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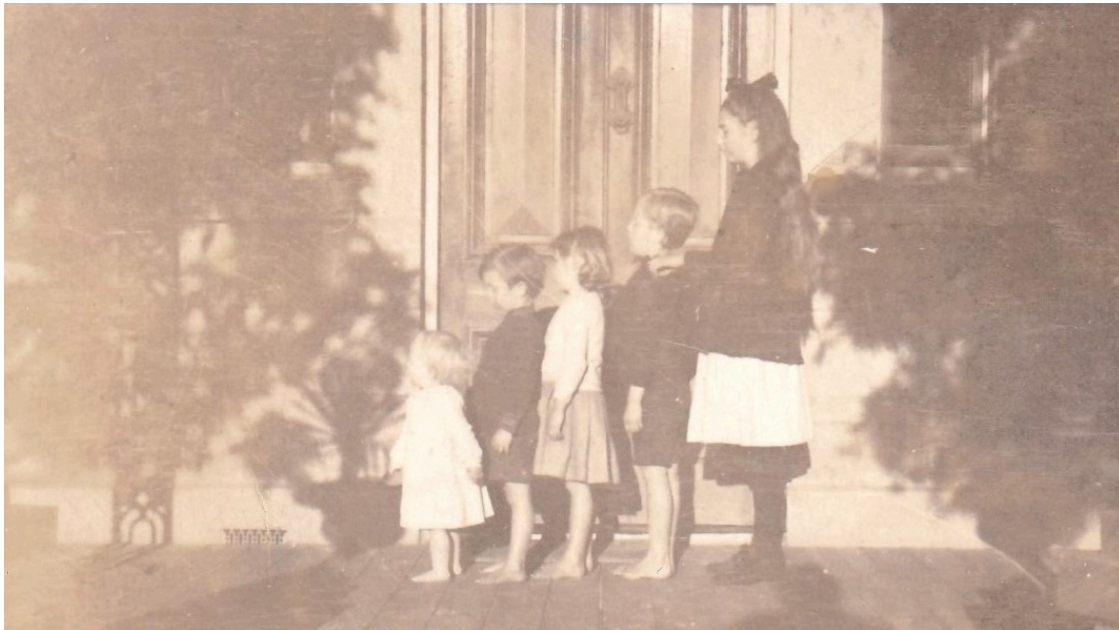
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ST GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER | JUL-AUG 2025



WELCOME to the July-August newsletter. as you will read, we've had a busy June and about to have a busy July. We have designated July as Christina Stead Month. Check out our website to see What's On. The AGM will be held on Saturday 19th July so please join us for this important yearly event.

July is also time to renew your membership. Membership is so important to keep our Society active and financially viable. Click on the link below.

Your Editorial Team

[RENEW MEMBERSHIP HERE](#)

[BOOK FOR 'THE MILK RUN' WALK](#)

WHAT'S ON

[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)



Saturday 21 June 2025 | 2pm until 4pm
|3rd Floor Rockdale Library | 444 Princes
Highway Rockdale

HISTORY TALK: BEA: BOHEMIAN REBEL

Bea Miles was Australia's most famous Bohemian Rebel who defied conventional expectations of female behaviour. Rose Ellis shares a fascinating glimpse into a dark side of Australia's history. Entry is **FREE** but donations gratefully accepted. Refreshments provided.



Sunday 6 July 2025 | 10am-4pm | 18
Lydham Avenue Rockdale

LYDHAM HALL OPEN DAY

Immerse yourself in history in the magnificent Victorian interior of Lydham Hall. Our knowledgeable volunteers can share the history of the house and the area. After a tour, relax on the verandah for some delicious home baked scones. Entry is free for members. Bring family and friends for a morning or afternoon.



Saturday 19 July 2025 | 2pm until 4pm |
3rd Floor Rockdale Library | 444 Princes
Highway Rockdale

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We will present the Annual Report and Financial Statement, elect the Committee for 2025-26, and discuss our plans for the coming year. Members of the SGHS can nominate for a committee position for 2025-26.

This meeting is for members only.
Refreshments provided.



Sunday 20 July 2025 | 10am-1pm | Start at Dappeto

HISTORY WALK: THE MILK RUN

Join us for a recreation of Christina Stead's historic walk from Dappeto (her grandfathers house in Wollongon Road Arncliffe) to Lydham Hall. Enjoy a rare and exclusive glimpse inside Dappeto, see historical sights along the route, enjoy a light lunch at Lydham Hall. Numbers limited. Lunch provided. [Click here to book.](#)



Sunday 20 July 2025 | 10am-1pm | Start at Dappeto

HISTORY TALK: CHRISTINA STEAD - LIFE AT LYDHAM

To celebrate Christina Stead's birthday month, there will be a special talk on the life of Christina Stead whilst she lived at Lydham Hall with her father David Stead, stepmother Ada and her many siblings. Refreshments provided. Numbers limited. [Click here to book.](#)



Sunday 3 August 2025 | 10am-4pm | 18 Lydham Avenue Rockdale

LYDHAM HALL OPEN DAY: SCOTTISH PIPE BAND

The amazing St George-Sutherland Scottish Pipe Band are back by popular demand. Whilst the band plays, the cafe will be serving up a Scottish delights as well as our Devonshire Tea on the Verandah. Entry is free for members and we encourage all members to bring along friends & family.



Saturday 16 August 2025 | 2pm until 4pm |
3rd Floor Rockdale Library | 444 Princes
Highway Rockdale

HISTORY TALK: MIRACLE AT MASCOT

Dr Peter Hobbins will give a talk on Surviving Sydney's 1971 Airliner Collision. Luckily - by the narrowest of margins - the two aircraft involved survived the incident, although not unscathed. This presentation explores the technology, politics and personal stories of that very near miss.

2025 ANNUAL DINNER



The St George Historical Society hosted its Annual Fundraising Dinner on Saturday, 14 June, at the Arncliffe Scots Club. It was a truly memorable evening, with an enthusiastic turnout from members, community groups, and guests. Meticulously organised by Anne Field and Garry Stokes, the event provided a meaningful and joyous way to close out the financial year.

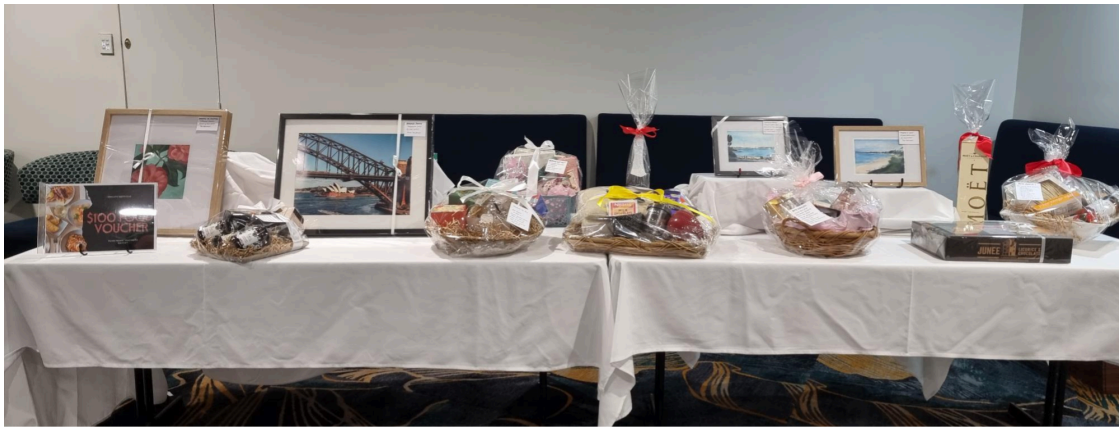
The evening commenced with an address from the Mayor of Bayside, Councillor Ed McDougall, who underscored the importance of preserving our local history and heritage. We extend heartfelt thanks to the Mayor and the Councillors who joined us in support: Awada, Barlow, Bredehoeft, Kassim, Nagi, and Saravinovski. A special thank you to our

President Wesley Fairhall who was MC for the night and who presented a wonderful wrap up of the last year of the St George Historical Society and Lydham Hall.

Our keynote speaker, Emma Payne, delivered an engaging and thought-provoking presentation on *The Daisy Chain*—a program devoted to enriching the lives of aged care residents through creative and innovative lifestyle initiatives.

Below: Clockwise from top left - Mayor McDougall presenting certificate to volunteer Diane Smith, Mayor McDougall presenting certificate to volunteer Mercedes Estaban-Lyons; The Mayor and Councillors with some volunteers; the raffle table!





A highlight of the night was the heartfelt presentation of appreciation certificates to our cherished volunteers. Their dedication, passion, and generosity of spirit are the foundation of our Society's continued success.

To wrap up the evening, we held a lively raffle draw. Our dedicated Society members spent months gathering an impressive selection of over 14 prizes. Special thanks to volunteers Michael Drew and Fred Scott, whose outstanding efforts in coordinating ticket sales have undoubtedly helped raise essential funds for the Society's ongoing work. We're incredibly grateful to everyone who purchased raffle tickets—your generosity truly makes a difference.

