



OUR HISTORY

MAGAZINE of the ST GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

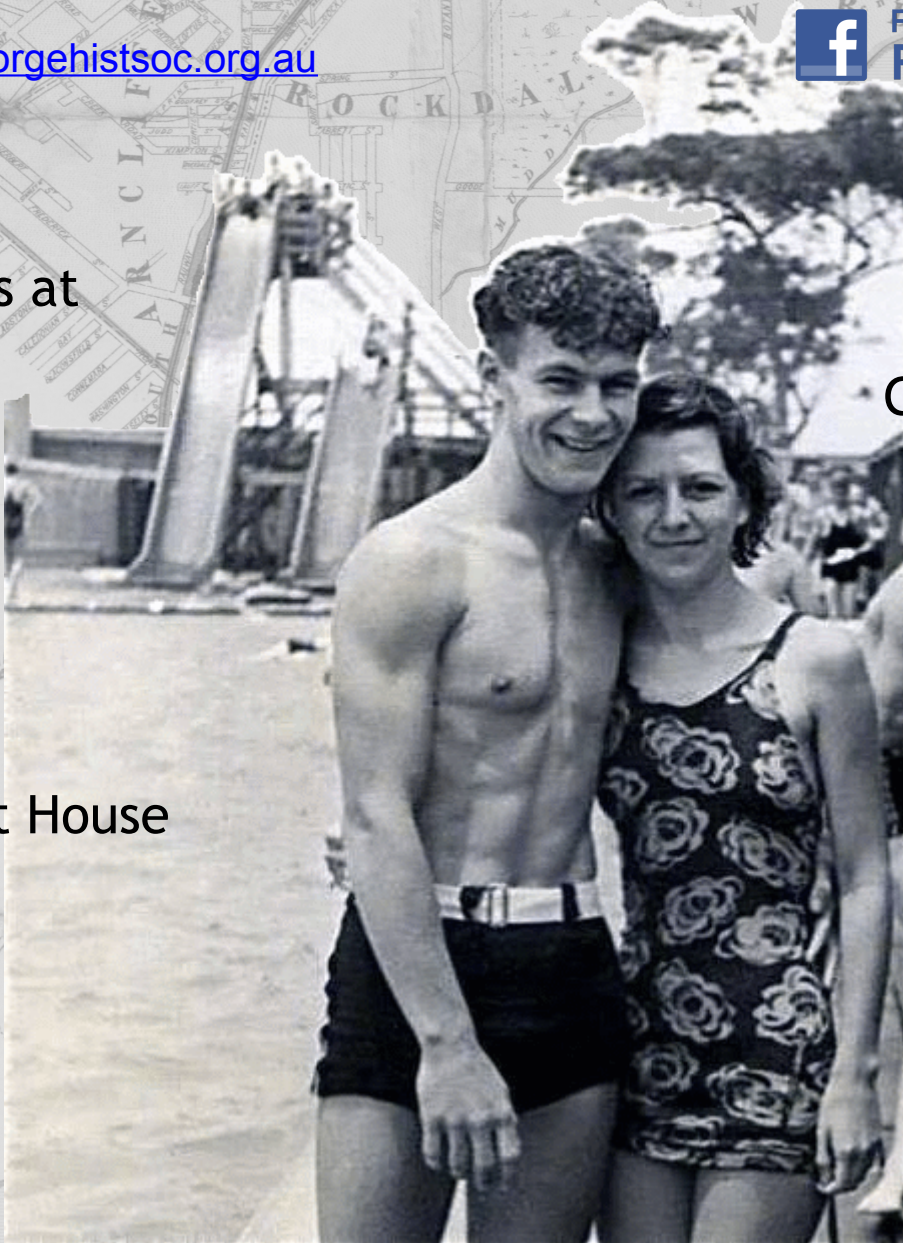
April – June 2018

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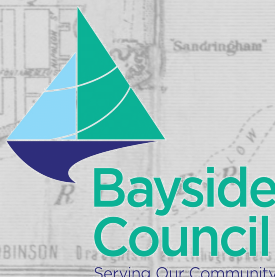


Ice Cream
on the
Georges River

Love at
Government House

Your Words
in History

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Parish of St George.

SCALE

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MILES 0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

Present Municipality boundary shewn thus ————

Ward

Late Municipality boundary

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Front Cover Image – A couple posing beside the ladies' pool in the 1940s. The giant water slides in the background were built in the early 1930s.³⁴

Front Cover Background – 1939 street map of Rockdale, NSW, showing administrative boundaries and physical features, scale [ca. 1:18,000].³⁵

Back Cover Image – The Sydney Gazette window in the western wall of the Mitchell Library Reading Room, State Library of New South Wales. Designed by John Radecki (see page 21).³⁶

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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

“ During an unseasonably warm April, we might seek relief in neighbourhood pools. For almost 50 years, Pemberton's Baths at Ramsgate were a popular summertime destination, noisy with the splashing as swimmers descended the giant waterslide. Dan McAloon is writing a book about the baths, informed by hundreds of gleeful childhood stories and photographs.

Oral histories are one of the most accessible methods to capture personal accounts of the past. In our 'How To' section, begin the process with your family and friends, using this series of questions as conversation starters.

Diana Milford-Smith, one of our newest members, has taken the initiative to record her parents' histories, uncovering a romantic tale of two people living full lives of adventure.

During the commemoration of Australia's involvement in WWI, a local high school student has investigated the circumstances and legacy of a crucial battle. For her efforts, Eloise Cooper was awarded with a study tour of the sites liberated by the Australians. It will be fascinating to see the results as her enthusiasm for the study of history leads to future opportunities.

In March, we hosted a conference in St Magdalene's Chapel, inviting esteemed speakers and members of neighbouring historical societies. The event was a great success and our report on page 16 offers suggestions to ensure our local history is accessible to new generations as our communities change.

After the railway opened our region to an influx of new families, schools were built during the early 1900s. After determined lobbying, Lugarno Public School opened to students in 1933. 2018 marks its 85th anniversary and Graham Blewett has written

about the early struggles to build it.

For the first time since becoming editor, I'm pleased to publish a poem set in our region. One of our members, **Alison Miller**, reminisces about childhood treats on the Lugarno Punt.

In sport, the selection process for the next rugby league Immortal is underway. After the St George Dragons won 11 straight grand finals, we're well represented. Amongst that team, Johnny Raper, Reg Gasnier and Graeme Langlands are acknowledged as rugby league Immortals. Margie McDonald makes a strong case for another great of that era to receive the same honour.

To end this edition, an examination of the aquatic world by a scientist whose achievements are often underrated beside the legacy of his daughter's novels.

Thank you to Olga Sedneva for the new design of our Society's logo, updated to note our incorporated status.

As well as the print version of this magazine, we also publish a digital version in PDF format. The digital edition is easily searched and includes additional video, webpage and email resources. It is accessible on most computers, tablets and smartphones and it's an environmentally friendly alternative. To “go digital”, email me at barry.johnson@live.com.au

Do you have any local stories, newspaper clippings, objects or photographs about which you've always wondered? 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 Rockdale Library, Level 3, 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:

- **21st April**
- **19th May** Guest speaker: Charles Reid, Australian National Maritime Museum.
- **16th June** Guest speaker: Alan Powditch – The Hotels, Trams and Schools of Brighton-Le-Sands.
- **21st July – Annual General Meeting**
- **18th August** Guest speaker: Cathy Jones – Historic Homes of Strathfield. Former Secretary of the Strathfield District Historical Society, Cathy Jones has documented the history and heritage of the Strathfield district. This presentation will trace the historic housing styles of the district, through the 1870s Victorian era, the Federation period at the turn of the century, and the interwar years. The most significant homes and the lives of their owners will be revealed.
- **8th September** Guest speaker: Bob and Laurel Horton – Botany Unearthed. Bob and Laurel are the creators of [Voices From The Graveyard](#), an audio record of the lives and deaths of those resting in the St Peters Cooks River church graveyard. In this presentation, they will exhume the characters of 19th century Botany since the arrival of the First Fleet.
- **20th October** Guest speaker: Jenny MacRitchie, Bayside Heritage Librarian – Stories of Mascot Airport.
- **17th November** Guest speaker: Craig Werner, Nepean District Historical Society – the Arms of Australia Inn. Built in 1826, the inn was a staging post for travellers journeying from Sydney over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst and the goldfields. The [Arms of Australia Inn](#), one of the oldest buildings in Penrith, is now a museum and home to the NSW Corps of Marines.

Special events:

- **Wednesday, 25th April 2018** ANZAC Day Dawn Services. Memorial and wreath laying services will be performed throughout St George. For the full program, which includes the stories of 20 veterans of the Great War, visit the [Bayside Council website](#).
- **Saturday, 5th May 2018** 10am – 4pm – Tempe House Open Day. Free Entry. <http://friendsoftempehouse.blogspot.com.au/>
- **Friday, 27th July 2018** – closing date for entries to the **Ron Rathbone Local History Prize**. A prize of \$5,000 will be awarded to the author of the best piece of original research on the history of the Bayside Council area. Entrants in the prize can research any aspect of the Bayside Council area: its history, buildings, natural features, people, or events. Visit the [Bayside Council website](#) for the entry form and competition guidelines.
- **Friday, 27th July 2018** – closing date for entries to the **Ron Rathbone Junior Local History Prize**. In November 2018, Australia will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ending of World War I (1914-1918). As part of Bayside Council's own commemorations, school students are invited to submit an essay on any local soldier or on any topic relating to the impact the war had on the Bayside community. Both the winning high school student and the winning primary school student will receive \$500. Visit the [Bayside Council website](#) for the entry form and guidelines.
- **Saturday, 4th August 2018** 10am – 4pm – Tempe House Open Day. Free Entry.
- **Saturday, 3rd November 2018** 10am – 4pm – Tempe House Open Day. Free Entry.

Highlights at the Hurstville Museum and Gallery

St George on a Sunday

19 May – 29 July 2018

This photographic exhibition captures residents of the St George area and their favourite spare time activities. Hurstville Museum & Gallery collaborated with TAFE NSW College of Fine Arts for this project.

Students were given the opportunity to get hands-on experience and work closely with the local community, taking the photographs for this exhibition. For some of the students, this is their first time exploring photography and gaining experience in the field.

Official opening: Sunday 27 May 2018, 2.30pm

All welcome, afternoon tea provided.

RSVP by Wednesday 23 May 2018.

Out and About: A picnic in the park

14 April – 29 July 2018

A picnic in the park is a popular past time activity for many Australians. Selected photographs from the Georges River Council Local Studies collection illuminate how residents and visitors to the St George area spent their leisure time picnicking in the 1900s – 1930s.

The Freezesi Ice Chest - The chest that makes ice last longer!

The Freezesi range of ice chests were manufactured in Australia in the first half of the 20th century and were found in many Australian homes. They were first advertised in Australian papers from 1914 and were sold as late as the early 1950s.

In 1929, the Freezesi Ice Chest was sold in Esienberg's Value Centre in Rockdale for around £4 for a two-shelved, galvanised-lined model.¹

The name 'Freezesi' is a play on words for 'Freeze easy,' communicating to customers its function and ease of use. Advertisements for the chest state that it is 'the chest that makes ice last longer!'²

Ice chests allowed for perishable foods to stay cool and have a longer life. After canning decreased in popularity, ice and refrigeration became an important investment within Australia for both agricultural trade and domestic use.³

It also drew on growing preoccupations within Australia for health, hygiene, and cleanliness. One advertisement by Smellie & Co, Ltd in Brisbane claimed that 'No housewife should be without one of the Freezesi Ice Chests for health reasons....'⁴

An article devoted to Natural Food Preservation in the *Sunday Mail* records our search to preserve perishable food; "From the very dawn of human history, man has endeavoured to protect his food from the deteriorating effect of atmospheric heat".⁵

As with all technological developments, ice chests were superseded by kerosene-based coolers and ultimately by electric refrigerators and freezers in the mid-1950s.

