



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

A P R I L

1 9 7 5

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Our next meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 10th April on the Second Floor of the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah.

Mr. A. Walsh will be our Guest Speaker and his subject will be "Edison Gramophones, Music Boxes and Antique Clocks". In addition to his talk, he will provide an opportunity for all to ask questions if further information is required about the subjects - and as he specializes in the repair and restoration of similar articles at his Antique Clock Repair Company at 22 Frederick Street, Rockdale, who is better equipped than he to give us advice.

Mr. Walsh deals in Antique Clocks, Edison Gramophones, Music Boxes and rare automata and will bring some examples. If YOU have anything you would care to show us - or about which you would like advice, - you are invited to bring it.

OPEN WEEK AT CARSS' COTTAGE

MONDAY, 28TH APRIL TO SATURDAY, 3RD MAY

An Open Week has been arranged at the Museum to enable the Public to take advantage of extended viewing times to see the Cottage and the story it tells of the past.

The programme for the week is as follows:-

- * Monday 28th April to Friday 2nd May,
Open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and
6.30 to 9 p.m.
- * Saturday, 3rd May. SPECIAL DAY FOR MEMBERS
Open from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. with Afternoon
Tea being served from 2.30 to 3.30 p.m.

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A number of members have already volunteered to go on duty, BUT WE NEED MORE. If YOU could spare a few hours for one or more morning, afternoon or evening sessions, this would be appreciated.

Please contact

Colleen McEwen

587 2090

not later than

14th April

PRESIDENT'S REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Our Annual General Meeting, held on 13th March, was well-attended and proved to be a most enjoyable evening.

Mrs. K. Johns, our Hon. Treasurer, completed her first year of office efficiently and happily and her financial statement (which appears in this Newsletter), clearly indicates a satisfactory result. Notice, for example, that income over expenditure for the period of 13 months was \$646 compared with \$354 for the previous 12 months. The accounts have been audited by Mr. Don. Sinclair, to whom our thanks are extended.

The thanks which I conveyed to members of Committees were echoed by all members when they unanimously re-elected to office all those whose efforts have undoubtedly led to our Society having had such a successful year.

The election of office bearers and committees was competently conducted by Mr. Philip Geeves in the gracious manner we have grown to expect from him. Mr. Geeves was co-opted at short notice and his services were appreciated.

The highlight of the evening was the conferring of life-membership of the Society on one of our most untiring members, Mr. Vince. Smith. Members unanimously agreed to the conferring of the honour as a token of their appreciation of the contributions he has made to the growth, effectiveness and enjoyment of the Society. The preparation of our Newsletter, articles and printing, the booking of Speakers for our meetings and the films which provide such enjoyment - all these are contributions which Vince Smith makes to the running of our Society.

I can think of no more deserving recipient for the life-membership than our Senior Vice-President, Mr. V. Smith.

The business section of the evening proceeded smoothly and at its conclusion we viewed two films and then partook of supper.

J. E. VENESS

President.

1975 Office Bearers and Committees.

President:	Mr. J. E. Veness
Vice-Presidents:	Mr. V. S. Smith & Mr. W. Wright.
Hon. Secretary:	Mrs. N. Butters.
Hon. Assist. Secretary:	Mrs. L. Gilmour.
Hon. Treasurer:	Mrs. K. Johns.
Convener, Museum Com:	Mrs. J. A. Lean.
Social Secretary:	Mrs. S. Kelly.
Publications Officer:	Mr. V. S. Smith.

Management Committee

Abovementioned Officers
Mr. & Mrs. D. Burghart.
Ald. & Mrs. K. Cavanough.
Mrs. D. A. Hatton.
Mr. J. A. Lean
Miss C. McEwen.
Mrs. M. Grieve
Mr. R. Mitchell

Museum Committee.

Miss C. McEwen.
Mr. & Mrs. J.A. Lean.
Mr. W. Wright.

Hon. Auditor:

Mr. Don. Sinclair.

Social Committee

Mrs. S. Kelly
Mrs. C. McEwen.
Mrs. D. Burghart.
Mrs. J. Lovatt
Mrs. E. Thompson.
Mrs. M. Fordham.
Mrs. R. Diment.

