



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST

1974

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THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council)

President:
Mr. J. E. Veness,
6 Lance Avenue,
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'Phone: 546 3932.

Hon. Treasurer
Mrs. K. Johns,
38 Princes Hghwy,
KOGARAH, 2217

'Phone: 587 4848

Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. E. 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.

Subscriptions - Ordinary Members: \$1.50 per annum.
Pensioners: \$1.00 " "
Students: \$1.00 " "

MEETINGS: Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 8 p.m., in the Exhibition Lounge, at the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah. (Take lift to second floor and turn to the right).

PARKING: Cars may be parked in the ground floor parking area, the entrance to which is in Wick's Lane, at the rear of the Civic Centre. Post Office Lane alongside the Civic Centre has one-way traffic and it is necessary to enter at Montgomery Street end. From that Lane you turn left into Wick's Lane and use the first entrance into the parking area. An alternative way is to enter Wick's Lane from Kensington Street. In such case, use the second entrance into parking area.

CARSS PARK 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:

Mrs. J. A. Lean,
24 Victoria Ave.,
PENSHURST, 2222

'Phone 57 5940.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEWSLETTER: Contributions of articles and information of local interest for publication in this Newsletter will be welcomed if forwarded to the Publications Officer:

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

'Phone 587 2938.

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AUGUST MEETING Our next Meeting will be held on the Second Floor of the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 8th August. Our fluent and interesting Speaker on this occasion is MR. DON. SINCLAIR and his Talk is entitled "The Incident at Clontarf".

Those Members who heard Mr. Sinclair's talks about Broken Hill and Gilbert and Sullivan won't want to miss this one!

Four Items of Good News from our Social Secretary.

- 1 - - - Thanks to the Members who so generously stocked our Street Stall, and the ladies who so kindly attended and served (with beaming smiles) all those satisfied customers, we made ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY DOLLARS! We express our sincere appreciation to all who helped.

- 2 - - - Our President's Night

BEEF & BURGUNDY

COCKTAILS AT 6.30

It's on WEDNESDAY, 28th AUGUST. Tickets, \$2.00

MR. & MRS. PHILIP GEEVES have agreed to be present, and Mr. Geeves will speak on home-made wines and provide us with samples.

This Night represents our THIRD ANNIVERSARY of our Museum Celebrate with us! It will assist with the catering arrangements if you book at August meeting.

- 3 - - - On Saturday 31st August

come and see

BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

At the Illawarra Guild Hall, next door to the Rockdale School of Arts. Those who have attended the Pocket Playhouse will be among the first on our list, for this is just as good but it's not so far to travel.

Tickets are \$1.50 and we have only twenty!
Book not later than August meeting, please.

- 4 - - - A Special All-Day Coach Tour

BOWRAL AND ITS TULIPS

THEN TO

KANGAROO VALLEY

Exactly the right time for seeing the Tulips
SUNDAY, 29th SEPTEMBER SEATS \$3.50

We have only one comfortable coach, so please book early
Mrs. S. Kelly, 587 6986 (night). Mrs. V. Burghart, 546 4385.

Sylvia Kelly

Social Secretary.

MUSEUM REPORT.

The number and variety of articles received for inclusion in the Museum's collection, seems to increase each month, and is much appreciated.

Members of the Museum Committee are kept busy adding new items to existing displays, grouping material for further projects and keeping an up-to-date record of all acquisitions.

In relation to work on the Library, etc., Miss Colleen McEwen is providing a separate report this month.

The additional space gained by the installation of our large wall cabinet is of great assistance in the re-organising of our photographic collection, reference material and documents.

Kogarah Council has given to the Society a bookcase for the Museum and this is being used to display some interesting old books.

Mr. Philip Geeves has donated a leather cover for an Australian Military Pocketbook - World War 1. This one belonged to Light Horseman George Shannon and was carried by him throughout the Palestine Campaign including the historic attack on the Turks at Beersheba.

Mr. Upton, of Padstow, has given a hand plough and metal fireguard, and from the Railways Department (N.S.W.) we have received as a gift, the large clock which for many years has told the time of day (and night) on Kogarah Railway Station. Mrs. Presland, of Bexley has donated a sampler worked in 1865 by her grandmother, Elizabeth Young.

Many interesting items have been given by Mrs. E. Lowe of Bexley. These are, two fine white huckaback towels, a silver-backed mail buffer, an enamelled dress buckle, a lace collar, a glass and metal container for pins, a small dish (oval with floral design) and inkwell and pen-nibs. A booklet of monograms, crests and scrolls, samples of designs for ornamentation of coaches etc., presented by Conrad William Schmidt, of London. A booklet of superfine coach and automobile colour samples by John W. Manery & Son (c.1895). A leather covered note book, and six photographs of Peet family, (relatives of donor).

