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PUBLICATIONS

LYDHAM HALL



ST GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER | **NOV | DEC 2024**

## WELCOME



Our last opening at Lydham Hall for 2024 will be on Sunday 1st December. After an overwhelmingly successful year of Open Days and Thursday Tours, the volunteers are going to enjoy their well earned break. We look forward to welcoming members and visitors at our next opening on Sunday 2nd February.

As well as opening Lydham Hall, the Society hosted the opening of another magnificent local historic house over the last couple of months - Tempe House. Some photos have been shared further in this newsletter.

And we had the return of a wonderful event at Lydham Hall - the Ron Rathbone Local History Prize. Congratulations to all winners. See story and photos below.

An important announcement for members - there is no talk or meeting in November. Instead, the Society invites members to a Christmas afternoon tea at Lydham Hall. If you have yet to visit, this will be an opportunity to see the museum and mix with fellow members while partaking of some delicious food. At this event, we will also be drawing the raffle for our wonderful painting donated by the talented Pamela Griffiths.

We would like to warmly welcome our new members - Ruby-Faith Faleniu Asaua (Arncliffe), Suzanne Chate (Glenfield), Anne Cutler (Cronulla), Lynne Marshall (Banksia), and Lynne Weston (Ramsgate). We encourage all our new members join us at our monthly meeting and talks in 2025. These talks are free and you are welcome to bring friends and family along. As a member you also receive unlimited free entry to Lydham Hall and we encourage you to become involved as a volunteer. 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.

*Your Editorial Team*

## WHAT'S ON

[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)



**Sunday 3 November 2024** | 10am to 4pm | 18 Lydham Avenue Rockdale

### **LYDHAM HALL OPEN DAY: Bangers & Brass Day**

In November we have the St George Brass Band playing in the gardens - always a huge event! First sessions starts at 10.30. Bring some friends to enjoy scones or 'bangers' on the verandah whilst you tap away at old and new music. Entry is free for members and we encourage all members to bring along friends & family.





**Opens Saturday 9 November 2024 | 14**  
Macmahon St, Hurstville

**HURSTVILLE MUSEUM &  
GALLERY: Makers & Manufacturers: the  
industrial history of St. George**

This terrific exhibition in the wonderful museum at Hurstville highlights the untold stories of the industrial history of the St George region. See the tools people needed to go about their daily jobs. Exhibition is on until the 11th May. For more information, [click here](#)



**Saturday 16 November 2024 | 2pm until**  
4pm | 18 Lydham Avenue Rockdale

**Members Christmas Afternoon Tea**

Join fellow members for the last Society event of the year. We will be having nibbles overlooking the gardens with the museum open to wander at leisure. Christmas raffles, books for sales and last chance to win a wonderful painting donated by local artist Pamela Griffiths. Free for members although donations are always welcome. Click [here](#) to RSVP.



**Sunday 1 December 2024 | 10am to 4pm**  
| 18 Lydham Avenue Rockdale

**LYDHAM HALL OPEN DAY: The Last One**

Oh no! Our last Open Day for the year! Your last chance to indulge in our delicious Devonshire Teas. We will have lots of Christmas Raffles and books for sale just in time for gift buying.

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



**Sunday 2 February 2025** | 10am to 4pm  
| 18 Lydham Avenue Rockdale

### LYDHAM HALL OPEN DAY: The First One

Happy New Year! Our dedicated volunteers will be back in action after the Christmas New Break and will be again opening Lydham Hall for the enjoyment of the community. Entry is free for members and we encourage all members to bring along friends & family.

[BECOME A MEMBER](#)

[MORE WHAT'S ON HERE](#)

## THE RON RATHBONE LOCAL HISTORY COMPETITION



From left: Joshua Osei-Agyei, Riya Yeshwant-Suvarna, Councillor Liz Barlow, Mayor Edward McDougall, Olga Sedneva, Richard Sheridan (Director City Performance at Bayside Council) and Deputy Mayor Heidi Lee Douglas.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2024 Ron Rathbone Local History Competition. The prize is significant for many reasons - for entrants there is \$6,000 awarded to the winner; the award provides a rich source of historical information that is made



available for the community; and it provides an avenue of research and publishing for historians. So start researching now for next year!