Did you or anyone you know own a Freezesi? We'd love to hear about it! You can view our Freezesi Ice Chest as part of our permanent exhibition 'St George Stories: people – places – community.'



The Hurstville Museum and Gallery is located at 14 Macmahon St, Hurstville, one block east of Hurstville Central Library.

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm, Sunday, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Call (02) 9300-6444, email museumgallery@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au or visit <http://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/HMG> for more information.

Highlights at the George Hanna Memorial Museum

What's Your Story?

Do you have photographs like these sitting in a photo album at home? You might think they are ordinary and personal but the people and backgrounds in these images can tell us a lot about how local lives and areas have changed.


The museum is seeking photographs, objects and memorabilia such as these for our upcoming exhibition called 'What's your story?' which opens in late June. The exhibition seeks to humanise the past and communicate that history is not static but a living thing which is actively kept, honoured and remembered by individuals, community groups and institutions.

Examples of the wonderful images of the past



Charmaine's costume for a fancy dress parade at Botany Public School

include these three photographs provided by Charmaine Piaud, a resident of Botany her entire life.

Over the years, Charmaine has contributed material to many of the museum's exhibitions. 

If you would like to share your story in our exhibition please contact Sam, Bayside Council's Curator on 0429 521 771 or via email samantha.sinnayah@bayside.nsw.gov.au.

Participants will be interviewed about the items they would like to share and should also be willing to be photographed.



Charmaine's 21st birthday party which was held at Botany Town Hall

The Precursors and Origins of Pemberton's Ramsgate Baths (1924 – 1970)

Dan McAloon

When Arthur Ashley Pemberton moved his family from inner western Sydney south to the shores of Botany Bay, 16 kilometres by road, they were captives of his dream of building a public baths. It was 1922 and land at Ramsgate Beach, then known as Scarborough, was cheap. The block Pemberton bought in Alfred Street to build his home cost £60, while the brick house cost £700. He paid slightly more for the six blocks on the beachfront and the crucial corner block which was already occupied but necessary to

propose that a stillwater venue for learn-to-swim programs would be well patronised in Sydney's bathing culture as so much of the recreational life involved water sports.

Finance and engineering aside, the business model of operating a public baths and charging for attendant services and amenities, including food and beverages sold at a kiosk, had long become a staple in Sydney's leisured lifestyle. The hot summers ensured the popularity of the cooling



the design of the baths.

On this beachside consolidation, covering an acre and a quarter, Pemberton intended to build his 'Modern Baths'. These would be walled pools separated from Botany Bay but serviced by seawater pumped in from the bay. They opened in 1924 and closed in 1970.

But why build a public baths? It was certainly not because Arthur Pemberton was a champion swimmer, nor even a good one. His son, Albert, as an old man recalls seeing his father in one of the Ramsgate pools only twice in his lifetime. The idea of the baths, said Albert, came from one of Pemberton's friends, "an Englishman who was a lifesaver". The friend encouraged Pemberton in the

waters at beaches and pools even when the staid Victorian etiquette was to segregate the sexes while bathing. Sydney Harbour was dotted with tidal pools and picnic grounds on beaches, and "shark proof" enclosures could be found at harbourside suburbs including Balmain, Leichhardt, Manly, Balmoral, Clontarf, Parsley Bay, Nielsen Park, Double Bay and Watsons Bay.

The earliest of the harbour pools was built into Woolloomooloo Bay. By the 1890s no less than four tidal baths operated here. The most elaborate was Robinson's Hot and Cold Baths on the western side, below Mrs Macquarie's Drive and the Domain. By 1907, with the merciful diversion of the city's raw sewage outfall away from the bay to

Bondi, Sydney City Council built a fine new municipal baths at this locale, known as the Corporation or Domain Baths.

This large tidal pool was constructed on pylons, replete with starting blocks, diving boards and platforms, a wide concourse and a very commodious grandstand able to accommodate thousands of spectators. The Domain Baths was the city's outstanding venue for swimming and diving championships and exhibitions. It was also home to several vibrant swimming clubs, including the Tramways Club and the professional Sydney League of Swimmers.

Among many memorable contests held at the Domain was the 1914 NSW 100 yards Freestyle Swimming Championships in which the fabled Hawaiian athlete Duke Kahanamoku was an

'Australian Crawl' stroke was adopted by Sydney's swimmers, the most efficient style yet devised.

The Domain was also the catalyst for a social change in swimming's near cousin, bathing. By 1921, Domain sessions of "continental" or mixed bathing were trialled. Unsegregated, for the first time men and women shared the same waters. Seven hundred people attended the sessions. Hugely popular with the public, these mixed bathing sessions led to the repeal of old laws banning the practice. The modern era of mixed bathing would be incorporated into Pemberton's Baths.

At the time Arthur Pemberton moved to Ramsgate, the Municipality of Rockdale had about 30,000 residents. Most of these were concentrated on the rocky hinterland several kilometres westward,



entrant. This race was a watershed in Sydney competitive swimming. Duke won the race, breezing ahead of his competitors and setting a new world record 53.8 seconds for the distance. For local freestyle coaches it was a Eureka moment.

The Duke's freestyle was an over-arm crawl augmented with a powerful six beat kick – an unbeatable combination that relegated the scissors-like 'trudgen kick' to the past. Despite innovations in the 'Crawl' stroke by 'Professor' Fred Cavill at his Lavender Bay floating baths, the trudgen kick had been retained as a social convention. It was regarded as impolite to break the surface of the water by kicking. Now Sydney's coaches saw the potential for the straight leg kick. And so the

either side of a sandstone ridge traversed by the southward Illawarra railway line and the road back into Sydney, the Princes Highway, which crossed the Cooks River at Tempe. This roadway, built over a dam on the Cooks River, was the only way into the St George District. The dominant local sports venue was Moorefield Racecourse at Kogarah, where the Rocky Point Road split from the highway and headed south.

Rocky Point Road ran the length of the Sans Souci Peninsula, ending at Rocky Point on the Georges River. It took in parts of Kogarah and Ramsgate, Sans Souci and Sandringham. Its settlements were established but sparse and isolated. On the bayside, horse paddocks and market gardens verged on the

wild expanse of public land named Scarborough Park, a tidal creek and wetlands sourced at the Georges River.

When Pemberton built his house at 107 Alfred Street it was only the eighteenth residence in the street. Vacant land was everywhere. With Scarborough Park at his backdoor it is no surprise that the sleepy suburb, today named Ramsgate Beach, was likewise named Scarborough. Scarborough Estate was a residential subdivision comprising 210 acres surveyed 60 years earlier by the wealthy merchant Thomas Holt MLC.

The English immigrant Thomas Holt is best known today as the founding father of the Sutherland Shire. His first fortune was made as a wool merchant in Sydney, from which he retired and began other careers as a land speculator, mining and timber getter, and parliamentarian. He conceived of his bayside estate Scarborough as a 'coastal village'. It was a small project for a man whose land holdings totalled millions of acres and included the Sans Souci peninsula and the whole of the Sutherland Shire. Where his interests were concerned Holt was a vigorous self-promoter.

When the Governor-General, Sir Hercules Robinson, and his wife accepted an invitation to stay with Holt at the Sandringham Hotel, Lady Robinson's passing admiration for Botany Bay's Seven Mile Beach – which she and her husband had traversed in their long carriage trip – gave Holt inspiration. He moved in the NSW Parliament that the beach be renamed 'Lady Robinson's Beach' in her honour, and so it was. Like the name Scarborough, it added a rarefied tone to Holt's holdings.

Another gesture at greatness arrived on the occasion of the centenary of Cook's Landing in Botany Bay. At Kurnell, Holt commemorated the historic event by erecting a handsome granite monument to Lt. James Cook and his botanist Sir Joseph Banks, adding his own name to theirs for all perpetuity. Although Holt had a mansion at Rocky Point, he and his wife preferred to reside at their neo-gothic pile 'The Warren' at Marrickville due to its proximity to Sydney.

Holt's schemes for opening up the Sans Souci Peninsula were typically grandiose, expensive and publicly funded. He proposed damming the Georges River at Botany Bay and sending fresh water back to thirsty Sydney via enormous canals constructed along his peninsula. Government

engineers rejected his plan as impractical. Indefatigable, Holt lobbied for the route of the coming Illawarra railway to pass down the peninsula. Again, this scheme was rejected as wasteful to the public purse. Holt's real estate business nonetheless continued to advertise that the arrival of the southern rail link was a foregone conclusion that would bring residents "within fifteen minutes travel of Sydney by locomotive."

On the sands of Scarborough, Holt's surveyors had criss-crossed the cleared flatlands with streets named after his children – Alfred, Fredrick, Walter, Alice, Florence and Emmaline. Intersecting them, running east-west, was an airy avenue named 'The Boulevard'. This spacious thoroughfare divided Holt's estate into North and South Scarborough. The Boulevard was a far grander continuation of Ramsgate Road – 300 feet wide by virtue of being built to accommodate a town centre and services. Holt advertised his Scarborough Estate as "a thoroughly established beautiful seaside township".

It was blatantly false advertising as no such place existed – only a grid of streets.

Buyers were understandably slow to take up lots in the lonely subdivision and the area languished for many years. When Pemberton moved there, little had been done to improve on it, save for a cutting at Ramsgate Road to allow vehicular access to The Boulevard. Mains water had also been connected, though rainwater tanks and wells were still common. Sewerage systems, by contrast, would take another 40 years to arrive.

With the idea of his own business in mind, Pemberton brought a fresh perspective on Scarborough's potential. He knew electricity would be connected within a short time, accelerating residential growth of the suburb. He also knew that a good road and permanent bridge at the mouth of the Cooks River to the north was imminent. This new road, the General Holmes Drive, would create a direct route from the city via Mascot along the foreshores of Botany Bay and down to his beachside development. The day-trippers would follow the road to his door.

He believed the name 'Scarborough' had long been associated in the public's mind with the swampy mosquito-infested wilderness of Scarborough Park. But a solution lay at hand. The steam tram from Kogarah Station to Sans Souci along Rocky Point Road had a stop about two and a half kilometres walk from where he proposed to build the Baths.

That tram stop was designated Ramsgate Post Office. Pemberton took 'Ramsgate' and its allusion to the famous English coastal resort and its ocean pool as an auspicious name for his enterprise.

And so, before the first shovel was dug for the foundations of his baths Pemberton had decided to forego the name Scarborough, and although his Baths would sit fairly in the midst of it, he would build a place to be known forever afterwards as 'The Ramsgate Baths'.

Not that land-based sea baths were unknown in Sydney. The outstanding example was the delightful Coogee Aquarium dating from the late 19th century where saltwater was pumped from pipes laid at the surf beach into an ornate domed emporium that held both swimming pool and aquarium. Another antecedent was New Zealand's Napier Baths. Prior to its destruction in a fatal earthquake they were a popular tourist attraction. They were built on Napier's black volcanic sands, piped with seawater, and equipped with diving boards and slides – details that would be accommodated into the layout at Ramsgate.

We do not know who designed the Ramsgate Baths – all plans and development applications were lost by Rockdale Council after the Baths closed in 1970. There is strong circumstantial evidence that the plans were drawn up by the engineer James Waddell, an Englishman who lived at Blaxland.

During 1923, Waddell resided with the Pemberton family as the Baths were being constructed. Little is known about Waddell (or 'Wadel', as Albert Pemberton spelt it) and though Blaxland had a fine swimming pool there is no record that Waddell built it. However we cannot doubt his competency for the difficult job at Ramsgate. The time that elapsed from Pemberton settling the deed on Cletus Egan's block to the opening of the Baths was almost exactly a year to the day. Waddell made things happen in a hurry. He marshalled a team of workers whose names are all unknown to us today.

