

EMAIL US

PUBLICATIONS

LYDHAM HALL



ST GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER | **APRIL 2024**

WELCOME



You will have to forgive the lateness of this newsletter - it's been an extremely busy 3 months and all hands have been on deck for the re-opening of Lydham Hall. After 4 years closure due to covid, renovations and time spent negotiating a lease agreement with Bayside Council, this opening has been long anticipated. As such, the success of the openings over the last few months has been very rewarding.

We would like to warmly welcome our new members - Garry Stokes (Bexley), Jenny Beck (Peakhurst), Renee Geelen (Rockdale), Pamela Griffith (Bardwell Park), Angela Hume (Arncliffe), Peter Martyn (Sans Souci), Maria Awad (Rockdale), Frances Bowron (Arncliffe), Michael Drew (Bexley), Nicholas Koutras (Bexley), Sharon McIntyre (Brighton-Le-Sands), Eugenia Mora (Bexley), Judith Jane Stephens OAM (Darlinghurst), Carla Strong (Dolls Point) and Alese Troussas (Banksia).

We have already met many of you at our monthly meeting and talks. These talks are free and, as a member, there is also unlimited free entry to Lydham Hall. If you haven't made it to a talk or the museum as yet, please come along. For those new members who have volunteered to help at Lydham Hall, a special thank you. Membership is the key to keeping organisations such as ours alive and we are very grateful to all our members for their support.

WHAT'S ON

[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)



LYDHAM HALL OPEN DAY

Sunday 7 April 2024 | 10am to 4pm | 18
Lydham Avenue Rockdale

"Tours, Teas and Scones"

Our next opening of the magnificent Lydham Hall will be on Sunday 7th April. We will have tours through the house, old fashioned games for kids plus our volunteers will be serving delicious, freshly baked scones.

Entry is free for members and we encourage all members to bring along friends and family.



LOCAL HISTORY TALK

Saturday 20 April 2024 | 2pm to 4pm
Rockdale Library, Level 3.

"The early history of Lydham Hall"

Local resident and Society member, Janette Pelosi has spent a considerable amount of time researching the history of Lydham Hall and its occupants. Janette will discuss new information that she has discovered.

Open to all members and the general public. Entry is free but gold coin donations are gratefully accepted. Refreshments (tea, coffee, snacks) provided.

[BECOME A MEMBER](#)

[MORE WHAT'S ON HERE](#)

LYDHAM HALL RE-OPENS!

Lydham Hall Historic House Museum finally re-opened in February 2024 after a closure of nearly 4 years. The re-opening day was officiated by Bayside Council Mayor, Bill Saravinovski with a number of Bayside and Georges River Councillors in attendance, as well as a wide number of invitees who have helped the Society in the lead up to the opening. In his speech, Mayor Saravinovski said *"This State heritage-listed building is home to a wonderful collection of fine antiques and period objects and I am pleased to see it open to the public once again after Council undertook some major renovations to the building including replacing the roof."*



A new member takes a closer look at objects in the dining room. Image: Heidi lee Douglas

The re-opening of Lydham Hall could not have been possible without the commitment and energy of our volunteers. Every Thursday for months, volunteers cleaned, painted, ironed and did whatever else needed doing to get the museum ready. And since then, they have been on hand for open days - talking to visitors or in the kitchen baking and serving scones.

The volunteers worked through dust, dirt, rain and extreme heat with good humour, and there were a few good-natured debates over lunch breaks about how museums should be run and what history means to people in the 21st century.

On the Opening Day, it was pleasing to see this dedicated group receiving recognition with an award presented by Mayor Saravinovski for their dedication and hard work. The kitchen volunteers deserve a special mention for managing to deliver their delicious scones on opening day when the inside temperature of the kitchen hovered around 45 degrees!

Below are photos of some of our volunteers happily working away.





On the morning of Opening Day, a small queue was already forming at the front door. Some visitors made a beeline for scones whilst others were welcomed by the Executive and volunteers of the St George Historical Society including the Society President, Wesley Fairhall and Secretary, Laurice Bondfield.

Despite the 38 degree heat, we had a record number of visitors join us in the opening celebrations which included tours of the museum, childrens games on the lawn and devonshire teas on the verandah. A highlight for many visitors was seeing a number of guests and members 'dressed to impress' in period clothing.





The day was deemed a great success with close to 200 visitors seeing the museum on the day, many new member applications, a considerable amount received in donations, and 52 scones baked and served within 4 hours!

