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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

PRICE 5 c.

# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Registered for Posting as  
a Publication Category 'B'.

24 Duff Street,  
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.  
December, 1978.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:-

- Date: Friday evening, December 15th, 1978, at 8.00 p.m.
- Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
- Business: General.
- Syllabus Item: Mr. Don Sinclair will present: "Nostalgic Memories",  
whilst the Ladies prepare the "Festive Supper".
- Supper Roster: Joint Captains. Mesdames Wright and Lee, together with  
many of our Ladies.

Ladies, please bring a plate, and what a plate it will be.

Mr. A. Ellis,  
President.  
Phone 587.1159

Mrs. B. Perkins,  
Publicity Officer.  
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Mrs. E. Eardley,  
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Free sitters grumble most at the Play.  
A Chinese Proverb.

The President and Officers extend their best wishes for a Merry Christmas  
and Bright and Happy New Year to all.

(2)

Many of our Members have been and still are ill; Mrs. McNamara has had an accident. We are sorry to hear this and trust that you will all be well again soon.

We regret to record the death of Mr. A.F. Day, late of Bexley, one of our very early and most regular members. To Mrs. Day and Family, our deep sympathy.

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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.

#### SPECIAL NOTICE.

The St. George Historical Society is pleased to announce that the following books, written and illustrated by the late Gifford H. Eardley, for the Society, have been re-printed and are now available:-

Price: \$1.00 per copy. (Postage extra)

- No. 1. "The Wolli Creek Valley"
- No. 2. "Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway"
- No. 3. "Saywells Tramway. Rockdale to Lady Robinson's Beach"
- No. 4. "Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway"
- No. 5. "Our Heritage in Stone"
- No. 6. "All Stations to Como"
- No. 7. "Tempe and the Black Creek Valley" is also available. (Limited stocks only).

For your copy of the above books, please contact one of the following:

Mrs. E. Wright - Phone 599.4884

Miss B. Otton - Phone 59.4259 (after 8.00 p.m.)

Mrs. E. Eardley, (Secretary) - Phone 59.8078.

Mr. A. Ellis - Phone 587.1159

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If you have any items of Historical interest will you give them to Mrs. Eardley for publication in the Monthly Bulletin. Your news could awaken memories for others.

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The December Meeting (15.12.78) will be held at our usual meeting place, Council Chamber (upstairs), Town Hall, Rockdale, also the Christmas Party. Ladies will excell themselves on this festive occasion as they always do. Thank you Ladies.

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH - KOGARAH.

- Dr Joan Hatton.

For the Catholics who were early settlers in the St. George District, the nearest church was at St. Benedict's at Broadway, thirteen miles away, and many are the times they would walk there and back for the service on a Sunday.

Later on, in the 1850's, the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul was built at Cook's River (now Tempe), and then in the 1860's St. Joseph's Newtown was built. These churches would have been more convenient to the people of St. George, although some residents still preferred to make the long trip to St. Benedict's. The Parish Priests at Petersham or Newtown would also have made regular visits to conduct services in the St. George District. They baptised the children, and St. Joseph's at Newtown appears to have been the favourite church for weddings of St. George residents.

After the gold rush of the early 1850's, there was an influx of permanent settlers and soon the need arose to establish a permanent meeting place in the district. This was the church school building, officially opened on 15 May, 1866. The Rocky Point Road Catholic School was first established in 1862, when there were 11 boys and 10 girls on the roll.

In the district then, there was a Church of England School at Lord's Forest (Hurstville) and a Wesleyan School at Rockdale. In these times there were many church schools receiving funds through the Denominational School Board, for the payment of teachers' salaries, the purchase of buildings and repairing of school houses, the purchase of school documents, books, apparatus and school furniture, as well as other school requirements. Each school was under the control of a Local Board. The Roman Catholic School did not flourish, for the teacher was transferred and the school was closed.