Waddell's first task was to dig a well at the western end of the site. Covered with a concrete lid, it was a curious feature to later visitors. The shaft descended 20 feet; at different levels the water was either salty or fresh – this water would be used by Pemberton for plants and showers. The subterranean water, Waddell discovered, lay a mere seven feet under the soil.

Waddell's engineering solution was as practical as it was financially responsible. He would elevate the


sides of the concrete pools by several feet. He bricked up the sides and reinforced them with iron rods salvaged from a shipyard, mixed with concrete. Inside these stout frames the two main pools "hung". This method allowed the main swimming and diving pool to be excavated to a depth of nine feet at its deepest end. Leakage of ground water was not an issue.

This elegant solution necessitated a two-tiered design that was a familiar, if odd, feature of the Baths. Bathers entered at ground level but to reach the edge of No. 1 and 2 pools (and the additional slippery dip pool), poolside seating and walkways, meant walking up a set of concrete steps.

Waddell's other engineering challenge was to divert seawater 500 metres from Botany Bay. He excavated to the beach and into the Bay. A pair of four-foot diameter pipes were laid in the trench under the roadway. The pipes connected with the pump house built inside the seaward boundary wall. The pump house had foundations several feet deep to allow this transfer of water.

The piping married the Baths to Botany Bay for life. Land-locked yes, but nonetheless a tidal baths by nature, as it was only on the high tide that the outreach pipes were fully submerged and the pools could be filled. Tidal charts would furnish those windows of opportunity when all the factors converged and pumping could occur.

None of it would have meant a thing but for a technological marvel we take for granted today – electricity! In March 1923, the St George County Council became the first of Sydney's district power utilities to supply its residents with 240-watt mains power. The army of grey wooden poles strung with wires humming with electricity marched right up to the beachside corner.

Electricity opened a new era in Sydney bathing of which the Ramsgate Baths was the first beneficiary. Electricity brought the telephone that was vital to taking bookings. It also facilitated 'night bathing'. Around the main pool, large spotlights on poles illuminated the walkways and water. To take a cooling plunge after sunset in the midst of a heatwave became a popular reason to visit Ramsgate. Arthur Pemberton positively encouraged this, advertising his trading hours on postcards and placards as being 'from 5 am to 10 pm'. Electricity had sparked a booming business model. 

Read more about the baths and record your memories at the [Ramsgate Baths Facebook page](#).

An English Rose Finds Love at Government House

Diana Milford-Smith

The most enjoyable aspects of historical fiction involve imaginary characters, blending virtue and luck, as they journey through the challenges of a changing world. These tales are often surpassed by the achievements of real-life characters, including those from one of our members, Diana Milford-Smith, as she shares her family story.

As light rain fell on a cool winter's day in 1909 in Mungana, a small town in the Tablelands Region of Far North Queensland, William Harold Smith was born. Growing up in a remote country town, resources were scarce but Bill quickly developed a knack for living off the land. He honed his reflexes to snare rabbits, roasting them over an open fire.

Years earlier, Alexander Buchanan and Thomas Austin released rabbits into the wild for recreational hunting. Their choice and their aim were short-sighted, allowing the rabbit to become a serious threat to native wildlife. Over 160 years later, pet rabbits are still illegal in Queensland, as modern farmers cringe at the mention of the dreaded *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

Barefoot until his fourteenth birthday, Bill's stamina was tested as he trekked five miles daily to attend school. In his early teens, he scanned the area for work, realising he would need to venture over the horizon to earn a livelihood. Patient but determined, he went south, seeking pockets of prosperity in a country despairing as the Great Depression weighed on every family, already burdened by the human cost of World War I.

Bill arrived in Sydney, skirting west around the harbour and marvelling at talk of a vast iron bridge set to span the 500-metre stretch of water, dotted with ferries and fishing boats. He watched as the heavy granite foundations of the Sydney Harbour Bridge were laid in Milson's Point and Dawes Point. He then traced a horizontal line 50 metres above the waves, trying to picture the procession of cars, buses and bicycles tracking along that now imaginary line.

As he grappled with the idea of a giant steel-arched bridge, Bill soon discovered the prospects for many men in Sydney were scarce. He would compete with veterans of the war for the few available jobs,

preferring service roles to make use of his education. He travelled between Sydney and Newcastle, chasing rumours of work. He struggled, but his determination did not waver, as he searched for a chance to realise his potential.

After Bill's 28th birthday, he was offered that chance. Lord Wakehurst, the new Governor of New South Wales, arrived with his wife, Lady Wakehurst, at Government House, beside the Royal Botanic Garden. Bill was appointed in the household staff, serving as the governor's valet and personal butler. He would ensure the efficient functioning of the residence as the family hosted dignitaries, including royalty, diplomats, heads of state and business leaders.

Distinguished guests included HRH Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen Mother and Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt. In 1958, after one of many such functions, he received a personal note of gratitude from the private secretary, Major R.S. Connor and 2 years earlier, he led the team preparing to host Prince Phillip.

Diana's mother's story begins a century ago in the district of Kirkdale in the County of Liverpool, England. Violet Milford would also endure a difficult childhood, orphaned at an early age. Huddled with her four siblings, she feared the consequences as authorities assessed their fate. While it was common for siblings to be separated to accommodate them in foster families, the Milfords would remain together in the Fazakerley Cottage Homes, north of Liverpool.

In this stable environment, the cycle of grief over the premature loss of their parents was eased by the education they would receive. These lessons introduced Violet to the joys of cookery, where she displayed an immediate aptitude. When she left the orphanage, cookery became her livelihood, as her growing reputation drew her into the kitchens of some of the great houses of England.

She prepared cuisine for banquets and formal dinners for Lord & Lady Brocket, the Duke of Portland, Earl of Darby and the American Embassy in London.

When her talents reached the palates of Lord &

Lady Wakehurst, they invited Violet to join their personal staff in Australia. While she strolled through London's cobblestoned alleys to consider this opportunity, she passed bakeries and tea houses, with the aromas of cakes and pies, roasts and soups wafting from kitchen windows.

While she would miss her family, Australia fascinated her. The tastes of exotic fruit and meat from the island nation compelled her to accept the invitation. She imagined dishes blending Australian flavours in English cuisine, created in one of the most well-appointed residences in the country.

Shortly after Bill's future was secured, he found love in the idyllic gardens of the Gothic house, meeting Violet when she arrived in Sydney. Their love for each other formed amid the rising tension in Europe, as Germany descended into fascism. The staff at Government House were privy to the diplomatic efforts to avert war, also witnessing the dire outcome. Both Bill and Violet understood the risks and sought to marry before the world would change once more. They wed in 1939, months before the declaration of war by the Australian prime minister, Robert Menzies. Bill, a child of the outback, enlisted in the Light Horse Brigade.

Violet's life also changed. Convention dictated that staff at Government House were either single or widowed. As Bill prepared for combat, Violet would farewell her colleagues and her employer and friend, Lady Wakehurst. During her tenure, the menu for official functions showcased a distinctive combination for the period, using European and Australian ingredients. Dishes would begin with a choice of soup entrées including Chicken à la Lindy, Creme Washington, and Kangaroo Tail. The dinner continued with a choice of mains including

Lobster Puffs, Roast Chicken, Grilled John Dory, Filet de Boeuf en Marinade, Murray Cod with Sauce Bodalla Mornay, and Duckling in Orange Sauce. For dessert, a selection of fresh fruit was served, with either Jamaica Ice Cream, Bombe Diplomate or Loganberry Chantilly.

In 1941, as they looked over the gardens of Government House, the site of his marriage proposal, Bill and Violet were blessed with young

daughters but sat in silence. They had confronted challenges before, but after Bill received orders to join the battle overseas, their hearts were heavy at the prospect of parting in wartime.

As Violet prayed for his safe return, caring for their two daughters, Bill fought with distinction in the 2/20th Platoon of the Australian General Transport in the AIF. He served in Labuan in Malaysia, North West Borneo and Morotai Island in Indonesia, and was promoted to the rank of sergeant, returning home in 1945 to be reunited with Violet.

While Bill was abroad, Violet's talents in the kitchen and her knowledge of both the local produce and the recipes of Europe secured offers from a variety of

Sydney's residents. She started her own business, bringing the elegance of formal catering to special occasions for government, business and family functions. She especially enjoyed baking elaborate cakes and pastries for birthdays, weddings and christenings.

Violet and Bill's early lives were arduous, but they each had talents and a strength of character which served as an example to all those who knew them. These values were instilled in their daughters, particularly Violet's passion for education.

SGHS



Newlyweds, Bill Smith and Violet Milford, circa 1939

2017 Premier's Anzac Ambassadors Program

Eloise Cooper

To encourage high school students to research the events of WWI, the NSW Government and the RSL Council sponsor a writing competition, the Premier's Anzac Ambassadors Program, with the winners selected to visit the significant sites of Australian sacrifice during WWI in Europe.

In 2017, Eloise Cooper, a year 11 student in St George Girls High School, won for her answer to the question:

Why is the Centenary of Anzac important for modern Australia and what lessons are learned from the Battle of Beersheba in 1917?

In the middle of two seas and two continents lies Gallipoli; in antiquity, called 'beautiful city'. Under the sliver of dawn on the 25th of April 1915, tongues of flame and bullets illuminated the sky finding their targets at the base of the cliff. In that moment; at that time; there was nothing beautiful about war. The silent forms of the fallen rested on the beach; some writhing in agony, others with their life oozing into the Aegean Sea. There is a certain beauty that has since arisen from the sacrifices of Australian soldiers in the form of ANZAC spirit – the embodiment of everything for which Australians stand.

When people question what generally or specifically constitutes ANZAC, I too wonder. Was it found in the sweltering New Guinea jungle fighting against the Japanese, or on the Western Front in the trenches, or on the shores of Gallipoli? Was it found in the tragedies, or in the successes? Or was it found in mateship and hardship? It is, at its minimum and not singularly, definitely found in the Australian and New Zealander combatants who ventured into a four-year journey of tumultuous battles that occurred far, far away. It is personified in those who enlisted for adventure and those who enlisted on a quest to halt oppression with recovery of others' freedom.

WWI, by the time America was involved, was a global, arduous and bloody conflict unlike anything recorded in history. With casualties and deaths never before seen in conflict and pestilence, it left the global citizens to wonder if anything could ever be this bad again? For Australia, up until WWI,

there had been nothing that elevated us from a colonial statement to an independent entity on the world stage. Of the 420,000 Australians who enlisted for service, 60,284 died before discharge from the AIF - it is difficult to see what should be celebrated about WWI? However, WWI became a defining period in our history that united a sense of national pride and patriotism that arose under the most difficult and dire circumstances. Our biannual celebration (ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day) of remembrance has become a national outpouring of pride in what we have become as a nation. This resonates even more so in the centenary of ANZAC where we rejoice in how far we have 'grown up' since we pledged allegiance to the King.

The centenary's importance is unequivocal! The modern population must understand the unfortunate consequence of war, human sacrifice and the context of Australia's considerable force despite being a fledgling nation. Australia's involvement in war was a sacrifice that later held ramifications for our society for many years thereafter. The centenary provides Australia an opportunity to outwardly express our gratitude of what was and what is to come, as well as continually maintain the legend of ANZAC for future prosperity. It is truly a heightened reflection of the legacy and heroic deeds which were boldly displayed not only on the shores of the Gallipoli peninsula but in all of the campaigns such as those in Polygon Wood, the Somme, and Fromelles.

If mateship and camaraderie embodies the ANZAC remembrance, then quite unconventionally, with a touch of surprise, it is most epitomised in the legacy of Beersheba.

"Into the valley of Death/Rode the six hundred," wrote Lord Tennyson on reflection of the Battle of Balaclava in the Crimean War. This is perhaps the most well known cavalry charge due to the British Light Brigade's definitive annihilation from poor instruction and poor execution. The result, tremendous casualties and no decisive gains. Similarly, the Gallipoli Campaign is well known as a battle of spirit and retreat, but the Battle of Beersheba is lesser known as Australians are not known to gloat in victory.

