



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST

1975

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THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council)

President:
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Hon. Treasurer:
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KOGARAH, 2217
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Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. N. 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 on 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 1 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.,
PENSURST. 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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Our next meeting will be held in the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah, at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 14th August.

On this occasion Mr. R. Sturrock (Senior) will present a most attractively arranged screening of colour-slides of Mosman, accompanied by a high-quality tape-recorded commentary. This is a most interesting presentation, which you will enjoy!

Our Raffle Prize is being donated by Mrs. Grieve. Mrs. Grieve is also on Supper Roster.

We're happy to report that Ken Grieve is now home from hospital after having been knocked down by a car. Ken was badly hurt and is still laid up with a broken leg. We send our best wishes Ken and hope you will be back with us before too long.

NEWS FROM OUR SOCIAL SECRETARY.

A Bread Demonstration will be held at the Sea Scouts Hall, on Friday morning, 22nd August, from 10.30 till approximately 1.30 p.m. This is a most interesting demonstration and I am sure everyone who attends will be anxious to get home and try their hand at bread-making. The charge is 50 cents and we will be pleased if anyone would care to bring a small plate of sandwiches -- and a friend. Because I know just how interesting this presentation is, I have promised to have 40 attend, so don't let me down, will you. We will also have musical entertainment and it will be a very nice two hours. You'll be glad you came!

PRESIDENT'S NIGHT - 28th AUGUST. If you intend coming to the President's night please put your name on the list. We need to know the number to help with the catering. \$2.50 donation.

TULIP TOUR - BOWRAL -- BERRIMA. We have a full coach for this day but please put your name on the reserve list as it is very seldom we do not have any cancellations. \$4.00 is the cost for a full day.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

August	22nd	Bread Demonstration 10.30 a.m. - 1.30 p.m.
August	28th	President's Night - Cocktails 6.30 p.m.
October	12th	Tulip Tour - Bowral - Berrima 8.30 a.m.
December	11th	Christmas Night at the Cottage.

Ladies of the Social Committee -- we will have a meeting at 7.30 p.m. in the Supper Room on the night of our General Meeting on August 14th. See you there!

Sylvia Kelly.

A REMINDER.

Don't forget Friday October 24 is our Street Stall at Kogarah. Please can you help with at least one article to sell!

MUSEUM REPORT.

In addition to the many people who visited "Carss Cottage" on Sunday afternoon in July, there have been several other inspections by special arrangement. Of these, two were groups of school-children, the first being approximately seventy lively young pupils from Gynea North Infants School, complete with bright yellow raincoats, hats and boots, to combat the very wet weather of Friday, July 4. Two teachers accompanied their respective classes, and Mr. Smith and Mrs. Butters were in attendance.

Again on Wednesday, 9th, Mr. Smith volunteered for duty and was assisted on this occasion by Mrs. Johns, in answering the many questions asked by interested students from Kogarah High School. There were thirty five, girls and boys, from second form, also accompanied by their teacher.

On Sunday 20th, among the many names in the visitors' book were a group from the Girls' Brigade, Carlton, and on Saturday 26th a party of thirty-five people from a Vintage Car Club looked through "Carss' Cottage" while visiting the park during the afternoon. Colleen McEwen opened the Museum and supervised the inspection.

Our garden is looking quite attractive since Mr. Pogson and his assistants have been working on a plan for improvements in the layout, and members will appreciate the planting of many native flowering shrubs and colourful annuals. Mr. Pogson's work for Kogarah Municipal Council's Parks and Gardens is widely known and appreciated by many local people and we are looking forward to seeing the Carss' Cottage garden add further attraction to the lovely parkland which everyone enjoys.

In the museum, week to week maintenance continues, and future projects are being organised!

Donations continue to come in, and are, as always, much appreciated. Among recent gifts we would like to mention a quaint little gold-rimmed pince-nez, c.1880, with flat glass lenses. Miss D. MacLean has brought us these interesting eye-glasses, a donation from Mr. R. B. Stevens, an ophthalmologist, of Mount Pleasant, Western Australia.

