



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER

1975

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There will NOT be a meeting in December BUT on Thursday, 11th December, at the Carss' Park Museum, there'll be a wonderful Christmas Night which Mrs. Sylvia Kelly and her Social Committee say will be even better than the last one. Impossible, you say! Well, Mrs. Kelly is accustomed to achieving the impossible, so just telephone on 587-6986 and book if you haven't already done so. See her report, for all the details.

GOOD NEWS FROM SOCIAL SECRETARY. Come along early and select a comfortable position and enjoy the peace and quiet of beautiful Carss' Park as the sun goes down, and be all ready when Noel and Jeff complete their tasty cooking and appetizing smells entice the first-to-be-served with lovely steaks etc. at about 7 p.m.

After enjoying a satisfying repast, members of the Sutherland Light Orchestra will entertain us, while YOU can demonstrate your vocal ability by joining in community singing, including Christmas Carols lead by this fine orchestra.

In the unlikely event of somebody having forgotten to book for this happy event, DO SO AT ONCE AND WE'LL ORDER MORE FOOD! The cost is \$2.50 and the telephone number is 587-6986 (Mrs. Kelly) or 546-4385 (Mrs. Burghart).

AND WHAT ABOUT BUTTS FOR CHRISTMAS RAFFLE TICKETS? Please hand them in as soon as you arrive on 11th December.

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What a busy and satisfying year it has been. Our Social Committee has brought much happiness to members who have really appreciated the well-arranged events which have been provided for their enjoyment. My personal thanks go to those happy-to-work-with ladies who have earned the thanks of all the members.

JANUARY 18th. A Sunday Afternoon Tour of Menai, commencing from outside the Civic Centre at 1.30 p.m. Bring your Afternoon Tea and just relax with us as Messrs Alf. and Fred. Midgley give us some more of The History of Bangor (Menai) as they were urged to do at our last meeting. Please book at the January meeting so that all arrangements can be made.

"A thought for the Month: Christmas is Love, with All the Trimmings".

..... Sylvia Kelly.

OUR NOVEMBER MEETING. Our last meeting was just as we confidently promised it would be. Messrs Alf and Fred. Midgley of the Sutherland and District Historical Society seemed to immediately capture the friendship of members as with their pleasant manner and most interesting and informative illustrated address they entertained us with "The History of Bangor" - this being the old name of Menai. Members were so interested to learn more of this not-so-far-away district that by popular vote the Midgley Brothers kindly agreed to our arranging a tour of Menai on Sunday Afternoon, 18th January, when they will act as guides.

Mr. Alf. Midgley has kindly contributed an article to this month's Newsletter concerning a related subject entitled "By Paddle-Wheeler, up the Georges River to Parkesvale".

MUSEUM REPORT.

In the past month we have acquired for the Museum a number of additional items, which we acknowledge with appreciation.

There is a copper pump, from an old winery in Sussex Street, Sydney, received by Mr. J. Veness. A Leather Horse Collar and a quantity of Cutlery from Mr. W. Wright. Two Crockery Dishes donated by Mrs. H. Button. A Silver Serving Fork with bone handle, a gift, from Mrs. J. Wright. Three articles donated by Mrs. A. Newlyn are a Serving Platter, Burleigh Ware, England; a Wooden Collar Box, and a Christmas Card from France (First A.I.E., 1918).

Mrs. A. Walsh has sent us a printed Menu and Toast List for a Dinner, in connection with the Australasian Medical Congress, 1914, held in Auckland New Zealand. There is also a group of family portrait photos around the turn of the century (on loan), and a card bearing a one penny Edward VII stamp, posted to Mr. A. Walsh, c/- R.M.S. Mauritania, in New York Harbour, U.S.A.

Among recent donations from Miss A. G. Coxhead, is a book of local newspaper clippings, referring to discussions on the development of the Carss' Bush area and the formation of the Blakehurst Progress Association. Many interesting local events and notable citizens of the nineteen twenties, are mentioned. Also there is a photograph of the home of Miss Coxhead and her parents, in Prince's Highway, where they lived prior to Mr. Harold Coxhead's appointment as Ranger of Carss' Bush Park.

