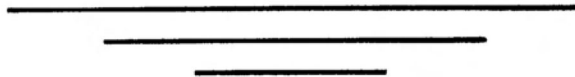




| THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 1972.



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 per annum
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.

CARSS' COTTAGE MUSEUM (Phone No. 546 7314)

Open Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays from Noon to 5 p.m.

Cost - 20¢ Adults; 10¢ Children with a maximum of 60¢ for families.

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

JANUARY MEETING

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

Date: Thursday 13th January, 1972 at 8 p.m.

Address: Mr. Peter Orlovich, of the staff of the Archives Office of New South Wales and Honorary Research Officer of the Royal Australian Historical Society, will speak on methods of researching local history. People who belong to research units will find the information given in this address most useful.

Supper Roster: Mrs. Butters and Mrs. Thompson

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

Firstly, I wish you all a Happy New Year. I expect you have had a busy time since our Christmas Party, which I am sure you enjoyed. Many thanks to those who sent me Christmas cards.

This month I would like to comment on current affairs. During the last four months it has been a busy time for those members who have been doing voluntary attendance at the Museum, and I thought you might like to have a short resumé of these activities.

Right from the opening, regular visitors to Carss Park were very eager to inspect the Cottage and its contents. All have stressed they would like to live in such a delightful spot. Families from all over the St. George district and people from a great many Sydney suburbs have signed the Visitor's Book and we have had others also from Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory, New Zealand, England, U.S.A., and many N.S.W. towns - in fact from 169 places outside the St. George area.

In the above I have not included those who attended on the Opening Day, or the President of the Royal Australian Historical Society and delegates who attended the Annual Conference and whom we were fortunate to entertain to lunch. All these visitors thought we were lucky to have a Museum situated in such pleasant historical surroundings and we have received many letters expressing thanks and congratulations both from N.S.W. and Interstate.

However, it is necessary to ask more members to join the roster for Sunday afternoons. Those who have already volunteered have found it a most satisfactory time, meeting people from everywhere who have the same interests. The takings also have been very satisfactory but we must endeavour to keep this up so that we can meet our commitments.

I hope to see as many as possible at our next meeting.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) D.A. Hatton,
PRESIDENT.

EASTER HAMPER

Enclosed is a book of tickets for an Easter Hamper which has been arranged by the Social Committee. The value of the Hamper is \$50 and it will be drawn on 29th March at the Museum. All tickets must be in by the 20th March.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Sunday 13th February, 1972 - A half day outing to Balmain

Cost: \$1.25 Adults; 50¢ Children

Time: 1.15 p.m.

Meeting Place: Previously we have left from outside the Council Chambers in Belgrave Street, Kogarah. However, due to a Government regulation which states that buses cannot be chartered to carry passengers to and from areas where Government buses operate we will have to pick up the bus at Rockdale. The new meeting place will be at the parking lot in MARKET STREET, ROCKDALE.

As most of the streets in Balmain are too narrow for a bus the inspection will be made on foot. This will take approximately two hours. Bring your afternoon tea.

CHRISTMAS PARTY AND WEDGWOOD DISPLAY

Our two social events in December proved very enjoyable and profitable. At the Christmas Party \$61 was made on the evening and \$95 was made on the Wedgwood afternoon.

MUSEUM ROSTER FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Sunday January 16th	Mrs. E. Leahy and Mrs. B. Smith
" " 23rd	Mr. & Mrs. Gaskin
" " 30th	Mr. & Mrs. Kelly
Monday " 31st	Mr. K. Grieve and Mr. V. Smith
Sunday February 6th	Mrs. B. Phelan and Mrs. James
" " 13th	Mr. & Mrs. Lean

If any of the above dates are not convenient please advise the Secretary.

DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM

The following people have donated items for inclusion in the Museum during the last month:-

Mrs. Young and Miss Goddard

THE OYSTER FARMING INDUSTRY IN THE ST. GEORGE DISTRICT, 1877

BY

PETER ORLOVICH

On the 29th September, 1876 a Royal Commission was appointed "to inquire into the best mode of cultivating the oyster, of utilizing, improving, and maintaining the natural oyster beds of the Colony, and also as to the legislation necessary to carry out these objects". The members of the Commission were The Hon. Thomas Holt M.L.C. (President), The Hon. John Bowie Wilson, and James Squire Farnell, M.L.A., and they reported to the Governor on the 3rd May, 1877.

In the course of its investigation, the Commission issued a memorandum suggesting details of information which the Inspectors of Oyster Fisheries, to be appointed by the Commission, should be required to furnish, and in which they were questioned on the following points:-

1. What was the state formerly of the natural oyster beds of the rivers, ect., you inspected, as far as you are able to ascertain the facts?
2. Have the oyster beds been injured by over dredging, or any other cause? If so, state to what extent.
3. Describe the present natural state of the rivers, ect.
 - (a) Are their banks and beds of rock, soil or sand? Or if various, state how much there is of each.
 - (b) If the beds and banks are of rock, are they covered, or partially so, with spat or oysters?
 - (c) Are any of the beds of mud? If so, what portion of them is of that kind of mud similar to the London clay, so suitable for fattening oysters?
4. Are there any salt water marshes near the rivers you have inspected? If so, are they more or less covered by the tidal waters, and to what extent? Do the swamps consist chiefly of sand, alluvial, or a rich clay mud? Do the swamps belong to the Government or to private parties? State also, as nearly as possible their situation.
5. State what you consider to be the quality, sizes and ages of the oysters; also the proximate extent of the beds.
6. The quantity of shells or other suitable material on the banks of the rivers which can be used as cultch.
7. State what you may have been able to learn from reliable sources about the spatting of oysters in the rivers, etc., you have inspected. It is very desirable to ascertain if possible, whether there is any proof (as some persons assert) that the spatting of oysters is going on all the year round.

8. If it is considered that the spatting of oysters is confined to certain months, which are those months?

The above queries relate to matters of fact, and the Commission now requires you will give your well-considered opinion on the following topics.

9. Do you consider it is for the interest of the public that the rivers, etc., should be leased, in very large areas, as at present, or in small and moderately sized areas.
10. Do you think it expedient that the Government should refuse to lease those rivers, etc., whose banks and beds are natural breeding beds but not fattening grounds.
11. Do you think it would be a wise policy on the part of the government not to base these natural oyster beds, but to allow licensed oyster-men to remove the spat and oysterlings therefrom, and sell them to those persons who have what are termed in England laying beds.
12. What improvements, if any, have been made in the leased natural oyster beds by the lessees? Also their nature and extent?
13. The Commission will be glad to receive from you any further information or mature opinions other than are suggested by the above queries.

William John Langham (Inspector of Oyster Beds) submitted the following report to the Commissioners in February, 1877 on the oyster-bearing capabilities of Botany Bay, George's River and Cook's River. Langham's report is extracted from the Appendix to the Report of the Royal Commission contained in the Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Session 1876/7, Vol.5, p. 998. The numbered paragraphs in the commencement of the report are the replies to the several questions set out in the foregoing memorandum.

REPORT ON BOTANY BAY, COOK'S RIVER AND GEORGE'S RIVER

George's River, February, 1877

1. They were all largely oyster-bearing.
 2. By over-dredging, exposure to easterly gales, and and drifts.
 3. Replies to these questions may be gathered more conveniently from my report in chief.
 4. Marshes exist on the south side of Botany Bay and Cook's River, and in one or two parts of George's River; they are chiefly soft mud and sand. I am not aware to whom they belong.
 5. Of all qualities, sizes, and ages, and as will be gathered from my report, principally in George's River.
 6. Dead shell and rock on south side of Botany Bay, and all rock in George's River.
 7. The time of spatting is consequent upon the seasons and depth of water.
 9. Moderately sized areas.
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10. Yes
11. Yes
12. The only considerable improvement is in George's River, opposite Mr. Emerson's residence, and referred to in the appended report.

