



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

1/46 Oatley Ave.,
OATLEY. 2223.

March 1978.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday Evening, March 17th, 1978, at 8.00 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Mr. & Mrs. Day will take us to New Zealand per medium of their picturesque slides. Mrs. Day's commentary is always interesting and enjoyable, as are their slides.

Supper Roster: Mrs. Tarlington, Captain, & Mesdames G. Napper, H. White, E. Turton, L. Robb.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. A. Ellis,

President.

Phone: 587.1159.

Mrs. E. Wright,

Treas. & Soc. Sec.

Phone: 599.4884.

Mrs. B. Perkins,

Publicity Officer.

Phone: 587.9164

Miss A. Lang,

Secretary.

Phone: 57.2608.

Mr. A. Ellis,

Research Officer.

Phone: 587.1159.

The ability to say NO is the gateway to freedom.

... Anon.

Many of our Members are on the sick list. We are sorry to hear this, and trust that you will all be well again soon. It was with regret that we heard of the recent death of one of our early members, Mrs. Florence Adams, of Kogarah. To her friends we offer our deepest sympathy.

Books numbered 1 to 6 should soon be available again at a reasonable price. Also available (by the same Author) -

Book 7. "The Early History/Tempe & the Black Creek Valley".

Contact Asst. Secretary 'Phone 59.8078

OR Miss Otton 'Phone 59.4259 (after 8 p.m.)

Society Badges are available - \$1.00 each. (See Mrs. Wright).

Miss Otton, Curator of 'Lydham Hall', is in need of Ladies and/or Gentlemen to assist with the weekend roster. Visitors come from far and wide to see this lovely old Home, and your presence would greatly facilitate the inspections. Ring Miss Otton, Phone 59.4259, your call will be appreciated.

There is now a large glass display case upstairs in Lydham Hall. At present it contains a few souvenirs from the various wars. Can you help to enlarge this display by exhibiting some of the war relics which you might have? These will be greatly appreciated, and good care taken of any souvenirs which you might care to loan or perhaps donate. Ring Miss Otton 59.4259.

Donations to Lydham Hall.

Miss Dunsmore, Photographs - 2 ten foot rolls of 1885 Sydney, taken from top Rockdale. of old Government Printing Office.

Books - 1. "Beautiful Sydney"

2. "One Hundred Pictures of N.S.W."

3. "Prince of Wales Souvenir"

4. "Old Colonial By-Ways"

5. "Sydney. Descriptive & Illustrative"

Mr. & Mrs. Day, Small World War II Air Raid Precautions Notice. Bexley. Child's Pencil Box.

Mr. S.H. Mulley (Late of Villiers St., Rockdale) now Blackheath. Small Baby Basket.

SOCIAL.

PORT MACQUARIE.

For your pleasure, Mrs. Wright (Social Secretary) has arranged a Coach Trip to Port Macquarie, with a visit to Timber Town at Wauchope, and also to South West Rocks & Trial Bay. This should be most enjoyable. If you are interested, and wish to avoid disappointment, give your name together with a deposit of \$10 to Mrs. Wright at the March Meeting. This outing is proving very popular.

The Details are as follows:

Time: 7.30 a.m. Sharp.

Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.

Cost: \$65.00 per person (Inclusive - Dinner, Bed & Breakfast)

Date: Sat. September 30th, October 1st and 2nd.

Ring Mrs. Wright for further information. 599. 4884.

LYDHAM HALL FUND RAISING COMMITTEE.

Balance Sheet for the year ending 30th June 1977.

(Division of St. George Historical Society)

Receipts.

Raffles	\$ 142.90
Cake Sales	7.90
Donations	16.25
St. George History Books	64.00
Century Progress Books	100.00
Lydham Hall Admissions	468.38
Cultural Dept. of Activities Grant	250.00
Bank Interest	4.80
Cash in Bank:30.6.1976	614.46

Expenditure

Australian Post Office	\$ 123.30
Century Progress Books	75.00
Petty Cash	24.00
Show Cases (A.Ford)	70.00
C.E.Hirsch Ltd.- 2 China Cabinets	100.00
Acme Brass Plates	40.00
Show Cases (R.Rathbone)	36.00
Penrose Glass	39.60
G.L.Cooper-Glass Cases	105.00
Penrose Glass	24.75
R.Rathbone-Glass,paint etc.	32.89
Glass Case (R.Rathbone)	175.00
St. George Hist.Scy.Books	57.20
Petty Cash	12.01
Value of Century Progress Books on hand.	17.25
Cash in Bank:30.6.1977	<u>793.79</u>
Full Total	\$1725.79
less unrepresented cheque	<u>57.10</u>

Total: \$1668.69

Total: \$1668.69

In submitting the accounts of the Lydham Hall Fund Raising Committee for the year ending 30th June 1977, I do so with pleasure, having been supplied with all the relevant books required and have found them to have been kept in a satisfactory manner.

