peters Church, Cooks River. In his memoir, *In Old Australia*, published in 1902, he reflected on his time at Botany.

My parish, in those days included Newtown, Botany, Cook's and George's Rivers, Petersham, Canterbury, and George's Hall within three miles of Liverpool. I must say, I never have had since a worse class of people to deal with than were some of the old fishermen, at Botany, and the charcoal burners between George's and Cook's rivers (although afterwards I was a gaol chaplain for fifteen years.) The district was as wild and godless a place as I have ever known, although so

near Sydney. Still I have baptised as many as eight children at a time from one family, and had the satisfaction of starting a school there with forty children, and another at Canterbury with as many more.

The lot of the city dweller is not a happy one when it comes to the quality of water.

February 1866 THE WATER DEFECT - Public attention has at length been awakened to the injurious effects produced by that 'villainous compound' jocosely called 'pure water' that is daily pumped up from the bog at Botany ... The Botany 'water' is both deficient in quantity any detestable in quality ... the sooner our supplies are drawn from a purer source, the more beneficial it will be for the public health.

The New Year's Day holiday found a multitude seeking pleasure.

2nd January 1880 - BOTANY - The Sir Joseph Banks pleasure grounds at Botany were very largely patronised yesterday, it being estimated that at least 5,000 persons present during the day. The amusements provided were of a varied character, dancing forming the greater attraction ... in the afternoon a concert was given ... Mr Gordon Barker performed a number of magical tricks, in a temple devoted to that art, and the proceedings generally were enjoyed by the Young Australian Band, who played during the day.

Even in 1882, much of what was Botany has gone, the writer being only relieved of his melancholy by a visit to the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel.

In an Illustrated Guide to Sydney of 1882:

BOTANY, During holiday season, is often made accessible by steamer, skirting "round the rough and rugged rocks," but on ordinary occasions we may take the tram-car-fare, 6d. which runs at short intervals from the terminus, Bridge Street, direct to Botany; or we may hire a cab, and so take a more extended drive round the historic region of Botany Bay. We pass through Redfern and Waterloo, thriving suburbs, almost part of the city. On the road are large kerosene works just beyond Waterloo. Market gardens have usurped the place of the bright epacris and the varied baronia.

Vegetable life is but the counterpart of animal life-the uncultured must give way. There are of course, a few specimens of wild flora, but in nothing like their old magnificence. those who remember the road to Botany in years gone by are not surprised at the name given by the first discoverer referred to in our introduction. We know most of the wild flower regions of the colony, but none to compare in variety and richness with Botany, as it was. Midway on our journey a signboard "o'er the road" announces the welcome Half-way House. Arrived at the Bay we pay our respects to Captain Cook's companion by drinking a health in the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel. At this place of public resort are well-kept gardens, quoit grounds, skittle alley, dancing pavilion - in fact, all the surroundings necessary to brush away the cobwebs of the city from the brains of excursionists. The historic ground whereon Captain Cook first set foot is marked by a brass tablet, and here, too, is the column "A la memoire de Monsieur de la Perouse," the intrepid French explorer, who was just too late to carry out his intention of annexing this great land to la belle France, and whose melancholy end the world of science deeply deplored. "Strolling on the sands," we see the waterworks that supply Sydney, well worth inspection, the spongy ground and sand beds around forming splendid reservoirs and filters for the water. The service pipes are filled by pumping to an elevation sufficient for gravitation. No visitor should leave our shores without first visiting that spot wheron [sic] might fly the flag of all nations; where civilization [sic] first planted its ensign on a continent known to the Chinese (1619), seen by the Dutch (1606), patent to the Spanish (1605), declared British by Cook, assisted in his researches by Sir Joseph Banks, and sacred to France through the gallant La Perouse.

The tram indeed had brought the wrong sort of people!

June 1883 - BATHING AT BOTANY - Botany is not at any time a pleasant place for bathing, the foreshore being too shallow, far-reaching and ... and

stinking. ... beyond the disagreeabilities of Botany as a bathing place itself, it seems that some who bathe there add mental to the physical horror of the place ... a letter ... which tells things about "bathing at Botany" that surpasses in immorality the "etablissement des bains" or the performance of the rites of the "Bona Des" with the accompanying coarseness to which even pigsties ate strangers. ... people who like to leave the crowded city and closer suburbs ... respectable people visiting Botany...should be made unwilling witnesses to indecency and unwilling hearers of obscenity ... a number of young women went bathing nearly opposite the tramway terminus at Botany and were watched with critical eyes, and commented on with the most disgusting language by some men standing on the shore ... the scene at Botany ... outraged humanity and shocked all that was decent ... the matter is the police ... where were they whilst beasts were bathing and brutes looking on ... it is within the province of the police to see that at least common decency is observed at Botany.

An act of mild criminality may well be an appropriate place to end our exhumation.

June 1891 - Sunday Selling - James Park, licences of the New Half-way House Hotel, Botany-road, was carted with selling liquor on Sunday. Constable C. Quelch stated he saw a number of men admitted into the defendant's hotel on Sunday morning ... He caught Mrs Park in the act of serving them liquor, and as he was taking up one of the glasses of rum she rushed at him and spilt the liquor all over his clothes. Mr Park came out of another room and said, "Come into the parlour, old boy, till I have a yarn with you." The constable refused ... and opened the door to Constable Vane. Augustus Juhrs, one of the men who entered the hotel, stated that he never received a glass of liquor, and that if he had he would have drunk it. ... seeing how hard it is to get into a hotel on Sunday." William Long ... asked for a glass of rum, but the policeman grabbed it before he received it ... defendant £3 and 5s 6d costs.

SGHS

A Stately Presence: the story of the Rockdale district's 12 state heritage listed sites

Barry Johnson

Dappeto

171A Wollongong Road, Arncliffe (1885)

Born in 1841 at Mullet Creek, south of Wollongong, Frederick John Gibbins would remember the Aboriginal name for his birthplace, Dappeto, spelt Dapto more recently, upon his arrival in Rockdale four decades later. He would also ensure his own family would never be short of a handkerchief, the theft of the simple cloth having led to his father's expulsion from Britain, arriving in Australia with hundreds of other convicts aboard the 'Claudine' in 1829.

He was sentenced to 14 years punishment in the new colony for his crime, but still finding time for romance, he married Ann Meredith in St. Liverpool's Luke's Anglican Church on 16 March 1840. While his own history was tainted with a criminal record, his wife's ancestors brought a modicum of respectability to the Gibbins family name, with Ann's grandmother serving as the steward to John Marshall, the Captain of the 'Scarborough', a ship in the First Fleet.

At age nineteen, Frederick married Catherine Pickett and while living at Kent St, Sydney, their family grew with the couple producing nine children - six sons, Alfred, Ernest, Frederick, Walter, Edwin, and Percy, and three daughters Emma (Pattison), Amy (Thom), Ada (Stead). Percy, their youngest son, died in 1885, prompting a break from their previously happy home. While he may have been planning a move to a larger estate in a more natural setting, this tragedy heightened his efforts to complete construction of a new home, Dappeto,

soon afterward.

He had purchased 11 acres of land in the St George Parish, previously part of a Crown land grant to Thomas Hill Bardwell in 1853. After Bardwell sold his grant to George Penkivil Salde, it quickly changed hands to Frederick in 1881.