BOTANY BAY

In my examination of the water, I failed to discover any live oyster, except a small bed in Marbray and Keeney Bays, chiefly a deposit of spawn on the mangroves. However, I discovered a large extend of dead mud-oyster-shells, extending from the old wharf at Sans Souci to Sandringham for and upwards of a quarter of a mile in length, with a mean width of 170 yards. Overlaying it is a crust of small shells and sand, and a species of coarse coral which was alive with marine insects. I was not able to ascertain the depth of the deposit, but after cutting through the crust the dredge showed nothing but clean dead shells. This deposit was totally devoid of live oysters or spawn. The whole bed of the bay with the above exception, seems to be composed of dead shell smothered with drift sand. And however important the bay may have been as regards its oyster-bearing capabilities in former times, it seems to me that, owing to its exposure to easterly gales, and the eddies produced by the tides, causing the sand-drift to distribute in all directions, it cannot now be relied on as a field for oyster culture.

COOK'S RIVER

Is totally devoid of oysters. The mollusc was once plentiful in it, but it has not been worked for nine or ten years. The banks are composed of soft clay and overlaid with drift-sand, and, like Botany Bay itself, is by no means a desirable field for culture, i.e. to say, it would take a large outlay of capital to make and form beds in it, which on other rivers could be formed at comparatively little or no cost.

At the risk of exceeding my instructions in another respect, I will venture to remark on the system of "stalling" in connection with net-fishing, which is practised in these and other waters. The system is to fix stakes at the north of shallow bays. The fishermen combine and join their nets, so as to extend the whole width of these bays. This is done at high-tide. At low-tide the bays are left dry, and fish of all descriptions and size are thus caught. The marketable fish are collected, and the remainder in proportion of at least two-thirds in number are left to die in the mud. The practice is so general that the destruction of fish is immense - almost beyond calculation. Without fear of contradiction, I can assert that not only in Botany Bay and its tributaries, but in every water within reach of the Sydney Fish Market, there is not a bay in any suitable inlet in which this "stalling" process is not carried on.

GEORGE'S RIVER

I inspect this river from the Salt-pan Creek to its mouth. It is at present under lease to Mr. A. Emerson. The mode of catching oysters on this river is by diving and the tongs. Owing to the rocky nature of the bottom the dredge is seldom used. Mr. Emerson has introduced a very complete diving apparatus, by which, with the aid of a covered punt, he can take oysters in most weathers. He has from twenty to thirty persons in his employ on the river. Some of them are South Sea Islanders, who dive in the shallow parts where the depth does not exceed say 10 feet.

These also collect fine marketable oysters from the rocks; indeed, in the river as a rule grow in the crevices and on the rocks even in the deep water, and can be obtained by the help of the diving apparatus. The banks and the bed of the river between the rocks is composed of a very soft description of mud, quite unsuitable for carrying oysters. The oysters are a fine sample, one of the finest brought to market. They are very prolific, exhibiting an unusual growth in a given period.

I note one exception to the generally soft nature of the mud of the river; it is in Snake Bay, where there is a bank on which oysters would readily grow and fatten.

I should not omit to give special mention to an effort made by Mr. Emerson to improve the already naturally great oyster-bearing capabilities of this water.

In the bay just fronting his residence he has stocked an old natural bed with brood he obtained from Port Hacking about two years and a-half since. The bed is about a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile in length by 150 yards in breadth, and on it were deposited several thousand bags of brood. This brood has now developed in the comparatively short space of two years and a-half into a fine, large, well-flavoured oyster. I can speak with confidence in respect to the fact, inasmuch as I had the opportunity of seeing the brood soon after it was laid down, and a more misshapen unpromising article it was almost impossible to conceive.

The Wooronora is a tributary of George's River; it is not suitable for oyster culture, its beds being composed of sandy flats.

I have, &c.,

WM. J. LANGHAM,
Inspector of Oyster Beds.