This year, Bayside Council held the award ceremony in the gardens at Lydham Hall on Saturday 26th October. The MC for the day was Deputy Mayor Heidi Lee Douglas and the awards were presented by the newly elected Mayor Edward McDougall. Councillor Liz Barlow gave a wonderful summary of the awards and why they are named after Ron Rathbone, former Councillor and Mayor of Rockdale Council.

The overall winner was Olga Sedneva for ***Tempe: Change of purpose change of landscape.***

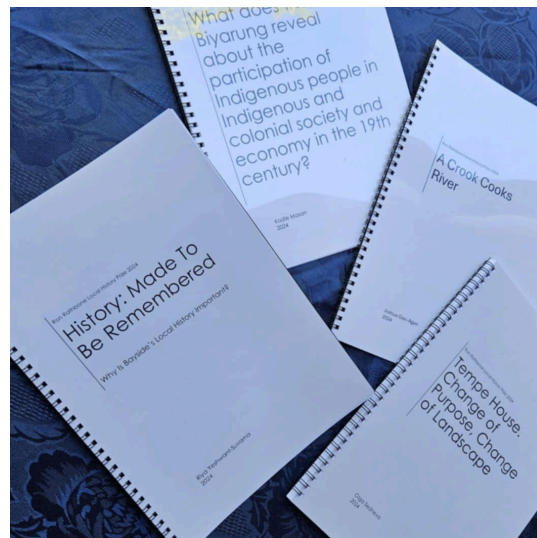
Winners of the High School categories were:

Kodie Mason for ***What does the life of Biyarung reveal about the participation of indigenous people in indigenous and colonial society and economy in the 19th century?***

Joshua Osei-Agyei for ***A Crooks Cooks River***

Riya Yeshwant-Suvama for ***History: Made To Be Remembered. Why is Bayside's Local History Important?***

Congratulations to all the winners. And well done to all the entrants. The work of the winning entrants will be available to read on Bayside Councils website soon.







## RON RATHBONE - THE LEGACY LIVES ON



The Ron Rathbone Local History Prize was established in 2006 in honour of Ron Rathbone OAM (1931-2007), a former teacher at Bexley Public School as well as former Mayor, Councillor and historian for Rockdale Council.

Rathbone set aside his own Council salary as prize money for the annual competition and, in the last year of his life, he used these funds to establish the Local History Prize to encourage the recording of local history for future generations.

Amongst his great contributions was the founding of the St George Historical Society in 1962 (with Rathbone as foundation secretary) and, in 1970, the purchase of Lydham Hall as a local history museum.

Ronald William Rathbone was born on the 9th October 1931. His family home, later his home, still stands at 53 Bruce Street Bexley. He went to Carlton Public School, the Kogarah intermediate High School and then Canterbury Boys High School. After high school, he trained to be a teacher at Balmain Teachers College.

During his adolescence he became fascinated with politics and as soon as he was old enough he joined the Young Liberals at Kogarah.

In 1959, at the age of 28, he ran for local council and, after a strong campaign, won a seat as an Alderman. At the next election in 1963, he had been elected deputy Mayor. And in 1968 he was elected as Mayor – a position he held for a record 4 terms.

Rathbone died in January 2007, a year after establishing the Ron Rathbone Local History Prize.



As well as his council activities, Ron taught at Bexley Primary School for 24 years and was involved with many organisations, including the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra and Opera Company, the Heritage Council of NSW, the Benevolent Society of NSW and the St George Historical Society.

In January 1967, Ron Rathbone was one of a small group of people who took the first unsponsored tourist trip to China since the communist takeover in 1949. His fascination with China remained with him his entire life.

In 1987 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for Service to Local Government which spanned over 40 years. He wrote more than 15 books and numerous articles on the history and heritage of our area.

Lydham Hall is currently hosting a small exhibition about Rathbone which includes a display of his medals. many of his books still in print are available for purchase.

*All images courtesy of Bayside Libraries.*

RON RATHBONE

BIOGRAPHY



## TEMPE HOUSE OPENING SEPTEMBER 2024



The St George Historical Society organised a one off opening of Tempe House on the 14th September.

Tempe House is the magnificent 1830s villa built by colonial architect, John Verge, for Alexander Brodie Spark in the 1830's. The State Heritage listed house sits on the edge of the Cooks River at Wolli Creek and still retains a large area of greenery around it, including the Mount Olympus Gardens which retains vegetation typical of the era before settlement.