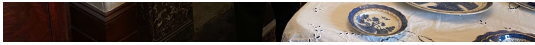
The majority of our visitors were local to the St George area, across both Bayside and Georges River LGAs. Many remembered coming to Lydham Hall as a child but most had never been before.

The St George Historical Society would like to thank all our visitors and the St George community for supporting our wonderful local museum and we look forward to welcoming you again.

GROUP TOURS

After a long hiatus, Lydham Hall Historic House is welcoming groups back to the museum. And in March we had our first group visit from our neighbours - the Kogarah Historical Society. The group of 20 spent a couple of hours in the museum with a talk, then some devonshire teas on the verandah before taking a leisurely wander through the museums and gardens. We can accomodate and welcome all groups with bookings on a Thursday. For more information visit our website.





BOOK YOUR GROUP VISIT



ABOUT KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DONATIONS TO MUSEUMS - A WORTHWHILE GIFT

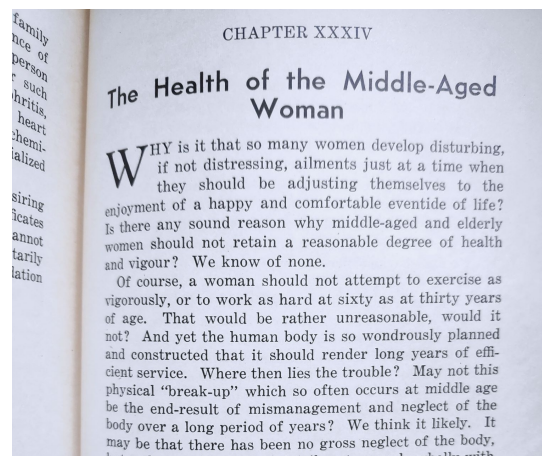
A museum can only be called a museum if it has an interesting collection of objects to show visitors. Over the last few months, the Society has been fortunate enough to receive an eclectic array of donations from Society Members and members of the public. The Society considers every offer from furniture, objects, letters, books & photographs.

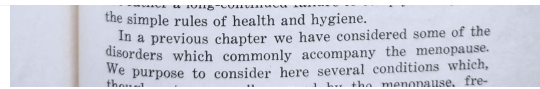
Often the most mundane of items will be the most interesting - those items that get thrown away because they have little monetary value. From generation to generation, people are more likely to keep jewellery, silverware, wedding dresses, family Bibles. These are the items most likely to be offered to museums. But of equal value are the 'every day' objects such as soaps, gardening tools, kitchenware, socks as these are the things that tell stories about how people lived.

Here are some of our donation stories over the last few months:



We received a small collection of books from Mrs Elizabeth Wallace. Whilst not in pristine condition, they were valuable to us as they included a copy of *Mrs Beeton's All About Cookery*. Lydham Hall lost a valuable edition of *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* when water entered the building during renovations in 2021. So we are pleased to have a replacement Mrs Beeton's, albeit it is much later and of a different title. Another book, the *Ladies Handbook* has proven an eye opener - check out the chapter on the *Health of the Middle-Aged Woman* is a good example!





We've also had lots of donations from members that have been put to uses other than for display in the museum. For example, we've had donations of antique and vintage teacups, teapots, milk jugs etc that we have used to serve Devonshire Teas - much to the delight of visitors! And other members have donated objects for fundraising - in a cabinet at the front door, visitors can take home a piece of history for a small price with all proceeds going towards the restoration of a painting in the collection.



A donation that comes with a story attached is always exciting. The following donation was left on our doorstep a few months ago with no donor details except a lovely letter. The donation was for a meat mincer and an early phone system. The letter that accompanied the object was a lovely addition:

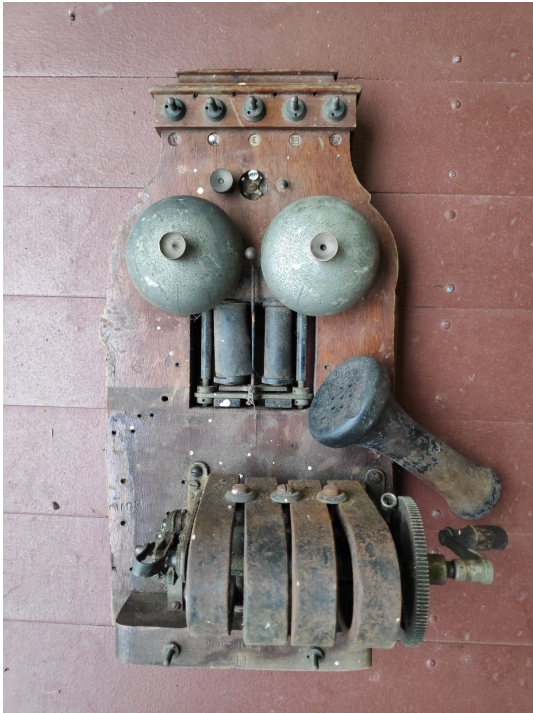
"These items were given to Neil Keast by George Bloomfield when Neil taught History at Kingsgrove North High School across the years 1973 to May 1977. At the time he had been given a large display cabinet and was setting up a History Museum at the back of his classroom.