Mrs. Lowe also brought along three gifts on behalf of Mrs. E. Stelzer of Croydon, formerly of Bexley:-

- A satin Souvenir Programme of a Demonstration of Welcome, to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, on the occasion of his visit to Sydney in 1920;
- A letter to Inspector Evans to whom the programme was sent, and also his silver match case, engraved, G.M.E. - December 1921 - and containing wax matches.

Inspector Evans lived at Bexley after his retirement and Mrs. Stelzer is his daughter.

The most recent addition to our collection is a grindstone on a stand, which has been donated by Miss V.I. Geeves of Bexley. Miss V.I. Geeves is the eldest daughter of the late Frederick Geeves, who was the eldest son of Yeoman Geeves a pioneer of Frog Hollow, which Yeoman's wife later renamed Rockdale -- and across whose back paddock Rockdale Railway Station was later to be constructed. Mrs. Yeoman Geeves became the Toll-mistress of the Tollhouse on Rocky Point Road just to the south of Cooks River and it was therein that Frederick was born. (These facts are extracted from "Rockdale - Its Beginning and Development" by Philip Geeves. There is a copy in Kogarah Municipal Library but it can be purchased from the Rockdale Council and many members will feel that they would like to have a copy themselves.

We gratefully acknowledge all these gifts to the Society, with many thanks to the people mentioned. Their generosity assists the development of the Museum and gives pleasure to all concerned.

Requests for group inspections of Carss' Cottage continue to come in, and we anticipate a visit by members of the Junior Group of the National Trust, in September, as part of their tour of the St. George District.

A number of improvements are planned for the Art Centre, and we are happy to have a new supply of Mrs. Dorothy Self's vases, bowls and lidded pots, for sale.

A word of appreciation to Mr. V. Smith for his work in producing the leaflets which are handed to visitors at the Museum, and to Mrs. K. Slater who recently gave him a helping hand, by providing an extra 100.

Any members wishing to help the Museum Committee in some way, may 'phone me. Yours may be just the talent we need!

<u>Museum Roster.</u>	August	4th	-----	Mr. & Mrs. J. Lean
	"	11th	-----	Mr. & Mrs. J. Howard
	"	18th	-----	Mrs. S. Kelly & Mrs. N. Kelly
	"	25th	-----	Mrs. D. Hatton - Mrs. M. Grieve
	September	1st	-----	Mr. & Mrs. J. Lean
	"	8th	-----	Mrs. R. Diment and Mr. P. Diment
	"	15th	-----	Mrs. B. Butters & Mrs. D. Drake
	"	22nd	-----	Mrs. K. Calter & Mr. K. Grieve
	"	29th	-----	Mrs. S. McOnie & Miss M. Foley

If date on roster is inconvenient, please phone 57-5940.
The Museum Entrance fees for July amounted to \$41.95 and sales were \$22.35.
Pottery Sales were \$8.50 and an amount of \$11.34 was paid to the St. George Potters Group for June sales (less commission).
Gwen Lean.

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NATIONAL TRUST - AFTERNOON DRIVE AND WALK THROUGH "DRAGON COUNTRY".

The Junior Group of the National Trust is arranging an afternoon tour through the St. George district. The outing will include an inspection of approximately four homes in the area, and will end with a wine party.

The Trust has extended an invitation to any of our members who would care to join the tour. This is indeed a unique opportunity for the Society to inspect the inside of houses which we have previously admired only from the outside.

It will be necessary for members to provide their own transport, but if this requirement proves difficult, please advise and we will endeavour to make suitable arrangements.

Date: Sunday, 1st September.
Cost: \$3.00 (if you are a member of the National Trust \$2.50).

(Information on the time and meeting place will be supplied at the next meeting.)
Please advise our Hon. Secretary of your intention to attend by
23rd August.
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LIBRARY REPORT.

Over the last month the efforts of the Museum Committee have been primarily directed to cataloging and arranging books, documents, photographs and booklets acquired by the society since its inception. Thus the Society now has a collecting and distributing point for the many publications that have been received through donations and by purchasing.

We hope that many members will use the Library as a tool for research as we have now in our possession quite a number of photographs and books which are relevant to the history of our district, and these have been indexed for easy access and reference.

The custodians of the Library, Jack Lean (57-5940) and Colleen McEwen (587-2090) should be contacted when members wish to borrow, or want assistance in looking for particular materials.