It was not until 1864 that the school was re-opened with 19 children on the roll, with teacher Miss M. Eyre at an annual salary of pounds 60. At this time the school was located on the eastern side of Rocky Point Road, just south of the Moorefield Estate. The Inspector reported that *"the children are taught in a wooden building in fair repair, and is held at will from a Mr. Trott of Parramatta, pending the erection of a schoolhouse. The room in which the school is held is 24 feet by 12 feet by 10 feet, not cieled (sic). No out-offices or a residence for the teacher. There is plenty of playground. A new schoolhouse is very much needed in this district."*

Perhaps their previous experience with loss of the school, made the local residents determined to provide a better schoolhouse for their children and at the same time obtain a church meeting place. However, according to reports *"the circumstances of the people were not good, woodcarting and gardening were the two things by which the people lived. The woodcarters were poor, and the gardeners who were occupants of new ground were struggling."*

They were, however, able to raise pounds 20 to purchase one acre of land from Charles Bown *"for the erection and maintenance thereon of a School House for the Education of Roman Catholic children."* This is the land on which the present St. Patrick's Church is built. The purchase was made on 20 April, 1865, and the Trustees were: The Most Rev. John Bede Polding, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sydney; the Rev. Patrick Kenyon of Redfern, Clerk in Holy Orders; and Patrick Moore and Edmond English, both farmers of Rocky Point.

Plans were made for a stone building and the deeds of the property were submitted to the Denominational School Board at its meeting on December 11, 1865, for a grant towards the cost of the building. The total outlay for the building was expected to be pounds 120., and an amount of pounds 30, was approved. As the building was probably under construction when the request for a grant was made, this is probably the reason why "1865" is carved on the school's stone. An amount of pounds 4.10.0 was granted towards the outlay of pounds 9 for furniture.

The new stone building had a galvanised iron roof, and was 30 x 17 x 10 feet internally. It was reported to be *"a very neat building, pleasantly situated on a rising ground..... It is light, well ventilated, and every way suited for a schoolroom. There is one acre of land, fenced from the Road, but not otherwise enclosed. There is no residence for the Teacher and no closet. If these were put up it would be complete. The Local Board have made great exertions to build this School; their means are now exhausted."*

On 15 May, 1866, Father Garavel opened the new building with celebration of Mass. Not much schoolwork was done this day, for the children of Cook's River visited the school, and all the scholars had a feast and sports outing. It was a fine day, the children were regaled with cake, fruit, lollies etc., and they enjoyed all kinds of sports, and were given prizes for running, jumping etc., causing a friendly rivalry between the several competitors. After hymns were sung, the children reached home about 5 o'clock without suffering any accident to mar the day's sports.

So began the building which was to play such an important role in the life of the Catholics of the district for the next 90 years.

Population slowly increased until the railway came through Kogarah in 1884, and this brought such an influx that there was need for a larger building to accommodate the Catholics of the district. On Sunday, 29th April, 1887, the foundation stone of the new church was laid in front of the original stone church. His Eminence, the Cardinal-Archbishop Moran, came to Kogarah to perform the ceremony. In honour of the Cardinal's visit, the church grounds were festively decorated and an arch was erected with the words "*Caed Mille Failthe - Advance Kogarah.*"

The new church was designed by Messrs. Sheerin and Hennessy, Architects, and was to be in transition Gothic. The principal measurements were:

length, without sancturary	- 85 feet
sanctuary and vestry	- 23 feet
nave	- 35 feet
transepts	- 60 feet
tower	- 14 feet square.

The building was to be of pressed brick with stone dressings and it was estimated to cost pounds 6,000. However, only the first stage of the building, at a cost of pounds 2,200 was to be completed at present by the contractors, Messrs. Simmons and Knight.

On the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone, the proceedings began with a procession from the old stone church to the adjoining site of the new building. After the stone had been laid and blessed, the Cardinal addressed the assemblage, the Very. Rev. Father Slattery O.S.F. delivered the formal address, and then Father Byrne spoke a few words and called on the people of the district to show their proverbial generosity. A collection of pounds 685 was then laid on the stone. The crowd, which numbered several hundred, then dispersed.

In 10 months, the first stage of the building was completed and Cardinal Moran returned to bless and open the church, on Sunday afternoon, 19 February, 1888. The weather was exquisitely fine, as the Cardinal was welcomed by the Rev. Peter Byrne, pastor, the clergy, and leading catholics of the district. The new building could accommodate 500 or 600 people. The appearance of the front was very striking - the Gothic features of the arched central entrance, with its flight of steps, and the graceful three-light windows all executed in white stone, showing out in fine relief from the more sombre brick.