Frederick found his fortune on the ocean, selling oysters caught in Sydney Harbour and becoming a magnate in the trawling industry as he formed the largest oyster merchant firm, Woodward, Gibbins & Comino, in NSW in 1906, partnering with Comino Athanassio, Charles Edward Woodward and John Moriarty.

He also had a talent for architecture, initiated in his youth while exploring the large estates in Wollongong, seen as palaces in comparison to the cramped terraces in Sydney's inner-city. While sandstone was a common construction material during this period, in plentiful supply once split

from the large tracts of stone, Gibbins chosen another popular material, sand-stock bricks, sourced locally from the Arncliffe Brick Works, the same factory supplying the materials for many of Rockdale's historic buildings.

Whaling in Sydney Harbour was the most lucrative export for the colony during the late-19th century.

Gallons of oil were

syphoned from each humpback whale claimed during the annual migration season for the giant mammals, as they swum along the eastern coastline. Frederick used this oil to coat the bricks as a protection against moisture during rainstorms and dew-coated winter mornings which would otherwise seep into the porous material. As the mass production of chemical solutions was in its



Dappeto, built in 1885. [3]

infancy, including the supply of house paint and lacquer, whale oil was instead used without hesitation as a protective coating and a fuel source.

Dappeto rose two storeys in a Victorian domestic style architecture, topped with slate tiles, patterned over the arched roof beams. In memory of his great-grandmother and her nautical responsibilities, he added an ornate cast-iron spiral staircase, named the Captain's Walk. Climbing those stairs, guests could look beyond solid-iron balustrades lining the verandah, trimmed with iron which descended to the ground floor iron friezes.

The fireplaces are central features of each room, even when empty of the warm, flickering orange and red flames dancing beneath the richly coloured mantles of imported English timber.

After 'christening' his home with the name Dapetto, Frederick etched the name above the fanlight, also creating a coat of arms marked with his initials and displayed above the side bay window. The home was ensconced in a curated garden, under the stewardship of Mr. Hardge, an award winning member of the Horticultural Society of NSW, with his healthy blossoms of ornamental flowers, including fuchsias [63*].

When Frederick passed away in February, 1917 at the age of 75, the home was sold for £5,325, with the surrounding grounds divided into 54 allotments and sold at auction four months later [64*].

The quality of the decorative elements Dapetto ensured these qualities would be retained after the site was re-purposed as a girls home when the Salvation Army purchased the building and five surrounding allotments, with the site now also known as "The Nest" [37*]. Charitable organisations were particularly important for the welfare of the needy as World War One claimed

thousands of local lives. Orphaned children lived in "The Nest" until 1969, when the service continued in the Stanmore Children's Home. As southern Sydney's demographics changed, with the average age of residents rising, the 'Salvos' drafted plans for a senior citizen's complex, opening in 1971 as Macquarie Lodge, with refurbished residential units, a hostel and a nursing home. Despite no local or State heritage orders applying to the property, the architects were mindful of the historic, aesthetically pleasing aspects of the building's interior, again ensuring their retention.

In 1986, Rockdale Council placed an interim heritage order on the site, which became permanent three years later. At the end of the 20th century, Dapetto entered the lists of the State Heritage Register, a fine example of 19th century domestic construction, with an enduring architectural presence in a street, suburb, and local government area experiencing vast change during those 114 years.

As the site is domestic, the State Heritage Register does not specify the criteria upon which the significance is assessed, but there are elements which can be inferred. Dapetto is one of the few remaining original Victorian styled homes in southern Sydney, significant for its associations with a child of a 'First Fleeter' and a dominant figure in the fisheries industry.

Aesthetically, it is a beautiful example of the use of sand stock bricks, a

typically cold and functional construction item, but with an oiled coating, the tone is welcoming and protective. The attention to detail, using cast iron and expensive foreign timber, elicits a sensation of longevity. The site is rich in symbolism, inviting study by architects, historians, artists and sociologists to contrast the changing designs of the family home. Dapetto is a rare and authentic example of the Victorian era style both within NSW and Australia.

SGHS



Dapetto, built in 1885. [3]

Growing up at Dolls Point

Rhonda McKinnon

The question has often been asked *What is your earliest recollection in life?*

Over the years I have tried to recall that moment and the same picture always comes to mind. I was standing at the front gate of my home at 16 McMillan Avenue, Dolls Point in 1948, waiting for my sister to come home from school. I would have been 4 years old and my sister Maree, 6 years of age.

Reginald and Emily (nee Cairncross) Hazel, my parents, had purchased this home in 1946, after my father returned from naval service in the Mediterranean. Many servicemen began buying or building houses at Dolls Point in the years following World War Two. A baby boom began in the area and the village of Dolls Point grew rapidly over the next decade.

I grew up in this era and enjoyed the pleasures of living in this beautiful seaside suburb. We took a short trolley bus ride to school each week day and weekends were spent in our playground at Dolls Point Park. We were never short of a friend as the streets of Dolls Point were lined with children of the same age. Some of these friendships have lasted a lifetime.

I thank my parents for choosing Dolls Point as the place to raise their children. The wonderful memories I have of *Growing up at Dolls Point* needed to be told.

McMillan Avenue

By the 1920s the area was well known for holiday

resorts and picnic outings and this led to the growth in population of the suburb. Several of the streets in Dolls Point crossed over Clareville Avenue and had access to the beachfront at one end and a cul-de-sac at the smaller end. Many of the residents were fishermen and oyster farmers.

During the 1930s and 1940s, after the Depression and particularly when the servicemen returned from war, land and housing sales increased. This allowed more employment in the area as the suburb became more residential. During this time gas, electricity and telephones were new conveniences connected for the residents.

We lived in Elselyn, at No.16 McMillan Avenue, a two bedroom brick home. Our street was located between Russell Avenue and Sanoni Avenue, an unpaved street scattered with houses that had

vacant blocks (paddocks) beside them. The street was divided in two with Clareville Avenue crossing between the long end and the shorter end.

I can remember most of the people that lived in the street, particularly the families from the east end of the street. The

Mercer and Dent family homes faced Cook Park on our side of the street. Fred and Myrtle Strutt lived on the opposite side facing the park with their children Alma who married Sid Young, Freddie, Wendy who married Harry Abraham and young Alan. I remember having a few feeds off the grape vines that grew around their verandah. The family moved to Greenwell Point where Fred died in 1988 and Myrtle Strutt died in 1991.

I vaguely remember James and Vera Brett in No.3, who made pottery. The Michael family, who later



Diesel Bus – Circular Quay to Dolls Point No.302 & No.303

purchased this home, had big trucks and supplied us with tyres for our bonfires. In the early 1960s the Allen family moved into this house, they also had large trucks. Alfred and Alma Dern and daughter Heather lived in No.5. They worked in the grocery shop on the corner of Clareville Avenue and McMillan Avenue, which was owned by Walter and Amy Harper in the 1950s.