9th August 1977.

(Sgd.) Alderman, Arthur Ford, J.P.
Honorary Auditor.

A TRIP TO PATONGA.

- *Ralph Dunsmore.*

On Saturday 30th April, 1977 a party of 45 left Rockdale at 8.45a.m. bound for Brooklyn, Patonga, Gosford and return. It was a lovely bright sunny autumn day with just a touch of coldness. We were met at Rockdale by driver Don, with his swanky new Coach, belonging to Leisure V.I.P. Tours. It was beautifully appointed with the latest floating on air type of springing, which was very comfortable.

Leaving Rockdale we made our way via Brighton-le-Sands, past the Lakes and other golf courses to the Cahill Expressway and over the Harbour Bridge. It was pleasant travelling and the sun shining on the sails of the Opera House made a wonderful sight. The traffic was not heavy and we made good progress through St. Leonards, past the Royal North Shore Hospital, and the old Gore Hill Cemetery. The houses and gardens with their beautiful trees were really lovely and lived up to the reputation the North Shore has for lovely homes. Killara, Turramurra, Wahroonga and Waitara were well worth seeing.

We went through Hornsby, on to Berowra, to Brooklyn via the old road. Just before reaching Brooklyn Bridge, we turned right and followed the river round past the oyster leases to Brooklyn Railway Station and the wharf from where we were to catch the launch to Patonga. Before boarding the launch we had morning tea at some tables under the trees.

The launch held quite a lot of people, and besides our party there were passengers for the various ports of call.

Our first call was Dangar Island where quite a number disembarked. Evidently they had been to the mainland shopping. Leaving Dangar Island we proceeded downstream, and looking back the Railway Bridge made quite a nice picture and several cameras were busy clicking. Our next stop was Wobby, where we discharged a few passengers. It was just a wharf serving a small settlement. After leaving here, looking back, Dangar Island stood out as a real island and one could see the Railway Bridge on the opposite side to the way he had come.

There was a lot of activity on the water - several boats fishing and a few launches. We called at the Broken Bay National Fitness Camp Wharf where a number of young people got off. This was a lovely spot with a nice secluded beach. Back in mid-stream and looking at the foreshores they looked as they must have looked when Captain Cook came to Australia, with just isolated pockets of habitation.

Patonga has a lovely and rather extensive beach with plenty of picnic grounds. The water was clear and as smooth as a millpond. Upon disembarking we found our coach and driver awaiting us. We then set off for Ettalong, where we were to have lunch. Leaving the beach road which climbed rather steeply, we made our way through

several small patches of rain forest, while on our left we caught panoramic views of the Bay. We had a few miles of travelling through open forest country, and at the top of one hill we had a wonderful view overlooking Pearl Beach, across to Lion Island. It was really a magnificent view and the cameras were out. On the left we could see Woy Woy, Umina, Ettalong etc. Further on we got a beautiful view of Ocean Beach.

We went through the village of Umina to Ettalong where we stopped at the Memorial Club. Most of our party had lunch here and from reports they were very satisfied with their fare. The driver took the rest of us to the beach front where we enjoyed a picnic lunch. There was not much in the way of picnic facilities but we were able to get seats, and had a very nice outlook. We were facing a quiet beach and looking away we could see the white breakers coming over the Rip, and the head of Lion Island, and in the distance the Headland with Barrenjoey Lighthouse. The Rip is formed by the river and the waters of the Bay meeting on a sand bar, and can be very dangerous to small boats.

After lunch we set off for Gosford via the new Rip Bridge. Just before coming to the bridge, we turned into St. Huberts' Island which is a reclamation development, something similar to the Sylvania Waters project. It is an L.J.Hooker enterprise. Turning in from the main road we crossed a fairly long bridge to the area, we drove through the streets and had a good look at the homes etc. Whilst we were there a number of walking races were in progress. Going back to the main road we crossed the new Rip Bridge and meandered our way through open forest country passing Bouddi Park, the villages of Kincumber, and Green Point, where quite a lot of new development is going on.

Gosford is a very busy place, we only skirted the southern end of the town passing the parks and playing fields which looked very attractive. Crossing the railway line we turned left and headed for home down the Pacific Highway, past Kendall's Rock, which is an obelisk upon which is Kendall's poem about the Bellbirds. Further on we passed Penang Corrective Establishment, and later saw the turn off to Old Sydney Town. Just before reaching Mt. Colah we stopped for drinks, ice creams etc.