Two early photographs have been brought to us by Mrs. Dodd and there are a number of other items which will be acknowledged in next month's Newsletter, when we have further information on them.

Many thanks to all for gifts mentioned. Interest in the Museum continues to increase and there is much opportunity for our future progress.

Museum Roster.

August	10	Mrs. A. McOnie and Miss M. Foley	---(Mr. W. Wright to open and close)
"	17	Mr. and Mrs. R. Diment	----(Mr. J. Veness to open and close)
"	24	Mrs. S. Kelly and Mrs. E. McIlroy	
"	31	Mrs. D. Hatton and Mrs. M. Grieve	
Sept.	7	Mr. and Mrs. E. Schweikert	----(Miss C. McEwen to open and close)
"	14	Mr. and Mrs. J. Lean	
"	21	Mrs. J. James and Miss D. MacLean	--(Mr. J. Lean to open and close)
"	28	Mrs. G. Johns and Mrs. G. Taylor	

(If any date given, is inconvenient, please phone 57-5940).

Gwen Lean.

OUR SOCIETY'S EXCURSION TO PARRAMATTA.

On a beautiful fine morning, 27th July, our full bus left from outside the Civic Centre and proceeded to Parramatta, where pleasant, well-prepared Guides awaited to show us over the selected buildings. Written notes on the day's programme were carefully prepared by Colleen McEwen and studied by members in the bus.

Parramatta is a never ending source of interest to anyone who is concerned with the history of the settlement in Australia.

Although we have visited the city on a number of occasions, our visit presented us with a new facet of the city's history.

The Lancer Barracks, hidden away amongst the commercial development, is a link with the earliest years of the settlement in the Rose Hill area. Within the Barrack compound has been erected Linden House, a charming stone building, which now houses the Museum of the Royal New South Wales Lancers, Australian Cavalry and Armoured Corps.

Our visit was made most enjoyable by our host for the day, Mr. Phil Vernon, a former commanding officer of the Regiment.

The displays as presented were most interesting and very easily viewed. However, the wealth of material was very difficult to absorb in the time which was available to us. I for one, could have spent much more time browsing through the excellent collection of items.

Hambledon Cottage and Experiment Farm Cottage are always a source of interest and no matter how often they are visited there is always something to see which has been missed on previous occasions.

Lunch was enjoyed at Lake Parramatta and a happy, well-satisfied party arrived back in Kogarah just a little after 4 p.m. Our Social Secretary, Mrs. Sylvia Kelly, received congratulations for another well-organised outing.

Jeff Veness.

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No doubt some of our more senior members have, during their childhood, sat astride the old cannon under the pine trees at Brighton-le-sands, and directed their fire to imaginary enemy ships entering through Botany Heads. This article, concerning those guns, appeared in the Hurstville Propeller in 1941.

THE OLD CANNON OF BRIGHTON-LE-SANDS.

by Father Time.

With their cold yawning muzzles pointing in grim silence to the Heads of Botany Bay a group of fortress guns stand guard along the beach-front at Brighton-le-Sands. About them, and overhead, hangs the natural green camouflage of tall pine trees.

In this fashion have those ancient pieces of ordnance stood for more than half a century, yet in all that time not a shot has been fired from those massive barrels. Their thunderous fire is stilled for ever. No more will the powder flash in their touch-holes; no more will the wooden carriages on which they

stood rock to the recoil of the charge; and never again will their anchor-cables whip and strain as they did when those war veterans of other days boomed out their message of death and destruction.