George Bloomfield had come to Bardwell Park Uniting Church in the 1970's and had a love of history inherited from his father, Henry David Carson Bloomfield, whose birth was registered at Bangalore, the main station of the British Forces in South India. George's grandfather had come to India from England via extended stays in America and Japan. There he distinguished himself in the Boer War. He later fought on the Western Front in France before arriving in Australia and settling in the bush near Earlwood on Slade Road and getting occasional work at Hilsdon's Orchard nearby.

An artifact from there is the large old mincing machine, once used by Mrs Hilsdon to make sausage rolls, which she sold in Earlwood. She also sold honey from the hives she kept down by the creek, fruit from the orchard and jam from the quince trees there.

The other artefact is part of the old communications system used to connect the house with the orchard. Several old telephones were strung around the perimeter of the property so that customers could contact the Hilsdon's when they were working at considerable distance to the house. Slade Road was a lonely and secluded spot and, as George's father sometimes recalled in his memories of the early days of the

area, occasionally questionable characters would suddenly appear out of the shadows.



The house is still standing at 112 Slade Road including its kitchens, which were built so that Mrs Hilsdon could prepare her jams, sausage rolls, and other treats for sale in Earlwood.

These artefacts are given to the Lydham Hall Museum. They were doomed to be lost and forgotten until retrieved by Neil and delivered into the hands of the St George Historical Society, who now have ownership with the power to determine their future. Signed Neil W. Keast."

The St George Historical Society thanks Mr Keast for his kind donation with additional thanks for the history of the objects which paint a vivid picture of a time long ago. We will do our best to restore these items and eventually display them with an intact history attached. We hope Mr Keast revisits Lydham Hall so that we can meet him and thank him personally.

There are other ways to donate. As a non-profit, the Society relies on memberships and donations to help us run active events and restore objects in our collection. We are currently raising funds to restore one our most important objects - a landscape painted by Mrs Ellen Davis, the original owner of Lydham Hall. This lovely little oil painting currently resides in the Drawing Room and has suffered over the years. Even small amounts help and all donations are tax deductible.



This little painting is probably one of the most important pieces in our collection. It is a painting done by Ellen Davis, wife of Joseph Davis - the man who built Lydham Hall in the late 1800's. The painting is of a French rural scene painted in 1887 by Ellen as a gift to her son. It now takes pride of place on the wall in the Drawing Room. Sadly the



painting and the frame is in need of conservation and the Society is seeking donations for its restoration.

Do you have anything at home (or in the garage!) that belongs in a museum? If you have something with a history that you would like to donate, please get in touch.

RESTORATION FUND DONATIONS

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

VALE HEINZ HENKE

It is with great sadness that we convey the news that Heinz Henke has recently passed away. The Henke family were great supporters of the St George Historical Society and dependable volunteers at Lydham Hall. Heinz was blessed with a practical can-do ability which greatly assisted with maintaining the fabric of the home and in resolving logistical quandaries. His skills were sadly missed when he 'retired' from Lydham Hall after the death of his beloved wife Gloria - both were a mainstay at Lydham Hall for many decades.

The Henke family were editors of the Society bulletin from September 2000 until January 2014 and possessed a wealth of information about the history of the museum. Heinz could turn his hand to any odd job that needed doing at Lydham Hall, including baking - the "Wickel Kuchen" cake he baked as a raffle prize at the SGHS Christmas Party in December 2000 is still remembered. Heinz's legacy lives on at Lydham Hall through all manner of tasks he had a hand in attending to, and he is sorely missed. The Society would like to express our sincere condolences to his son Richard.

COMMITTEE

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

LOCAL HISTORY IMAGES

St George Historical Society Incorporated

PO Box A89 Arncliffe NSW 2205

www.stgeorgehistsoc.org.au

One of the benefits of becoming a member of the St George Historical Society is receiving information about the Society & the local area. If you do not want to receive this newsletter, please unsubscribe below.

Note that once you unsubscribe, we will be unable to add you to our mailing list for newsletters in future.

[I want to unsubscribe](#)

