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ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

INC.

7 Lynwood St
Blakehurst

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1992

MEETING PROGRAMME

13 OCTOBER **TOM BROWN** will present a film about the Krait raid and the second attack on Singapore during World War II.

10 NOVEMBER **KEN LUKER** will give an illustrated talk on cannons and guns of the 18th and 19th century. Mr Luker also has some interesting facts about the cannons at Brighton-le-sands. If you have any antique firearms Mr Luker will be happy to answer any questions you care to ask.

8 DECEMBER **CHRISTMAS MEETING**

PETER SAGE will give a slide presentation. Details to be announced in December Bulletin.

Meetings are held 8pm at the Council Chambers, first floor, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.

MEMBERS: Please bring a plate.

OFFICE HOLDERS

PRESIDENT: Arthur Ellis 529 4879

SECRETARY: Mrs Val Beehag 546 2819

TREASURER: Mrs Margaret Persen 771 5461

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT: Noel Beehag 546 2819

VICE PRESIDENTS: Joan Hatton and Bernard Sharah

RESEARCH OFFICER: Arthur Ellis 587 1159

**SOCIAL SECRETARIES and PROMOTIONS OFFICERS:
Mrs Joan Fairhall 546 5555 and Mrs Dora Lenane**

BULLETIN EDITOR: Bernard Sharah 567 8989

LYDHAM HALL COMMITTEE:

Mr A Ellis, Miss B.Otton, Mrs V.Beehag

AUDITOR: Mrs L Thompson

**All correspondence to the Secretary, 7 Lynwood St Blakehurst
2221**

INCORPORATION

Some Society members will give a sigh of relief to know that we are now officially incorporated. Incorporation will provide a measure of legal protection for members in the event of the Society being sued. It establishes the Society as a legal entity enabling us to acquire and dispose of property. It will also mean that social outings suspended during the process of incorporation can now be resumed.

DON SINCLAIR - LIFE MEMBER

At our September meeting, President, Arthur Ellis, conferred on Don Sinclair life membership in recognition of his services to the Society. Don Sinclair presided over the St George Historical Society at its height in popularity and activity - the glory days that are often recalled by long term members. Back in 1971 the Society's museum, Lydham Hall, was opened to much fanfare and the average attendance at meetings was 83! Don gratefully accepted the honour and in doing so recounted some amusing anecdotes from the period of his Presidency.

ROCKDALE HERITAGE STUDY READY FOR SUBMISSION

At its last meeting the Rockdale Heritage Advisory Committee resolved to submit to Council the list of heritage items identified by consultants, Meredith Walker and Terry Cass, together with those put forward by members of the Committee. Ald Ron Rathbone as usual made a tremendous contribution. His list included over sixty items, mainly in Bexley and Carlton.

If approved by Rockdale Council, owners of the affected items will be notified and given the opportunity to comment or object to the proposed heritage listing.

On Sunday 20th September the Committee carried out an inspection tour of some of the more contentious sites throughout the Municipality. Apart from the many interesting and historic buildings were less salubrious items such as cast-iron sewer vents and the Arncliffe Sewage Farm.

CONGRATULATIONS, MAYOR RATHBONE

Once again our patron Ald. Ron Rathbone, has been elected Mayor of Rockdale. It is indicative of Ald. Rathbone's administrative experience and competence that he has served no less than 11 terms as mayor, the last period ending in 1987.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Society member, Bettye Ross, has done some original research regarding the origin of the name, Lucas Heights. As you probably know there is a great deal of pressure from residents to rename the area to avoid association with the nuclear reactor. The name is actually quite historic and is a lot older than one would expect for such a recently settled area. 1825 is a long time ago in Australian history and it would be a shame to lose such a connection with the early days of European settlement. This matter was taken up by another Society member, Dr Peter Orlovich, who is a representative on the Geographical Names Board. Peter was most interested in the work done by Bettye Ross and hopes to use her research to argue for retention of the name in some form or another. Bettye Ross's article is included in this Bulletin.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

This year we will hold a Christmas function inside Lydham Hall for the first time. Members will recall last year's Christmas party was to be held in the grounds of Lydham but was cancelled due to appalling weather. Because of the amount of space available attendance will have to be restricted to members only. Hot and cold finger food as well as traditional Christmas refreshment will be included in the all up price of \$10. The function starts at 4pm Saturday, 12th December. To avoid disappointment please return your booking form before 9th November.

For those people unable to attend the Lydham Hall party we will have our usual Christmas meeting on 8th December and as is traditional Peter Sage will give one of his entertaining slide shows. Please bring a plate with Christmas in mind.

BUS TOUR TO CAMDEN UNIVERSITY FARM

3RD DECEMBER 1992

Join us on a guided tour of Camden University Farm. The tour will give visitors an insight into the research unit based at Camden and on the return trip we will visit an Italian winery.

The all-up price of \$22 includes lunch, special guided tour and coach transport from Sydney Town Hall.

Bus departs 9.15am George Street, Sydney, opposite Town Hall (outside Electricity Building).

Returns 4pm Sydney University Broadway.

Enquiries: Joan Fairhall 546 5555. To book please complete form below and send to St George Historical Society C/- 7 Cheddar Street, Blakehurst 2221 together with cheque or money order for \$22.00.

BOOKING FORM

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Phone No.

