



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

A P R I L

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PRICE: 5c.

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THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council.

President:

Mr. J. E. Veness,
6 Lance Avenue,
BLAKEHURST. 2221.

'Phone 54 3932.

Hon. Treasurer:

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

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Hon. Secretary:

Mrs. B. Butters,
36 Louisa Street,
OATLEY. 2223.

'Phone 57 6954.

OBJECTIVES: To promote interest in the history of 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 enquiries regarding membership should be directed to the Hon. Secretary. Visitors are especially welcome.

Subscription: \$1.00 per annum (plus 50c joining fee)

Senior Citizens: .25c per annum

Students: .25c per annum

MEETINGS: Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 8 p.m. in the Soldiers' Memorial Presbyterian Church Hall, Kensington Street, Kogarah. (Opposite The St. George Hospital).

CARSS' COTTAGE MUSEUM:

Open Sundays and Public Holidays from Noon to 5 p.m.

Admission 20c Adults, 10c Children (Maximum 60c for one family).

DONATIONS FOR MUSEUM:

Donations of items of historical interest suitable for inclusion in the Society's Museum will be gratefully received by the Museum Convener:

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

'Phone 587 2090.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEWSLETTER:

Contributions of articles and information of local interest for publication in this Newsletter will be welcomed by the Publications Convener:

Mr. V. S. Smith,
26 Prince Edward Street,
CARLTON. 2218.

'Phone 587 2938.

OUR APRIL MEETING. Our April meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on the 12th April, 1973, in the Soldiers' Memorial Presbyterian Church Hall, Kensington Street, Kogarah, opposite St. George Hospital.

Our Guest Speaker will be Mr. S. Stedman who is now a member of the Sutherland Historical Society. Mr. Stedman lived at Wiley Park for sometime and is to tell us about Sir Arthur Rickard, a Real Estate Magnate and Pioneer of Real Estate Subdivisions - particularly in the Bankstown Area.

The Competition Prize for this meeting has been donated by Miss Gould.

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THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE meets at 8 p.m. on the last Thursday in each month at Carrs' Cottage.

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OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Our well-attended Annual General Meeting was held on 8th March. The most important business was the election of the Office Bearers and Committees for 1973, and here are the details:-

President: Mr. J. E. Veness.
Vice Presidents: Mr. V. S. Smith and Mr. W. Wright.
Hon. Secretary: Mrs. N. Butters
Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. D. Briancourt
Hon. Asst. Treas: Mr. D. Briancourt
Convener Museum Committee: Miss C. McEwen
Social Secretary: Mrs. T. Kelly
Publications Officer: Mr. V. S. Smith

Management Committee

Abovementioned Office Bearers.

Mr. & Mrs. D. Burghart
Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Lean
Mr. T. Kelly
Mr. & Mrs. K. R. Cavanough
Mr. H. Mayfield

Museum Committee

Miss C. McEwen
Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Lean
Mr. K. R. Cavanough

Social Committee

Mr. & Mrs. T. Kelly
Mrs. C. McEwen
Mrs. D. Burghart
Mrs. J. Lovatt
Mrs. E. M. Thompson
Mrs. D. Briancourt
Mrs. M. Fordham

Our Newsletter Etc.

At the last meeting of the Management Committee it was disclosed that Mr. Peter Orlovich was no longer in a position to be Editor of our Newsletter. It was decided to appoint Mr. V. S. Smith as Publications Officer. With the assistance of the Hon. Secretary and Mrs. D. Burghart (and other volunteers where necessary) he would produce the Newsletter and other small publications required. He was authorised to select suitable people for appointment as Consultants and Research Officers.

Mr. Smith gave the General Meeting an outline of what he had in mind and this was approved. The persons concerned have been approached and we are pleased to say that all have signified their acceptance of the appointments.

We are happy to announce that our Consultants comprise Mr. Peter Orlovich, M.A. Dip. Ed, Dip. Lib., the Research Officer of the R.A.H. Society; Mr. W. Foster, M.A., Dip. Mod. Languages, Fellow of R.A.H. Soc., Mr. A. H. Brewer, ED, A.S.T.C., F.I.E. (Aust).

Mr. Orlövich while being an Archives Officer in the Public Library of N.S.W., the Hon. Research Officer to the Royal Australian Historical Society (and, in his spare time, a proud father of a young family) was Editor of our Newsletter from a time when we were not properly organised and most of the early articles were due to him, for which we are grateful. He has now been appointed a Lecturer in the University of N.S.W.