Financial Statement for period 1. 1. 74 to 31. 1. 75.

<u>Income.</u>		<u>Expenditure.</u>	
Members' Subs.	\$ 243.50	Stationery	\$ 295.31
Museum Admissions	682.25	Bulk Postage	95.76
Jam Sales	336.86	P.M.G. (Telephone)	68.02
Book Sales	63.15	St.Geo. County Council	29.56
Raffles	185.93	Maintenance Exes.	295.79
Tours	330.60	Museum Exhibits	325.26
Pottery Sales	242.50	Jams	270.71
Donations	17.70	Tours	271.00
Photos, Etchings, Cards.	29.90	Insurance	100.44
Paintings	83.10	Pottery. (Less Commission)	232.93
Street Stall	156.00	Social Activities	190.35
Grant	50.00	Bark Pictures	21.76
Barbecue	278.66	Sundries	90.91
Theatre Evenings	164.25	Projector Screen	37.46
President's Night	68.10	National Trust	6.30
Demonstration	130.00	Museum Assoc. of Aust.	15.00
Sundries	8.22	Royal Aust. Historical Soc.	25.00
Bank Interest	16.93	St.George Art Society	29.75
		Library	24.78
		Petty Cash	15.50
		Income over Expenditure	646.08
	<u>\$3,087.65</u>		<u>\$3,087.65</u>

Balance Sheet

<u>Liabilities</u>		<u>Assets</u>	
Balance as at 31. 12. 73	395.78	Bank - Comwlth Savings Bank, Sth. Hurstville	1,151.32
Income over Expenditure, 31. 1. 75	646.08	Cash in hand	80
			<u>1,152.12</u>
		Less Unpresented cheques, 453359,65,66,67,69,70.	110.26
	<u>\$1,041.86</u>		<u>\$1,041.86</u>

IN ADDITION:

Deposit with St.George Building Society	\$800.00
Accrued Interest	79.67
	<u>\$879.67</u>

Audited and found Correct.
D. H. Sinclair
Hon. Auditor.

G. Johns.
Hon. Treasurer.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE REPORT.

March has been a busy month, with the Annual General Meeting, elections and much work being done at Carss' Cottage.

The new exhibits are progressing well and attracting much attention. Time and effort have gone into the planning research and preparation of the "Postal Services" display which is now receiving the finishing touches, while work proceeds on "Transport" and the story of William Carss; his family and his estate.

The display of Stamps, arranged by the St. George Philatelic Society at the Museum has been changed, and we now have on loan, a selection of Australian Commemorative issues, depicting important historical events. Mr. J. Gifford of Kogarah has provided this exhibit.

We have received a number of articles, donated to the Museum collection recently. These are listed here, with our acknowledgement and thanks to all, for their interest and generosity.

Silk, embroidered bookmarks, samplers, a tin type photo, and a child's slate have been donated by Mr. and Mrs. V. Smith.

A ruby glass Christening Mug, engraved "W. Frost 1907" has been donated by Mrs. Aiken.

A hand-made Iron Ladle donated by Mr. Parker.

A lady's Black Silk Jacket donated by Mrs. K. Johns.

Photographs of a Bakery, Horses and Carts (on site of present Hurstville Bowling Club) an old Kogarah School photo also an early photo of Tempe-Newtown Soccer Club and a Child's Story Book were all received from Mr. Menday.

Mrs. A. Palmer gave a photo of Como Bridge while Mr. Stibbes loaned a number of photos of Early Oatley to the Society to be copied.

All the items mentioned are much appreciated.

The special opening of Carss' Cottage for one week commences on Monday 28th April and if you would like to assist for a few hours, please let us know soon as we still need more attendants. We hope to hear from you, so that a roster can be prepared, for mornings, afternoons and evenings, up to Friday 2nd May. I'm sure you will enjoy it. -- See special notice in this Newsletter. We sincerely hope you will come for Afternoon Tea on Saturday, 3rd May.

Gwen Lean.

Museum Roster.