On the homeward trip we travelled on the Tollway, through the City to Rockdale, arriving about 5.00p.m.

THE TIN LIZZIE (or Flivver).

- A. F. Day.

Henry Ford had perfected his Model T motor car by 1909, and between then and 1927, when it was superseded, 15 million are said to have been sold.

As a motor car, the Model T was both ingenious and unique. Accordingly, some remarks on driving one, by someone who did, may be of interest.

There was, of course, no electric starter, they came later. Hand cranking by a permanent handle had to be carefully done because of the risk of back-firing. The ignition lever had first to be set to retard and the throttle lever to an appropriate position. Both these levers were on the steering column, ignition on the right and throttle on the left. Then the elementary carburettor had to be flooded by pulling a wire loop which was to the left and slightly above the crank handle. The handle would then be pushed into mesh with the engine shaft at about a seven o'clock position. The method of holding the handle was most important, the thumb had to be on the same side as the fingers in case injury was caused by a back fire. For the same reason complete rotation was never advisable. Cranking was achieved by a series of upward pulls until the engine started. Then there was a dash round to the throttle and ignition levers to adjust them for a reasonable idling speed.

Now, with the driver seated behind the wheel, all was ready to move off. The hand brake in the "full-on" position, meant that the clutch was automatically disengaged. So the clutch pedal was pushed in half-way to the neutral position and the hand brake could then be released. To move from the position of rest the clutch pedal was then pushed hard down giving low gear drive. When a suitable speed was reached the clutch pedal was allowed to come right out and the vehicle was in top gear. There was no foot accelerator and speed was regulated by the hand throttle.

On approaching a hill, the throttle would be advanced and the spark retarded by use of the respective levers. To move in reverse, the clutch pedal had to be held in mid- (neutral) position, and the special reversing pedal (a smaller one) had to be pressed right down and the speed regulated by the throttle lever.

For wet weather use, storm curtains were provided and usually kept under the seat. The windscreen wiper (driver's side only) was of the hand-operated variety. Windscreen vibration on the roads of

those days was frequently too severe to permit easy use of a rear-vision mirror, if there was one.

The petrol tank was in front of the dash-board with gravity feed to the carburettor. It was therefore, advisable to turn off the petrol cock at the carburettor when the vehicle was not in use. The tank position could result in petrol starvation when going up a steep hill and more than once, I have gone up Taverner's Hill backwards to avoid this trouble.

The handbrake was on the rear wheels. There were no four-wheel brakes in those days; when they first appeared the vehicles so equipped had a hollow red triangle attached to the rear to indicate superior stopping ability to a following vehicle.

The foot brake was on the drive shaft between engine and differential. This circumstance could lead to easier skidding, especially as tyres were frequently in various stages of "baldness", or even down to the canvas. I remember being in a T-model going over Pymont Bridge in a westerly direction. Another person was driving and he somehow, by sudden application of the foot brake, skidded 180°, going back in an easterly direction. A passing "wag" in another car shouted - "What, did you forget something."

Then there was the case of another man who had the steering wheel of a T-model come off in his hands going up the ramp from the punt at Milson's Point.

Motoring in those days could be a dusty and exciting pleasure with, perhaps, Mittagong as the first day target on the run south.

A Grand Old Lady by the Harbour ...

- Catherine Harper
Sydney Morning Herald - 1976.

At a time when it deserves to be left in peace, Admiralty House is to suffer the indignity of having its carpets pulled up and floorboards lifted for electrical rewiring next month.

The old mansion has had more than its fair share of upheaval. But if its life has been chequered, it has also been interesting.

It has been the home of politicians, admirals and most recently, the Sydney residence of Australia's governors-general. It is linked historically with Kirribilli House next door, where Sir John and Lady Kerr will stay while it is rewired, and with the vice-regal Canberra residence, Yarralumla.

Its story goes back to 1800, when the land on which it stands was part of a 120 acre grant to one Robert Ryan for his "services in the Marines and N.S.W. Corps". The grant stretched from near the head of Lavender Bay to near the head of Careening Cove, the area now covered by Kirribilli and Milson's Point.