Beersheba, by comparison to Balaclava, was well executed and well planned; with the troopers undeterred by the overwhelming numbers against them. The battle was an example of what Australians could achieve when dedicated, skilled and committed soldiers applied their trade. On 31st October 1917, the 4th Horse Light Brigade undertook history's last great cavalry charge. Brigadier General William Grant planned to engage the remaining Turkish defences via a mounted charge across open ground against entrenched infantry, artillery and machine guns – it was not possible. But without the water from the wells in Beersheba the horses would die and the Gaza-Beersheba line would remain unbroken; the whole Sinai-Palestine campaign would stagnate. Victory over the Turks would avenge Gallipoli.

The Turks expected to 'engage arms' with the cavalry as soon as they dismounted. However, Beersheba was a battle controlled by Australians and therefore would be different. With rifles slung and bayonets drawn and swung in the dusk light. A man, his horse, dependent on one another until the end; charged forth. The Australians ever showing initiative, deployed unorthodox Napoleonic engagement techniques that won them the battle and changed the history of the Middle East.

The Battle of Beersheba is told as a tale of reckless heroism, but was more than that. They did not 'fall with their faces to the foe' despite the sacrificial setting, nor ride into the Valley of Death. There was success against the odds. Against the massive losses at Menin Gate and Fromelles and elsewhere, there was success and hope. The Light Horse never doubted what was needed to win.

Survival of the legend of ANZAC is due to a collective perseverance. The capacity in our soldiers, a fierce determination and bond of mateship stronger than any rank structure in any military system, demonstrates the loyalty found in the ANZAC spirit. Beersheba is the success story which is little told despite its embodiment of ANZAC.

"Give me Australians as comrades and I will go anywhere duty calls."⁶ Mateship, resilience, determination, resourcefulness, commitment, all with a touch of larrikin, is what ANZAC stands for and moreover reflective in the centenary years. My Japanese-Australian heritage is riddled with war-involvement, and I could ask for no better opportunity than the centenary of ANZAC to commemorate that.

SGHS



The Charge of the Australian Light Horse at Beersheba, 1917 by George Lambert

History Conference at St Magdalene's Chapel

Barry Johnson

On 18 March, our society hosted a conference for local history, heritage and family history societies at the State-Heritage Listed St Magdalene's Chapel in Wolli Creek.

Guests from the Canterbury, Cape Banks, Kogarah, St Peters Cooks River, Sutherland and Marrickville History Societies attended. The event was an opportunity to discuss new initiatives with committee members in the surrounding area.

Experts from our most prestigious historical organisations gave practical presentations to guide our efforts. Carol Liston, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, outlined methods to respond to recent council amalgamations. Maintaining a good relationship with councillors and council staff will always be crucial for the future of non-profit community groups.

Christine Yeats, RAHS Vice-President, explained the publication process and recommended cataloguing tools. Her steps, including the use of ISSN and ISBN numbers, allow historical research to reach a broader audience.


The book *Shady Acres: Power and Vested Interests in the Government of New South Wales and the Shaping of Sydney*, was used as a case study on the steps to research content and resolve copyright concerns. The book is an engaging tale of the history of the rail network in NSW, with particular

focus on the negotiations in Sydney's south.

After lunch in the chapel, beneath the uplifting scenes in the large, restored stained-glass windows, Aleema Ash, the Audience Development Officer at Sydney Living Museums (Historic Houses Trust of NSW), detailed the dynamic range of events and activities her team has hosted. Audience feedback and project planning increased the reach of the events, as she trialled various ways to connect with an audience. Many events catered to the history of aspects of popular culture. Highlights included true-crime forums with local authors in the Police and Justice Museum, cooking classes with colonial ingredients and recipes at Vaucluse House, and convict escapades for teenagers in the Hyde Park Barracks Museum.

To further inspire us, Ross Berry led a guided tour of Tempe House.

The day was a great success and we thank the organisers – the SGHS Committee, especially Olga Sedneva, Wesley Fairhall, Laurice Bondfield, and Tina Workman. Thanks to Ross Berry, curator of Tempe House, for arranging the use of St Magdalene's Chapel, and to Bayside Council for the community grant to fund the event.

We look forward to ongoing discussions at follow-up conferences, and during our regular monthly meetings. 



Lugarno Public School

Graham Blewett

The Lugarno Public School was established as a result of pressure brought to bear upon the government by the Lugarno and District Progress Association and the Members of Parliament representing the district.

The Progress Association wrote a letter to the Minister for Lands on the 12th July 1927, "Members are anxious to know whether there is any land set apart for a Public School in the Lugarno district, Hurstville Municipality."

This letter was passed to the Department of Education, and Inspector Price was asked to report if steps should be taken to secure a school site in the Lugarno area. Inspector Price informed the Chief Inspector that he was too busy to visit Lugarno until early in the new year, and was of the opinion that the matter was not one of urgency. He reported on the 31st March 1928:

"It is very probable that in the not distant future a school must be established in the locality, and that being so, it is desirable that a site be acquired at once.

A tracing of the site suggested by the local Progress Ass'n is forwarded herewith. The block comprises approx. 3 1/2 acres, is lightly timbered, level, centrally situated, and otherwise suitable for school purposes. It is recommended therefore that the necessary steps be taken to acquire the site as requested."

The Headmaster of Peakhurst Public School, Joseph D. Woods, was asked to report to Inspector Price. The Peakhurst Public School was the closest school to Lugarno at this time, and the report lists the names and ages of pupils at Peakhurst who lived at Lugarno, with the distance they travelled.

The Headmaster also gave his opinion on the proposal:

"Lugarno is a sparsely populated centre. The houses are chiefly weekend places. The Progress Association have been trying to boom it of late. The apparent boom is being engineered by a few land-jobbers who have bought extensively there, but cannot sell. I think it will be years before people seek homes there as communication is too inconvenient. They can show only about eleven children near school age.

These people have no educational hardships at present for they ride about 3 miles in a bus for which all are receiving subsidy. There is no congestion at Peakhurst School. The risks to the children now of an afternoon waiting for the bus are practically nil. There is plenty of shelter available from weather conditions, and traffic is very light. For these reasons I think a school at Lugarno is unnecessary at present."

It was decided to provide land for the school, but to defer opening a school.

On the 26th April 1928 the Department of Education requested the Department of Lands that the proposed school site on Crown land totalling 3 acres, 2 roods, 35 perches in size, be dedicated for school purposes. The Department of Lands gave approval on the 13th July, and the Government Gazette of the 26th October 1928 officially notified the vesting of the land in the Department of Education.

The Minister for Education, Mr. D.H. Drummond, wrote to the State Member, Mr. Fred Stanley, MP for Lakemba, stating that he preferred to have five acres for a school site, but as the school would not be erected for some years to come, and as there was Crown land on the opposite side of the road, he was satisfied with the three and a half acres.

Soon the Progress Association and the State Member of Parliament, Fred Stanley, were pressing for a school to be erected on the site provided.

The bus to Peakhurst was a major issue. In May 1930 the Progress Association wrote to the Minister for Education, pointing out that if the children were dismissed early they must walk along a lonely road, or wait at a lonely corner for the bus to come, which exposed the children to moral and physical danger.

At this time most Lugarno residents were not wealthy, and would have been affected by the Great Depression. Mr. Stanley, MP for Lakemba, representing the Lugarno residents, wrote to the Minister, noting that they received a subsidy of 9d. a week for the bus fare, but they had to pay a shilling a week, and this was a hardship for parents with several children, especially if the parents were unemployed.

To indicate their strong desire for a school, the Progress Association told the Minister that residents had agreed to clear the ground ready for a building to be erected, and Mr. H.P. Cleveland offered his hall as a schoolroom, until a proper school was built, at a rental of ten shillings per week.

Mr. Cleveland described it this way:

"I have erected a fibro building, 20'x12' with stone foundations, tiled and gabled roof. The building is now in use as a Sunday School, and is well-ventilated, attractive, and situated just off the main road."

Inspector McDowell reported on the 11th August 1930:

"There were sufficient children at Lugarno to warrant the establishment of a school ... I have seen the Hall; it would be fairly suitable, and would enable the Department to test the bona-fides of these applications without the cost of building a school. I recommend that the Department accept this offer of Mr. Cleveland's for that purpose."

This offer was not taken up, and agitation for a school continued.

A new Member of Parliament, Mr. Edward Parnell Kinsella, M.L.A. for George's River, took up the fight for a school during his term in office from 1930-1932, but without success. He was informed in May 1931 that the present financial stringency precludes the Department from taking any steps toward the establishment of the school.

The next Member of Parliament, Mr. C.O.J. Monro, M.L.A. for George's River, pressed the case for the school with the Minister for Education, the Hon. D.H. Drummond, M.L.A., and indicated the political advantage of having a new school in his electorate. He arranged for the Minister to visit Lugarno on the 29th March 1933, and they met a deputation of Lugarno parents including Mr. W. Dyson, President, and Mr. Hans Matthei, Secretary, of the Progress Association.

They claimed that there were forty-four Lugarno children at Peakhurst school, four at Penshurst school, and ten at Menai school. Complaints about the bus service being expensive, the bus being old, packed full of both children and adults, and unsafe, were made. Some children had to walk two miles, and others had to cross the ferry from Menai to


catch the bus. An undertaking was given by Mr. Dyson that the local residents would clear the land, and fence it if materials were provided. The Minister pointed out the advantages of the well-equipped and fully staffed school at Peakhurst over a one teacher school at Lugarno, however he felt that they should have a school of their own, and he asked for a diagram to be prepared showing where the pupils lived in Lugarno.

Mr. Monro forwarded the diagram, with a letter commenting that it showed that 30 families with 72 children lived within a mile of the proposed school, and he suggested that the provision of a school would encourage additional people to live at Lugarno. He reported that the people of Lugarno had begun to clear the site.

The Department wrote to the parents in Lugarno, seeking details of the number of pupils and their ages. They also wanted to be sure that the parents would send their children to the Lugarno school rather than the better-staffed and equipped Peakhurst school.

There was a little opposition to the school. One wished to keep her children at Peakhurst, and wanted an adequate subsidy of the bus fares. She had not received the subsidy for six months, and objected to having to use the child endowment for bus fares, but was willing to do this if it was the only way to get her children properly educated.

On the 17th July 1933, Mr. Monro, M.L.A. was informed that the application for a school at Lugarno had been approved. In August it was decided that the name Lugarno would be used, and instructions for a building to be erected were issued. It was a S.P.C.R. (Single Portable Class Room) similar to the building at Balgowlah Heights, and was erected by the Drummoyne Workshops of the Department of Education at a cost of £363/2/3d, including a wash shed and closets.

The official opening took place on the 28th October 1933. 

Read the full story of the school's early years, including the opening ceremony, and the expansion program in the 1950s, at [Graham's Lugarno History website](#).

St George's, Bermuda

Barry Johnson

The name of our region commemorates Saint George of Lydda (modern-day Lod in Israel). An officer of the Roman Empire, he was martyred in the fourth century AD while defending Christianity. Dozens of other sites throughout the world also bear his name. This regular feature in our magazine explores these cities, churches, regions and monasteries.

In this edition, we travel to the Town of St George's in Bermuda, the first capital of this British Overseas Territory, founded in 1612. As the English charted the New World, St George's became the oldest continuously-inhabited English town on the western Atlantic Ocean. While the possessive form of the name, St George's instead of St George, may seem incorrect, it is the convention among Bermudans. The name also distinguishes the place from the person.