Mr. W. Foster was formerly Headmaster of the James Cook High School and we are honoured to have him as a member of our Society. He is a Vice-President of the R.A.H. Society and has still found time to give us two most interesting talks - and promises another.

Mr. A. H. Brewer was Engineer to Kogarah Municipal Council for the period from 1933 to 1954 when he was appointed to a similar position with the Hurstville Municipal Council. He retired in July 1970. He thus has an extensive first-hand knowledge of our district and has already (cheerfully) given us assistance.

Partly as an encouragement to shy members (which means most of us) who say "who? Me!" when it is suggested that they contribute an article for the Newsletter, we have now appointed Research Officers. Many members have (or know someone who has) information which would be valuable to us. It may not be sufficient to comprise an article in the Newsletter but it should at least be recorded and - who knows - with further information unearthed by the Research Officers, may be developed into an informative article that will owe its origin to - perhaps YOU. We also expect the Research Officers to institute their own research and be responsible for a series of articles.

Who are these Research Officers? Here they are:-

Miss C. McEwen. A Life Member and a former Hon. Secretary. She has done a great deal of work in connection with Carss' Cottage and is Convener of the Museum Committee. Has contributed to the Newsletter.

Mr. J. Fletcher. Is Research Officer to the Education Department. Author of our monograph "The Kogarah School". Has produced a guide for use by those who interview people on behalf of our Society.

Mrs. S. Kelly. Has an intimate knowledge of the contents of the "St. George Call" which date back to 1904.

Mrs. M. Grieve. Has resided in district since childhood and has already contributed articles to Newsletter. (more to come!)

Mr. Don Sinclair. Has given two very interesting talks to our Society and will shortly give another. Is President of St. George Historical Society.

Dr. Joan Hatton. Has contributed an interesting article on the English Family and has arranged a display concerning them in our Museum.

Mr. H. Mayfield. He was hiding quietly in our midst until we accidentally discovered that he is Mr. H. Mayfield, M.A. (Hons); M.A.Ps S; M.A.C.E. formerly History Master in Newington College but now appointed as Master in Charge, History and Social Science, Sacred Heart Convent, Rose Bay.

GENERAL.

Much too busy with other duties, Mrs. D. A. Hatton did not stand for election this year. She has served the Society both as President and Hon. Secretary and most members are still amazed at the magnificent job she did as convener of the 1971 and 1972 Street Stalls which she organised and conducted so successfully and profitably.

Mrs. B. Butters has had a year's experience as Hon. Asst. Secretary and we are sure that all will enjoy her cheerful disposition and quiet efficiency as she now takes over as Hon. Secretary for 1973.

Since the formation of our Society we have been very happy to have had Mrs. Briancourt keep our accounts and we are glad that she is willing to again be our Hon. Treasurer. We know the great help she has had from Mr. Briancourt, so we officially made him Hon. Asst. Treasurer.

At the conclusion of our meeting those who were able to stay saw the half-hour colour film "The Cattle Carters". Each year thousands of cattle are moved by road-train from large properties in north-west Australia to the railhead for shipment to southern markets. This was the story of one of these 800 mile trips.

OUR SOCIAL SECRETARY SAYS -- "WANTED - 25 ladies to join me for Morning Tea in the Jasper Room at Roselands at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday 2nd May". This will be a pleasant morning's relaxation with an interesting talk on hair care and the chance to win \$10.00 of Wella Hair Care. Each lady will receive a small gift. Donation is 30c. Please let me have your names at the Meeting on April 12th or phone me on 587-6986.

Sylvia Kelly.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE REPORT

The last month has been one of activity at the Museum. The simulated kitchen that we are setting up in the entrance room is just having the finishing touches added. The fireplace, which was modernised in recent years, has been returned to its original state; and the old dresser which we acquired has had many hours spent on it removing layers of paint. Our aim in setting up the display is to present a picture of how a kitchen would have looked in the era of the cottage.

Mr. J.A. Lean, a member of the Museum Committee, as well as being interested in history is a keen philatelist and holds the position of President of the St. George Philatelic Society. Mr. Lean has arranged for a philatelic display with an historical theme, to be set up at the Museum. The Philatelic Society is very enthusiastic about the display which they hope to set up shortly. We feel sure this exhibit will create a great deal of interest and draw many visitors to the Museum.