The Dooley's house was another new addition to the street at No.6. Alf Dooley was a policeman and they moved to the Wollongong area. This house was later purchased by Gib and Marj Darby. I can remember when the Cartwright's house was built at No.8. They had two daughters, Margaret and Cathy. Margaret married Don Selmon and Cathy married Wally Clements, two local boys. Mrs Cartwright was a nice quietly spoken lady, who died in 1982 and her husband Tom, who was a trucking contractor, died in 1986.

Colin and Gladys Carter and family lived in No.10 but later Norman and Clare Stokes moved into this house. They had nine children, Norm, Sue, Peter, Elizabeth, Dianne, Kathy, Teresa, Donna and Kevin. Norm was always working under cars or trucks and son Normie followed in his footsteps. Wally and Mavis Gordon lived next door to the Stokes family and they had two daughters Maureen and Marianne.

Between No.7 and No.17 was bush, with a laneway going through to Russell Avenue. Eric Berry's safe factory was situated in the laneway. Turnbull's house, where fishing nets always hung over the front porch, was on the corner of Russell Avenue and this laneway.

A vacant block of land near the laneway was used for our bonfire each Empire Day, on 24 May each year. In the weeks before, we cut down bushes from near the creek in Horbury Street and dragged them home to build our bonfire. We purchased our crackers from Mrs Nagle's shop, they included bungers, sky rockets, tom thumbs and the pretty ones such as Mount Vesuvius, Roman Candles and sparklers.

Our next door neighbours in No.14 were Alan and Phyllis Trivett. They had four children, John, Ross, Phillip and Suzanne. Phyllis married Athol Palmer in 1961 and they lived in Russell Avenue. Sadly Phyllis died in 1988.

Brian and Merle Parkhill operated the corner store for a few years before it was converted into a hairdressing salon. In the early 1960s the Parkhills

purchased No.14 McMillan Avenue and they lived there with their children, Cherie, Trevor and Karen. Brian died at Taree NSW in 1995 and Merle died in 2004.

Our other next door neighbours built their house some years after we moved in. They were George and Eileen Collinet, who had two sons Jimmy and Anthony and daughter Mary who was born after they moved in. They moved to Kogarah and then later to Kingscliffe. Eileen died there in 1991 and George died on the Gold Coast in 2008. George had a sister Jean who married Bert Elliott. They lived at Zetland and built their house at No.27 where they lived with their children Carmel, Robert and Jean's father. Bert died in 1979 and young Robbie died in 1986. Norm and Millie (nee Collinet) Wilson, lived in the short-end of McMillan Avenue. They had two daughters Joan and Betty and a son Brian. Norm Wilson, a French polisher who made our bedroom wardrobe, worked at F. R. Wolstenhome at Rocky Point Road, Kogarah.

George and Eileen Collinet, our neighbours, sold their house to Ralph and Noela Greenstein. They had two daughters, Lyn and Lee. They moved to Budgewoi on the Central Coast, where Ralph died in 1993 and Noela in 2010.

Opposite our house in No.17 lived the Bernie family. Charles and Joan had children, Bronwyn and Paul, and some years later had twins, Mark and John, and then another son, David. Charles Bernie worked at Hygienic Containers. He had a car and each afternoon he piled the kids inside for a ride around the block. We loved this daily treat as not many families owned cars at this time. The family later moved to Sans Souci. Charles died in 1996 at Fairlight and Joan died at Manly in 2008.

In No.19 lived Wal and Sylvia Philpott with their two sons Richard and Alan. Number 21 was a rather large brick home where George and Catherine 'Avice' Bradford and their daughter, Jean, lived. Later the Pausey family bought this property. Robert and Dot Pausey did not have children so treated the kids in our street like their own. They were one of the first in the street to own a TV set so we were allowed to go over to their house every afternoon to watch the Mickey Mouse Club. They owned a weekender at Springwood and sometimes took a few of us children up there for the weekend. Next to them No.23 was a vacant block for several years before a house was built for Mrs Cooper, an elderly lady and her daughter Elsie.

Next to the Collinet's house, No.20, was a vacant block and this was our playground where we spent many a time practising our play acting and held concerts with the kids in the street. It was a good spot for our cubby house and playing cowboys and Indians until Aubrey and Eileen Wall, from the corner milk bar, built a house on it and moved in with their children Tony, Bobbie and Barbara. In No. 22, a weatherboard house, lived the Larkin family. They lived there together with John's mother Eva and their two sons, Terry and Bruce. Terry died 1968 aged 21 years.

Ted, a fireman, and his wife Agnes Cook lived in No.24 with their sons, Howard and Grant. Next door lived the Wilson family. Mr Wilson was the man who fixed everyone's wireless. They had two daughters, Lucy and Christine.

On the other side of the street in No.25 lived the Tyrrell family. Frederick (George) and Mary had a son, Robert, and three girls, Joyce, Shirley and Jeanette. Joyce married Bob Keating and had a daughter, Christine. They lived at Kogarah Bay. Shirley married Arthur Smith and lived in Bonanza Parade, Sans Souci. Mary's sister, Gladys, and her husband, Harold Howard, lived in No.29. He died in 1951. They had a son, Jimmy, who married Jill Emery from Sanoni Avenue.

Directly behind the corner store, No.31 was owned by Thomas and Charlotte Thornber who lived there with their daughter, Merle. Jack and Mavis Greenhalgh owned this beautiful brick house in the

1960s. Opposite this house was No.28 where Ernest and Edna Messenger lived. They sold the house to Mr and Mrs Cullen in the late 1950s.

The street eventually filled up with houses except for the laneway that took up No. 9 and 11. Reg and Bonnie Trevitt, together with their children, Naida, Karen, Roger, Bronwyn, and Mr Harris (Bonnie's father) moved from Hornsby to their new home at No.7. Don and Doreen Gurnett built their home at No.13, also Ane Van Der Linden, moved into the new house at No.15 and this filled up our end of the street.

McMillan Avenue in my earlier years was a great street to grow up in, when it was made of clay and there were very few cars but plenty of kids. We enjoyed playing cricket and marbles with the boys, hopscotch, skipping and jacks with girls.

These were the days we had goods delivered to the door. We had to put a container with a cloth cover out each night for the milkman to fill with milk. Daily, the baker came down the street in his horse and cart to deliver the bread. We also had deliveries of rabbits, fruit and vegetables, ice, coal and clothes props. By the late 1950s milk and sliced bread came in packaging and supermarkets were introduced.

It was not until the late 1960s that the houses at the park end of the northern side of McMillan Avenue started to be sold to make way for home units. The face of this street is very different today to the street that I grew up in. SGHS



Dolls Point Shopping Centre 2006

Macedonian School Council of NSW

Liljana Mitreska

With the influx of immigrants in the early 1970s from Yugoslavia, there was a common feeling amongst Macedonians that their children and grandchildren should learn the Macedonian language. There were no Macedonian classes available. The first step was the decision that Macedonian classes would be incorporated in the Yugoslav Ethnic School along with the Croatian, Slovenian and Serbia languages. The Yugoslav Ethnic School was established in 1977 on the grounds of Newtown Public School with the help of Serbian-born Jovanka Noussair, the school principal, Doug Merkin, and Tode Kabrovski. It is important to note that at that time Macedonia was still part of Yugoslavia and any decision would have the support of the Federal Yugoslav government. The teachers all had teaching qualifications from Yugoslavia.