Sunday	April	6th	- Mrs. S. Kelly and Mrs. E. McIlroy
"	"	13th	- Mr. and Mrs. E. Schweikert
"	"	20th	- Mr. and Mrs. R. Holmes
"	"	27th	- Mr. and Mrs. J. Lean
"	May	4th	- Mrs. A. McOnie and Miss M. Foley
"	"	11th	- Mrs. D. Hatton and Mrs. M. Grieve
"	"	18th	- Mrs. G. Johns and Mrs. G. Taylor
"	"	25th	- Mr. and Mrs. R. Diment.

(Please phone 57-5940 as soon as possible if date is inconvenient).

LIBRARY REPORT.

Holy Bible, printed by G. E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, Edinburgh, for the National Bible Society of Scotland, 1863. Donated by Mrs. H. King.

Johnson's English Dictionary, John Weston, London, 1839. This dictionary has been lent to the Society by Mrs. Blandy.

"Gems for Young Folks", McLoughlin Bros., New York, 1911. This book has been donated by Mrs. Munday.

"Harmony Simplified for Popular Use" by E. S. Patton, Novells, Ewer & Co., London, 1880. This book has been donated by Mrs. H. King.

"Paddy's Market" by Carol Henty, photographs by Tony Schmachling, Tempo Books, Sydney, 1973. This book traces the history of Paddy's Market from its beginnings as a collection of rough stalls on an acre of open space bounded by Campbell, Pitt, Hay and Castlereagh Streets, to 1973 before its prospective removal to Flemington. It has captured the magical atmosphere in a series of candid photographs, and by vivid descriptions of the colourful settlers, with their odd assortment of merchants, and the variety of eager buyers, which go to make Paddy's Market. Donated by Mrs. Beven.

March Newsletter of the Hurstville Historical Society. To commemorate International Women's Year the H.H.S. has chosen to present the history of two women, Alderman Mrs. Eva Franks B.E.M., and Mrs. Catherine Evans, who have played a part in the development of the district.

February Bulletin of the St. George Historical Society. The historical article is an illustrated account of "The Valley. A Hamlet of Old Time Tempe. N.S.W." and "The Homestead named "Avondale", West Botany' by Gifford and Eileen Eardley.

March issue of the Royal Australian Historical Society. In this issue there is an account of the opening of Old Sydney Town at Gosford; a review of Professor John Dunmore's 'French Explorers in the Pacific' (2 volumes, Oxford, 1965 and 1969); and an article by Roger Darvall on Andrew Douglas White.

The February Bulletin of the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.)

The National Trust has decided to extend its register to include parts of the physical environment other than historic buildings. The main purpose of the listings is to indicate that the areas possess special qualities which must be conserved. The Trust does not propose that conservation areas should remain unaltered but it is concerned that these areas should be controlled by relevant planning authorities to such an extent that any new development complements the areas special scenic, scientific and social characteristics. Areas classified so far include entrances to Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay, Broken Bay, Lord Howe Island, the Illawarra Escarpment and an area near Brooklyn.

The March issue of the Journal of The Royal Australian Historical Society. Articles in this issue are as follows:-

Socio-Medical Factors in the Evolution of the First Settlements at Sydney Cove 1788-1803 by B. Gandevia.

Some Social and Political Aspects of German Settlement in Australia to 1914 by R.B. Walker.

Mary McKillop and The Teaching Order of Saint Joseph by F. O'Grady.

The First American Consul to the Australian Colonies: Some unpublished letters of James Hartwell Williams by A. Daniel and A. Potts.

Colleen McEwen.

OLDEN DAYS AT OATLEY

Being early recollections of

Darcy William Fletcher

I was born at what was then known as Oatley's Platform on the 14th July 1889 and was one of a family of eight - five boys and three girls.

Our home was situated right at the level-crossing gates and opposite was the home of Mr. John Brown who was the first station-master at Oatley. The gates were looked after by this family until Mr. Brown died. They were then taken over by a railwayman's widow, Mrs. Mears, who, when she received her fortnightly pay, would take a trip to Sydney and leave me in charge of the gates. This meant that I had a day off school - and also received two shillings from Mrs. Mears.

Mr. Brown's cottage was later moved up to Rosa Street by Mr. Ben and Mr. Alf. Lean. The house was first cut into two sections. Then a hand-winch was bolted to the floor and a steel cable was run from the winch to a heavy bar driven into the ground about fifty yards ahead. The winch was then manned and one section at a time was drawn up to the bar, which was then taken further ahead. This went on until they reached the new site.