Following the blessing by the Cardinal, and singing by a choir from St. Mary's Cathedral, the Rev. Father O'Connor delivered an eloquent address from the Sanctuary steps. The church was said to be named after the Apostle of Ireland. The collection raised pounds 140., making the total amount subscribed over pounds 1,300

towards the total cost of pounds 2,400.

At this time, there were two other buildings in the grounds - the original stone church school, which had been extended by the addition of about 15 feet to its length. It was used as a day school, and there was an additional building, used for an infants' school. At the rear and fenced off, was the cemetery. This was said to be small with not many graves, but was well looked after with trees and shrubs planted.

The new church was boarded up at the western end to allow for the second stage extension, and only the base of the tower had been built to the height of the walls.

Various fund raising functions were organised to raise money to pay off the church indebtedness. Cardinal Moran attended again on Wednesday, February 5, 1890, to open a bazaar in the School of Arts, Kogarah. He found the district more advanced than during his visit three years earlier - the roads were improved and were lined with beautiful villas. A church school had been erected at Kogarah and ground had been purchased to build a residence for the pastor.

On 10 June, 1899, Edmond English was the sole surviving Trustee, the others - John Bede Polding, Patrick Kenyon and Patrick Moore - having long since died. New trustees appointed were Father Michael MacNamara and James English, produce merchant.

The long rule of Father John Joseph O'Driscoll, began in 1904 and during his time the church was completed according to the plans.

The sanctuary and transepts were completed and first used in 1916. The bell tower was completed and the bell dedicated on St. Patrick's Day, 1936. The bell bears the inscription in Latin: "*John Joseph O'Driscoll, the successor of Peter Byrne, first pastor of this parish, gave me in pious memory of him so that I might call the faithful to St. Patrick's Church to give praise to God.*"

The weight of the bell and its ringing proved too much for the tower and the nearby hospital patients, for it is now not suspended from the tower, but remains within it. The slender brick tower was completed with a donation of pounds 800, from the Moore family, in memory of departed members of the family. A brass plate records their names in Latin.

The Moore family also donated one of the main stained glass windows above the altar. The families of English, Beavers, Dillon, Radecki, Davis, Duffy, Rogers, Fox, McCole, Arundell and Madden and the names of the men who died in the 1914-18 War, are remembered in the other windows.

The first altar was wooden and this was replaced by the narble altar, the gift of the O'Meara family.

For 38 years until his death in 1942, Father, later the Right Rev. Monsignor O'Driscoll, was the parish priest. His length of service ensures that he will always be remembered - of his speeding sulky making the trip to Tempe Refuge in a half hour, his shooting at the pigeons in the church during sermons by the curates, his infectious laughter and his profound sense of humour. Perhaps the latter was the reason for his reply to Walter English when he was among a group of boys standing outside St. Patrick's waiting for something to happen. When Father O'Driscoll asked them who they were, Walter said: "*I'm English, sir,*" to which Father O'Driscoll replied, "*Your church is down the road.*"

The little stone school-house served several generations of Catholic families, and the nearby churchyard became the playground for the school children. With the course of progress, the stone schoolhouse had to pay the price when it became too small for the needs of the growing population. The stone over the door has been incorporated in the wall of the new school. The original inscription was: "*St. Patrick's Schoole 1865*". The additional inscription has been made: "*With grateful appreciation of those whose efforts led to its erection, this stone from the first building on this site, recently demolished, has been re-set here. Requiescant in pace - 23.1.55. Rev. T.O'Farrell, P.P.*"

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References: Sydney Norming Herald;  
The Freeman's Journal;  
R.G.O's Office - Land Titles Office;  
N.S.W. State Archives.

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There was a free jar of cream for every customer, at Christmas

WHEN MILK WAS THREEPENCE (2 cents) A PINT, & DELIVERED TWICE A DAY -

- Sydney reader Mary McMahon  
pays tribute to her father -  
The Australian Women's Weekly -  
March 19, 1975.

The Depression was at its worst, and my father, like so many people, had lost his job. Being a person who could not abide being idle, he was at his wits' end. Then a friend of his, who owned a house on an enormous block of land in a farther-out suburb, suggested that if he could start some sort of business there, we could live in the house for a nominal rent.