By early 1978 there was growing sentiment amongst the ever-expanding Macedonian community in Rockdale to conduct their own Macedonian classes, rather than have classes as part of a wider Yugoslav ethnic school. This was part of the growing Macedonian nationalist sentiment of the time.

Tode Kabrovski was born in the village of Oreovo, in Bitola, Macedonia and completed his teaching qualifications in Macedonia. Upon his arrival in Australia on 9th May 1969, he joined his parents and sister and commenced employment as a technician with Telecom, where he remained until his retirement.

Tode taught initially at Newtown Ethnic School. Later he taught at Canley Vale Macedonian School for four years and a short period at Richmond. Perhaps his greatest achievement was teaching Macedonian for eight years to HSC students at Kogarah High School with Dr Ilija Casule of Macquarie University, Dr Gorgi Stalev, Branko Naumovski and Vera Bosevski. In later years, he was solely responsible for the smooth running of the Macedonian School Council.

In 1978 Tode commenced his tireless work as an unpaid volunteer president of the Macedonian School Council. All members of the school council are volunteers, with hours spent attending meetings

and liaising with parents and students. In a sense Tode was not only the founding father of the school council but embodied it in its very existence. He worked tirelessly to promote the Macedonian language and its history at every possible opportunity. Through his hard work and personality, Tode gained the trust of many parents and the wider community in expressing the need for their children to learn their mother language - Macedonian.

This enabled him to open Macedonian Ethnic Saturday Schools, initially at Rockdale Public School, "Kiril and Metodi" Arncliffe, Athelstane, Bexley "Goce Delčev" and Yagoona "11 Oktomvri".

The Macedonian School Council also lobbied the NSW Education Department for the study of Macedonian as a second language and part of multicultural government policy, in regular primary schools. In 1978, Macedonian classes commenced at Rockdale Public School with Roza Petrovska teaching the subject. The appointment of Vera Bosevska as principal at Rockdale Public School also helped to promote and maintain the study of the Macedonian language during the regular school curriculum and as a Saturday community language ethnic school. The most successful school in terms of numbers is Carlton Public School, conducted by Jaklina Mihailova since 1992.

Following growing pressure from parents and the wider community, efforts commenced to include the study of the Macedonian language as a community language for the NSW Higher School Certificate. In 1978 it was part of state and federal government policy to encourage the study of community languages as part of a wider multicultural policy that had started under Labor leader Gough Whitlam in 1972. It was decided to commence the study of Macedonian at Kogarah High School for years seven to twelve. The school opened in 1978 and some three hundred and seventy students enrolled at all levels. Early teachers included Tode Kabrovski, Dr Ilija Casule, Irena Casule, and Vera Bosevski.

Classes were initially held at St Petka Church Rockdale and early teachers who taught on a

voluntary basis included Lubica Seljanovski. The success of these classes was limited due the participants' extra-curricular and family obligations.

The promotion of the Macedonian language by the school council was multifaceted and intense. Tode regularly gave interviews at local radio stations, wrote newspaper articles and attended many community events. More importantly, he liaised with local groups such as St Petka Church and the Ilinden Soccer Club for moral and financial support. He was an active member of these associations for many years both in a personal and professional capacity.

Tode widened community awareness of the work done by the school council during social events, including the celebration of International Women's Day on 8th March, with a dinner held at venues such as Chuck Wagon, and Dresden Lounge, Rockdale. Also, St Kiril and Metodi Day on 25th May was celebrated in honour of the founders of the Macedonian alphabet, by holding concerts for all attendees at Macedonian primary schools in NSW at various venues in the Rockdale area.

Tode's organised an annual Macedonian primary schools' concert held in December at various venues within the Rockdale electorate. Following the song and poetry recitals, students would be awarded a participation certificate and a Christmas present. In some years, Santa Claus has arrived to entertain the children.

Perhaps the main event for HSC candidates in the Macedonian language was the Macedonian School Council's graduation dinner. Proud parents, friends and teachers attended this happy event. Students wore a graduation gown and received a graduation certificate. Official guests included member of the Macedonian Embassy, NSW Education Department and the NSW Ethnic Schools Council.

It was important to Tode to foster close relationships with other ethnic groups in NSW to ensure adequate and fair representation for the Macedonian community and promote the Macedonian language and its study. This was achieved through his long-standing paid membership of the NSW Ethnic Communities Council and the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools.

Tode had the foresight to realise that the Macedonian language was changing and growing, as all languages do. He realised the importance of liaising with the Matica for Iselenici (Director for Macedonians abroad) in both Yugoslavia and its successor Macedonia, to ensure that the language taught in NSW Schools was of an acceptable standard for Macedonia. This involved regular teacher exchanges with teachers from Ohrid and Skopje teaching at Kogarah High and Rockdale Public School. Visiting teachers from Macedonia included Pavlina Chingova and Lubenka from Ohrid. Many teachers from the Macedonian ethnic schools in Sydney were also offered the opportunity to attend exchange programmes in Macedonia at the summer Macedonian language school held every July in Ohrid. These exchange programmes offered the participating teachers the opportunity to exchange new methods and ideas.

The Macedonian School Council had limited financial resources and relied on fundraising from social events and donations from local businesses, residents and St Petka Church to fund its activities. Its limited annual budget of less than \$3000 was supplemented by the tireless work of its members to miraculously achieve their goals.

In 2010 Tode Kabrovski had retired from his full-time employment to devote time to his family life with his wife and two daughters. To this end, he retired as president of the Macedonian School Council to allow Zora Janeva, a younger teacher, to take over as president. Tode will be fondly remembered for his character traits and achievements. For his tireless work to promote the study of the Macedonian language at all levels. For his concern for the well being of his students. And most importantly for his love of his second home, Australia, and trying to accommodate the needs of his students in their new life in Australia. All of these priorities were blended with Macedonian pride in this wonderful country, offering each child the opportunity to feel proud to learn their mother language. Tode was a much loved high-profile character that will be a very hard act to follow.

The School Council embraced the concept that learning a mother language such as Macedonian encourages the students' mental well being, with increased self esteem and the ability to understand other cultures and relate to other children.

SGHS

The Walz's of Walz Street

Karen Pentland

“One of these German settlers was Joseph Walz, who worked the sandstone of the area which Captain Cook had noted in 1770 as “very proper for building”. In earlier times the Germans represented the largest non-British migrant group in Australia. Walz is remembered in Walz Street, Rockdale.” [4]



Marc Joseph Walz was born in 1827, the only son of Frances Maria Metzger and Anton Joseph Walz. He married Johanna Keicher on the 2nd May, 1854, in the municipality of Erlenbach, Baden-Württemberg, in southern Germany. It was and still is a predominantly Catholic region of the country. The next year the young married couple decided to



This brief paragraph, along with a mention found in my earlier research and my memories of the Walz Brothers' shop of my childhood, led me to the research you find within. I have fond memories of, as a young girl, chatting to the brothers when I walked down Walz Street, around the corner from my family home at 31 Watkin Street. I also attended St Joseph's Church, little knowing that the Walz family had originally donated the land on which it stood. I knew the name Walz but knew nothing really about the family of German pioneers who had made such a powerful contribution to the locality. Who were the Walzs and what was their story?

try their luck in a new country and emigrated halfway across the world. Marc Joseph Walz, with his wife Johanna, arrived in Australia in 1855 on the *Undine* as a twenty-eight-year-old assisted immigrant. State records show that the *Undine* arrived in Sydney on the 13th February from Hamburg via Melbourne.