My father, Joseph Fletcher, who died in May, 1937, joined the railway service in 1880 and came to Oatley in 1886. In 1889, when work commenced on the duplication of the railway line to Waterfall, he was employed as flagman during the blasting operations in the cutting just south of Oatley. Later, during the deviation of the line from Mortdale to the bridge, he was one of a gang of fettlers under Mr. John Connolly who, not long afterwards, died and was succeeded by Mr. George Cootes. The other members of this gang were Mr. Ernest Savage and Mr. Tom Byron. They looked after what was known as "the length from Hurstville to Como Bridge".

The early settlers at Oatley, as I remember them, were Mr. Pearsall on the corner of Mulga Street and Oatley Parade, then next door was a cottage occupied by the two Miss Evans' - and next to them was Oatley's first shop occupied by Mr. Peter Groves and family. This was later taken over by Grannie Colbourne, as we locals knew her. This dear old lady was struck and killed by a train as she was crossing the line to collect the morning papers. The shop was then taken over by Mr. Arthur Phillips and his wife Gertrude, who was a daughter of Grannie Colbourne.

The next house was on the corner where the road branches off and runs under the subway and was occupied by Mr. Holloway. On the eastern side of the railway in Oatley Avenue was the home of Mr. Orange which was later taken over by Mr. Rowell and family. Next, in Letitia Street, were the homes of Mr. Michael O'Connor and family, Mr. Colbourne and family, and then a small place occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hawkins. Along to the south was the home of Mr. Towers and further south was another brick cottage. I do not remember the name of the first occupant, but Mr. Harold Judd later lived there. He, by the way, was an Australian Rep. Footballer and a very good Cricketer.

Three sisters, the Misses Smith, lived in the only house in Wonoona Parade. In Rosa Street was the home of Mr. Edgar Williams. Further south was another brick cottage occupied by Mr. George Howard and his wife, who passed away there. Further along, looking down on the Bay, was the home of Mr. Lombe and his family. Mr. Harry Linmark lived in and owned the boatshed at the Pleasure Ground. There was another house in Ada Street and this was owned by Mr. John Stibbs.

I first attended Sunday School at the home of Mrs. Saunders in Woronora Parade and this school was later moved to the little St. Peter's Church at Mortdale. Mrs. Saunders still remained the Superintendent. Church services were conducted by visiting clergymen, including the Rev. Mr. Dillon. Mr. Huntley was the curate. There were no other Churches in the district at that time.

What a beautiful place was the Pleasure Ground at the Bay, surrounded by big trees and scrub. It was reached by a path cut through the scrub, from station to the top of Rosa Street and thence by a winding path down to the water.

There was a small school situated in Mort's Road, Mortdale, in charge of Mr. Coleman. The Infants' Section, when I first attended, was in the care of Miss Frize who was a wonderful teacher of the young children. Of course, as the school grew, new teachers came and most of them I can remember by name. They were Miss Loftus, Miss Cornish, Miss Mitchell, Mr. George Hawke. I was taught under most of these through the different classes until I reached the top class under Mr. Joseph Coleman who was just about to retire.

Mr. Andrew Garden was the new headmaster, and he came from Berry. It was then that we saw a wonderful change come over the school. It was transformed from just a school into one we were all proud to belong to. A large square tank was installed and everyone was instructed that not one piece of paper was allowed to blow around the playground but all discarded lunch-wraps, etc. were to be collected and placed in this new incinerator and burnt. Then we bigger boys were set to work to make a garden between the school and his residence. Our next job was to dig holes and boys and girls - and teachers, too - were given the choice of trees to be planted.

But these were not the only improvements Mr. Garden made. He also improved the bearing and manners of the children and taught them the meaning of respect.

It was at about this time that organised sport was introduced into schools. Australian Rules football was commenced and a team was taught the rules by senior players. We eventually entered a team in a competition against other schools. I was appointed Captain and I am pleased to say that our team won. We were presented with a silver cup at a Concert held in Mr. Hales' Hall at Mortdale.

The school was right near the level-crossing near the old Mortdale Station, which was built with a wall of railway sleepers, behind which was earth filling topped with a surface of ashes. Next to the school on the other side was the school-master's residence. This was adjoined by the two-story home of the Kemp family, whose land extended to Hurstville Road and was known as Kemp's Paddock.