By 1806 the land had passed into the hands of the Sydney merchant, Robert Campbell ("Campbell of the Wharf"), who later received a 5,000 acre grant he named Dunroon, at Limestone Plains (now Canberra). In 1842, Campbell leased five acres in the south-east corner to Lt. Colonel J.G.N. Gibbes for 21 years at pounds 30.0.0 a year. Gibbes, who arrived in the colony in 1834, to be Collector of Customs, built on it a single-storey stone house, with verandas on the southern and eastern sides supported by delicately-patterned cast-iron posts. Access to the verandas was through a series of French doors, framed by shutters. They commanded sweeping views across the sloping laens of the property, of Sydney Cove and the Harbour.

Gibbes completed his Harbour-side house in 1845 and Robert Campbell paid him pounds 800.0.0 for the improvements on the leased site. Campbell died in 1846 and three years later Gibbes bought the five acres for about pounds 700.0.0.

After two years he sold it - to James Lindsay Travers, a merchant - for pounds 1,533.0.0. Travers sold slightly more than an acre of the grounds to another merchant, Adolph Feez, who built Kirribilli House on it, the attractive twin-gabled house now a residence for important visitors.

In 1855, Governor Denison resumed land on the tip of Kirribilli Point "for the erection of fortifications thereon, or for any other purpose connected with the defence of the colony against invasion, or hostile or predatory attack." Marine barracks were erected.

Shrunk to three-and-a-half acres, the property passed to Lt. Colonel George Barney, of the Royal Engineers, the following year. Barney was a member of the Legislative Council and later Surveyor-General. From his ownership,

the house passed to two more owners before being purchased by the N.S.W. Government in 1885 for use as the residence of the Naval Commander-in-Chief. By now the house was known as Wotonga. At this time it underwent its greatest upheaval. Not only did its name change to Admiralty House, but it gained a second storey.

The simple posts were replaced with stone pillars, curved at the top to form a series of arches. Rooms on the top floor opened through French doors matching those on the lower-storey on to a veranda with breath-taking Harbour views.

From its naval days the house has inherited a row of three vertical stained glass windows - bearing the crests and the coats-of-arms of its past admirals - which cast colourful light over the wide cedar staircase in the main hall. The admirals moored their galleys and skiffs at the jetty at the bottom of the garden.

Then, as in later times, it was the setting for garden parties, dances and dinners.

The house became the Sydney residence for the Governor-General during World War 1. It was then valued at pounds 46,000.0.0 and the first Governor-General it housed was Lord Denman. At this time the ownership was disputed, both the Commonwealth and State Governments claiming it. Finally, in 1930, the High Court ruled that Admiralty House was the property of the State, a decision confirmed by the Privy Council. But the Depression had hit and the State was at a loss to know what to do with it.

The furnishings were sold and the stately mansion stood deserted with only a caretaker to watch over it.

In 1935, the State Government decided to give the property to the Commonwealth for the Governor-General. It was in disrepair and once more the carpenters, builders and decorators descended upon it to carry out major renovations and additions. In 1936 Lord and Lady Gowrie moved in.

However, it was another decade or so before the property officially passed to the Commonwealth Government.

Last Friday I was shown over the house. Photographs taken at the turn of the century showed the house furnished with a heavy Victorian hand - cluttered with chairs, tables, and plants; its chair covers, wallpapers, curtains and mats over carpets all patterned and none matching. Today the rooms are furnished simply. The walls are painted, not papered, and hung with modern art which blends with the antique furniture.

A small tiled porch leads into the large square hall, dominated by the magnificent cedar staircase and lit by the admirals' crests. The walls are white, contrasting with the high, glowing cedar-panelled doors; the carpet is a soft greyish-green.

On the left is the very large drawing-room, painted yellow (almost

mango-coloured), which runs for the width of the house, on the eastern side. Its French windows open on to the eastern and southern verandas and look out over the garden and Harbour.

From the rolling lawns, the old stone house, with its arches and white cast-iron upper balcony, is more stately and imposing than any photograph could convey.

The changes it has undergone since its single-storey days and the encroaching modern buildings have not succeeded in destroying its serenity.

ITEMS RECENTLY NOTED -

- A. F. Day 1977

Sydney Herald - March 7, 1833.

"Wanted a steady bullock driver, James Chandler, Bexley,
South side of Cook's River."

Lows Directory of Sydney 1847 (Two Advertisements).

Mr G Preddey of 205, Castlereagh St. advertised carts
and drays for hire.

Frederic Oatley of George St., opposite the old Burial
Ground, advertised as a chronometer,
watch and clock maker. Captains of
vessels and others were notified that
under his "personal inspection" chronometers
were repaired and accurately rated.

The advertisement refers to "many years in business".
Frederic Oatley was the father of a Mayor of Sydney,
James Oatley, whose portrait hangs at Lydham Hall.