The Walz parents had twelve children in twenty-one years, with Joseph Anthony arriving the same year as they did in Sydney in 1855 and John Francis following two years later. One year later the young parents were naturalised on 9th October 1858 in Sydney. They went on to have ten more children, Charles, Phillip, Anna, Maria, Louis,

Mary, Bernard, George, Johanna and Peter. Marc Joseph Walz became known as a stonemason and builder, an occupation stated on one of his son's death certificate. Walz, along with other German stonemason immigrants, put the superior sandstone of the area to good use in the buildings, kerbs and guttering of the locality. Even sixty years later, the prominent pioneer Walz family were noted for carrying on quarrying operations at Nanny Goat Hill in Arncliffe. They were probably the first to open up the area for commercial quarrying purposes. Marc Walz became to be known by his second, more Anglicised name, Joseph and lived on White Gum Flat, land along the eventual Princes Highway at Rockdale. [5]




The Walz family decided that in 1892 they had sufficient funds to become a philanthropic influence to their community. Saint Joseph's School at Rockdale began in April 1892 when a church-school was erected on the corner of the Watkin and Walz Streets, the land being gifted by the German family. The land had been originally granted in 1831 to a James Chandler, who subdivided and auctioned it off to Marc Joseph Walz at a later date. The eighty-eight students, both boys and girls, were taught by Sisters of Charity nuns, who had to travel from Hurstville each day. Increased enrolment numbers led to more development on the site with new classrooms being built ten years later. The Charity nuns were replaced by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1912, who formed a community in 1920, leading to the building of a new convent for them in Walz Street

in 1929. All this educational and religious development came from the generosity of the Walz family's original land donation. [6] It was such a momentous occasion when the school-church was opened; the Cardinal Archbishop arrived in Rockdale to officiate at the opening and blessing ceremony.

By 1897, the Walz family were heavily involved at St. Joseph's, Rockdale, with involvement in the celebration of Christmas Day. The women in the family created beautiful decorations; were in the choir and were involved in the establishment of the nativity scene crib, admired by the parishioners. The joyous occasion gave no foreboding of the

sorrow that would engulf the family within a year. Marc Joseph Walz, patriarch of the family, died on 28 September 1898 in Rockdale, New South Wales, at the age of seventy-one.

A year later, the Parish decided to celebrate Walz's life and parish work by dedicating a large stained glass window in the church, featuring St Joseph and the Christ child. It was a fitting memorial for a man who did so much for his community. As well as making a gift of the land upon which the Church stood, prior to his death, Walz bequeathed an adjoining portion upon which the School Hall was subsequently built. The ground originally given by Walz comprised about half an acre, and eventually, a new Church was built at the top of the hill however, for the present, St. Joseph's School Church sufficed. 

Brighton-Le-Sands Public School Centenary

Alan Powditch

The attempts to open a public school at the village of Lady Robinson's Beach began in November 1898 with an approach by Thomas Saywell, developer of The New Brighton Estate, to the Hon. John Hogue, Minister for Public Instruction. In 1903, Lady Robinson's Beach was renamed Brighton-Le-Sands. On 24 November 1914, after considerable pressure from parents, the Minister for Public Instruction, Mr Ambrose Carmichael, announced in the NSW Legislative Assembly that a school would be built at Brighton-Le-Sands.

288 children enrolled at the school on 16th April, 1917, most of whom had been attending the distant and overcrowded Rockdale and Kogarah Public Schools.

The school was a 'model' school, planned and controlled by the Director of Education, Mr Peter Board. The school site was at 35 Crawford Road, and it adopted an innovative syllabus, and a unique building design. The school site had been the garden home of Mr George Hook, 'Carrington Park' from 1870 to 1902. He was the first resident of Brighton and anywhere along Lady Robinson's Beach, from Kyeemagh to Sans Souci. In 1917, Brighton-Le-Sands was a rural outpost of Sydney and only 10% of the land was occupied. The population of Brighton grew substantially up to 1930. School numbers increased dramatically from the original 288 to over 1000 students in 1930s.

World War I was a major influence over life at Brighton-Le-Sands and the school's pupils. Over 800 men from Rockdale Municipality served, in Gallipoli and on the Western Front in France and Belgium. At least 70 men from Brighton-Le-Sands served overseas. Quite a few died or were injured. Every edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* carried details of the war. Most soldiers returned in mid-1919. The school was closed in June 1919, for 3 weeks, because of the deadly pneumonic flu brought back from Europe by soldiers. It prompted the first boys' Dux, Lindsay Burrows, to join the Royal Australian Navy, at age 14 ½ in early 1919.

The first Headmaster was Mr Percy Cox, B.A., whose family had served as teachers for many years. Mr Cox travelled each day from Drummoyne to Brighton-Le-Sands for 9 years, until he swapped

positions with the 2nd headmaster, Mr John Curry B.A. B.Sc., in March 1926, formerly the headmaster of Wellington Intermediate School. Mr Curry remained until 1930. Both Mr Cox and Mr Curry were highly credentialed in an era where less than 5% of teachers held degrees. The Depression from October 1929 to the late 1930s was a very difficult period. Australia's unemployment level reached 32% in 1932, and was still 11% in 1939. Brighton-Le-Sands mothers began feeding poorer pupils at lunch time and in 1930 over 300 lived in humpies in Happy Valley in the sand dunes of North Brighton-Le-Sands. Other painful major conflicts involving local families included World War 2, Korea, and Vietnam. The Olympics in Melbourne in 1956, Sydney in 2000 and the moon landing in 1969 were uplifting international events.

There have been major changes to life at Brighton-Le-Sands, from the horse and buggy era of 1917, with steam trains, picture theatres, and swimming baths, to 2017 where our life of cars, computers, mobile phones, air travel, television, social media, and organised sport pervades.

Over these 100 years, Brighton-Le-Sands has been under the direction of 17 principals/headmasters, setting the tone and effectiveness of this academic community. There have been more than 800 staff, and up to 10,000 pupils. A highlight of 2016 and for previous years for this multicultural school was the celebration of Universal Children's Day in November.

A wonderful web site for Brighton-Le-Sands Public School provides information about the school's organisation and expectations, with regular updates of activities, completed or planned.

Currently 753 children at the school are under the care and direction of the Principal, Mr Ian Power, now in his 7th year, ably supported by Mrs Tracy McKinnier and Mr Nicholas Potten and a staff of more than 40 teachers and other administrative staff. We salute them.

Brighton-Le-Sands Public School Opened 16th April 1917

On Monday 16th April, 1917, Brighton-Le-Sands Public School opened at 35 Crawford Road. The

School was built on a 4 ¾-acre level garden site, set back 600 metres west of Botany Bay.

It was a fine but overcast day, 18C, with a gusty southerly, when '288 little boys and girls' quietly enrolled. Their ages ranged from 7 to 13. They would 'remain until they passed the Qualifying Certificate Examination ... usually at the age of 14.' There was no ceremony or publicity on the day, just parents enrolling their children at this new school.