To assist in the cataloguing of articles a form has been devised by the Museum Committee for people to fill in when they lend or donate items. With such a form we will be able to build an accurate picture of the history of each article. The forms will be available at the meeting, the Museum or from any office bearer.

Donation: Mrs. C. Mitchell has donated to the Society the wedding dress worn by her mother when she was married at Bombala in 1893. The gown is of cream satin and is trimmed with brocade lace. The cream kid shoes worn on the occasion have also been donated.

<u>Museum Roster:</u>	15th April	- Mrs. N. Taylor and Mrs. G. Johns
	21st "	- Mr. & Mrs. V. Smith (Easter Saturday)
	22nd "	- Mrs. A. Davis and Mrs. Woodward.
	23rd "	- Mr. & Mrs. J. S. Howard (Easter Monday)
	25th "	- Mr. & Mrs. E. Gaskin (Anzac Day)
	29th "	- Mrs. M. Grant and Mrs. B. Butters
	6th May	- Mr. & Mrs. J. Lean
	13th "	- Miss A. Coxhead
	20th "	- Mrs. S. McOnie and Miss M. Foley
	27th "	- Dr. & Mrs. D. Hatton

Colleen McEwan
(Museum Convenor)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

Our Annual Meeting has come and gone. You will notice from the report in this Newsletter that a slightly different format now exists for the committees. I feel that the effectiveness of each has been improved by the changes, and I look forward to a year of achievement in all our activities.

We have been fortunate in obtaining the services of well-qualified consultants. These gentlemen, and the research officers who have been appointed, as mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter, will make the task of historical research a lot easier and ensure that any material we may from time to time prepare, will be as historically accurate as possible.

You may have read in the local press, the announcement of an Art Competition in conjunction with the opening of the new Civic Centre. A number of prizes were mentioned, and among these, the Kogarah Historical Society Prize. It was felt by the Management Committee that a prize such as this, would be an incentive to local artists and would stimulate an interest in historical sites and subjects in the locality.

The prize offered is \$50.00 for a painting in any medium, of a subject or site of historical interest within the Kogarah Municipality.

It is hoped that a display of entries in the competition will be arranged at the Museum after the judging and completion of the display at the Civic Centre.

If you're looking for a pleasant place to take your visitors or yourself on a Sunday afternoon, the Museum is the perfect place. There's quite a lot more to see and there are some new old things being added all the time.

J. Veness.

Members will be pleased to know that as a result of the investigations being conducted by Mrs. D. A. & Dr. Joan Hatton on the English family, the Society has been given a painting by the eminent Artist Elioth Gruner. This will be displayed in conjunction with the English family exhibit as soon as restoration is complete.

O'Brien's VILLA MARIA ESTATE Hurstville.

(Please see sketch-map at end of article)

Mr. N. C. Arrowsmith, of 71 Scarborough Street, Kogarah, a son of the late Alderman E. T. Arrowsmith, who served Kogarah Council as a Middle Ward Alderman from 1922 to 1936 (being Mayor 1926-1928) here recalls his boyhood memories of this Estate. Alderman Arrowsmith died on 27th June 1951)

For about 50 years, up to the time of the subdivision of the property in 1923, Mr. John O'Brien lived in his home, "Villa Maria", which was built in a commanding position at about the centre of the Estate, with extensive views of the surrounding countryside.

In my boyhood days, the land to the south-east of the estate comprised Minnette's Nursery and on warm sunny days the air would be heavy with the perfume of roses. But we young boys regarded flowers as being sissy and my recollection is much more vivid concerning a flat grassy area at the rear of the O'Brien home. This area was ideal for use as a cricket ground and conveniently adjoined a beautiful orchard - for cricket and fruit in season made a delightful combination for we 10-year-olds. And sometimes when the trees were laden with ripe peaches, that combination was about 10% cricket and 90% peaches.

The old homestead and orchard were surrounded by a high wire-netting fence which, while being effective to keep out the horse, was not boy-proof. The one-storied home, with shady verandahs about 8 feet wide on three sides, was surrounded by shrubs. Its cement-rendered exterior was painted green and the many tall chimneys indicated that most rooms contained a fireplace.

At the north-eastern corner of the estate, adjoining the railway, there was a large unlocked gate which gave access from Woniara Road to a private road which led to the homestead and then to Belmore Road near the railway bridge. I can well-remember an old couple, Mr. & Mrs. Faulston, who lived at the corner of Belmore Road and Bridge Street, often passed along this road in their sulky to and from Hurstville. Their old home still stands, but now boasts a brick veneer.

