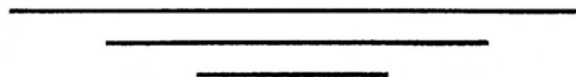




THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER, 1971



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council

President

Mrs. D.A. Hatton, J.P.,
15 Annette Avenue,
KOGARAH, 2217.

Phone 587 9970

Hon. Treasurer

Mrs. P. Briancourt,
9 The Mall,
SOUTH HURSTVILLE, 2220.

Phone 54 2156

Hon. Secretary

Miss C. McEwen, J.P.,
84 Carlton Parade,
CARLTON, 2218.

Phone 587 2090

OBJECTIVES

To promote interest in the history of the Kogarah Municipality and Australia in general.

To give support to the preservation of historic buildings and other objects considered to be of historic value.

MEMBERSHIP

Any inquiries regarding membership should be directed to the Honorary Secretary. Visitors are especially welcome.

Subscription: \$1.00
Senior Citizens: .25¢ per annum
Students: .25¢ per annum

MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 8 p.m. in the Kogarah Council Chambers, Belgrave Street, Kogarah.

DONATIONS

Donations of items of historical interest suitable for inclusion in the Society's Museum will be gratefully accepted by the Convener of the Museum Committee -

Mr. J.E. Veness,
6 Lance Avenue,
BLAKEHURST, 2221.
Phone 54 3932

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions of articles and information of local historical interest for publication in this Newsletter would be welcomed by the Editor -

Mr. P. Orlovich,
54 Culver Street,
KOGARAH, 2217.
Phone 587 0377

NOVEMBER

The next meeting of the Society will be held as follows:-

Date: Thursday 11th November, 1971, at 8 p.m.

Address: Mr. R.F. Holder, the Bank of New South Wales' Economic Adviser and author of its recently published history will address the Society.

Supper Roster: Mrs. M. Sneddon and Mrs. I. Lovatt

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Fellow Members,

Firstly, I feel I must congratulate all those who contributed to the success of the luncheon for about 100 delegates to the Royal Australian Historical Society's 1971 Conference with Affiliated Societies, when they visited our Museum and its surroundings on the 17th October. The Hon. Mr. Justice Else-Mitchell and his wife were present as well as delegates from many N.S.W. towns and also interstate, and all were delighted with the lunch provided by the ladies of our Society. Personally, I thought the food, together with the table decorations, were as good as any caterer could have provided.

There was plenty of time for the visitors to inspect the Museum and park and the weather was perfect, with crowds of people in the area. All those to whom I spoke thought it was a very delightful spot and were amazed that we could have managed so much in such a short time. I am sure all will remember their visit for some time to come.

Secondly, I thought some members might like to know about the historical places my daughter and I visited when overseas recently. Although Rome, Stockholm and Paris have much to offer, England's history is part of our heritage and the museums and magnificent castles and cathedrals in which we could envisage the past were truly breathtaking. Complete towns of stone cottages, and villages full of antique shops, together with a great many miles of pleasant fields made a wonderful picture. Winston Churchill's home at "Chartwell" was one of great interest, as besides being built on a sloping terrain with ponds and immense flower beds, there were rooms containing all the history of his life from childhood to the Boer War and then to all the other great events he took part in and included photos, robes, citations, medals etc., together with all his paintings. I have just mentioned "Chartwell" particularly, as during the momentous days of the last war we waited with bated breath to hear just what he would do next to free us from the yolk of war, and some of our members may remember this.

Sincerely,

Mrs. D.A. Hatton,
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Sincerely,

Mrs. D.A. Hatton,
PRESIDENT.

MEMBERSHIP

The following new members have joined the Society since October:-

Mrs. D. Beaven, Mrs. P.E. Brown, Miss M. Foley, Mrs. L. Gilmour, Mrs. J. James, Mrs. V.S. Smith and Mrs. I. Whitby.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

The Society's Christmas Party will be held on Thursday 9th December, commencing at 8 p.m. It has been suggested that the Party be held at the Museum. Final details for this evening will be discussed at the November meeting.

Monday 13th December, 1971 - A luncheon, followed by a Wedgwood display, including a film, will be held at the Museum. This should be a most enjoyable afternoon. Members are invited to bring their friends. Cost 50¢ per head. Tickets are now available.

Sunday 13th February, 1972 - A half day outing to Balmain. Arrangements have been made to inspect the Watch House which has been restored by the Balmain Association.

Sunday 19th April, 1972 - A half day outing to Randwick which will include an inspection of Nugal Hall.

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE ABOVE EXCURSIONS WILL BE GIVEN IN LATER NEWSLETTERS

DONATIONS

The following people have donated items to the Museum during the last month:-

Mrs. A. Berwick, Miss A.G. Coxhead, Mrs. Hurst and Mrs. G. Longfield

KOGARAH MUNICIPAL BAND DISPLAY

As mentioned in the October Newsletter Kogarah Municipal Band is organizing, together with Kogarah Council, a display and concerts to celebrate their Jubilee. It is interesting to note that the district has had a Band since 1887 when the St. Georges Brass Band was formed.

The display in the Museum consists of photos, awards that have been won by the Band and a variety of old instruments. The oldest being an Ophicleide dating back to 1850. Engraved on this instrument is 'Sydney Symphony Orchestra 1911'.

As a part of the celebrations an outdoor concert will be given on each Sunday during the month of November. Set out below is the programme for the month:-

<u>Date</u>	<u>Band</u>	<u>Time</u>
7th November	South Hurstville Salvation Army Band	From 2.30 p.m.
14th November	St. George Police Citizens' Boys' Club Band	From 2.00 p.m.
21st November	Kogarah Municipal Band	From 2.00 p.m.
28th November	Burwood Band	From 2.00 p.m.