It was a very exciting day for the children, their parents, the teachers, and The Education Department. Mr Percival Cox, previously teaching at Blackfriars Practice School, Chippendale, was appointed as headmaster. It was also a very special day for Mr Cox. The University of Sydney published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that he had been awarded his Bachelor of Arts degree.


The builders faced late deliveries of materials and a lack of trained labour, with fitting out the building continued for more than a month after the first enrolments. The on-site architect had waited for Oregon timber from the State timber yard for 4 months, finally arriving in mid-December. Without these delays the school would have opened closer to the start of the new school year, Tuesday, 29 January, 1917. The opening day occurred one week after Easter on Monday, 9 April.

In addition to educating Brighton-Le-Sands' children, the new school would help alleviate overcrowding at nearby existing schools, Kogarah

and Rockdale. It was calculated that up to 229 children would transfer from these schools to Brighton. It was also the first day of school for 60 children. It was more than 2 years since the Minister for Public Instruction, Mr Carmichael, had publicly notified members of parliament "that Brighton-Le-Sands School would be constructed without further delay".

Children living along Bay St and the beach had for many years been provided with free travel aboard Saywell's tram, up the hill to Rockdale School 2km west. Many children walked to these two schools. The twice daily burden up and back was a tiring event, especially when it was hot or raining.

For family and safety reasons, some mothers would have found it difficult to send their daughters and younger children to Kogarah or Rockdale School. And some were unable to send their children at all because of their distant location. There were many absent fathers, on war service, or at work in the inner city, who could not help with this task. The parents would have been overjoyed that their children could at last attend this local school.

Unknown to most families, the syllabus and the buildings at the new school were purposefully designed to introduce and provide a unique and innovative form of primary education in NSW. In education circles Brighton-Le-Sands Primary School was known as the Model School. This school represented the future guideline for primary education in NSW. 



Land south of Cook's River: the colonial lives of the Saywell and Roseby families

Mary Saywell

In 1869, Thomas Saywell was a tobacco merchant with a shop at 4 Park Street, Sydney. He was married to Annie Ellen Fawcett, the daughter of a stone mason from Oldham, Lancashire. They had just moved into 'Ada Terrace', 8 Jane Street, Balmain with their three young children, George, Ada and Frederick. The family was friendly with other stone masons from the industrial north of England, in particular the Roseby and Aspinall families. Thomas Saywell had family in Bathurst and Maitland and was involved in mining ventures in the Lithgow area.

John Aspinall was about the same age as Thomas Saywell. John had married Sarah Ann Dunton in December 1862, just one month after Thomas Saywell married Annie. The Aspinalls had two daughters, Millicent and Annie, and in 1869 their son, Herbert John Aspinall, was born. John and his brother Albert were stone masons, like their father and uncle. John also carried on business at a

general produce store at 789 George Street, Sydney, for and on the account of Thomas Saywell. John Aspinall appears to have built 'Ada Terrace' in Balmain for Saywell. Both John Aspinall and his brother Albert worked in the building industry, while their younger brother, Arthur was being educated for the ministry at Camden College.

John Roseby was also a friend of Thomas Saywell. He owned Roseby's Monumental Works at 781 George Street, near the Devonshire Street Cemetery on Brickfield Hill (now the site of Central railway station). This masonry business was close to the general produce store that John Aspinall operated at 789 George Street. John Roseby had inherited the business from his father, a stone mason and lay evangelist from County Durham called Thomas Roseby, who died in 1867. Thomas Saywell's eldest daughter, Ada, would marry John Roseby's son Herb in the Petersham Congregational Church in 1886. John had two



Thomas Saywell and his family gathered for the wedding of Leah Saywell at the New Brighton Hotel, 1896 (courtesy of the Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais Inc.)

younger brothers, Samuel and Thomas, and a sister Ann. Samuel was educated at home and from 1867 was a public school teacher at Gunning, near Yass. Thomas Roseby was one of the first students to attend Camden College in 1864, just a few years before Arthur Aspinall. Thomas Roseby was to become a prominent minister, educator and scientist.

Thomas Saywell had arrived in Australia as a young boy. He was from a family of mechanics and lacemakers who had fled political upheaval in France in 1848 and arrived in Australia aboard the *Agincourt*. This family history sets out information about Saywell's early life in Calais in France, Maitland in the Lower Hunter Valley, the gold fields and Sydney prior to his move to Brighton-Le-Sands in 1887. Saywell's movements in Sydney reflect the suburban expansion of the time, from Balmain to Hyde

Park, Enmore, South Kingston, Petersham and Rockdale. From the late 1860s, Saywell was involved with collieries in Lithgow where he established the Vale of Clwydd and Great Western Zig Zag collieries. He had brickmaking operations and property developments in Sydney, particularly in Alexandria and Marrickville. By the 1880s, he was investing in collieries in Newcastle, Bundanoon and the Illawarra, where he established the new Mount Kembla Colliery and the South Bulli Colliery and built a jetty at Bellambi. He also owned the South Clifton Colliery for many years from 1891. These coal mines, along with his manufacturing operations and property developments, helped fund his capital investment in his many projects in Rockdale.


The suburb of Brighton-Le-Sands was developed in the 1880s by Thomas Saywell, who built Saywell's Tramway from Rockdale to Lady Robinson's

Beach after recognising that the new Illawarra Railway line would open up opportunities in land south of Cook's River. The railway enabled the development of new suburbs around Rockdale and other stations along the route. Saywell's Tramway resulted in an influx of holidaymakers to Lady

Robinson's Beach; it also allowed children to travel at no cost to Rockdale Public School.

In 1893, The Scots College was established at Lady Robinson's Beach in Thomas Saywell's New Brighton Hotel. The first principal was Rev. Arthur Aspinall, whose concerted action with Rev. Dr. Archibald Gilchrist and Rev. William Dill Macky, with the support of Rev. Dr. James Smith White, had persuaded the Presbyterian church to approve the first Presbyterian boys' secondary school in New South Wales. Thomas Roseby is likely to have helped

Rev. Aspinall to locate these premises, as he had been heavily involved with plans to establish a Congregational boys' grammar school, however the project had insufficient funding and the school was never built.

Thomas Roseby's daughter, Amy Roseby, was headmistress at Ascham under Principal Herbert Carter from 1908 and purchased Redlands in 1911. Samuel's daughters, Clara and Minnie, were co-principals of Kambala from 1914 to 1926. John Roseby's granddaughter, Edith Roseby Ball, established Danebank in 1933 with the support of a group of Hurstville parents, led by Valerie Crakanthorp, Ada Roseby's daughter. In 1934, Edith acquired the Walker residence on Park Road for Danebank with the help of the Crakanthorp family. Rosemary Crakanthorp was Danebank's first pupil and Thomas Saywell's great-granddaughter. 