St George's was encountered by the English while sailing to Virginia, when they struck the island's reef while seeking refuge from the churning ocean during a fierce storm. While the ship was destroyed, the crew survived, salvaging the wreckage to build a pair of ships, aptly named *Deliverance* and *Patience*. A replica of the *Deliverance* can be seen in the harbour, moored at Ordnance Island.⁷

The year was 1607, shortly after the founding of Jamestown, Virginia. As the crew sailed onward to the mainland, two survivors remained on the island archipelago, determined to establish a permanent settlement. As they laboured, the sheltered cove continued to be an important refuge for sailors escaping treacherous seas.

After St George's was declared the capital of the Bermuda islands and the Parliament House was

built in 1612, the town continued as the territory's capital for the next 203 years. The colony on the mainland expanded, and independence from Britain was declared, drawing thousands of Bermudan families to the north-eastern states of the United States, becoming dual citizens on the eve of the American Civil War.

St George's became a strategic port, as trade added to the wealth of the island's families. These families were more than skilled traders and political negotiators, also directing raids on the English stores of gunpowder held in the port. The barrels of explosive were smuggled to the waiting ships of George Washington's navy, and offloaded during

the night for cannons lining the American coastline in reinforced forts.


The island was also used to circumvent English blockades of naval trade to mainland forces. In the heart of the city, ironically named King's Square, historical re-enactments of these seventeenth-century events are hosted daily.⁸



St Peter's Church, bestowed with the title 'Their Majesties Chappell' (sic) in 2012¹⁰

The study of St George's archaeology continues, led by the [Bermuda National Trust](#), unearthing the foundations of the governor's house, an original structure built in 1612.

In 2000, the town on the island was [UNESCO listed](#), sited as an “outstanding example of a continuously occupied, fortified, colonial town dating from the early seventeenth century, and the oldest English town in the New World”⁹. Over 60% of the town's structures were built before 1900, including the first State House and St Peter's Church, the oldest continuously occupied Protestant church in the Western hemisphere.

In a place of such historical significance, the [St George's Historical Society Museum](#), built in the 1730s, is an ideal starting point for visitors. 

Saint George – One Life, Many Legends

Barry Johnson

In the October 2017 edition, I outlined the life of Saint George, highlighting his resolve against persecution for professing his belief in Christianity. This belief flourished throughout Nicomedia during the 4th century as citizens and slaves converted.

George was canonised in 494AD by Pope Gelasius I. Artwork of the legend of Saint George and the Dragon was first seen in the 10th century, in one of the holiest sites of the Orthodox Church, Cappadocia in Turkey.

The most familiar version of the legend throughout medieval Europe was in the *Golden Legend*, a compilation of hagiographies by Jacobus da Varagine, an archbishop of Genoa. The hagiography, a biography of a saint or spiritual leader, emphasised the significance of key events and miracles during a saint or spiritually-developed person's lifetime.

The tale begins in Silene, in modern-day Syria, a town with a small lake. The lake is inhabited by a dragon infected with a plague-like disease. To appease the dragon and ward off destruction, the villagers offer sheep as sacrifices, a reference to the sacrifice in the Old Testament of the Bible as the Israelites sacrificed lambs during their Exodus from Egypt. When the entire flock had been devoured, the villagers were forced to sacrifice their own children, drawing lots to select the order. This was another reference to the Old Testament, as Abraham is commanded to sacrifice his son to God.

When the king's daughter is chosen as the dragon's next victim, he offers all his wealth and half the kingdom if his daughter is spared, but the villagers reject his pleadings.

The princess is led to the lake's edge, wearing a bridal dress, her faith tested as she waits for the dragon's appearance. But as in Abraham's story, when his knife is poised above Isaac's chest, there is divine intervention.

Saint George arrives on horseback, searching for adventure and fortune. The princess urges the knight to flee. Instead, he makes the ritual Christian blessing of the sign of the cross. He then charges toward the dragon, driving his lance into the beast's neck while dodging the slashing of the dragon's claws. The dragon is bested and George frees the princess.

George binds the dragon in a leash, leading it into the town behind the rescued princess. The villagers, terrified at the sight of their tormentor, implore George to slay it.

He agrees, but on the condition that they perform the Christian rite of baptism. Thousands of villagers became Christians in the following days, first among them was the king. George then killed the dragon, ordering it from the village, dragged atop 4 ox carts.

The king built a church to the Blessed Virgin Mary on the site of the dragon's death. The baptismal ceremony purified

the lake, allowing holy water to flow from a spring in the church's altar. Where once the water caused only death and disease, it now cured.

The elements of Saint George's life, which transcended death and evil, sorrow and pain, were the basis of these legends. Upon hearing or reading them, and seeing the wondrous iconography, new generations would be inspired to convert to Christianity, centuries after Saint George's martyrdom.

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The Book of St George in Kogarah Library

Anniversaries – May

Barry Johnson

15 May 1903

Eric Stanislaus Joseph Miller is born in Rockdale. After his baptism, the family changed their Austrian surname from Prochatschek to the anglicised name, Miller. While he was educated at Marist Brothers Boys' School in Kogarah, his father worked as a railway engineer.

After graduating, he was keen to learn more about the inner workings of the law after reading legal reports in newspapers and debating social issues. His first job after school was in the sheriff's office as a junior clerk.

By 1926, Miller was promoted into the newly instituted Workers' Compensation Commission. He would respond to disputes as the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, which ruled on the amount for the basic wage and the hours in a standard working week, was reformed.

While working for Justice John Harvey in the Equity Division, he studied law at the University of Sydney. He became a founding member of the university's first formal Catholic student's group, the Newman Society. Graduating 2 years later, he was admitted to the bar.

As his vocational path was set, he married Rita Clarke in 1931. During their marriage, they had three sons and four daughters. While imagining the potential conditions during their working lives, he continued to direct his energies toward industrial relations in common law and appeals courts.

Under the guidance of Herbert Vere Evatt in the *Caledonian Collieries Case*, he sought to resolve the working conditions of coalminers in New South Wales mines during a lockout.

After 10 years as a barrister, he was appointed Queen's Counsel, one year after the opening salvo of World War II. This distinction provided him the opportunity to serve as counsel assisting in a series of Royal Commissions.

These included allegations by Edward Ward, the Minister for Labour and National Services, that the former Menzies-Fadden coalition government sought to abandon Northern Australia in the event of a Japanese military invasion. The "Brisbane

Line" Royal Commission did not find evidence for this claim, and was ruled as unfounded in 1943.¹¹ Ward would again appear before the commission in a timber rights review for Papua New Guinea in 1949. Ward's legal wranglings were a source of steady work for Miller, as he was represented a third time to prosecute a defamation case against the print media.

After VP (Victory in the Pacific) Day in 1945, ending WWII, Miller pursued the activities of government agencies and large corporations. He probed the administration of the Peace Officer Guard, a domestic force recruited to secure government buildings. In the 1950s, as social change accelerated amid a new wave of prosperity, Miller defended a "grossly negligent" police sergeant in the 'vice' squad and a suspect bookmaker.

While those proceedings provided stimulating copy for newspaper editors, memories of his father motivated him to concentrate on industrial law. He acted for a candidate in the election for positions in the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, successfully prosecuting claims of electoral misconduct.

One of his proudest victories was before the Privy Council in *Commissioner for Railways v Quinlan* in 1964, contributing to a precedent of reasonable duty of care, even for a trespasser.

Eric Miller was a respected Catholic throughout his lifetime. He retired from legal practice at 70, passing away in 1986.¹²

10 May 1955

John Radecki dies in Hurstville. Born Jan Radecki in Łódź, Poland in 1865, he migrated to Australia with his parents and four siblings when he was 16. The family settled in Wollongong, where his father continued working as a coalminer. Three years after Federation, in 1904, he changed his Christian name to John during the ceremony to become a naturalised Australian.

To further his talent for art, he left the family home, becoming a boarder with an English family in

Paddington. Surrounded by creative influence, he also found love in the home in Oxford St, marrying the family's daughter in 1888.

During his experimentation with different art forms, he was enthralled by the medium of glass. Admiring the striking effect of light upon a handful of coloured glass pieces, he discovered the finest examples of its use in the city's largest churches. The construction of new cathedrals and churches engaged the talents of the new country's finest craftsmen - stonemasons, carpenters, metalworkers and stained-glass makers.

As an apprentice to Frederick Ashwin, John was guided in the creation of Biblical scenes, including the 'Sermon on the Mount' and the 'Nativity', for churches throughout Sydney and New South Wales. As his skill developed, he would also design the artworks, leading to a significant commission in his early career - the depiction of the hymn of praise, 'Te Deum', Latin for "Thee, O God", in Christ Church St Laurence in Haymarket.

When his mentor passed away, John became the company's principal designer and in 1920, one year after his wife's death, he bought the company, becoming owner of the largest glassmaking company in Sydney, with a well-founded reputation in the Catholic community.

He would provide hundreds of stained-glass windows throughout the city, including in St Patrick's Church in Kogarah and St Joseph's in Rockdale.

The first St Declan's Catholic Church in Penshurst opened in 1907. St Declan's became a parish in 1916 and by 1927, a larger church was needed. John was familiar with the centuries-old practice of patronage, where iconography linked to the donor would form part of a religious artwork. From the outset of the project, John sought to honour his wife in the same way. He designed and crafted each of the stained-glass windows in the church, using his own funds to complete the project. After the new St Declan's was opened a year later, he would visit often, always pausing for reflection before the memorial window dedicated to his late wife, Emma Radecki (nee Saunders).

The banking industry was central to the growing investment in the Australian economy. It was depicted with industries including agriculture,

mining, carpentry and construction, on a series of Australian banknotes commemorating the country's sources of financial wealth. Those banknotes are now displayed in the Reserve Bank of Australia's museum in Martin Place. John was also guided by those themes when he designed the arched stained-glass windows in the heritage-listed Commonwealth Savings Bank, a short walk from the museum.

He would also enhance the artistry of another of Sydney's historic buildings, the Mitchell Library. John designed the window in the reading room, using William Caxton's achievements as inspiration. William Caxton introduced the first printing press to England in the 15th century, becoming the country's first printed-book seller. The window shows Caxton holding the first book printed using that press, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

After his death, the company continued in Dixon St, Hurstville for a further six years.¹³

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Two-panel window in St Michael's Anglican Church in Wollongong, designed by John Radecki in 1935 for Thomas and Charlotte Wearn.¹⁴

Our War, Our Words – Autumn 1918

Barry Johnson

In our October – December 2017 edition, we printed a letter from **Albert Edward Offord**, owner of Rutherglen Nurseries on Blanche St, Oatley and Forest Rd, Hurstville. In this letter, he is an Acting Corporal, enjoying happier times while training in Tell El Kebir, 110km north-north-east of Cairo:

Just a few lines relating to a very pleasant surprise that befell me in Egypt.

I was stationed at Tel-El-Kebir, where the sand of the desert, combined with a vast quantity of flies, make life almost unbearable. By the way, did you know that the flies were regarded as a sacred insect by the Egyptians. A foreigner once spent considerable time among the Egyptians, disguised as one of themselves, and remained undiscovered, until one day, tormented by the flies, he brushed them aside. He was at once discovered as an imposter. A true Egyptian never disturbs the flies.

To resume my story. Late one afternoon, we were dismissed to our tents after a long wearying march. On entering my tent I found a paper lying on the ground. Reading matter being very scarce, I took possession of it. Just imagine my surprise and delight, when I discovered it to be a recent copy of the "Call". I can assure you that it brought back many fond memories of the Illawarra district, and just a wee bit of home sickness. I knew that the "Call" had a pretty wide circulation, but I hardly expected to find it in an Egyptian desert.

I sat outside my tent to read the contents, and very soon had a very interested audience. I am not quite sure that my audience could read English print, but judging by their smiles and attentive looks, they were enjoying the "Call" very much, notwithstanding their lack of education. They evidently recognised and appreciated a good paper when they saw it.