See you next year!

JUNE OPEN DAY RAFFLE PRIZE WINNER



Katie from Marrickville was the winner of the June Open Day raffle prize. The prize was a delicious fruit cake baked by our very own Garry Stokes. Katie visited Lydham House on that day for afternoon tea with the **Chat 10 Looks 3** group. We were pleased to have the group and look forward to many return visits.



FOOTPATHS IN THE OLD MUNICIPALITY OF BEXLEY By AG and FG Day

Part of an interesting article about roads and footpaths from our archives. Dated April 1975. Image above shows Forest Road Bexley near Bexley Public School, 1907.

Desirable features of civilised town life include good footpaths, but when Bexley became an independent borough in 1900, its footpaths were far from good. There were then about 81 named streets with a total length of about 30 miles (48 km) in existence in the borough. It was hardly to be expected that the small population of the area, with only about 580 houses, could have provided much development of this kind.

Roads were so bad in those days that the footpaths were used at times by all kinds of traffic, including bread, milk, butchers' and brick carts, sulkies, bicycles and postmen from Rockdale or Hurstville (on bikes or horses). After wet weather the footpaths were as rutted as the roads and Bexley Council was forced to look at the matter seriously, because of pedestrians' complaints.

So in 1908, when bricks were first used for paving, advertisements were put in the local papers warning that such action was an offence against the by-laws. As early as 1902, Council had approached the police for help in this regard.

In those days a constable was on beat duty in Forest Road and he was requested to keep an eye on a newly constructed footpath. Several years later, an alderman and the Council Clerk were "prepared to stop horsemen riding on footpaths on Friday afternoons". At a few locations in later years, posts were put across the paths to prevent vehicles or horse riders mounting them.

Queens Avenue ramp, declared a footpath in November 1923, was an example of this. The corner of Bay View and Godwin Street was another, Bexley Municipality is hilly in places, so the advent of good footpaths was an invitation to young boys to make and use "billy carts". This activity became such a nuisance that Council had to take action. In

October 1918, 1,000 dodgers were printed warning parents of the dangers involved in the practice and the possibility of actions for damages in the event of injury to persons.

PAVEMENT CONSTRUCTION

Ashes were much used as paving material in the early days, but were apt to disappear gradually into the soil in wet weather. Such paths were regarded more as temporary expedients. Ashes cost 1/3d. to 1/6d. per cu. yd, and came either from the water pumping station then in existence near Carlton Railway Station, or from a brickworks near the junction of Durham Street with Forest Road.

Abercorn Street had an ashes and tar footpath in 1922. In the depression year, 1933, ashes had to be used alone until funds were available for brick paths. Tar and sawdust had been suggested much earlier (1906) for a footpath in Bay View Street, It is not known whether these materials made a satisfactory path, especially in hot weather. In an urgent case a resident would be supplied with a heap of ashes and he would do the spreading.

As late as 1940, residents of Tempe Road (changed 1942 to Slade Road) requested a footpath, which had to be of ashes, it being wartime, two hundred pounds was spent in the first year of brick paving in Bexley. Unfortunately, the bricks used in those days were ordinary "common" house bricks and not suitable for many years of wear. So by the 1930's many of these paths were being top-dressed with asphalt. Later brick paths were made of "clinker" hard-burnt bricks and, apart from any sinkage at soft spots or at vehicle entrances, served for many years.

Where tar was used for footpaths, it would be brushed over the dry earth, using a bass broom, then sprinkled with sand and allowed time to dry. On one occasion the Council's tar boiler caught fire and a nearby resident claimed £15 compensation for damage to the roof of her house.

In September 1919, Council passed an allowance of 1/6d. per week for men doing tar paving, "to cover the cost of destruction of boots and clothes at such work.

During the early 1930's, concrete paths came into favour. At first these were bought as 2 feet x 2 feet and 2 feet x 1 foot slabs, 2in. thick and laid on sand. Apparently, these were so successful, that Council decided to make its own slabs. A 36 ft. x 28 ft. building at the Council depot in Rye Avenue, became the slab factory. A special hydraulic press was purchased and production began. Many thousands of the slabs were made in the next six years. By May 1933, output was about 70 slabs per day and by June it Reached 104. Council was so pleased with this enterprise that, in 1935, it was suggested that slabs be sold to neighbouring councils and to the public. The price was to be 2/6d. each for the 2 x 2 slabs, plus cartage, with 510 off for 50 or more. However, the idea was not proceeded with.

In 1936, burglars broke padlocks on the factory and stole wrenches, ambulance bandages and iodine and threw oil around the place. On another occasion, four boys, who had been Implicated, were made to attend a Council meeting, and were admonished by the Mayor.

On their promising to mend their ways,
the pending prosecutions were withdrawn and they paid 25/- for the damage they caused.

As a result of these episodes, a six-foot paling fence with barbed wire on top, costing over £60, had to be erected. Although the cost of a slab footpath was claimed to be seven pence per square yard less than in-situ concrete, already, by 1936, Council began to have doubts about the future use of slabs. In that year, one of the moulders at the factory had to cease work because of lung trouble. Difficulty was next experienced with newly made slabs sticking to the palettes. These troubles were thought to be caused by the blue-metal dust. Then the hydraulic press broke down. Bexley Progress Association had maintained for several years that "in-situ" concrete would be more economic in the long run. The slab factory was costing £30 per week to run, including £9.6. 8 per week for two men's wages. Finally, in 1939, the Engineer recommended that concrete paths be laid "in-situ", as ratepayers preferred it. Slabs continued to be laid against vacant land, where disturbance of the path might subsequently occur.

In the early years of footpath construction, a street could get a path down one side only - the side with most houses. The other side might wait six or eight years for its path.

In 1946, when the "in-situ" laid footpath was thoroughly established, the use of ready-mix concrete was investigated, but decided against for a number of reasons (i) slightly higher cost, (2) difficulty in pouring into frames and moulds, (3) waiting periods between deliveries, (4) anxiety about stopping deliveries when wet weather might suddenly threaten, (5) could not be laid with joints, because of rush to pour, (6) better job obtained by mixing as required.



(Above clockwise from left: Croydon Road Bexley in 1902; 2 boys standing on the footpath Roach Street Arncliffe; Dunmore Street North, Bexley)

Where grass grew on unpaved footpaths, Council undertook to mow it occasionally.

If a concrete path was not close to the fence, and levels permitted, then a short strip of concrete between path and gate would be constructed at the usual charge for paving.

Council decided in December 1916, that once a ratepayer had paid his share of the footpath cost, there would be no further charge for maintenance, or renewal. This share was to be half for ordinary frontages, plus one-third for the side street of corner blocks.

As early as 1910, builders were required to lodge a deposit of £1 before materials could be taken across brick or tarred footpaths (concrete had not then been used). The footpath opening fee, for laying pipes, was set at 10/-.

In 1917, the opening fee became £1, unless the path was unpaved, when it remained at 10/-, it was made illegal to allow roof water to discharge across footpaths.

The N. S. W. Board of Health in 1906, circularised councils, suggesting that a by-law be introduced making spitting on footpaths an offence, On January 22 of that year, Bexley Council passed the by-law, on the grounds that it would minimise the spread of T.B.

Where trees overhung footpaths, owners were, as early as 1904, issued with a notice to cut them back.

Barbed wire on a front fence was considered a public danger. A case occurred in January 1921 where the wire was removed by Council employees and the owner was informed of the risk involved.

In February 1939, a warning was put in the local press relating to the practice of contractors and others using footpaths for mixing concrete or for colouring cement, then leaving the path in a soiled condition.

A young lady living in Croydon Road persisted in climbing under rope barriers in the evening and leaving small heel marks in concrete laid the same afternoon.

Several slippery spots on footpaths received attention in 1940 by "crow-picking". Two cases of which records exist are - the corner of Forest Road and Highworth Avenue outside the then existing butcher's shop, and outside the Commonwealth Bank at the corner of Harrow Road, Bexley.



(Above; The dirt road that was Forest Road in 1882)

[Read full article here](#)

2025 RON RATHBONE LOCAL HISTORY COMPETITION

Submissions are open again for this worthwhile history prize. You do not have to be a published author to enter - all entries, large and small are considered. The prize is \$5,000 for adults and \$2,000 for school students.

ENTRIES CLOSE **THURSDAY 17th JULY 2025**. For more information, [click here](#)

2025 Ron Rathbone Local History Competition

Bayside Council invites high school students and adults to participate in the Ron Rathbone Local History Competition.

A competition for works of original research on any aspect of the history of the Bayside Local Government Area.

Optional theme:

Role of women in war during WWI and/or WWII within the Bayside Council LGA.

Open Category

Prize Pool \$7,000

\$5,000 for the Winner

High School Category

Prize Pool \$2,000



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

Publicity Officer - Anne Field

Newsletter Editor - Tina Workman

The General Committee:

Michael Drew, 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 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.

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.



St George Historical Society

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