Clara and Minnie Roseby (image courtesy of the Kambala Archives, P497)

Early History Pictorial Narratives of Botany, Mascot & Pagewood, the Captain Cook Hotel and the Matraville Hotel

John Scott

Botany – The Early Years

Apart from the mere possession of land, Botany's earliest white inhabitants were attracted to the area for their livelihood. The first industry was probably the manufacture of shell lime. Shell fish were gathered by Aborigines as a source of food and the accumulation of shells furnished early Sydney builders with lime. Péron, the French visitor of 1802, referred to the lime kiln at Botany Bay at which a preparation of lime was made from the shells which were plentiful along the adjacent coast. The lime was transported by small craft such as the *John* and *Raven Baby*, mentioned in the *Sydney Gazette* of 1803.

Sydney first obtained its salt supplies from pans set up at convenient points, one of which was Botany. The *Sydney Gazette* of 1834 refers to the two establishments for the manufacture of salt at Bennelong, near Botany, each of which had an average output of one tonne weekly. Fish were

plentiful both along the ocean beaches and off the shores of Botany Bay. Obed West, an early resident of Paddington, describing the region between Port Jackson and Botany Bay, referred to the sea near Coogee as being "one living mass of fish of all kinds" and Long Bay was "alive with mullet". There is no doubt that fish was an important item on the Aboriginal menu and in view of the scanty food output of the colonists, it is not surprising that a fishing industry would soon develop. Early reports of the Botany Bay area state that "very early indeed a race of white fishermen began to settle upon the Bay, building their huts . . . in the fishermen's village and carrying their baskets over to the settlements". James Backhouse, a Quaker visitor to New South Wales in 1836, describes one of these fishermen colonies near La Perouse as "a row of fishermen's huts near to which were men mend their nets". These settlements, which still existed a century later, emphasise that fishing together with vegetable growing were the most tenacious of the early Botany industries.



Opening of Botany Town Hall, 1898

James Clarke, builder of the Captain Cook Hotel, 1880

James Clarke was born in England circa 1821 and most of his family are buried in Chiswick Churchyard. James married Sophia Featherstonehaugh of Staines, England, where her father was in the brewery business. Sophia was given £1,400 on her wedding day which her husband, James Clarke, lost through buildings on Turnham Green for which he did not have the rightful deed.

James was a blacksmith, having served his apprenticeship at the Great Eastern Railway Works. Upon arriving in Sydney, James obtained a job with the New South Railways, starting under a tarpaulin structure on a grassed paddock that later became the site of the main railway station.

According to his grandson, James made the first mechanical spring in Australia and helped to couple the first train, which he rode on a return trip to Parramatta.

It appears that James made and lost several "small fortunes". After the railways he built the Captain Cook Hotel on Botany Road, was foreman smith at Hudson's railway carriage works in Redfern, and built a blacksmith & engineers shop in Wattle Street, Ultimo.

James was killed by a bolting horse at Forest Lodge when 77 years old. The Coroner's Report indicated the cause of death as "injuries accidentally received through falling down at corner of Charles and Cross Streets Forest Lodge on 14 October 1894".

SGHS



Captain Cook Hotel, 1930

The Palace Picture Theatre Ramsgate

Michelle Steet

The Ramsgate-Sans Souci Palace Picture Theatre was heralded to be “up-to-date” and one of the most comfortable and well ventilated theatres in the State. Another fine feature would be the inclusion of a lawn and garden laid out to the side. [25*]

Building commenced on 26 June 1923, apparently before William Pilling had formally acquired any land or had relevant plans approved. It was completed in approximately five months.

The theatre was constructed of brick with an iron roof and had walls averaging a height of 17 feet above a timber floor.

A foyer with refreshment room and office either side was located at the front abutting Rocky Point Road, with the remainder of the frontage consisting of exits. A 14-foot-wide court was located at the rear.

The auditorium/hall measured 110 x 58 ft and seating capacity estimated at 1,100. However, exact seating was to be determined after seats had been fixed.

The auditorium included a stage measuring 32 x 12 ft, complete with sliding curtains and canvas screen.

Three small rooms under the stage, partitioned by Oregon pine, were used as store and cloak rooms.

Toilets were apparently located at the rear outside the hall. However, this later appears not to be the case.

The theatre also included the usual operating box, rewinding room and ticket office.

Seven fire escape doors were provided, two opening from the auditorium into the foyer, three opening directly onto Alice Street and two directly onto Rocky Point Road, at the extreme corners of the building. All doors opened outwards and included panic bolts. Standard exit lamps were also located over doors.

Of course in 1923 there was no airconditioning (as we know it) and thus four shutters, each approximately 5½ x 3 ft, were included in the side walls, nine ft above the floor.

The theatre also comprised a number of attached shops and offices, all of which were variously leased. [30*]

No photographs of the theatre (between 1923 and 1949) have yet been unearthed.

However and as previously mentioned, plans submitted by William Pilling for the Ramsgate-Sans Souci Palace Picture Theatre were

identical to that of the Palace Picture Theatre Canterbury (save slight modifications regarding exits) and thus the (Ramsgate-Sans Souci) theatre likely looked remarkably similar.

The Ramsgate-Sans Souci Palace Picture Theatre was officially opened on Tuesday, 11 December 1923 by Mr F.A. McDonald, M.H.R.

Mr McDonald described the theatre as a fine, spacious brick building, reflecting excellent credit on William Pilling as the owner/builder.

The theatre had also previously been described as a beautiful building and a great acquisition to the district. Messrs Owen & Sellars, the leaseholders and managers of the theatre, had spared no expense



Palace Picture Theatre Canterbury (image courtesy of Barry Sharp and City of Canterbury Local History Photograph Collection)

in rendering the theatre as modern as possible. [39, 40*]

At the official opening, which was greatly attended, Mr McDonald wished William Pilling and Messrs Owen & Sellars every prosperity and success, before cutting a St George (red and white) coloured ribbon which held the curtain.

Messrs Owen & Sellars, as part of the official opening, held a free matinee for children the following Saturday, 15 December 1923. [42*] Net proceeds were donated equally to the St George Hospital and the St George Ambulance. [43, 44, 45*]

Messrs Owen & Sellars became well known for their generosity. They often unreservedly offered the theatre and the services of its full staff at no charge to charities such as the Sans Souci Red Cross Society and to those raising money for (usually widow and children) benefit funds, often including a picture programme also free of charge.

In December 1931, *Mother's Millions*, the story of an unprincipled female financier trying to get even with a rival railroad buyer and starring world famous, Australian born May Robson, was showing. [82, 83, 84*]

In April 1932, the vampire thriller *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi was showing, to be followed at a later date by another sensation from Universal Pictures, *Frankenstein*. [85, 86*]

At 7.15 a.m. on Wednesday, 7 August 1935, a fire originating on the stage of the theatre broke out. Firemen from Kogarah, Hurstville and Rockdale

attended and found the ceiling and stage ablaze. It took firefighters 30 minutes to bring the blaze under control.

Ramsgate Theatre Programme (St George Call, Friday, 23 September 1932)

Fifteen years after opening, the theatre was popular as ever, if not more so, and transport to and from the theatre posed its own problem. William Pilling had had the foresight to choose a location on which to build which had, at its door, a tram stop. In 1938 and to cater for the number of patrons attending the theatre, the Tempe Depot arranged for two extra, dedicated trolleybuses to be on standby on Saturday nights from 10.30 p.m. to escort patrons home. [145*]

From approximately 1942 until after World War II, the theatre included a milk bar on its Alice Street corner, which served refreshments to patrons before and after shows, and during intervals.