Enclosed is cheque/money order for _____

LUCAS HEIGHTS

The above name brings controversial areas to mind - one the ATOMIC ENERGY REACTOR, and the other the WASTE DISPOSAL AREA but does anyone wonder how the name originated?

One of the first land owners, in the area, if not the first was JOHN LUCAS who 1825 built a WATER MILL on the south west boundary line. This was where the salt waters met the fresh of the WORONORA RIVER, though it was then known as Wooronora River, thus enabling small boats of light draft to travel up the river with grain and return laden with flour. This was in preference to travelling into Port Jackson with its heavy water traffic, duties and taxes to have their wheat ground.

In 1827 the Assistant Surveyor, Robert Dixon was instructed by Surveyor General John Oxley to survey the area of Botany Bay, naming many of the bays there e.g. Towra, Gwawley among others and he was told where he would find LUCAS' Water Mill at the head of the Woronora River. Dixon defined boundaries of the 150 acre "promise" to JOHN LUCAS to the north of the Mill. In 1829 David Duncombe took up 70 acres - in the now known area of Menai; and in 1838 J. Spencer took up acreage in total of 63, adjoining Duncombe's.

JOHN LUCAS born at Norfolk Island December 1795 had acquired considerable experience in building Mills when assisting his father Nathaniel Lucas in his business as carpenter, builder and miller, both as a young boy and adult living at Norfolk Island and Port Jackson.

Nathaniel Lucas had arrived in the Colony when 24 years old on the "Scarborough" a ship of the First Fleet under a seven year Sentence for stealing clothing. Due to his carpentry skills, two weeks after arrival he was despatched to Norfolk Island with a group of men who had been chosen for their abilities, to establish the Island further.

July, 1791 saw Nathaniel Lucas working 3 acres of ground at Sydney Town on the Island, thus providing for 6 persons and sharing two sows with wife Olive Gascoine/Gasgoyne/Gasgoine, his three daughters and employee, William Walsh. One of the sows had a litter of seven in the following March, and eight in the October after!

Nathaniel Lucas and Olive Gascoine had thirteen children and of these JOHN LUCAS was the seventh child and third son. Ann was the eldest born March 1789 then the twins Mary and Sarah in August 1790, William January 1792, Nathaniel August 1793, Olivia April 1795, then JOHN, before James in October 1798, George May 1800, Charles December 1801, Sarah December 1803, all at Norfolk Island. The last two children Mary Ann born October 1805 and Thomas November 1807 were born in Sydney.

The twins were killed when a pine tree fell on their home as Nathaniel attempted to clear around his dwelling. Two days earlier he had set fire to two pine trees, and it was one of these that fell, also breaking Olivia's arm in two places as she nursed infant William but who was spared injury.

Nathaniel Lucas was appointed the superintendent of convict carpenters, blacksmiths and sawyers and later settled on 15 acres of ploughable land (October 1793). After the death of master carpenter, William Peate, Nathaniel filled his role but was later dismissed by Captain Joseph Foveaux for "his impertinence" - but was re-instated. He returned to Port Jackson and early in 1806 erected an octagonal smock mill at Fort Phillip 40 ft. high with a diameter base of 22 ft. to work 2 pairs of millstones he had brought back from Norfolk Island. He had also been allowed to bring materials back to erect a mill for himself. He was the first to erect a post mill in the Colony.

As a private builder he became superintendent of carpenters in N.S.W. earning a salary of £50 a year in 1811. Many of his buildings - Rum Hospital, the goal, St. Luke's Church at Liverpool as well as the parsonage there (and at Parramatta) and the tollgate at Hyde Park have been wellknown but only a small, unidentifiable part of the Hospital remains. He died at Liverpool in 1818 and his newly erected windmill in the centre of Liverpool was auctioned. His son JOHN LUCAS kept the family business going, building a water driven mill 1823 commissioned by Governor Brisbane, at Liverpool and which he named the Brisbane Water Mill. This was on the first Grant by that Governor of 150 acres. JOHN LUCAS advertised that "local inhabitants of Liverpool and adjacent Farmers" could now have their Wheat ground, and "that he would dress the Flour at Fifteen pence per Bushel, and take payment in Wheat for Cash price".

JOHN LUCAS as well as being a builder and miller became a publican and political activist. In 1817 he married Mary Rowley (daughter of Thomas Rowley a soldier and landholder who was appointed adjutant of New South Wales Corps 1789 and Lieutenant April, 1791). There were seven children of this marriage, the eldest being JOHN LUCAS Jnr. born 1818 and who was educated at the Church of England school in Liverpool as well as at Captain Beveridge's Boarding school, Sydney.

JOHN LUCAS Jnr like his father became interested in politics and became M.L.A. for Hartley 1864-9. Through his efforts the Jenolan Caves were opened to the public and declared a Reserve. He was one of the first to visit them in 1861 and two years later (June 1863) he described them in the Sydney Morning Herald. One Cave, discovered in 1860, was named the Lucas Cave, and to this day retains its name.

Let's hope that LUCAS HEIGHTS also retains the name of its early settler in some form or another but loses the current stigma attached to a part of the pretty residential area.

Wouldn't JOHN LUCAS Snr. be surprised today to see the area where he built his Water Mill but which later burnt down?

Sources:

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- Mitchell Library Picture File
- The Australian Newspaper 9.3.1841
- Sydney Gazettes 29.8.1818, 10.3.1824, 23.12.1824