Well it's 'Lights out,' so I must close. With best wishes for your paper, and hope that a

few more copies will find their way abroad to cheer and delight the boys who are doing their bit.¹⁵



The actions during battle were briefly recounted when reporting the heroics of soldiers receiving commendations or of those suffering injuries or illness. In this letter from an unnamed soldier, the graphic detail and raw, honest emotion records the horrors of war:

Everything seemed to happen at once. Right beside me a mitrailleuse (French for grapeshot, a volley gun mounted on a carriage. It had multiple barrels, each manually loaded - Ed) began banging like an unsilenced motorcycle, and almost simultaneously there rose up forty feet high on the extreme left flank of attack a tall, thin jet of white and red light from which sprayed off flashes of green and yellow as water sprays from the hose jet at a fire. For what seemed a full second or more the flame hung high in the air above us, showing bright as day the shapeless slope in front with its mounds and hollows. Funny how the brain works!

In that brief moment, as I turned and threw the grenade in my hand toward the base of the fire column my thought was not of the danger to us, but of triumph in the havoc our quickfirer had wrought among the Germans advancing to the attack. Then a rain of blazing liquid fell upon us, and I

screamed as the drops of fire seared my left hand.

Suddenly all was night again --- thick darkness that seemed solid before our eyes like a black wall. Our mitrailleuse was silent, but in front our grenades were bursting like giant firecrackers; by my side some one was shrieking in agony, and farther along I could hear the lieutenant as I had heard him before cursing the fools who were so slow getting their mitrailleuse back into action.

My hand didn't hurt me any more. I had no pain anywhere, no thought save to throw bomb after bomb down there to the left to destroy the devilish thing that was preparing to spring at us again.

It's a queer thing about some of these new war inventions. You feel a concrete hatred as for a savage beast with out thinking about the men who are really working the thing. A boche prisoner told me the same thing about our tanks; said he entirely forgot there were men in them and was quite surprised to see our wounded crawling out once when a big shell hit one fair and square and smashed it. So we all cheered as if we'd killed the devil, when a sudden deep bellow drowned the banging of the bombs and a great round fountain of fire told us one of the flame containers had exploded. Those wretched boches must have died quick, like flies in the flame of a lamp, for one after another three more containers burst into roaring eruption as the fire from the first one caught them, and by their light we saw here and there a stray survivor plunging headlong back to the German line. So far at least the attack had been a failure.

I expected another dose of shelling, but perhaps something had gone wrong with the German signals. Anyway, the barrage stayed where it was behind us, and now the wheesh and rattle of our shells overhead showed the enemy's trenches were getting it in their turn.

The bonfire out in front made everything stand out clear with sharp black shadows, and right ahead of me, not twenty feet away, I saw a boche lying doubled up on

the near side of a hummock of earth. He looked just like a big spider with his arms and legs mixed up round the hideous snout a gas mask makes for you, and after one good look to make sure he wasn't shamming I didn't bother about him any more than an insect.¹⁶

During the war in Europe, soldiers were at risk of trench foot, damaging nerves and tissue. As a preventative measure, in 1914, *The Grey Sock*,¹⁸ a guide to knitting wool socks for soldiers, was published by the Soldiers' Sock Fund. Schoolchildren used the guide to knit socks for Australian soldiers¹⁹, and this letter from **Sapper Ulric Gilbert** to **Miss Sadie Oxenham** and her classmates at Sandringham Public School records their appreciation:

You have earned my heartfelt thanks for the beautiful pair of socks you so thoughtfully sent per medium of N.S.W. Red Cross Society. I can assure you, Sadie, that we boys would not know what to do without the generosity of the little school children of Australia, so well have you children risen to the occasion for patriotic purposes.

I am a Victorian born at St. Kilda, but I know Sydney very well, being, prior, to enlistment, on the staff of the Rockdale (near Sans Souci) Branch of the Commercial Bank of Australia, Ltd. The weather is not so cold at present, strange to say, being winter time. This time last year was intensely cold.

We are not in action for the moment, but will soon be – we are resting many miles behind the firing line and not within sound of the guns.

Well, dear Sadie, in conclusion I again thank you so much for the socks, which I like very much. Trusting you and your little mates at school are enjoying the very best of health.

Though very late in the season, but as the old proverb says: 'Better late than never,' I wish you, your little mates, your teachers and the rest of the staff of your school, a merry merry Xmas and a bright and happy new year. 'May this be the year.'¹⁷

After **Albert Edward Offord** was discharged as medically unfit, he sought ways to support Australian soldiers and the volunteers devoted to easing their suffering. In this letter, he describes the Anzac spirit, imploring readers to consider their welfare through donations to the Red Cross Society:

On the 25th of April we celebrate Anzac Day, a day set apart to commemorate the landing at Gallipoli. It was there that our boys showed that they can be said to be one of the finest fighting body of men in the world.

Since that day, on the western front, and in Palestine, they have shown the same courage and fighting powers, as they showed at the landing. It is a well-known fact that a Hun fighter never likes facing the wild Australians, and that the best troops that Germany can provide are sent to hold the line opposite that portion of the line held by the Australians. I spent many months in the trenches. I have seen our boys 'go out,' with a smile, proud to make the supreme sacrifice that spells safety for the people that remain here.

To you women folk, God bless you, for the part that you have played. You have sent husband, brother, son, and sweetheart with an aching heart, yet with a smiling face. You have worked and given to your utmost. The war still goes on, our lads are pressed harder than ever before. Many will be wounded, while some will sleep beneath the war-stricken fields of France.

Perhaps you would like a personal testimony of the treatment of a soldier who is sent from the firing line, sick or wounded. I was sent from the firing line on January 6th, 1916, to report to an advanced dressing station. I was met with every kindness. A cup of tea, biscuits, cigarettes (provided by the Red Cross Fund), was given me. An ambulance took me to a casualty clearing station. Again I was met with great kindness and more comforts. I stayed there two days, and then carried to a hospital train bound for Rouen.

It was on this train that I first met those glorious women who come right up within gun range of the enemy to tend the

wounded. Plenty of books were given us (again the sign of the Red Cross) and we were made comfortable. The snow was swirling against the train windows, but we were too comfortable to notice that. A six hours run brought us to Rouen.

We were then carried to hospital, where we had a warm bath (badly needed), a cup of tea, and were put to bed under clean sheets, the first that I had seen for nearly eighteen months. From here I was sent across the Channel to "blighty". We were all lying helpless on stretches. Soon a squad of women came along with the glorious Red Cross on their breast. We were supplied with hot bovril, chocolates, cigarettes, etc., while some of the girls produced a packet of post cards, knelt beside us, and wrote to our friends for us. Another train and we arrived at our destination.

Next morning a lady came to my bedside and introduced herself as representing the Australian Red Cross Society. I had lost all my kit when I left the line, but this lady supplied me with everything that I needed, also a parcel of tobacco, and some real Australian newspapers. I received many visits from the lady of the Red Cross, and she never came empty handed. Time passed on and at last I was fit to be sent to a camp in the south of England.

Here again, I met the sign of the Red Cross. Every Thursday we received an issue (gratis) of everything that we needed, such as socks, mufflers, mittens, soap, brushes, etc. At last came the day when I boarded the hospital ship bound for Australia. Each man, on going aboard, was handed a bag, again with the sign of the Red Cross. It contained pyjamas, two pairs of shirts, two pairs underpants, three pairs of socks, handkerchief, writing material, etc. We were also provided with tobacco, fruits and cigarettes the whole of the trip.

Such is the work of the Red Cross. More funds are needed to carry on the glorious work. April 25 is your chance. You have given before, but there is greater need than ever. Give and work to your utmost is the earnest appeal from a soldier, who knows what this great Society is doing.²⁰

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For King and Country – October 1917

Barry Johnson

During World War I, the local newspaper, *The St George Call*, published photographs and brief biographies of local volunteers to the Australian Infantry Force when they departed for foreign battlefields. The portraits²¹⁻²³ published in January and February 1918 were:

A - Private Henry William David Riches was a carpenter and driver when he enlisted in 1916, aged 36. He was living with his wife, Frances, at Queens Rd, Connells Point. After basic training at the Show Ground in Moore Park, he embarked on the ten-week voyage to Plymouth before joining the battle in France. After two weeks of combat, he was shot, fracturing his right scapula forcing his return to England for further treatment. After the injury, he would lack the range of motion in his shoulder to handle a rifle. Riches was medically discharged and returned to Australia five months before the end of hostilities. When a volunteer was serving overseas during WWI or WWII, the wife, mother, or closest female relative received the Female Relative Badge. After moving to Allawah, Frances's badge was stolen and she paid 6/4, the approximate equivalent of A\$21 in 2018, for a replacement in 1946.²⁴

B – Private Allan Walter Gordon Butcher, 28,

was living in Ocean St, West Kogarah when he enlisted in 1917. He embarked the week before Christmas for the Suez Canal for training before continuing the two-week journey to Southampton. He fought for five months in France before a shrapnel wound to his ankle ended his war on the Western Front. He required an extended recuperation in England before finally returning to Australia in October 1919.²⁵

C – Private Leslie Norman Wheeler, a labourer living in Auburn, had just turned 18 when he enlisted in the 13th Battalion in 1916. He would endure brief periods in hospitals and hospital ships, recovering from bronchitis and trench fever. Leslie fought on the Western Front for two years, receiving the Military Medal for bravery when a gunshot fractured his wrist.

While healing in London, the sights of the city tempted him away from the base for longer than expected, receiving a charge of being absent without leave for his indiscretion.

As the war ended, Leslie returned to Australia, still stinging from the damage to his wrist. He was medically discharged in 1920. While travelling throughout New South Wales in search of work, his medals were stolen, but after serving in WWII, he obtained replacements.²⁶

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*Female Relative Badge*²⁷



*Military Medal*²⁸



Lugarno Punt 1964

Allison Miller

Snake line of cars
kids waving out windows
tongues hanging out for
a rare treat - ice-cream.

Our Austin smacks onto barge
chains and ramps clank
kids shudder in anticipation
as the crew winches us forward.

Putt across to the other side
waves lapping
sea spray playing
a tune on the cable.

Land ahoy-
ramps extended
winch and chains commanded
snake line slithers forward.

Sunday destination.



The Lugarno Ferry began service in 1843 with the £20 per annum tender of Charles Rowan for a punt to cross the Georges River. In 1930, Hurstville and Sutherland Councils financed the purchase of a 6 car ferry which was in turn replaced by a 16 vehicle vessel in 1961. With a decline in use of the ferry following the construction of the Alfords Point Bridge the ferry service was discontinued, the last journey being made on 12 December 1974.^{37, 38}

Rugby League – Why Norm Provan should be the next Immortal

Margie McDonald

He is half the National Rugby League Telstra Premiership trophy. He should be the next Immortal.

Norm Provan might be more familiar to the broader church of rugby league fans as the taller guy in bronze, embracing the shorter Arthur Summons as they trudged off a sodden SCG pitch at the end of the 1963 grand final between St George and Wests.

But Provan's career achievements far excel his 193cm, 99kg frame, which itself was impressive on a football field.

With NRL chief executive Todd Greenberg announcing in February that a ninth Immortal would be named this year – the first since Andrew Johns in 2012 – the debate will be on about who should next shoulder this immense honour.

"This is a significant occasion for our game as we celebrate the history of rugby league and recognise those who have shaped it," Greenberg said.

"Without question, one of the biggest topics in rugby league revolves around comparisons between heroes of our game... whether it's players from decades ago or those from the modern era."

Remember the game started in 1908, so a name to herald that 110th anniversary should be a significant one.

It is hard to compare the careers of players over the generations, when so much in rugby league has changed.

But a few things haven't – including how hard it is to win a premiership, and how difficult it is to break into the Australian Kangaroos team, or a state rep team.

Provan did all that – it's just that he did it before the majority of present-day fans were born.