I mentioned that not a shot had been fired from those massive barrels during the past fifty years. Officially, that is quite correct, but unofficially, one of those veterans did experience something of a flutter of its former youth during a holiday season about three years prior to the 1914-1918 war. Old residents of St. George still talk about that incident which was in the nature of a daring escapade. It appears that some local "lads of the village" got it into their heads that old Brighton needed brightening up a bit. The time of the year was Christmas. Well, these lads got together one dark night, having in the meantime collected a goodly quantity of gunpowder and a length of fuse. Then, cunningly watching their opportunity, they sneaked around to one of the ancient cannon and proceed to charge it with explosives. Whether they rammed anything else down the barrel I don't know. To set the fuse, they must have cleaned out the gun's old touch-hole and poked it down into the charge-powder. However, they must have done the job effectively, because the next thing the peaceful citizens of Brighton knew was that a terrific roar rent the still air of the night. The ancient cannon had spoken! Naturally enough, there was a fair bit of enquiry forthcoming as to who had committed that "dastardly deed" but, according to old-timers, the police never discovered the miscreants.

Those old cannons at Brighton have long been a local landmark. But their age of usefulness belonged to another century. Today they are nothing more than ornaments. Through the decades thousands of children have frolicked about their iron-clad sides, adventurously sitting astride their great barrels, each one no doubt adding his quota of broken glass or stone to the rubbish which is gradually collecting within their once-fiery interiors.

Gradually, too, these veteran cannons have fallen into disrepair although, oddly enough, their metal-work appears to have suffered little from the ravages of rust. Their once sturdy and trim gun-carriages of solid wood have, however, rotted away and broken up. In recent times most of them have been re-set in concrete but one old fellow remains on his wooden carriage. Portion of the original wheels are still to be seen and there also will be found the iron rings by which the whole gun was securely anchored to the floor of their original gun-pits.

Although I have been well aware of their presence for many years, I have never, until recently, bothered to look into their history or tried to find from where they came. Of course, like most others who are acquainted with the history of Brighton-le-Sands, I know that those old guns were originally placed in that spot under the pine trees in the days of notable Thomas Saywell, the pioneer who laid the foundations of this popular bayside resort over fifty years ago. These facts, however, did not fully satisfy my curiosity altogether. So one day, knowing a thing or two about artillery, I went to make a closer inspection of those cannons, with the following result.

In the first place, working from the date stamped on these guns, I brought to light the rather odd fact that these relics of the Victorian era were manufactured by a British firm of armament manufacturers which today, in 1941, but under a slightly different name, is still turning out guns, warships and the like. I came to that conclusion after discovering the name "Sir W. G. Armstrong and Co." stamped in the solid metal face of one of the trunnions of a gun. The trunnion

is the short axle which juts out from the side of the gun barrel and by means of which the barrel rested and moved on the supporting carriage. In addition to that enlightening fact, I noted that each veteran is marked with the letters "R.G.F." beneath which is set the individual number of the gun, such as "No.606" and the year of manufacture. Just what the initials stand for I do not know. The age of these relics, however, can easily be determined from the dates stamped upon them. Thus, one is dated 1872, another 1870 and a third 1871. This makes them approximately seventy years old.

Concerning the manufacturer of these historic cannon, my encyclopaedia tells me the following facts about the firm mentioned. It appears that this company was founded by the noted English engineer and inventor, Sir William G. Armstrong, who lived from 1810 to 1900. During the Crimean War he turned his inventive genius to the making of guns. His own creation, the Armstrong gun, was taken up by the British Government and under his management, works were opened at Elswick for the making of ordnance. Many years later certain changes and amalgamations were made and the name changed to Armstrong, Whitworth and Company -- a firm of armament manufacturers which is now world-famous.

The type of muzzle-loading cannon which stand under the pines at Brighton today are the same as those which were used in warfare at the time of the Franco-Prussian conflict and the American Civil War. However, they were not used as pieces of field artillery, where they would have been much too cumbersome, but were installed in coastal forts and on warships and in similar places.

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OATLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

by J. J. Fletcher.

"The oncoming summer season will compel children of tender age living in this distant quarter (about two miles from Mortdale) to tramp, under a broiling sun, to Mortdale Public School"

- A. H. Rinoldi, Oatley
resident, 1.9.1913.

"Our children will have to tramp as far as two miles through lonely places (to get to school)"

- A. E. Cuthbertson
Secretary of Oatley
Progress Association 1914.