Another portion of the property was of great interest to we young boys for it was there, just before he ran, that my mate distinctly saw in the gloom either a tiger or a large dog. And another boy definitely heard a sound resembling the roar of a lion - although it could have been a motor horn. This was clearly not a place where one would care to go alone. It was an area densely covered by closely spaced trees, resembling a rain-forest, which almost entirely blocked out the daylight. Through these trees bubbled a clear creek whose mossy banks were lined with maiden-hair and other ferns. Hanging from the trees were masses of tangled vines and with the aid of these we would swing across the creek like monkeys - especially when we thought we heard the sound of approaching indians.

In March 1923 the Kogarah Council approved of a plan of subdivision submitted by the family. The plan provided for a street at the north adjoining the railway line, and this was named Jammeroo Crescent. It was later converted into an extension of Woniara Road. Two internal streets were called Neirbo Avenue which, of course, is O'Brien spelled backwards, and Meakem Street, a name composed of the initial letters of the Christian names of Mr. O'Brien's daughters.

The subdivision provided for the old home to be sited (facing sideways towards the old road and railway) on Lot 59, containing 2 roods 18 perches, on the northern side of Neirbo Avenue. The house stood for several years until it was eventually demolished, the land subdivided, and new homes erected thereon. Before the sale of the land, a further application was made to re-subdivide Lots 29 to 33 to enable Neirbo Avenue to be extended through the new Rosebank Estate, then being subdivided, to join up with O'Brien's Road.

The Villa Maria Estate was auctioned on 24th March 1924 jointly by Moss & Diment and W. Robjohn Ltd. The sale was well advertised in the Hurstville "Propeller" and other papers, which referred to "about 70 choice residential Lots, all of which are conveniently situated in close proximity to the railway station and township".

But no advertising could hide the fact that the land facing Belmore Road (now King George's Road) through which ran a valley containing the bubbly creek, was low-lying and most unsuitable for building blocks. Despite the fact that the sale was well-attended, these Lots remained unsold.

Six months after the auction sale Alderman Arrowsmith moved in Council that Lots 3 to 18 be purchased and this was approved. Later Lots 19 and 20 were also acquired. It will be seen from the Sketch-map that these are the Lots which now comprise the Park.

Soon, many new homes were erected on the Estate and one new resident, Mr. E. Willison, in May 1925, convened a meeting in the residence of Mr. Braid to which about 35 people attended and another 25 wrote and promised their support. Amidst great enthusiasm "The Villa Maria Improvement League" was formed and Mr. Willison, who lived at the corner of Neirbo Avenue and Meakem Street, and was in the Jewellery trade in Sydney, was elected President. It is pleasing to recall that the League's representations to the Council concerning improvements to the area received such a sympathetic hearing that in October 1926 the League invited The Mayor (Alderman P.A. Tanner) the Ward Aldermen (E. Arrowsmith, T. Higginson and J. Reed), the Town Clerk (G. Leighton) and Engineer (D. Ingram) to a Dinner and Smoko. After a musical programme contributed by members, the then President, Mr. Bert Davies, presented the Mayor with a gold fountain pen and pencil and the opportunity was taken to give the founder of the League, Mr. Ted Willison, a pair of pipes.

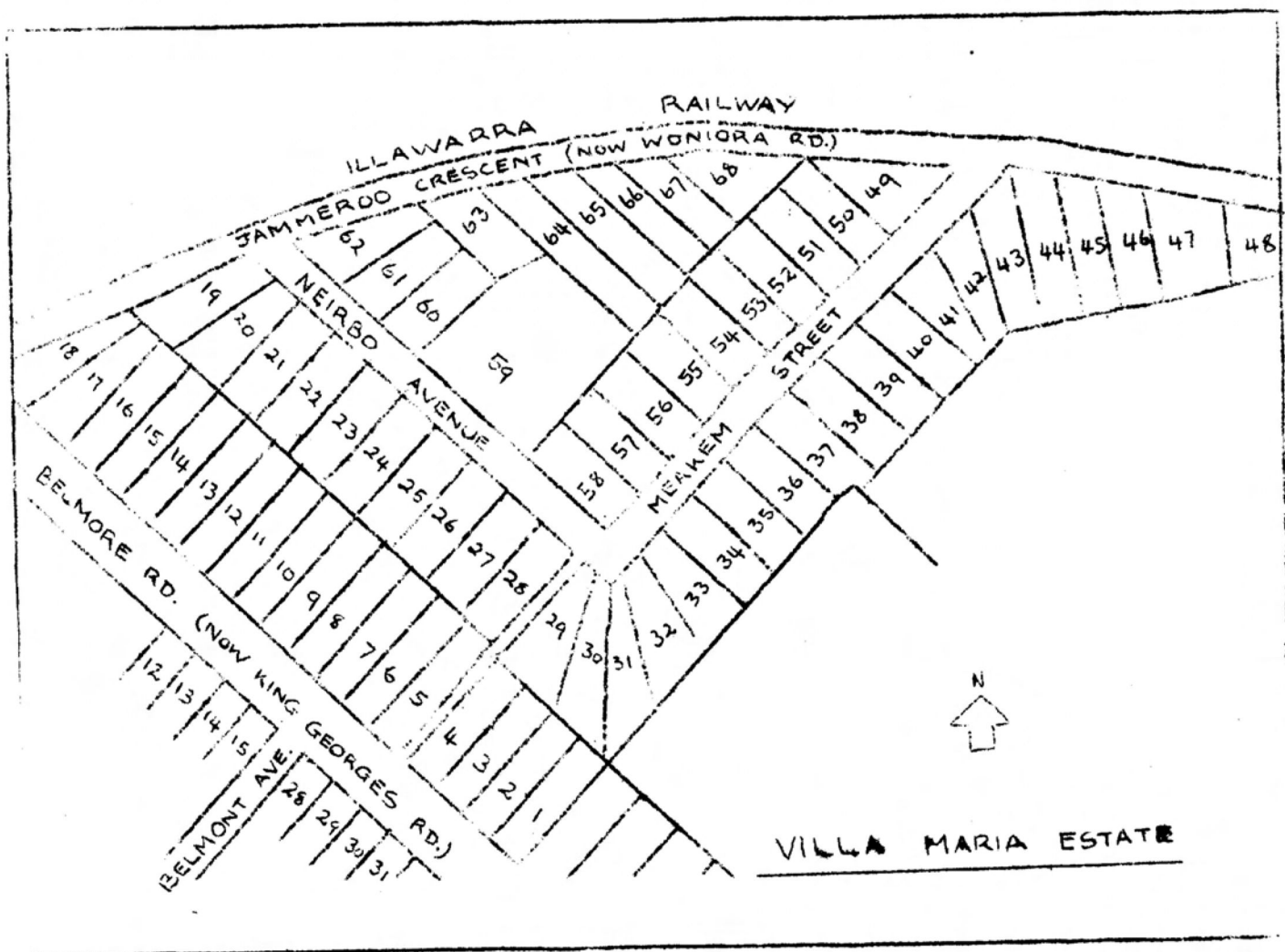
In February 1927, the League wrote to the Council and suggested that the park facing King George's Road, still un-named, be officially called "Arrowsmith Park", in honour of Alderman Arrowsmith, and to this the Council willingly agreed. Later, the Council piped the watercourse and raised the level of the area by spreading garbage, to a depth of fifteen feet, over the lowest parts.

In the Council's Jubilee Booklet, issued in 1936, it is recorded that "Arrowsmith Park was named after Alderman E. T. Arrowsmith, a member of Council since 1922 and Mayor 1926 to 1928. The area is part of Villa Maria Estate and improvements carried out go to show what can be accomplished by adequate drainage and filling. It was formerly a swampy depression covered by blackberry vines and wild scrub almost impenetrable but today, with undulating formations, trees and flower-beds is a decided acquisition to the district". The article conveniently omits to mention that the Council had previously approved of the sale of this "swampy depression" for building blocks!

It is of interest to note that the Villa Maria Estate comprises a small part of the 1950 acres granted to John Townson on 11th April 1810.

.... V. S. Smith.

(sketch-map next page)



Arrowsmith Park now comprises the land
included in Lots 1 to 20.

JEWELLERY AND SLIDE NIGHT.

Our Jewellery and Slide night held at the Sea Scouts' Guardship on March 29th was most successful.

It was nice to see so many members present and I am sure all those who attended enjoyed the evening. The slides were of a high standard and Mr. Buhn was a most entertaining Speaker.

The sale of Jewellery was good as it was both attractive and unusual. Mr. Jeff Veness, on behalf of all present, thanked Mr. Buhn and the evening ended with a very nice supper supplied by the ladies.

S.K