Photographs loaned by Mrs. Tallais, showing early views of the Georges River, have been copied for the Museum's photographic collection, also a portrait of Mrs. Hogarth. Mr. Stewart Hogarth (father of Mrs. Tallais) was an Estate Agent in Oatley in about 1919. His Sister, Miss Hogarth, was a School Teacher at Mortdale School.

May I repeat an appeal made on previous occasions, for more, and still more photographs of local scenes and residents of earlier times.

Also, any member wishing to be more actively associated with the Museum is requested to contact the Committee and advise us in what way you would like to help. Perhaps on roster, restoration, typing, research, display, carpentry, painting etc. We hope to hear from you. You will notice that volunteers are required for Museum attendants on three public holidays. If you can help in this way, please let me know as soon as possible.

Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes to all Members and Friends.

Gwen Lean (Convener)

MUSEUM ROSTER.

December	7th	Mrs. D. Hatton & Mrs. M. Grieve	(Mrs. Hatton to open)
"	14th	Mr. K. Grieve & Mr. J. Wright	(Miss C. McEwen to optn)
"	21st	Mrs. S. Kelly & Mrs. E. McIlroy	(Mrs. S. Kelly to open)
"	28th	Mr. & Mrs. E. Schweikert	(Mr. J. Lean to open)
January	4th	Mr. & Mrs. R. Diment	(Mr. J. Veness to open)
"	11th	Mrs. J. James & Miss D. MacLean	(Mr. W. Wright to open)
"	18th	Mr. & Mrs. J. Howard	(Miss C. McEwen to open)
"	25th	Mrs. G. Johns & Mrs. G. Taylor	(Mrs. Johns to open)

Boxing Day - December 26th Volunteers requested

New Year's Day - January 1st Volunteers requested

Australia Day - January 26th Volunteers requested

Please phone me if any date given is inconvenient (57-5940)

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT.

We residents of the Kogarah Municipality are to be counted among the privileged in the Sydney area. Few municipalities could boast such a jewel as the Carss' Bush Park.

The setting aside of the Park as a permanent record of the original nature of the area was an example of the foresight by a Council which led the way fifty years ago. It is only in recent years that this is being fully appreciated.

Australian history is only 200 years old. It is essential that an area which was referred to in Cook's Journal in the first days of this history should receive some recognition. Carss' Cottage is an inherent part of this heritage and as such should be given the deference it deserves.

Even though the Cottage is only about 110 years old, it still commands the respect of those who seek to preserve our heritage. Carss' Park is a popular picnic spot for a great number of Sydney siders, a few of whom have no concept, concern, or even consideration of the rare and irreplaceable value of what is represented by the area.

Any area which is free and accessible to all without adequate supervision is subject to abuse. As the summer progresses it becomes more evident that the main concern is not only the vandals, but the vast number of people who have no concern for their environment and leave the evidence of their presence for others to remove and repair.

A visit to the Park on a Sunday afternoon is a bitter-sweet experience, the scenery, the water, the park itself is a continuing enjoyment, only when one looks further at cars parked on grassed areas, fires and barbecues being used in prohibited areas, rubbish, bottles, cans left indiscriminately, an almost complete disregard for the value of the facilities being provided.

The supervision of such an area is a continuing thing and is not within the capacity of a single individual.

We the Society have a responsibility to ensure that the Bush Park, with all its attractions and history is preserved for future generations.

I would hope that in the near future we will be able to play a more active part in ensuring that the area receives the recognition and attention it deserves.

In a lighter vein, may I wish all Members of the Society a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

I look forward to greeting many of you personally at our Christmas Night at the Cottage on the 12th December.

J. VENESS.

Everybody knows this is a triangulator (sometimes spelt with an "er" when the second syllable is silent and rhymes with ssh) but it is not generally known that Mr. Jeff Veness needs a handy-man to make three to hang behind the door of the fourth bedroom at Carss Cottage (when approaching from the left). Two-foot sides please, and made exactly like the model.



This very ordinary whybollis, so-called because one leg is both the same, is different from those usually seen. As a matter of fact, the leg which is both the same is that at the centre and any member willing to make one for us is advised to carefully attach it in the same manner as shown on the plan.



BY PADDLE-WHEELER, UP THE GEORGES RIVER TO PARKESVALE

By A. Midgley.

Sanbrook Brothers, who operated the steam paddle-wheelers from Como to Parkesvale, on the Georges River, were a partnership of three brothers who were also building contractors, mainly at Camperdown. The ferry headquarters were there and enquiries and bookings could be made by telephoning 232.