Today nothing remains of the Ramsgate-Sans Souci Palace Picture Theatre or even of its successors.

Gone is the stately entrance with its winding staircases, leadlight panelling and marble columns.

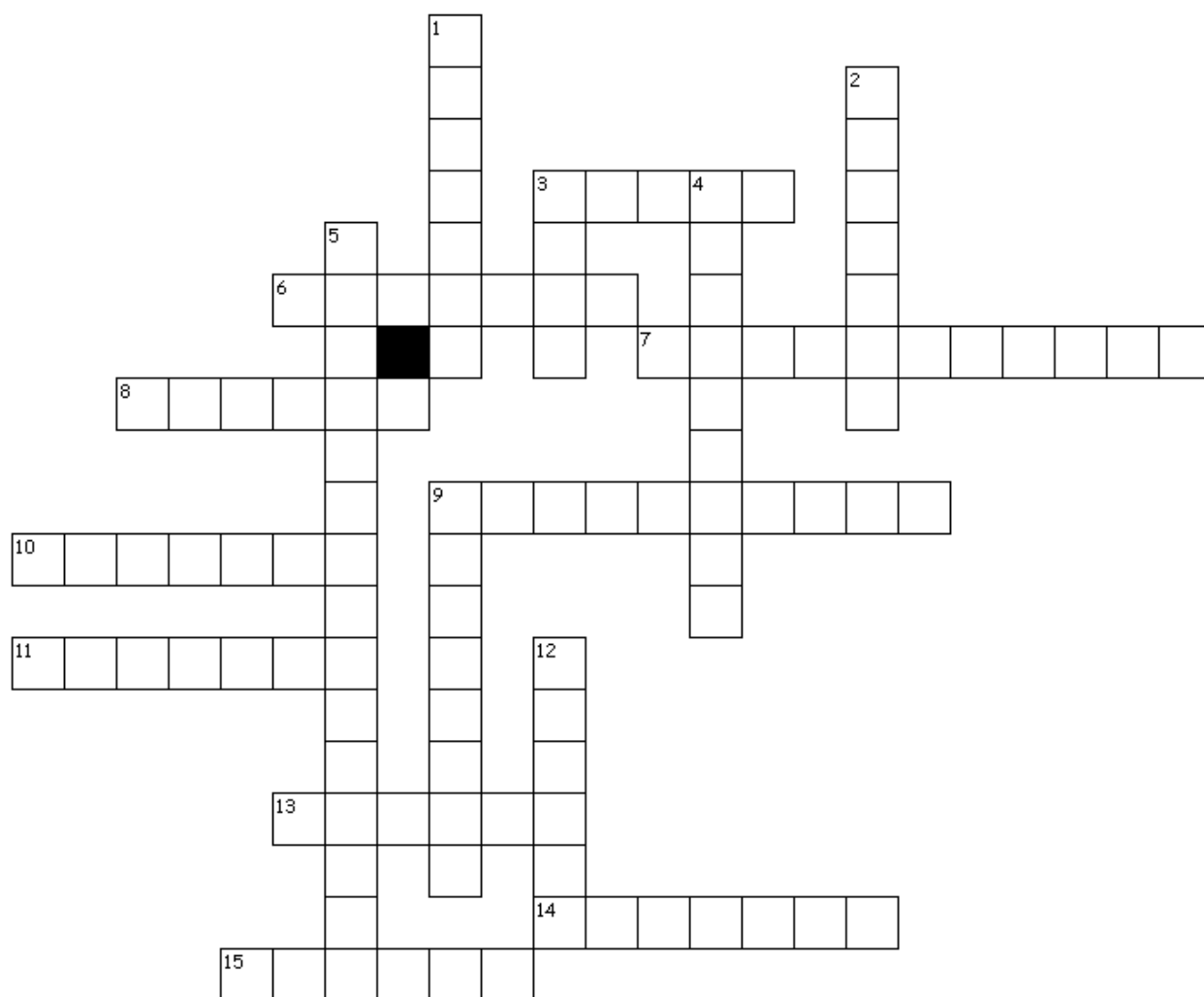
Gone is the splendid proscenium and delightful garden setting.

Gone is one man's vision and the dedication and hard work of two others.

Recent generations and generations to come might simply look upon the present-day apartment complex as though it had always existed in that manner. Yet something much more grand, something of great social importance, had once occupied that very space, brushed aside by progress and long forgotten.

SGHS

Crossword



Across

3. A 'villainous compound' from 1860s Botany (5)
6. Bela Lugosi's thriller (7)
7. A local alderman and boxer (5, 6)
8. social venue in Rockdale, "Dresden" (6)
9. Tode Kabrovski, prominent in the ... community (10)
11. tobacco merchant and tram owner (7)
13. the picture theatre in Ramsgate (6)
14. George Toyer's primary business (7)
15. owner of a 'monumental' work on Brickfield Hill (6)

Down

1. Archibald ... brought cast iron cooking to Australian kitchens (7)
2. Frederick Gibbins' ocean fortune (7)
3. local German stonemason (4)
4. bridge replacing Mascot Bridge (9)
5. 2017 was the centenary year of this public school (15)
9. avenue between Russell and Sanoni (8)
12. ... Lord, owner of Johnstown in Botany (6)

Answers on page 39

SGHS Publications

The St George Historical Society has many books and pamphlets for sale, documenting the history of suburbs, people and events in 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 Joan Rankin on (02) 9567 8641.

- The Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway \$2.50
- Saywells Tramway 1887-1914 – Rockdale to Lady Robinson’s Beach \$2.50
- The Arncliffe to Bexley Steam tramway \$4.00
- Our Heritage in Stone \$4.00
- All Stations to Como \$4.00
- Tempe and the Black Creek Valley \$4.00
- Early Churches of the St George District \$4.00
- Early Settlers of the St George District – Volume 1 \$4.00
- Early Settlers of the St George District – Volume 2 \$4.00
- The Illawarra Railway – Hurstville \$4.00
- Rockdale Beginning and Development \$12.00
- Christina Stead by Jennifer Gribble \$10.00
- History of the Rockdale Uniting Church – 150 Years Anniversary (1855-2005) \$15.00
- Kingsgrove The First 200 Years by Brian Madden \$20.00

Books by R.W. Rathbone:

- A Village Called Arncliffe \$25.00
- Brighton Le Sands \$25.00
- Cameos of Bexley \$25.00
- The Bexley Book \$15.00
- The Glen Village – its first 25 years \$7.00
- The Sans Souci Peninsula \$26.00
- The Lydham Hall Booklet \$6.00

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* References for the Ron Rathbone Local History Prize excerpts are listed in the complete articles, available at the [Bayside History Blog](#) and the Local Studies Collection in Rockdale Library, 444-446 Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Crossword answers

Across - 3. WATER; 6. DRACULA; 7. PETERDEPENA; 8. LOUNGE; 9. MACEDONIAN; 10. DAPPETO; 11. SAYWELL; 13. PALACE; 14. NURSERY; 15. ROSEBY;

Down - 1. KENRICK; 2. OYSTERS; 3. WALZ; 4. ENDEAVOUR; 5. BRIGHTONLESANDS; 9. MCMILLAN; 12. SIMEON;

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