They will be more familiar with Australia's Test coach, Queensland's record-breaking Origin mentor, and the only player to be selected in four Kangaroos Tours, Mal Meninga.

Or they might think four-time premiership-winner Darren Lockyer, who is still the most capped

Kangaroos player (59 Tests), and one who broke a host of other records as a sublime fullback and five-eighth, is a worthy candidate – and they'd be right.

You could add winger Ken Irvine - who still holds the record for most first-grade tries with 212, hooker Noel Kelly or second-rower Ron Coote as possible candidates – and you'd be right again. All three were in rugby league's Centenary Team named in 2008.

There's plenty of backing for current stars like Cameron Smith and Johnathan Thurston. But it is understood a player must be retired for at least five years before they are considered.

Regardless of the chatter, Provan was special.

He put his body through 15 first-grade seasons with St George (1951-65), playing in 10 winning grand finals – his last four as captain-coach. He played 18 Tests (1954-1960) and 27 games for NSW.

He then coached St George to a preliminary final in 1968, before a season with Parramatta (1975) and two years with Cronulla, which included the 1978 grand final loss to Manly-Warringah.

However, if you're still not sure about Norm Provan then you need only look at the Provan-Summons trophy – the pinnacle for clubs in the Telstra Premiership.

The pose was first captured in a photograph by Fairfax's John O'Gready known as "The Gladiators".

O'Gready captured near-perfectly the exhaustion, courage, competitiveness and mateship of rugby league, especially on display in high-octane games like grand finals.

The 85-year-old Provan was born in the NSW Riverina region, retired to Queensland, and usually makes the trek to each Dally M Awards with Arthur Summons to present the medal struck in their names, one that is for the player voted by fans as their favourite.

It is now time for Provan to receive his due recognition.



Have your say on the [St George Dragons website](#).

In the Courts

Barry Johnson

While the language and the currency differed, the “thin blue line” is regularly tested, as crimes, often petty, were prosecuted in the St George and Kogarah Police Courts and colourfully reported in *The St George Call*. During early 1918, Lady Justice dealt with these local cases^{29, 30}:

- Hector Pope Melville was proceeded against by summons on a charge that while proprietor of the Cronulla Picture Theatre, Cronulla, he failed to furnish a statement showing the total number of persons admitted for each separate taxable payment for admission, and on a second charge of having issued a ticket other than a stamped ticket contrary to the Act. The defendant who was represented by Mr. C. R. Penny, pleaded guilty, and was fined £15 and £2/5/0 costs on each charge, in default four months hard labour. Mr. C. M. Collins (instructed by the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor, appeared for the prosecution.
- Arthur Booth, of Arncliffe. pleaded guilty to taking five dozen oysters at Taren Point, George's River, without the consent of George William Collis, the lessee. He stated that "he did not know he was on the lease." Fined 30/- and 32/- costs, in default fourteen days.
- Dennis Brown was similarly charged in this case six dozen oysters were taken from lease No. 9224, of the value of six shillings. Defendant said "He did not know he was doing wrong." Fined 30/-, 37/- costs, in default fourteen days. Allowed until 26th January to pay.
- Vincent Gibbons, charged with stealing two ducks, three ducklings, eighteen pullets, and two roosters, valued at 52/-, the property of Euphemia Billington, Dora Street, Hurstville, will do one month's gaol with hard labour.
- William John Pearce, of West Kogarah pleaded guilty to leaving a train while in motion. Fined 20/-, 16/- costs, in default seven days.
- Frank Cosgrove, Macquarie St, Mortdale, Owen Ryan, Bay St, Rockdale, and Charles Barnett, Reiby St, Newtown, pleaded guilty to "heading 'em," in a paddock off Stoney Creek Road, Hurstville. While the game was in progress about fifty men were round the ring. When the police arrived, the crowd ran away, leaving umbrellas and articles of clothing, also 35/- in money. A fine of 40/- was imposed in each case, in default 14 days' gaol.
- John Bollard, Bay St, Rockdale, was fined 10/- in default three days, for driving on to a vacant piece of land across the footpath in Forest Rd, Bexley.
- Thomas Fitzpatrick, 65 Brown St, St. Peters, was fined 10/-, and Edward Barrington South, 44 Brown St, St. Peters, 40/- for working horses in Rocky Point Rd, Sans Souci, not being free from sores.
- Inspector Devene proceeded against Bertha Davis, of Cronulla St, Hurstville, for allowing one cow and one horse to stray in Mill and Ethel Sts, Carlton. Defendant pleaded guilty and a fine of 15/- with 7/- costs was imposed. Same v. George Brewer, Forest Rd, Bexley, 30/- with 7/- costs. Same v. J. Gilbert, Warialda St, West Kogarah, 7/6 with 7/- costs.
- Thomas Arthur Sayburn, of Sans Souci, was charged with detention of certain goods, the property of Lydia Sayburn, of Myers St, Sans Souci, to wit one trunk containing clothes, one suit case containing dresses, underclothing and shoes, and two pictures. Defendant was ordered to deliver up the goods forthwith, in default to pay the value £6. In default imprisonment for 21 days. 6/- costs.



A Night At The Pictures

Barry Johnson

Our cinemas in Beverley Hills and Hurstville feature films from around the world, using technology to create a 3D experience. A century ago, moviegoers enjoyed the silent silver screen, with black-and-white films shipped from Hollywood to Derby St in Kogarah.

Highlights of the cinema in April 1918 included ³¹:

Intolerance – Directed by one of the pioneers of cinema, D.W. Griffiths, *Intolerance* was his second epic silent film, created after a mixed reaction to *The Birth of a Nation* due to its racist overtones. The film was feature length at three hours, portraying four periods in history, each resonating with religious or moral intolerance, on a grand scale. Instead of a consecutive narrative, each drama was shown in segments to reach the climax of each in the final minutes of the film.

The film began with the Fall of Babylon as the Persian army invades during the Battle of Opis in 539 BC. The second drama was the story of Jesus and the events leading to his crucifixion. In the third, the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572 ignites across Paris as a Catholic mob attacks the French Calvinist Protestants, the Huguenots. The fourth tale was set in the present day, 1914, as a callous factory owner exploits his employees, leading to strikes. Amid the violence, an innocent employee is persecuted in a series of twists, but the invisible hand of fate intervenes, enforcing a poetic justice.

Griffiths employed a range of new techniques, building a two-storey tower to create one of cinema's first crane shots. The result would inspire similar sequences in *Citizen Kane* and *Gone with the Wind*. He avoided the use of character names,

instead defining a series of character types to encourage the audience to relate more directly to an archetype. Jesus was known as “the Nazarene”, the innocent man in the modern tale is “the Boy” and his wife is “the Dear One”.

The production of *Intolerance* became an obsession for Griffiths, costing the equivalent of over \$48 million in today's terms, as vast sets, a full orchestra, thousands of extras, and elephants were featured. It is now available to watch [online](#).

A Son of Erin – The action opens in Ireland as O'Hara, a man down on his luck, becomes enchanted by the possibilities in America. In a story replayed countless times in subsequent comedies and dramas, the protagonist chases a dream despite the common sense objections.

Arriving in New York, he attempts to become a police officer, struggling at first but persevering. His pride at wearing the uniform is quickly tarnished after discovering his commander is corrupt. Confronting him, O'Hara is also dismissed, but pleads for justice. He exposes the extent of the corruption and is granted reinstatement. Now settled in America, he invites his wife in Ireland to join him and they live the American dream. ³²

The Love that Lives – a surprisingly graphic story for the 1910s, beginning with the violent death of a man in a casino. Now widowed with two children to support, Mollie becomes a cleaner but despairs when her daughter is killed in a car accident. Her young son then seeks the same risks which led to



the death of his father. In financial desperation, Mollie agrees to become the mistress for a wealthy stockbroker, allowing her son to enrol in a prestigious boarding school.

Although separated from his mother, the boy's temperament improves and he becomes a firefighter after graduation. Mollie can now escape from the stockbroker, returning to her previous life as a cleaner. In a chance meeting, she encounters him again, overhearing a struggle as he attacks his new mistress. Mollie intervenes and during the struggle, a fire engulfs the apartment building.

Mollie's son charges into the building, not recognising his mother through the smoke and flames. After rescuing the mistress, he is unable to rescue his mother. She sees him after so many years, proud in her final moments to see the man he has become.

The Princess of the Park Row – a retelling of *Cinderella*, the romantic fairy tale of a commoner becoming royalty. Recent real-life examples, Kate Middleton marrying Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Mary Donaldson marrying Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark, still capture the same public interest.

This version of the tale, set in the mythical European kingdom of Bellaria, is filled with melodramatic twists. A corrupt baron exploits the lands of local farmers to steal mining rights with threats and bribes.

The king calls for foreign assistance to stop the baron and the prince and princess journey to America to secure support. Soon after arriving, an evil count joins them and while outwardly supportive of the king, he is in league with the baron. During the diplomatic negotiations, the princess falls in love with a newspaper reporter, and the count kidnaps the trio to stall the king.

The princess escapes from their isolated prison, returning with the police. The count and baron are arrested and the royal siblings return to Bellaria with the reporter. Overjoyed at his bravery, the king honours the reporter with a royal title. The new prince marries the princess as joy is restored to the kingdom.

The Tarheel Warrior – set in the town of Tar Heel, North Carolina. Rich in underground turpentine reserves, the now dormant rigs can still be seen today. The extraction of the oil leaves a residue oozing along river banks and wharfs, staining shoe heels with black tar and coining the name of the town. This film, set after the Civil War of the 1860s, taps into the lure of fast money in the stock market.

A retired Union colonel in Tar Heel attempts to transition to life as a plantation owner but falls into heavy debt and ventures to his son-in-law, a stockbroker in New York City, to seek a loan. Securing a partial sum, as much as the stockbroker can provide, the colonel explores the sights of the city, enticed by a slick salesman to invest in a lucrative scheme. He promptly loses his entire stake in the confidence scam and contemplates suicide. His son-in-law, now wealthy from a series of well-timed trades, searches for the colonel to offer further financial aid. He discovers the colonel in time to save him from tragedy, as the young corporate warrior inherits the prestige that his military ancestor once enjoyed.

Idle Wives – to challenge the audience, the screenwriter experimented with portraying characters watching another story – a movie within a movie. The same method was recently used in *The Truman Show*.

Idle Wives begins with a married couple, living together but emotionally distant. The husband sneaks away to meet a lover at the cinema. His wife, concerned and suspicious, follows and joins them in the theatre, watching from behind. They watch the not-so-subtly titled *Life's Mirror*, with the female lead almost identical to the wife in the audience. The story also charts similar relationship challenges, but this couple resolve their issues and remain happily married.

Touched by the relevance of the choices of these characters, the trio leave the theatre and the married couple resolve to reconcile. The lover is also affected by the story, seeing her own double abandoned after becoming pregnant out of wedlock. Realising the consequences of infidelity, she vows to find love with an unattached man.³³

SGHS

How to Record an Oral History

Bob Mitchell

Oral histories have always been an important element to record our heritage, used in biographies, reminiscence work and family memoirs. A critical factor in the success of these endeavours is the choice of suitable questions to ask when triggering memories. There is little material available on this topic and this is why I have written *1,001 Life Story Questions*.

These questions are a sample of the complete 1,001 in the book, through each period of our lives.

The generalised wording is more likely to evoke responses where emotions, reason and descriptions are forthcoming rather than just facts and figures. I hope you find these questions useful when gathering family histories and undertaking reminiscence sessions.

Family History

- 5. What was the reason your forebears / you came to Australia?
- 8. What family heirlooms, if any, were passed down to you from previous generations?
- 11. What scandals, heroic deeds or notable incidents form part of your family folklore?

Adolescence / Young Adulthood

- 200. How did you cope with the transition from primary to high school?
- 215. What subjects were you taught in high school and what was your favourite?
- 219. What are your memories of high school sports?