Publications or photographs that members would like to donate would be gratefully accepted. Photographs of local families, homes, public institutions etc., would be appreciated for our photographic collection. We realize that such prints sometimes hold sentimental value, thus the Society would be pleased to copy the photos and return the originals. In particular, we would like to receive any local histories that members may have acquired and no longer want. Such publications provide us with a picture of what other societies are doing, how others record the history of their districts, and go to make a more complete record of the history of Australia in our Library.

To acquaint members with the publications in the Library we will endeavour to present a regular review of material received. Publications received during June and July:-

* July, 1974 issue of the National Trust Bulletin (The society is a member of the Trust and receives the Bulletin four times each year). In this issue the leading article is a report on Fort Street Girls' High School which the N.S.W. State Government has transferred to the Trust to use as its Headquarters. In the article Mr. V.M. Parkinson outlined the Trust scheme for the building - it will include a public museum, an art gallery, facilities for Trust exhibitions and Public Lectures, a members' reading room, meeting rooms and a landscaped public park surrounding the building.

* June issue of the St. George Historical Society Bulletin (our society exchanges montly publications with the St. George Historical Society). The historical article in this issue is entitled "The Hamlet known as 'The Glen' West Arncliffe" by Gifford and Eileen Eardley.

* July issue of the Hurstville Historical Society Newsletter (our society also exchanges monthly publications with the Hurstville Historical Society). An article on the Hurstville Public School is included in the Newsletter from information supplied by the Dept. of Education.

* "Coins" by John Porteous (published by Octopus Books Ltd. London, 1964). This richly illustrated book surveys the history of coinage in the western world from its emergence in Greece in the 7th Century B.C., to the present day. The publication has been kindly donated by Miss A.J. Coxhead.

Colleen McEwen.

REMINISCENCES OF POSSUM WARD.

By Elaine Howard.

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Mr. Guy Edwin Moore has been a resident of the Mortdale-Oatley district for many years. From early boyhood he lived on a farm in Boundary Road, "near the creek" and the dairy, where the Mortdale Memorial Gardens are today. His late wife, also grew up on a farm near Forest Road, Penshurst. When asked to reminisce about his early life Mr. Moore, perhaps naturally enough, began by talking about his school.

The school, a small wooden building in Coleborne Avenue, stood next to the two-storied Judd residence and then, next to the railway line, was the Station Master's cottage. Across Coleborne Avenue, on the corner of Princes Street, was the Post Office. This old building still stands although the Post Office has been moved several times. Mortdale station was constructed of old sleepers and trains were stopped by lantern at night or flag during the day. Across the track from the school was Mrs. Murphy's solitary shop in George Street. From Victoria Street the orange-orchards extended to Forest Road, and the paddocks were marked by breakwinds of English hawthorn - Mr. Moore had a seedling growing in his own garden for many years.

Andrew Sidney Gardiner Garden, founder of the Amateur Athletics Association, was headmaster when Mr. Moore went there at the age of 10. Mr. Garden and Miss Frize taught the children from primary to secondary level, and Mr. Moore has rueful memories of the headmaster's prowess with the cane! Many of the forty pupils walked long distances over the lovely land to get to school. The Fletcher and Coleborne children came from Oatley and the Walkers from Woronora Parade. The Derwents and Thompsons walked from Neverfail Bay on the Georges River near Como Bridge. Mr. Moore thinks the Derwent family could be called the Fathers of the present massive rock oyster industry in Georges River and Botany Bay as they were the first to use the "tray method" of production, now in universal use.

In 1901 Mr. Moore had his 13th birthday, and soon after took his first job at Taylor's, the grocer shop in the Hurstville shopping centre of that time. But the book trade was to be his life for seventy years and early in 1907 he went to Angus and Robertson's where he worked, for 6/- a week, an "apprenticeship" with the brusque businessman, George Robertson. His memories of those days are coloured by his association with literary people, particularly Henry Lawson, who was almost a daily visitor to the publisher. Mr. Moore always valued Lawson's short stories higher than his poetry. When he died Lawson was given a state funeral from St. Andrew's Cathedral to Waverley Cemetery, and Mr. Moore remembers that day vividly although this occurred some years after he had left Angus and Robertson's to become in time the manager of Coles Book Arcade.

At the week-ends he visited his friends, the Walkers, who had been urging him to invest in local land which was 18 pence a foot when he left school. A favourite haunt of the friends was Jewfish Point where a sugar bag og 1-lb or better "darkies" could be had in an hour - no modern rods, just a bamboo pole, cord line, pickle bottle and cork with cedar stem for float for landing beautiful fish in the days when the river was truly a haven for fishermen.