It is rather remarkable that although the Georges River was of such antiquity, and possessing as it did such a number of attractions to the tourist and all lovers of the beautiful in nature, that it remained practically undeveloped as a tourist resort until about the turn of the century.

It seems to be agreed that Captain Cook rowed up the Georges' River to the vicinity of Tom Ugly's Point, where he discovered a stream of drinking water. Then, in 1789 Governor Hunter had a brief look at what he called the "West River" (it was still un-named) but he does not appear to have been greatly impressed.

Lieutenant Matthews Flinders and his friend Mr. George Bass, in their Tom Thumb, a mere eight feet long, in 1795 explored the river twenty miles further up-stream than Governor Hunter's previous survey. A report of this expedition caused the Governor to eventually examine the stream for himself and as a result a new name was added to the map - Banks Town.

Georges River (it is not known for whom or by whom it was named) gradually became a hive of industry as various forms of early employment were created. Shell-gathering, shell burning, timber getting, charcoal burning, stone for building and even some ship-building was carried on - and eventually, of course, many men were employed on work undertaken on the property of Sir Thomas Holt.

When the railway was eventually opened large crowds came to admire the River and to enjoy the various picnic-spots.

It was about this time, in 1887, that the Sanbrook brothers became associated with the River by making a purchase from the Government of a block of land on its banks, facing Oven Reach and known as "Wiatarra". Here they erected a Camp Cottage in which many happy summers were spent by them and later it became the home of their parents who resided there permanently until they removed to Parkesvale.

Noting that the glorious miles of river-banks were practically locked-up, so far as the tourist traffic was concerned, the Sanbrook brothers visualised just what would happen if facilities were provided to throw open long stretches of river scenery to the residents of Sydney's inner suburbs, who had formerly been content to share, in their hundreds, the limited river frontages around, say, Como Station.

A property of about 200 acres situated almost opposite Picnic Point, and once forming part of the estate of the late Sir George Innes, was purchased by the brothers in 1899. This beautiful property had a frontage of about one mile to a very picturesque portion of the Georges River.

Extensive Pleasure Grounds were constructed with every (then) modern convenience and attraction for an up-to-date pleasure resort offering unlimited scope for merry picnickers and bush fossickers. Beautiful native wild flowers were found growing in great profusion.

On the cleared portion of the grounds a caretaker's cottage was erected together with a substantial jetty. Scores of charming rustic summer-houses, fitted with tables and seats were provided and also a large public refreshment room, a pavilion (with piano), cricket pitches, see-saws, etc. Hot and cold water was available and there were facilities for fishing, swimming and boating.

And how did the Sanbrook brothers propose to transport the potential happy picnickers to enjoy the fun and frolic at Parkesvale - for such was the name selected for this successful enterprise? On the 18th December 1899, full of justified optimism, the

Sanbrook brothers provided a steam paddle-wheeler capable of accommodating 200 passengers to commence from a wharf at the foot of a long flight of steps leading from the western side of the railway platform at Como station.

The venture was an immediate success - embarrassingly so, for it was soon found that the potential number of passengers seeking the delights of winding river scenery far exceeded the carrying capacity of the available paddle-wheeler.

With a wise stroke of imagination, the railway authorities saw the advantage of sharing in the Sanbrook venture and advertised combined rail and ferry tickets. In the "Daily Telegraph" and "Sydney Morning Herald" it was announced by the Government Railways that "Through tickets to Como, thence per river trip to Parkesvale and back to Como by steamer, returning to Sydney by rail, where to be issued at Sydney, Sydenham and intermediate stations at two shillings and sixpence (=25 cents) first class and one shilling and sixpence (=15 cents) second class by trains leaving Sydney at 2.10 p.m. available on day of issue only". Just fancy! a forty-mile trip by rail and paddle-wheel steamer for just fifteen cents.

The Pleasure Grounds were named after Mr. Varney Parkes (the son of Sir Henry Parkes) who was then the Member for the Canterbury district. He was the guest of honour at an official opening but it was quite unnecessary to arrange this added attraction for the capacity of the existing paddle-wheeler was already stretched to breaking point.

It was quite obvious that hundreds of intending passengers were being turned away and at last the Sanbrook brothers were successful in the purchase from the Balmain Ferry Company of the S.S. Telephone - a fast and comfortable boat capable of carrying upwards of four hundred persons and even now, ^{on} holidays, the Sanbrooks had to limit the issue of tickets to prevent overcrowding.

River trips were advertised to run every Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday and Public Holiday and the Railway Department advertised in the daily press and issued handbills at all stations. On days when the Pleasure Grounds were not open to the public, special engagements could be effected by, for example, Church choirs and such-like groups. Parties of not less than fifty or more than two hundred could be arranged for morning trips while moonlight excursions were very popular.

The paddle-wheelers called at Lugarno wharf to take on passengers. Early settlers of Bangor (Menai) frequently used this means of transport. The Dawson family, who lived at Bellevue Street, Hurstville, had taken up a Homestead Selection of 23 acres at Bangor in 1897 and, having alighted from the steamer, walked the three miles to the Selection.

In October 1907, Sanbrook brothers pointed out to the Sutherland Council the necessity for a punt to cross the Georges River near their property to connect East Hills and Belmore with Parkesvale. This plan was rejected by the Council.

The large Hall erected on the Pleasure Grounds by the Sanbrooks was used for dances and other entertainments for the benefit of paddle-wheel excursions during evenings. Menai residents attended these functions, travelling by horse conveyances. Some of them would go to Sellers' Selection at Little Forest, stay for tea, and then board their vehicles and head along a track which lead from Old Liverpool Road to Parkesvale. After the evening's entertainment the tired but happy Menai people wandered homeward. On many occasions they left about 2 a.m. so it would have been daylight before reaching home.

The popularity of these days and night excursions continued uninterruptedly and, perhaps by mysterious moonlight, many thousands of city-dwellers were transported to happiness as the rhythm of large paddle-wheels echoed among the dark tree-clad hills as they thrashed the clear waters of the then unpolluted Georges' River to foam and two broad wakes floated lazily past the stern.

Melodious sounds of the group-singing of numbers such as "Roaming in the Gloaming and A Bicycle Built for Two", as dozens of voices joined in, caused many a sleepy Kangaroo to stare curiously as the twinkling lights of the "Telephone" were softly reflected in the river before it disappeared around a bend. To many hundreds of contented passengers

it was hard to believe that World War I would bring these excursions to an end and some would soon exchange a trip on a paddle-wheeler for a very different voyage on a transport to war-torn Europe. But so it was'.

One of the Canbrook Brothers, Frederick John, who was always interested in the future of Como, built the large sandstone home "Cranbrook" on the headland of Illawong. On his death in 1917 the property passed to a son and was used as a family holiday home until about 1930 when it was sold.

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A LONG, LONG-AGO OUTING TO CRONULLA BEACH

In the Horse and Buggy Days.

I recently heard somebody say "We are having a day out at Cronulla soon". A day at Cronulla! What thoughts the words awoke in my mind, and what visions have remained with me through the years. For a day at Cronulla in our girlhood times stood out in the calendar as a day of blue and gold - a day to be eagerly anticipated, engaged with an exquisite enjoyment and remembered as one remembers one's happiest hours.

Setting out from home in the old family buggy, in the cool sweet air of the early summer morning, our steadfast old horse soon getting into his leisurely stride, we proceeded at a dignified pace through streets which brought us on to what is now the Princes Highway, but which in those days was just plain Kogarah Road.

Journeying along we might see a few Chinese market garden carts slowly wending their way homeward, their drivers often nodding drowsily atop loads of stuff for their gardens. Otherwise the road would be almost deserted. Past the Carss estate, then a dense mass of trees and undergrowth, with only a little narrow track leading through it to the fringe of Kogarah Bay, and so on through Blakehurst to the old punt at Tom Ugly's, sparing a glance as we passed the Sea Breeze Hotel for Cocky Bennett in his cage on the verandah.

Crossing slowly, but all too quickly for our enjoyment of the beauty of the scene, we even got amusement from watching the punt's handy-man as he dipped water from the river in bucketsful and disappeared with it into the dark interior of the punt-house, where he disposed of it and returned for more. He never took two consecutive buckets from the same side of the punt and we wondered why, until one of our bright members said she supposed it must be to keep the water in the river level.

Gaining the far side of the river we ascended the Sylvania Hill, our old horse zig-zagging from side to side as we climbed it. On we went through Miranda and on to Caringbah - nothing much but names in those days - the long road stretching in front of us, passing here a homestead and there a poultry-farm, sometimes an orchard with the ripening fruit peeping rosily through the leaves, but over all lying the peacefulness of the countryside.

At length, topping the last rise, there before us lay the blue sea and the yellow sands - Cronulla! Soon we were on the beach, our old horse given his feed-box and tied in the shade of the trees where now stands the Hotel Cronulla.

In the background, amongst the trees, was an old wooden hotel, a two-storied building which was later destroyed by fire. We invariably had the beach to ourselves. Cronulla had not been "discovered" then and the beach was as nature made it. We were monarchs of all we surveyed.

We sniffed the ozone appreciatively, taking in large gulps of it. We never thought of surfing. Its joys had not been favoured then - that was a later development. Few people had bathing costumes, which were then strange-looking affairs with voluminous skirts generally made of blue and white striped galatea and trimmed with rows of white braid. They were designed to cover the maximum area of the "human form divine" but even

so, conservative people looked rather askance at them, with raised eyebrows and thought the wearers were just a little - well, advanced.

Our people, being the most conservative of the conservatives, never thought of such a thing as providing us with them. Perish the thought! Even if you had one, you never "surfed" as we now understand the word. You just flopped about in the water near the edge of the beach. So, not being in the "advanced" brigade, we just took off our shoes and stockings, and holding up our dresses modestly "paddled", getting out where the water washed up to about our knees and felt quite daring! Sometimes we mis-calculated, and were caught by an extra high wave and got wet in spots where we hadn't intended. However, it was all good fun and added to the enjoyment of our day.

We wandered along the beach, peering into the little rocky basins and admiring the sea-gardens in them, with their shell-encrusted floors and walls. Once we found a perfect heart-shaped rock about the size of a human heart - it might have been a petrified specimen, so like it was.

Getting on towards lunch time, we went back off the beach a little and, making a fire, cooked potatoes in salt water and grilled steak for our al fresco meal. Never did steak and potatoes taste so delicious as those cooked there on Cronulla beach. I can almost taste them now! Our meal finished, we washed it down with copious draughts of "billy" tea and proceeded to explore the "hinterland".

Roaming around, we found flannel flowers and gathered 'five-corners', sarcastically described by the head of the family as "the most delicious Australian fruit - all skin and bone". We generally returned to the beach with plenty of green "bottle brushes" as we erroneously named the brush-like flowers of the Banksias.

I remember on one occasion we were gathering 'bottle Brushes' and the head of the family, standing off and directing the activities of another member who was busy with a rather large Banksia, called out "There's a nice one, Bill, over on your left". Hardly had the words left his lips when a blood-curdling yell rent the air. We all looked around, very startled, and there was our dignified parent executing a wild dervish-like dance, the while he uttered the most ear-piercing yells we had ever heard. We thought he must suddenly have taken leave of his senses or else he had decided to 'go native' and was having a sort of corroboree on his own account.

We were soon undeceived, however. "Bull-dogs" he yelled. "Bull-dog ants!" Poor man - he had unknowingly stood on a bull-dog ants' nest and they had swarmed up the legs of his trousers and into his boots and were getting in their deadly work. He made a wild dash further into the bush, pursued by Bill, where he had to divest himself of all his clothing before he could get rid of the brutes. He afterwards declared that they chased him! However, they certainly made him pretty sick, and he was always very careful in the future to reconnoitre well before taking up a stand anywhere.

And so the day wore on and as the sun travelled westward and the shadows lengthened we began to think of the homeward journey. After a final cup of billy tea and another snack, we climbed into the buggy and reluctantly turned our backs on Cronulla and its loveliness. But we had stored its beauty in our memories and could always see it again in our mind's eye.

But the Cronulla of our youth is now a memory only. Groomed and glamorised she is still beautiful, but not with the maiden beauty that we loved. All is changed, except the ocean, and as we gaze seaward we can say -

"Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now".

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THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council)

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

'Phone: 546 3932.

Hon. Treasurer:
Mrs. K. Johns,
38 Princes Hwy,
KOGARAH, 2217

'Phone: 587 4848

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.

CARSE' 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.,
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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