Depression Days

- 435. What was the impact of the Wall St Crash on you and your family?
- 449. What memories does "the susso" conjure up?
- 456. What charitable incidents during the hard time did you witness or know about?

WWII Years

- 477. Once Australia committed to the war, what was your opinion on whether or not mandatory

conscription should have been brought in by our government?

- 542. How difficult do you think it was for some returned servicemen to settle back into civilian life, and how did this impact you or your family at all?
- 543. What do you know about the extra responsibilities women took on during the war, and did that sort of experience touch you or your family?

Marriage and Family

- 582. What were the reactions of your respective parents to the news of your engagement?
- 599. Where did you spend your honeymoon?
- 772. How regularly do you maintain contact with your siblings and extended family?

Retirement

- 777. How important was your financial status in the timing of your retirement?
- 840. Which of the five senses do you consider the most important?
- 845. Would you say you have become more tolerant and patient or less so as you have aged?

Life Observations

- 847. Over your lifetime you have seen a great deal of change in all areas of everyday life. What aspect do you think has changed most and why?
- 916. What changes have you observed in religion and religious tolerance?
- 919. What changes have you observed in mateship?

Personal Reflection on Life

- 923. Looking back over your life, what would you say were the turning points, if any?
- 925. Who was the person who inspired you most, and why?
- 929. What lessons in life have you learnt?



Read the full set of questions in Bob's book, available on the [Memory Man website](#) or by sending a cheque or money order of \$32.95 to Mr. Robert Mitchell, 33 Morrison Avenue, Engadine NSW 2233.

Book Extract – David G. Stead's *Fishes of Australia*

David George Stead (1877 - 1957), father of the novelist Christina Stead, lived at Lydham Hall during his daughter's childhood. He was a conservationist and founder of the [Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia](#). While serving as the Naturalist to the Board of Fisheries for New South Wales, he published a "popular and systematic guide to the study of the wealth within our waters". This extract highlights his fascination for marine biology and his accessible style to share his knowledge with the general public. The complete text is now available [online](#).

Fishes, defined in a popular way, are aquatic, vertebrated or backboned animals; cold-blooded and breathing by means of gills. They are provided with fins, to assist them in guiding or propelling themselves through the watery element by which they are surrounded, and in which their whole existence is passed. "It is in their conditions of living" writes Bashford Dean, "that they have differed widely from the remaining groups of vertebrates. Aquatic life has stamped them in a common mould, and has prescribed the laws which direct and limit their evolution; it has compressed their head, trunk, and tail into a spindle-like form; it has given them an easy and rapid motion, enabling them to cleave the water like a rounded wedge. It has made their mode of movement, one of undulation ; causing the sides of the fish to contract rhythmically, thrusting the animal forward."

In the body of a fish, four parts are usually distinguished: the **head**, the **trunk**, the **tail** and the **fins**. The head is usually divided from the trunk, by the gill-opening; while the tail is generally said to begin at the vent. There are numerous exceptions to the latter, however, particularly among the "flat-fishes" of the family *Pleuronectidæ*, such as our Soles and Flounders, in which the vent is situated far forward and near to the head.

If one examines a fish, he will find at the back of the head, on each side, a kind of moveable flap covering the gills. This is the **gill-cover**, or **opercle**, which is composed of three bony plates, styled the *opercle*, the *sub-opercle* and the *inter-opercle*; the modifications of which, are sometimes of considerable value in determining the natural

affinities of fishes. In some groups, such as the Eels and the Dragonets, the opercle is so entirely covered by the skin, as not to be visible, excepting after dissection; while in the cartilaginous fishes (*Sharks, Rays, &c.*) it is entirely absent.

The **gills**, or, as they are termed, the *branchiæ*, are fine hair-like or leaf-like projections, filled with innumerable blood vessels, and usually supported on the outer curves of cartilaginous or bony arches, known as **gill-arches**. In the true fishes, the normal number of gills on each side is four*. Along the inner edges of the **gill-arches**, are often to be found, hard, bony appendages or projections, which are subject to great variation in different species. These are known as the **gill-rakers**. The **gill-membranes** are those which usually serve to attach the gill-covers to the **isthmus**, which is that thick, fleshy projection between the gill openings. Occasionally are to be found on the inner side of the opercle, near its junction with the preopercle, small or imperfectly-developed gills, which are known as *pseudobranchiæ*. In the process of breathing, the water is constantly taken in by the mouth and passed out again between the gills; in its passage aerating the blood, as it circulates through the gill-filaments. This is the habit which has given rise to the saying, "drink like a fish," which, of course, has no foundation, as the fish does not really drink the water.

...

The **teeth** of fishes are usually conical and pointed, though frequently some are incisor- or molar-like; an instance in which the latter are possessed, being that of the common Black Bream. Other modifications in shape are also to be found, such as in the case of the common Blackfish, where the teeth are comb-like or tricuspid, and also in the Toadfishes, in which the teeth are welded together, so as to form hard, chisel-like plates.

Many of my readers, particularly those who keep aquaria, may have often noticed that certain fishes are able, without any apparent effort, to rise or sink in the water, at will; and perhaps they have wondered what means were employed in doing this. The answer is, that the fish is able to perform this seemingly impossible feat, solely through the possession of what is termed the **air-bladder** (known also as the "swim-bladder" or "sound").

The air-bladder which is one of the most characteristic organs of fishes, is a hollow sac, containing gas, situated in the abdominal cavity, immediately beneath the spinal column. By being compressed or dilated, it influences the specific gravity of the fish; thus enabling it in some instances to rise or sink in the water, without the aid of the fins at all; while in many other species, in which it has not undergone such a degree of development, it is still of very great assistance. In some fishes, only the rudiments of an air-bladder are to be found; while in others, there is no trace of it at all. In the Lung-Fishes, it assumes the function of a simple kind of lung; enabling them to breathe air. In the fishes of the Jewfish family, and also in the family of the Threadfins or Tassel-Fishes, the air-bladder is very large and important.

...

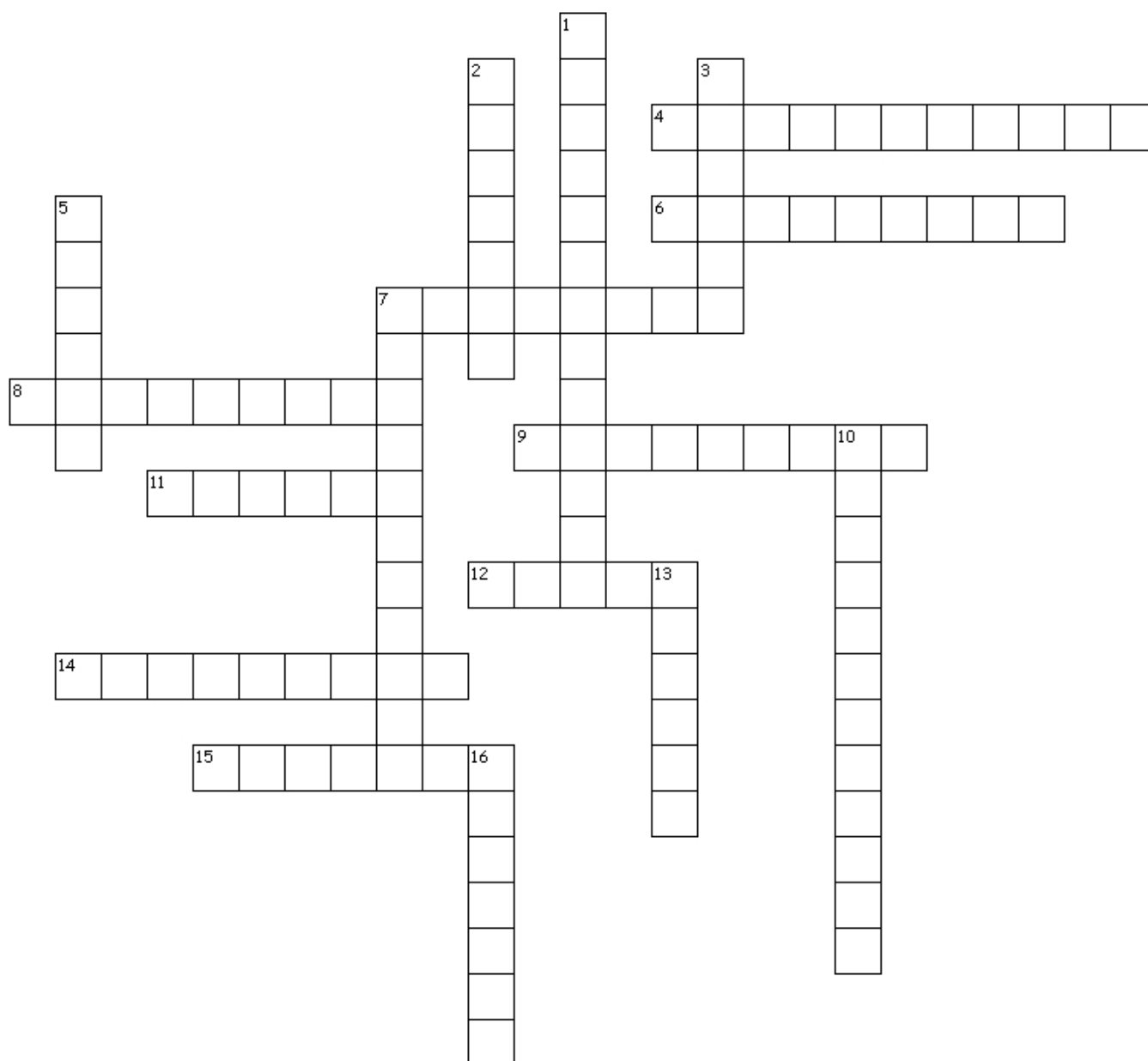
Colouration in Fishes: "Contrary to popular opinion," says Bridge, "it may be doubted if any animals, even Insects or Birds, can vie with living Fishes in the brilliancy and changeability of their colours. The nature of their habitat, the rapid fading of the natural tints after death and the fact that museum specimens, however carefully preserved, afford but a ghostly resemblance to the colours of the living animal, account, no doubt, for much of the prevalent ignorance of the extraordinary extent to which colour-development may proceed in a considerable number of Fishes." And certainly this is borne out in our experience with Australian fishes ; many of which are possessed of the richest and most glorious colours ; colours which in the fresh fish absolutely beggar description.

*Sharks and Rays have usually five, and occasionally (in the case of the "One-finned" Sharks) even six or seven. SGHS



Flying Gunards (Cephalacanthus spinarella)

Crossword



Across

4. sailing to Virginia with Patience and ... (11)
6. founder of the Ramsgate Baths (9)
7. a Sunday treat (8)
8. the governor of NSW during WWII (9)
9. site of the victorious charge of the
4th Australian Light Horse (9)
11. the hot drink to keep the chin up (6)
12. useful for 'drinking like a fish' (5)
14. our saintly chapel in Wolli Creek (9)
15. the town with stained heels (7)

Down

1. rewarding an act of gallantry and
devotion to duty under fire (13)
2. a polite swimming kick (7)
3. Latin for 'thee, O God' (6)
5. the ninth rugby league immortal? (6)
7. Griffiths's epic (11)
10. an alleged WWII conspiracy (12)
13. site of a slain dragon (6)
16. classes commenced in this school
85 years ago (7)

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
• Saywell's 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: its 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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Crossword answers

Across – 4. DELIVERANCE; 6. PEMBERTON; 7. ICECREAM; 8. WAKEHURST; 9. BEERSHEBA; 11. BOVRIL; 12. GILLS; 14. MAGDALENE; 15. TARHEEL;
 Down – 1. MILITARYMEDAL; 2. TRUDGEN; 3. TEDEUM; 5. PROVAN; 7. INTOLERANCE; 10. BRISBANELINE; 13. SILENE; 16. LUGARNO;

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