Social functions were centred at the church - St. Peter's, Mortdale, and he remembers pushing a cart to collect for the church, cakes from Mrs. Saunders' place in Woronora Parade, and then across to Mrs. Riley at the dairy in Oatley, on the corner of Letitia and Frederick Streets. Mr. and Mrs. Moore (nee Corbett) met at their church, and when they were first married they lived in Scott Street, Peakhurst, but later moved to a new villa in George Street, Penshurst. Many times the young Moores had walked through the bush in Oatley, and over to the Pleasure Grounds in Annette Street, so they decided to find a house in this area, which

they did, on the corner of Ada and Neville Streets, in an area of unspoilt and mostly virgin native coastal bushland. The surrounding land fell in steep cliffs and gullies towards Georges River. The only paved street in Oatley was Frederick Street, from the station to Rosa Street, past the shopping centre which had moved from the area to the west of the station where the shops had been in Mr. Moore's boyhood days. The train track had been moved in 1905 because of the steep grade from Mortdale to the river.

Soon after he came to Oatley, dissatisfaction was being felt with national politics. In 1923 William Hughes was replaced as Prime Minister by G.M. Bruce. The first branch of the All for Australia Party was formed in St. George. Membership was 1/- a year, and the group met in the city with people such as Sidney Snow, the directors of Gibson Battle, and Thatcher and Oberg and others. Meetings were held in Market Street, and Mr. Moore was a spokesman for St. George. However, the financial drain on the originators could not be met on a fee of 1/- a year as activities developed. Discussions with the Liberal Party took place, leading to the formation of the first branch of the United Australia Party being formed at Kogarah. In the next few years St. George returned a U.A.P. man to Canberra, and later four new U.A.P. men to the State parliament, which they held for the two succeeding elections.

In 1930 Local Government elections took place. Mr. Ferguson, the Alderman for the Oatley section of West Ward, did not seek re-election because of illness. With a number of citizens in his area he approached Mr. Moore to take his office and select two others to form a team to stand for West Ward. Due to pressure of work in his own business he refused several times until one day the same group, accompanied by a clever journalist from Oatley, arrived at his shop in King Street to see him on the matter once again. The journalist reminded Mr. Moore of one of the All for Australia meetings he held in the then Oatley School of Arts (now a branch of Kogarah Library) during which he had said it was the duty of all citizens to "Take their coats off" and work for what they wanted instead of complaining about neglect. He asked if Mr. Moore still meant what he said or was he the sort of chap who could not keep his word? The challenge was accepted (despite Mrs. Moore's tears), the application to stand for election was signed and work was begun by local committees in West Ward for the election in December 1930.

His policy was to consider all the facts of any issue and then to work for the best for their Ward, irrespective of any pressure group. The team was elected unopposed in that election and the next two. On their election, the West Ward team, also consisting of Mr. Trollope of Penshurst, a brilliant financial man, and Mr. H. Poulton covering the eastern end of the ward, took counsel with the Town Clerk, George Leighton, on the financial state of council and, in particular, West Ward, to be told that rates in the Ward were £46,000 in arrears, and many rate-payers were in the position of possibly losing their homes if arrears continued. A survey of the whole of the ward by the team and Engineer Harding over many weeks disclosed that the Oatley area was devoid of formed roads, foot-paths and gutters, except the small section in Frederick Street, and no finance was available for any work except garbage and night-soil services, and these contracts were to be renewed in January 1931.

The year 1931 saw a heavy increase of men out of work, particularly in West Ward. Kogarah Council discussed this problem at length as a result of which an unemployment scheme was devised to assist rate-payers. This, the first unemployment-relief scheme in the metropolitan area, was put to the Government which

agreed to back it. Too involved to give in detail, in essence it found work for all unemployed men in Kogarah, particularly in West Ward. To these men goes the credit for most of the roads and gutters in the ward, made by pick and shovel in the next four to five years.

The financial issue in West Ward of rates arrears was overcome by council's acceptance of the repayment of 1/- a week towards their debts. This had to be fought for in council, which caused the West Ward team to be called "The Bob a Weekers of Possum Ward". However, at the next Local Government election people by the hundreds backed and returned the team. A group of helpers collected boots and clothing for the men and their families, and when one man's wife died, the clothing group fitted him out to go to her funeral like a gentleman. After cleaning up gullies in Letitia Street, Ada Street and Russell Street one group of pick and shovel men nearly called a strike when told their next job was to dig out paspalum in Rosa Street. A deputation called on Mr. Moore, trouble was averted and acceptable pick and shovel work was found for them.