We moved to the roomy old house with all the land, and my father bought a very rundown milk run with the proceeds of the sale of our former home. Apart from the fact that one could not have gone into any sort of business at a worse time, my father had not the faintest idea of how to operate a milk run.

He'd only ever had three weeks' schooling, but he did have a strong will, was eager to learn, and prepared to have a go. After showing him "the run" twice, the previous owner left him to it - on the eve of Christmas.

I can still see my father, that Christmas morning, completely physically and mentally exhausted as he returned home after delivering milk since about 1.30a.m. - and a *free* jar of cream to every customer, as was the done thing in those days.

After seeing to the poor old horse and the dilapidated milk cart and scouring and scalding the milk tanks and measures, he fell into bed to sleep while the rest of us kept as quiet as possible. We had Christmas dinner at tea time. Christmas Day was the only day the milkman did not have to make two rounds.

Every other day there were two deliveries, the first in the early hours of the morning (carts had to be off the road by 6.00a.m.) and the second starting around 10.30a.m., after the milk had been delivered from the suppliers in ten-gallon cans. These were poured into the cart tanks, which then had to be lifted into the carts, and were very heavy.

Twice each day, after each delivery, milk tanks and measures had to be thoroughly cleansed and put on racks in the dairy room. The horse had to be cared for, and the cart kept immaculate.



Also after each delivery, the book-work had to be done. Accounts were mostly paid weekly. The milkman went to bed very early, as he had to rise again around 12.30a.m. to take delivery of his milk and have everything ready for his early morning round. He would try to have another hour or two of sleep after chores were done, in between the two rounds.

Like the mail, the milk *must* be delivered. To be late, to spill any milk, to make any noise, to make an error in the account, could mean the loss of a precious customer, something all milkmen dreaded. Milk was 3d. a pint, and if you did not give complete satisfaction, there were many other milkmen to choose from. They were up and down the streets, some yodelling and willing to cut the price to get a new customer.

Many customers were tempted by the offer of the first week's milk free. Others would run up a large account, and if pressed for payment would say, "Don't bother leaving any more," and give their patronage to another vendor.

Good customers were valued greatly, and even the most outrageous cranks were pandered to. My father got to know most of his customers well, and with few exceptions they stayed with him through the years.

"The run" increased considerably. The milk was good, and so was the service. (Some vendors, it was suspected, watered their milk, and inspectors would make spot checks at times, and take samples.)

Dad loved horses, and soon the dodderly old horse was replaced by a better one, as was the cart and harness. The "turnouts", as they were called, soon became the best in our district, and as business grew, there were eventually three "turnouts".

The two carters my father employed lived with us. Working the hours they did, it was easier for all concerned. Each took pride in his "turnout", and the horses were always well groomed, the harness cared for, and the carts, built by a craftsman coachbuilder, were always shining clean. How I wish I still had one of those lovely brass and glass coach lamps!

The really hard times were left behind. The hard work of earlier years had paid off and, while my father must be given great credit, the one who played a big and silent part in it, was my mother. How she worked all those years, rearing a family, up around 5.00a.m. each day, winter and summer, scalding and scouring those milk tanks and measures, stoking up the chip heater for boiling water, serving milk to the many customers who came to the house, at all hours; up and down to the dairy, making sure the ice supply was ample, doing her housework - hot breakfast, hot early lunches, and big hot dinners - sometimes putting out the washing at midnight; never a day off, never a holiday, and seldom an outing. Yet, when I commented on this in later years, she assured me she was happy and contented.

All sorts of setbacks had to be coped with. There were times when a horse would bolt, wrecking the cart and spilling the milk.

The carters could fall ill or meet with an accident, and on two such occasions I helped father "do the tun", up and down on the cart, and in and out of the homes with the milk, and then home to the open fire and the hot drinks Mother had ready for us.

It was a hard life, and we missed out on a lot of the things that are today taken for granted but, though we were tied down, we still had plenty of fun and friends.

With the outbreak of World War II, labor became scarce and "the run" was too big for my father to cope with alone. So it was sold, and we moved away to a much quieter life.