If we were to judge the state of development of Oatley by the two quotations above, we would possibly be led to believe that, just prior to the Great War, Oatley was a frontier settlement - isolated, vulnerable to the elements, and undeveloped. But this was not the case. Many of its streets had been laid out, a railway station served the community's transport needs, there was a church with a thriving Sunday School in operation, a post office, a School of Arts, and numerous houses. However, the two quotations above came from men who were arguing a case for a school at Oatley. They were endeavouring to show that

Oatley was both separate and at a distance from Mortdale. It would be useful to counteract their views on Oatley with the Education Department's inspector's opinion of the place:

"Oatley is a beautiful residential suburb;
the locality is permanently settled; and the
population is steadily increasing." *

Oatley was at this time facing the problem which most fringe suburbs have to face as settlement extends out from the city. Oatley had its own identity, and was considered to be separated from Mortdale by Hurstville Road, and yet in some ways Oatley was not yet an independent entity, for it was linked to Mortdale by its school. Naturally when new suburbs are developing, resources are used in common. The difficulty occurs as to when to establish separate resources. This was Oatley's problem. Was it yet time to break with Mortdale school and start a new school at Oatley, or was Oatley still not ready?

Clearly, from the two opening quotations, the residents of Oatley believed that a new school was essential. The residents not only pointed to the growth of Oatley, but to the new developments on the Como Lakes Estate where some 40 homes were going up. The inspector of schools also believed that a new school was necessary due to the slight over-crowding at Mortdale Public School. His comment on the situation was this:

"On enquiry I find that enrolment will be about 90;
the attendance will grow with the steadily increasing
settlement. The parents are willing to accept, as an
instalment, an Infants' School which at present would
serve about 45 children between 4 and 7 years of age,
and to allow their elder children to continue their
attendance at Mortdale pending further local develop-
ment. As, however, the accommodation at Mortdale Pub.
is already overtaxed, the removal therefrom of all the
Oatley children is desirable".

Had not the war intervened, a school for Oatley would have been approved as a result of the inspector's comments above.

By 1917 the accommodation problem at Mortdale Public School had become acute. Over 150 pupils were being taught in a rented hall on the opposite side of the railway line to the main school. Once again, the Oatley residents asked for their own school and once again the inspector of schools agreed that it was required. He pointed out to the Director of Education that Oatley had to have a school "sooner or later, and this was an opportune time" to establish it. Further, to save costs (it was still war time) he recommended the use of a rented building until finance was available. The building he had in mind was

* The attached map shows Oatley in 1912 as drawn by
A. E. CUTHBERTSON, Secretary of Oatley Progress
Association.

the School of Arts hall * which he considered capable of accommodating 100 children and 2 teachers comfortably. The inspector also suggested restricting enrolments to 3rd class pupils and below, so that the total attendance would not exceed 100 to 125.

The inspector's recommendations were approved: the School of Arts hall was engaged, furnished and Mr. Walter Horne appointed as the school's first Headmaster. Lessons began on 2nd October 1917 and by December 1917 there were 69 pupils enrolled. Consequently children up to 4th class were admitted in 1918, and 5th class from January 1920.

While the residents of Oatley were pleased with the establishment of the School, they were not satisfied with its accommodation especially after the war was over. In December 1919 a very large petition, signed by several hundred residents, was forwarded to the Minister for Education requesting a permanent building for the school. As a result plans were drawn up for a new building and tenders called. The residents responded:

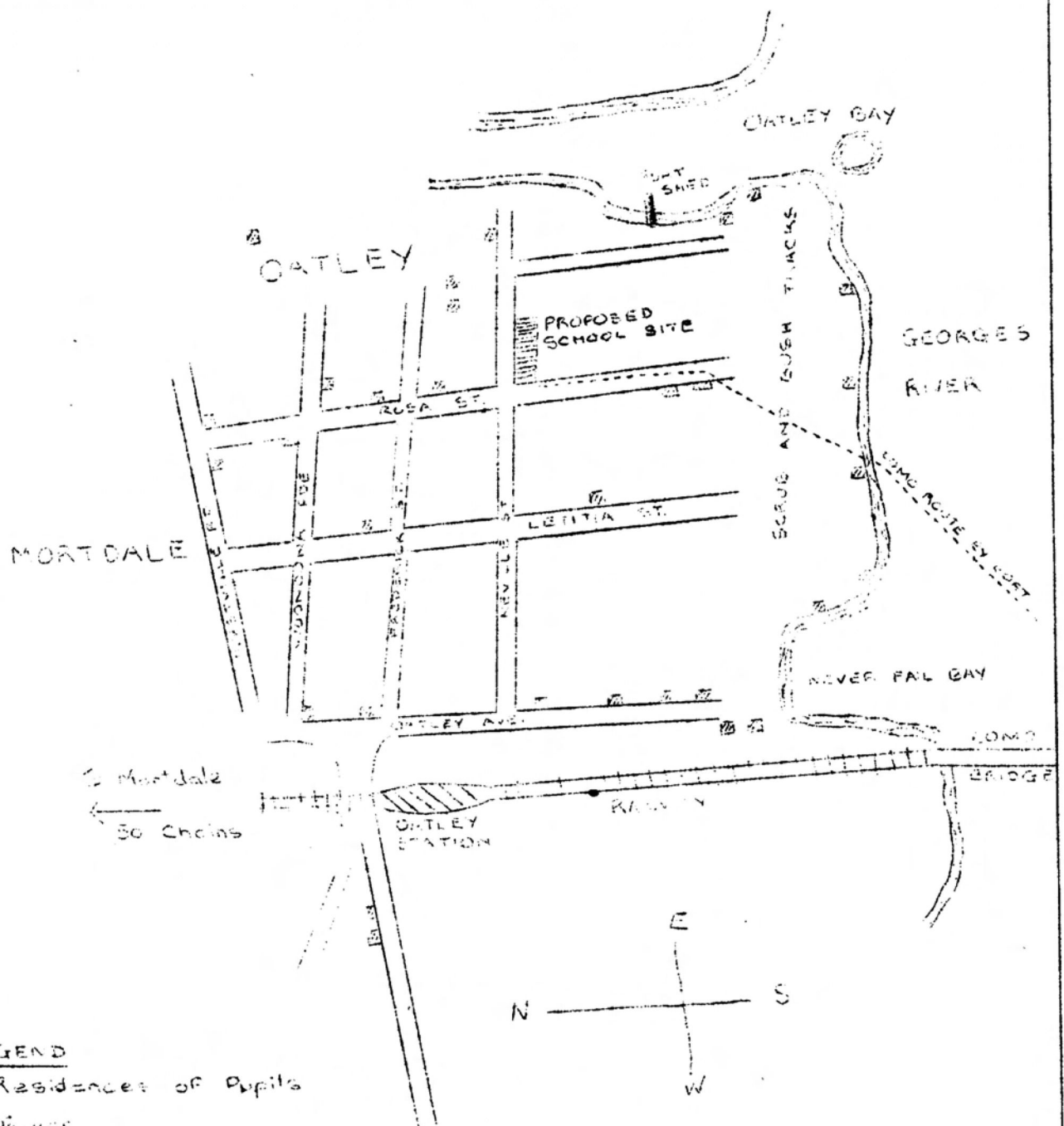
"The Oatley Parents and Citizens' Association and the community in general are overjoyed to hear that tenders are to be called for the new school in that district, and we thank you. We trust that it will be a full-sized school up to 6th class."

The tender of Mr. F. Paroz was accepted for £2,659 and the work was finished in June 1921. The building consisted of three classrooms capable of housing 150 pupils. Unfortunately the enrolment in June 1921 was 188 and the average attendance 132. Oatley had its new building but already had outgrown it!

* * *

* The School of Arts hall was approximately 45 feet by 30 feet, with 3 windows. Acoustically it was very unsatisfactory for class-work due to its inability to muffle noise; if anything it amplified it.

RESIDENCES OF OATLEY PUPILS



LEGEND

□ Residences of Pupils

~ River

—+—+— Railway