In that period Oatley, from Frederick Street to the waterside, was a small tree-clothed beautiful area, and the West Ward men agreed to keep it so - a difficult job in the latter part of their office to 1942, as all those who wished to build in this area were asked to retain some trees on their properties. To their agreement goes the credit that Oatley is still a suburb known for trees.

During his first survey of West Ward, Mr. Moore was particularly interested in the waterfront of the ward. First he became aware that the headland at Oatley point was an area resumed for military use (as was Baldface) during the Russo-Japanese War, when it was feared that the Russians were going to invade. Through the interest of the Town Clerk, this was made a public reserve to which an area at the end of Herbert Street was added. This area had been an aboriginal midden which Mr. Moore discovered for himself when he first came to Oatley. He would go to the point to do some fishing and would invariably spend time sifting through the remains of shell-fish consumed there long ago -- shell-fish no longer found in Georges River. The midden is protected in the Reserve and is known to the Australian Museum. In Annette Street, Oatley Bay there was a privately owned area with boatshed, kiosks and a wine bar. In time, the local people objected to the reputation the area was getting due to behaviour and noise, so the ward aldermen pressed for its purchase, against much opposition from other wards. This area was eventually purchased and called Oatley Bay Reserve. Later a further area was bequeathed by Mr. Williams, enlarging the reserve to Russell Street. Mr. Moore achieved several other reserves, and hoped the beauties of the N.E. and N.W. arms of Oatley Bay would be conserved, so you can understand his feelings about their development today. The Reserves last mentioned bear the names of the two Aldermen, Poulton and Moore.

During his term of office the pipe line was brought from Como across the Georges River to Oatley. (In the 1870's Thomas Holt had advocated the building of a dam at Tom Ugly's Point on the Georges River). The area from the waterside to Morildale train sheds was an unsightly mass of rubble for the length of the old railway embankment. Mr. Moore sought the help of the Mayor of the day, Mr. Sid Bell of Davis Corner, the Minister for Railways, Mr. Hartigan (a personal friend) and the president of the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board. He asked them to attend a conference of the three organizations with the object of Kogarah Council making a park. He suggested that the pipe line could be put underground which delighted the M.W.S.D.B. officials, but the Railway estate man pointed out the difficulties of acquiring some blocks of land which had already been sold, and settling the price to be paid. Toothe had bought two blocks between the hotel and the station and eventually, when Council had acquired all the area necessary, they

had paid £20000 plus £200 to Tooth and Company with the agreement that a path would be constructed across the park, from the station, for hotel customers. Council's Engineer, Mr. Brewer was delighted at the purchase and drew up plans for the park. The plans were on display in Oatley Post Office in 1941 prior to the election in December, and although Mr. Moore and his team were defeated, the plans for the park were brought to fruition.

For three years Mr. Moore was Chairman of St. George County Council and he is proud of a citation he has received from the County Council. During his term of office Electricity House, Hurstville was built, and the first electrical cooking demonstration was given in the Binder auditorium. Mrs. Moore had an early model electric stove which she put to good use for the family as well as for church, school and C.W.A. Activities. While reminiscing about other wards in Kogarah, Mr. Moore remembered the dispute at St. George Girls' High School when Mr. Clive Evatt suggested it should be made co-ed. Mrs. Moore was president of the Ladies' Auxiliary at the time and this was a real crisis.

During his eleven years in Council, Mr. Moore endeavoured to interest Aldermen in the Free Library Movement and the establishment of a Municipal Library. He was grieved that Kogarah was among the last Municipalities to do this. Mr. Moore remembers that Council had plans for a Library and Arts and Recreation Centre at Beverley Park which had been suggested by Mary Rivett, but other Aldermen held out for the Golf Course. The late Miss Rivett was a remarkable woman who established a children's library and arts and crafts centre in Cross Street, Hurstville during the 1920's. Her centre flourished there with some financial aid from Hurstville Council until the Municipal Library was opened. Mr. Moore was Patron of the Centre and was very enthusiastic about Miss Rivett's plans for a similar centre for youth at Beverley Park.

Mr. Moore retired from his book shop in 1972. He has seen many changes in Oatley, but he is still keenly concerned about conservation of natural bushland. He is the oldest foundation member of the National Trust and is an honoured life member. The Trust was an idea developed from a wartime Forestry Advisory Council, and was established in 1945. Mr. Moore is Patron of the Coolong Committee and is actively concerned with the National Trust's responsibilities in the Myall Lakes area. He will always "take his coat off" to work for the preservation of our pleasant environment and conservation of the best for all the people.

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