In 1884, the estate was sold to the Good Samaritan Order and was a home for unmarried women and later a home for 'delinquent' girls. The Good Samaritan Order retained the property for 100 years until it was sold to Qantas in 1989 before finally being sold to Interciti Arncliffe Developments in 2000 and redeveloped into the high rise precinct we see today.







We had a wonderful visitor turn out, including one lady who regaled all in period costume. It was the first event using our new Society banner which was displayed at the entrance on a perfect Spring day. We also made substantial sales of the first copies of the new edition of the previously out-of-print *The Early History of Wollie Creek Valley*.

A big thank you to the volunteers that helped make the September opening of the magnificent Tempe House a success. On the day our volunteers: Laurice Bondfield, Michael Drew, Wesley Fairhall, Brendan Giles, and Barry Johnson. And a special thank you to Bob and Laurel Horton for providing some excellent commentary on the history of the house.

## ST GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEE

The St George Historical Society is led by a Committee, which is chaired by the President. The role of the Committee is to manage the Society's business as per the Constitution.

Nominations for all Committee positions were called prior to the Annual General Meeting and elected at the meeting in July 2024. The Executive and General Committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday night of every month.

### The Executive Committee:

President - Wesley Fairhall  
 Vice President - Laurel Horton  
 Secretary - Laurice Bondfield  
 Treasurer - Barry Johnson  
 Public Officer - Robert McGarn  
 Curator/Librarian - Tina Workman  
 Research Officer - Barry Johnson

### The General Committee:

Michael Drew, Bob Jansen, Brendan Giles, Diana Smith, Garry Stokes

### The Lydham Hall Advisory Committee:

Laurice Bondfield, Wesley Fairhall, Tina Workman with Anne Field as supplementary. This Committee meets

Publicity Officer - Anne Field  
Newsletter Editor - Tina Workman

with Council staff and Councillors every  
3 months.

ABOUT US

COMMITTEE

## COULD YOU BE OUR NEXT GUEST SPEAKER?

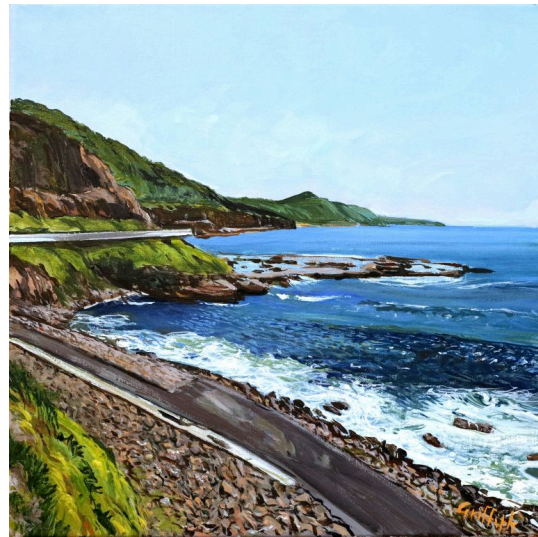
Have you researched your family history or entered the Ron Rathbone Local History Competition? If you enjoy sharing stories from our past and raising awareness about the local history of the St George District, you can present to a local community group. You'll choose the topic. It could be genealogy, railways, churches, or Victorian-era homes in your suburb.

Reply to this newsletter to join our [Guest Speaker program](#). We'll help prepare your talk and support you with all the details.

## BUY YOUR TICKETS!

Local artist, Pamela Griffiths has generously donated a magnificent painting of Coalcliff Harbour to help us with fundraising. Valued at \$1,500, the Society is thrilled to have this stunning painting to offer. Size: 33 × 33 cm. Framed.

To enter the raffle, click [here](#). For more information about Pamela Griffith, click [here](#). Raffle will be drawn at 5pm on the 16th November 2024.



## DONATIONS TO MUSEUMS - A WORTHWHILE GIFT

Do you have anything at home (or in the garage!) that belongs in a museum?

We are currently searching for every day objects for our kitchen. These are the things that might be hiding in back of cupboards, sheds and garages because they are worth so little to you but tell great stories when placed in a museum. Jars, tins, potions, medicines, soaps, flour sacks etc.

If you have something with a history that you would like to donate, please get in touch.



RESTORATION FUND DONATIONS

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

And lastly, **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year** to all members and friends of the St George Historical Society.

Thank you for your support throughout the year and reach out if you would like to become more involved in 2025.



## St George Historical Society Incorporated

PO Box A89 Arncliffe NSW 2205

[www.stgeorgehistsoc.org.au](http://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.*



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