On the opposite side of the road, at the corner of Princes Street, stood a two-story building which was the first post-office. Not far from this was the home of Mr. Whyatt and family. Opposite the school were a couple of two-story houses, one of which was a shop. In the hollow behind these were several houses, mostly semi-detached, and one of these was occupied by Mr. Fred. Gorman, who set two sons, Fred. and Bill were employed at the brickworks. Another house, in Princes Street, was occupied by Mr. Webber, who was a clerk in the brickworks. Following Hurstville Road brings us back to Oatley.

All this district, from Hurstville to Oatley, was cared for by Dr. McLeod, whose surgery was in Hurstville. He was a Scotsman with a really clear Scotch complexion and was of a very neat appearance. He drove about in a beautiful horse-and-buggy turnout with a driver who was also neatly dressed in a sort of uniform. Whenever I saw them, the Doctor was driving and always wore gloves. He called several times at our home and I especially remember him as he put a couple of stitches in my nose. He also straightened my leg after I suffered a slight dislocation.

I have a faint recollection of the local midwife, Mrs. Kemp. and later Mrs. Guymer who attended my mother. I can remember much more clearly, my mother lining us up for our weekly tablespoon of sulphur and treacle and, in the event of stomach pains, a spoonful from the contents of the blue castor-oil bottle.

There was only one local industry, and that was Judd's Brickworks, managed by Mr. W. Judd. His two sons, Percy and Harold, were also connected with the Works. There was a railway-siding into the brick-yard where bricks were loaded into trucks for delivery to all parts of the Illawarra line. Closer deliveries were by horse-drawn drays. The horses were, at first, stabled in the brickyard paddock. Later, a new and larger stable was built at the rear of a new home, built by Mr. Percy Judd in Letitia Street. We Oatley boys often called at the brickyards on the way home from school and gave the drivers a hand to load their drays for the next day. Then we would ride the horses home to the stables.

At Never Fail Bay there were four houses and these were occupied by the Andrew Derwent, Thomas Tompson, Ward and McAllum families. The Derwents, father and two sons, were local net fishermen and also managed a big oyster-lease. Mr. Ward and Mr. McAllum were also in the fishing business.

On the river was the paddle-wheel steamer, the Telephone, which took picnic groups to Parksvale (the pleasure ground up near Bankstown) and also the ss Eclipse and the ss Erina which, at weekends and on holidays, sailed from Sans Souci and Brighton-le-Sands to Kurnell. A small punt crossed the river at Lugarno. This was operated by a man-powered winch. I remember crossing on this with my parents in our spring-cart.

All vehicles, in those days, were horse-drawn and among the carts which delivered goods to our house I can remember that of Fred. Mumford, the baker and Tom Hillard the butcher. Mr. Morgan, and later Mr. Farr, both delivered groceries and Ah See was the popular Chinese greengrocer. There were also the Buses - the largest one being named "Emulator" - and what was known as a Drag drawn by four horses. Parked in a clearing at Rosa Street, right above the Pleasure Ground, were usually buggies, sulkies and sociables.

We were never short of hawkers nor of men selling clothes-props (which we could select ourselves from the surrounding scrub) and rabbits, while the cry of "any old bottles" was loud and regular.

We had our share of swagmen, too, and I cannot remember my mother turning one away empty-handed. I remember one swaggie calling and Mum had no bread. She offered him some flour, which he gladly took and, not far away, he lit a fire and cooked himself a damper - which he called a johnnie-cake.

All the trains were steam driven and passed about 20 yards from our house. The passenger trains of four carriages of the old corridor type were drawn by engines with only six wheels. Baldwin-type engines drew the goods trains and later larger ones were used. Sometimes, especially in the cold weather, goods and coal trains which were drawn up at the local signal, started with a series of jerks when they got the all-clear and, on the steep grade, I have seen the couplings snap. Half of the train would go forward while the other half would start to run back, only to be stopped by the guard in the van at the rear.

When the deviation of the railway line was being completed, I saw the last train to go through on the old line. This was the funeral-train, which went through at 3.30 p.m. and at Sutherland it ran on a short branch line right into the cemetery. The necessary joins in the line were made while it was away and when it returned at 4.30 p.m. it was the first to run on the new line.