The Bands will be situated on the cement drive of the Museum.

LASSETER

BY

COLLEEN McEWEN

The appearance in Sydney of a musical production called "Lasseter" reminds us of the man himself. The musical has no connection with the man who claimed to have found a rich gold reef in Central Australia. The use of his name, however, in the title of the play, which has as its theme mans never-ending quest for fortune, bears witness to the fact that Lasseter's reef, whether it exists or not, is firmly entrenched in Australian folk-lore.

Lewis Harold Bell Lasseter was a resident of Kogarah. In an agreement he made with John Bailey, who was acting on behalf of the Central Australian Gold Exploration Company Limited, on 14th June, 1930, his address was recorded as Orient Road, Kogarah. This road is now part of Burgess Street, and ran from Hastings Street to Ramsgate Road.

Lasseter undertook in this agreement to locate the gold-bearing reef he claimed he had found in Central Australia near the Western Australian border in 1894 while searching for rubies in the Macdonnell Ranges. In 1897 he was said to have rediscovered the reef with a surveyor and on this occasion traced it for ten miles. The average assay was said to have been over 3 oz of gold to the ton.

At a meeting of possible shareholders of the Company formed by Lasseter, he agreed to guide a party of prospectors to the location of the reef. The Central Australian Gold Exploration Company Limited was formed with a nominal capital of £5,000 divided into 5000 shares of £1 each. The object of the Company was to finance an exploration party of prospectors to proceed to the area and relocate the reef. Lasseter was paid £5 per week commencing on 21st May, 1930 as a retainer.

On 26th June, 1930, the Company's first office was opened in Room 204, 2nd Floor of the Manchester Unity Building, 185 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, in November it moved to the 8th Floor and on 8th July, 1931 to Room 5, 1st Floor, Bull's Chambers, 28 Martin Place Sydney. From there to the 7th Floor of the Savings Bank Building, 14 Castlereagh Street, on the 28th March, 1933, and in November to the 4th Floor of the same building.

Some of the clauses in the agreement signed on 14th June, are interesting to note.

Lasseter was not to accept employment or enter into any other engagement with anyone with respect to prospecting for gold or other metal or mineral while the agreement was in force. He was not to divulge to any other person or company the exact location of the reef unless previously authorized, in writing, by the directors of the Company.

He was to assist other members of the expedition, peg out leases in the prescribed manner, and help to carry out all that was necessary to lay claim to the reef.

It was stated that the Company would take up and hold in trust for Lasseter one tenth of all leases taken up or acquired by him. However, if the result of the assay was less than 3 oz of gold to the ton he would not receive the one tenth but a percentage according to the amount of gold found per ton. Upon the return of the expedition, after the reef had been located, it was agreed that the Company would in consideration of services rendered allot him 20 fully paid up shares. In the event of Lassiter not being able to relocate the reef he was to inform the Company immediately of this and apply and pay for 20 shares in the Company.

It was agreed upon that he would receive £5 per week while the expedition was based in Sydney and £10 per week during the expedition. The Company undertook to bear all expenses and costs in connection with the transport of equipment and support of the expedition.

Lasseter was to put in writing, as well as he could, the exact location of the reef and place it in a sealed envelope, verified by Statutory Declaration, and place it with a bank. The envelope was not to be opened except in the case of his being no longer able to serve the Company on account of his death or serious sickness or accident or if he did not obey the commands of the Company.

At a point 50 miles beyond Alice Springs he was to disclose to each member of the proposed expedition such land-marks and features of the country to help them locate the reef.

At a meeting of the Company on 30th July, 1931, it was passed that the nominal capital be increased from £5,000 to £20,000 being divided into 20,000 shares of £1 each.

The prospecting party was chosen and was made up of Matthew Blackiston Houston, who was aide-de-camp to Lord Stonehaven, Frederick Blakeley, miner, George Sutherland, miner, Errol Hampton Coote, Aviator and Philip Laurence Taylor, engineer. The expedition was well equipped and started with every hope

of success. However, this was not to be realized. I do not propose to relate the events which occurred during the expedition as they are worthy of much more detail than can be afforded in this short space. Briefly disaster followed the group and when discord arose amongst the party Lasseter left and went on alone never to be seen alive again. His death certificate was issued in Alice Springs the date of death being given as 30th January, 1931.

Robert Buck, of Temple Downs station, an experienced bushman who knew the area well led the search party. Buck found Lasseter's body and buried it bringing back his diary and letters which formed a basis of the novel "Lasseter's Last Ride" by Ion L. Idriss published in September, 1931. A second attempt was made shortly afterwards to find the reef but failed.

On the 5th March, 1934, the Director of the Central Australian Gold Exploration Company Limited, John Bailey, in a Statutory Declaration, declared the company dissolved. He stated:-

"The objects of the said Company have entirely failed and the Company has made no profits whatsoever.

The Company is not at present engaged in any business activities whatsoever and it is not likely that the business of the Company will be revived.

The Company has no funds whatsoever in hand for the winding up of the Company."

The Company's name was struck off the Register and dissolved on 12th January, 1940.

The aviator of the expedition Errol Hampton Coote, wrote a book entitled "Hell's Airport". This was published in 1934 and gave an account of his personal experiences on the expedition. The preface was written by Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith. Philip Taylor, the engineer of the party, wrote an article entitled "The Great Gold Myth" in People dated 9th February, 1955, and Robert Buck disclaimed the reef in an item in the Melbourne Argus on 23rd September, 1939.

Does the reef exist? Some think so as even within recent years plans have been mooted for further exploration.