These thoughts were re-awakened in me recently while visiting friends one Sunday afternoon. We heard a tinkling noise, and our host said, "That's the milkman. He doesn't come tomorrow. It's his day off." How times and things do change!

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THE CASE OF THE MISSING STATUES.

Census of Sydney Botanic Gardens statues indicated half of them were missing.

- Lorraine Hickman  
The Australian Women's Weekly  
October 1, 1975.

It was left to Mrs Betty Jacobs, of the Royal Botanic Gardens staff, to tackle the case of the missing statues.

It is a problem that might baffle any of the top T.V.Sleuths.

It arose when Mrs Jacobs set out to conduct a census of the statues, monuments and memorials in the 27 hectare Gardens.

Nobody knows when a last count was taken. Or if ever one was.

But Mrs Jacobs had reason to believe (as the sleuths say) that about 50 various items of masonry had been on display at one time or other.

She peered through pergolas, clambered into copses and took body blows from branches to discover long-lost statues overgrown by bushes.

"Come Up as a Flower" was seeking cover (and finding little) in a herbaceous border. "Flower" a nymph wearing not even a blush, was sculpted by Mr Shakespeare Wood (British, but naturally) in 1878. How the nymph got into the Botanic Gardens is a bit of a mystery in itself.

The "Sitting Lions" - one male, one female, almost lifesize in copper-coated cast iron - squatted forlornly beside the Gardens' historic Macquarie Wall. Mrs Jacobs ticked them off her list. Altogether about 20 of the possible 50 turned up. Mrs Jacobs tracked some of the absentees to the secluded corder where they await repair and restoration.

But others had vanished without a trace. "Love Led Them" was astray, "Rebecca at the Well" was sunk from sight, and where "Vases" should have stood was only blank space.

Of course, they might have been souvenired. But it's hard to imagine even the most enthusiastic statue-lovers smuggling such substantial chunks of marble out of the Botanic Gardens.

"Mystery? I wouldn't say that," said Mrs Jacobs crisply. "There might be some perfectly normal explanation. It's just that there's nothing on the files."

The statues and monuments that remain are a mixed lot, but evidently full of interest to the thousands of people (estimated at a million) who stroll through the gardens during the year.

The Superintendent, Mr W R Watson, and his staff get three or four phone inquiries each week. "Mostly people seem intrigued by our 'Mare and Foal' statue", he said. The statue is a lifesize bronze of a French brood mare and offspring. "Children all want to ride them," said Mrs Jacobs. As education officer, she guides school parties around the Gardens. Alas, a notice said, sternly: "No person shall clamber or sit upon this statue ."

The mare's name is given as La Reyna, but all that is known of her career as a racehorse is illustrated in the bas-reliefs on the plinth of the statue. The work of a French sculptor, A.J.le Due, it was exhibited in Paris in 1890 and given to the Art Gallery of N.S.W. some years ago.

Most solemn of the memorials is that to Allan Cunningham early 19th century explorer and botanist, who had charge of the Gardens at one time and died there in 1839. He was buried at the old Sydney cemetery where Central Railway now stands. In 1901 his remains were placed in a small casket and removed to the obelisk.

While the Cunningham memorial is impressive in its simplicity, the most oppulent of the monuments is the Governor Phillip fountain, an edifice of bronze and marble, 4.5m (15') high. The sculptor, whose name is recorded as Signor Simonetti, depicts Phillip with a Union Jack in one hand and a scroll in the other, presiding over four large figures representing Neptune, Cyclops, Commerce and Agriculture.

Perhaps the most unusual structure in the Gardens is a replica of an ancient Greek monument which belonged to a former State Premier, Sir James Martin, and once stood in the grounds of his home at Potts Point. When the Federal Government bought the property, the monument was removed to the Gardens. Its imposing title is the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates. Lysicrates, a showman of 330 B.C. vintage, had the original built in Athens to commemorate the victory of his singers and dancers in a choral contest.

Baffling as their absence is, none of the missing statues is thought to have suffered the fate of Sir Henry Parkes in Sydney's Centennial Park. It was blown to fragments - with "a lot of explosive, probably gelignite", reported the police - on New Year's Eve, 1971. Motive: unknown.

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