Milk was delivered to Oatley from Mr. Gorman's dairy at Mortdale by the proprietor and his son, Ernie, carrying cans. Sometimes one of his daughters was roped in too. They never came to our place, for we had a cow.

I might also record that there was a horse-drawn sanitary cart, built like a square tank on wheels. It was driven by Bob Hannon from Peakhurst. The pans were emptied into this tank which was covered by a lift-up lid. It was then driven to a large paddock at Peakhurst and the contents were emptied and ploughed into the ground. Before this service started, we had to dig holes and bury our own.

In reference to our sporting activities, I have already mentioned our football team at school. We later formed a cricket team at Oatley. We were helped by the older girls who were great fund-raisers with their Concerts, which they held in a large room at Mr. Colbourne's residence. The proceeds, plus some donations, bought our cricket kit. As for our other amusements, we had to make our own. We went swimming, fishing, rowing, sailing and hiking all over the bush. Also, picnics were held - and we always seemed to have something to do. The only show that came to Oatley on various occasions was a Punch & Judy Show, and its tent was erected on a little clearing near my home.

I have already mentioned Grannie Colbourne's accident, and there were others, too, although I didn't witness any. A young man from Mortdale, named Reid, was drowned near Como Bridge. I saw his body on a stretcher on the rear of a train. Two policemen were taking it to the Morgue in Sydney.

There was also a very nasty accident which happened to a man named Ferguson, from Mortdale, who was employed on the railway on one of the stations nearer to Sydney. He would come home, late at night, on the engine of a goods train, for passenger trains did not run at this late hour. The train would slow down at Mortdale to allow him to step off.

On this occasion, when he did so, he tripped and fell on the platform. He rolled towards the train and was caught on the brake-handle of one of the trucks. He was carried a long way down the line, where his body was found the next morning.

We had a number of bushfires at different times, and there were fires in three empty cottages at Mortdale. There was also one at Oatley, about 300 yards from my home, in the residence of a newly-installed policeman, a Constable Weaver. These fires were of a very suspicious nature

I must mention something about the Rev. James Clarke, known to everyone as Jimmy Clarke. He once took a trip to the Holy Land and brought back a bottle of water from the River Jordan. My young sister Dulcie was one of the babies baptised with this water. Jimmy had a powerful voice and was a wonderful preacher. He held Sunday-morning Services under a clump of wattle trees in the brickyard paddock and these were attended by men employed at the brick-works.

After his retirement from the Church, he again went to the Holy Land and on his return to Oatley, our house was his first port of call. He was very fond of my father and mother and they did a lot for him. He lived in a cave at the end of the western arm of Oatley Bay where a channel ran through the mangroves out into a clear grassy patch. The river, in those days, was beautifully clean and this channel, at high tide, was very deep. It was here that we Oatley boys learnt to swim. This part was always known as 'Jimmy Clarke's Channel'.

Further up the gully, towards Mortdale, was a large patch of raspberries which he would pick and bring to Mum, who made them into raspberry tarts for him. Mum also kept him supplied with milk and eggs, of which we always had plenty.

Sometimes he would stand in the little porch on the front of the church at Mortdale and join in the singing during the Sunday services. Using our springcart, my older brother Harry later moved him and his belongings up from the cave to the house in Rosa Street where the Lombe family had lived. In the yard of this house was a large circular well with a timber covering and on this he slept. Jimmy was well-known and very much liked by all.

I left school at the age of fourteen and started work at the Store of Charlie Barsby at Kogarah. This Store was later taken over by Mr. Walter Turner and is now known as Turner Bros. I first worked in the Storeroom and later made up the orders for delivery. Sometimes, when Frank Bentley, the carter, was absent, it was my job to deliver goods to Sans Souci, Sandringham, Brighton and all over Kogarah. The steam-tram for Sans Souci left from outside the Store and ran on lines within the railway fence, coming out and crossing Railway Parade (very dangerously) at the corner of Gray Street, where Mr. Peatfield had his store.

When I started at Barsby's, there was a drapery department in charge of Miss Asher who lived with the Barsby family. When Mr. Turner took over, this department was first under Miss Wilson and later Miss Ryan. An assistant was Miss Jean Armstrong, who later became my wife. Others I remember were Mrs. Souter, in charge of the Boot Department and her daughter Edith, who was in charge of the cash desk. The Men's Department was under Mr. Tully while Millinery was in the care of Miss Frances Armstrong, Jean's eldest sister.

On the days when I was entrusted to do the deliveries, one pleasant route was via the Moorefield Racecourse, where I called at the large home of Mr. Patrick Moore in President Avenue. I might mention here, that from the highway a short road led to the main entrance to the course. On the right-hand side of this was an hotel and opposite was a two-story building. The top floor was open on the side facing the hotel and this was used as a stage. On fine Saturday nights there was a vaudeville programme and this was very popular and well-attended

Proceeding down President Avenue, I turned the grocers' cart into a sandy track, heavy going for the horse, which passed through quiet scrub-lands and skirted the Patmoore Swamp, in the vicinity of which many lillipilli trees spread their shiny, dark-green leaves. From the many ponds, swarms of water-birds rose as we leisurely passed by. Sometimes, in the deep shade of a tall gum-tree, I rested the horse and spent a while gathering five-corners which grew on bushes which were three or four feet high. Although now non-existent, this fruit then grew in profusion.

Before coming out of this area of bushland, with its multitude of birds, and proceeding with the deliveries from Dolls Point to Sans Souci, I would gather bunches of the decorative branches of geebung which were prized by the female members of the staff.

At about this time, we formed a cricket club and on Wednesdays (a half-holiday because in those days we worked until 10 p.m. on Saturdays), we played at grounds from Kogarah Park to Redfern Oval - and as far out as Rushcutters Bay.

Just before I turned 18 years of age, I decided to give up the grocery trade, which did not seem to offer many prospects. After four years in Turner Bros' store I was earning a mere fifteen shillings per week. So I decided to learn a trade and applied to become an apprentice at the furniture manufacturing business of Murray Bros. at Redfern.

I called and saw Mr. Arthur Murray, the Manager, who asked my age. "Nearly seventeen" was my reply, and he looked at me very hard. "You're the oldest sixteen I've ever seen" he said, but he gave me the job.

I worked with this firm, which later built a large factory and timber-yard in Buckland Street, Alexandria, until I retired.

I was at one time foreman of the Cabinet Shop and later transferred to the Machine Shop where I was required to set up any special jobs. When Mr. Arthur Murray died, I became in charge of this shop.

During the war years we were making ammunition-boxes and also prefabricated sheds etc. for Darwin and office furniture for various military departments. I was in charge of the night shift until I retired after fifty years' service.

I was always very fond of Oatley - and still think it is the prettiest place of the Illawarra Line.

* * * *

183 YEARS IN AUSTRALIA.

Mr. Darcy William Fletcher, now deceased, who wrote this month's article for our Society, could trace his family's history right back to 1792 as is indicated by the following extract from a letter written, in 1947, to his daughter Joyce. The letter was written by his older brother Ernest.

Here it is:-

"Miss Ruglus was born in the Colony in 1793 - I presume in Sydney. I cannot say what year her father came out, but probably 1792. He came as an overseer of convicts. Miss Ruglus married a man named Eggleton and they had a daughter Maria Eggleton who married George Fowler, an Englishman, and they had, among other children, a daughter Jane Fowler, born at Dapto on 7th March 1856.

On 30th April 1879 Jane Fowler married Joseph Fletcher who was born in Lower Kent Street, Sydney on 2nd August 1852, and they were your grandparents. They were married at Milton, N.S.W. where grandfather Fowler was in business as a wheelwright, which was his trade.

My Dad's father was Abram Fletcher, an engineer by calling, and he married Mary Ann Howarth. They both came from Lancashire, England.

Great-grandfather Eggleton died in 1886, aged 93, possibly in Dapto, N.S.W. Grandparents Fletcher are buried at the Church of England, St. Peters."

Mr. Ernest Fletcher, the writer of the above Extract, was the author of an article, dated 1955, entitled "A History of the Mortdale-Oatley District" which was printed in our November 1973 Newsletter.

Here is the (partially incomplete) family tree:

