



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

JUNE, 1976.

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THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council)

PATRONS: The Mayor of Kogarah & Ald. K. R. Cavanough, A.M.

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Vice-Presidents: Mr. V. S. Smith & Mr. N. Kelly.

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: \$2.00 per annum.

Pensioners: \$1.50 " "

Students: \$1.50 " "

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

CARSS PARK MUSEUM: Open Sundays and Public Holidays from 1 to 5 p.m.

Admissions: 30c Adults, 10c Children. Maximum 80c for one family.

DONATIONS FOR MUSEUM. Donations of items of historical interest suitable for inclusion in the Museum may be left with the Attendant. Please be sure to leave your name and address and details of object.

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.

Our next meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 10th June on the second floor of the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah.

Our Speaker will be Alderman K. R. Cavanough, A.M. who will show us an interesting collection of Slides taken on a holiday trip to Western Australia, South Australia and the Inland.

Members should not fail to see a set of five murals (40" x 30") which Alderman Cavanough has kindly loaned to our Society for display in Carss' Cottage. --- See his description in this Newsletter.

Those on Supper Roster are Mrs. Burke and Mrs. Fordham.

Coach Tour to Bathurst and Hill End. (16th-17th October).

October might seem to be a long way off. But we already have 18 bookings for this popular tour!

We leave at 6.30 a.m. arriving in Bathurst in time for lunch. Sightseeing in afternoon and spending a comfortable night in the Motor Inn Motel. Early next morning we leave for Hill End where we remain until lunch time. We expect to arrive back at Kogarah about 7.30 p.m.

The approximate cost for all this is only \$29.00. Bookings, accompanied by a deposit, may be made at the June Meeting and the total cost is required not later than the September Meeting.

There are only 22 seats left so how about giving Mrs. Burghart a 'phone call - 546-4385.

Street Stall - 20th August.

The date is getting closer and if you have not already done so, please now consider how YOU may contribute towards the success of our Stall. This is a great opportunity and the amount of our profit will be limited only by the quantity and quality of our stock. We need your help!

MUSEUM REPORT.

I am pleased to report that the Museum has been painted this week. We were very fortunate to have employed a co-operative group of painters who worked at fever pitch to have the cottage finished by Saturday so we could open up on Sunday.

Due to the painting, the Museum was entirely disrupted, as nearly every item had to be moved so the painting could be carried out. The Management Committee took this opportunity to give the Museum a spring clean; the curtains were washed and ironed, brass ware polished, and the crockery washed.

It was decided at the last meeting that a cleaner would be employed to do the heavy duties at the Cottage. The man chosen is well known to Mrs. Grieve and will commence work in July and clean the Museum every two months.

Some time ago Miss Coxhead donated a sofa to the cottage. The article was in very bad condition and she arranged to have it repaired by apprentices at a Technical College. The work has now been completed and within the next few weeks it will be on permanent show in the Museum in the front parlour display.

His work was described in 1923 as "certainly vulgar, but not in the least indecent", but Lindsay's answer to the critics was to live in seclusion in Springwood, visited often by his friends who enjoyed his exhilarating company and conversation.

Today Australians still like to visit his home in its beautiful surroundings remembering the talented illustrator of "Lysistrata" and "Casanova" and the loving father who gave us the joyous "Magic Pudding".

He died in 1969 and was still painting at the time of his death at 90 years of age.

E. Howard.

LIBRARY REPORT.

It has been suggested that the Society's Library collection should be more accessible to everyone -- not only on Sunday afternoons as at present. For this reason I went along to the Kogarah Municipal Library and ascertained that the Librarians would be very interested in housing our local history booklets etc. in the reference section at Kogarah. This would mean the material would be available to many more people, providing a real community service, and could be used, in the Library only, every day (except Sunday). For a small charge readers would be able to get photo-copies which we are not able to supply.

It would be called the Kogarah Historical Society Collection and our own printed book plates would be inside each volume. For the sake of extra security it would be on shelves in the reference librarian's office, or if valuable original documents are added, arrangements will be made for their safe-keeping.

The Librarians at Kogarah are very interested in local history, and receive many enquiries for local information especially from people who are not able to research because of limited time or inclination. Our fairly small collection will add to the reference Librarian's sources.

Perhaps by next issue of this Newsletter lists will be available of the material to be placed at Kogarah, and of books to be kept at Carss Park. Some donors may be pleased to have their documents controlled but readily accessible at Kogarah, while others prefer the historical environs of Carss Park, limiting use to Society researchers only.

We would be pleased to hear from anyone with opinions either way.

E. Howard
Librarian.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Mr. R. Young of Kyle Bay, also Mr. Grieve, for the magnificent job they have done framing and restoring the very large portrait we were given of Queen Victoria. It is now proudly adorning the wall in the front room of the Museum. Both gave of their time voluntarily to restore the picture and anyone who saw this picture beforehand, will agree with me that they have indeed done wonders.

'FIRST FLEETERS'

At a meeting held on the 13th July, 1973, in the Presbyterian Hall, Sydney, an organisation, the Owen Cavanough Fellowship, was formed. The purpose of this organisation, a social and historic family group, was to record the history of their forbears, Owen Cavanough, who arrived with the First Fleet in 1788 on the flagship 'Sirius', and of Margaret Darnell who also arrived with the First Fleet on the 'Prince of Wales' and was later to become his wife.

The Fellowship arranged for a commercial artist, Mr. Keith Thompson, to prepare a set of five posters to constitute a mural, for display with the Fellowship of First Fleeters at the historic Rocks area on the 26th January, 1976, recording the early family history.

A brief outline of the posters are as follows:-

No. 1. Owen Cavanough holding the long boat for Governor Phillip to land at Sydney Cove on the 26th January, 1788. Herbert J. Bumsey, F.L.G.S., F.S.A.G., in his book "The Pioneers of Sydney Cove" writes "Owen was in the boat with Governor Phillip taking soundings when the party reached Sydney Cove on the 26th January, 1788. He held the boat for the officers to land." (Published by Sunnybrook Press in 1937, copy with the Mitchell Library).

No. 2. In March 1790 the 'Sirius' and the 'Supply' left Sydney Cove for Norfolk Island. This was the last voyage of the 'Sirius' as she was wrecked on the reef at Norfolk Island on the 19th March, 1790. Owen Cavanough, one of the crew left at Norfolk Island with the wreck of the 'Sirius' returned to Sydney in February 1791. (State Archives Records).

No. 3. Owen Cavanough married convict girl Margaret Darnell who was indicted at the Old Bailey on the 30th day of March 1787, for stealing one dozen dessert knives and forks valued at six shillings from the shop of James White, in the Parish of St. Andrew Holborn. Pleading not guilty before Mr. Baron Hotham at the Old Bailey, she was found guilty of stealing the goods, but not 'privately', and was condemned to be transported for a term of seven years to the eastern coast of N.S.W. or any one of the adjacent islands. (Copy of trial from Records Office, Corporation of London).

No. 4. Land Grants. Governor Phillip in a letter to Lieutenant Governor King on the 22nd October 1791, directed that six seamen and four marines were to receive land grants on Norfolk Island. These were the first land grants on the island, and the grant to Owen Cavanough consisted of sixty acres adjacent to the Cascade Stream. (As recorded in the book "Cadman's Cottage" by J. Selkirk Provis and K. A. Johnston). Later, he and his sons received land grants on the Hawkesbury River (from official documents with the Lands Dept.)

No. 5. Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, on the banks of the Hawkesbury River, is the oldest church of any denomination in Australia in continued use. The land on which the Church was built, four acres, was a gift to the Church Authorities by Owen Cavanough (Presbyterian Church records).

(The mural setting out this early history is in colour, is three dimensional, and has been cleverly portrayed by the commercial artist. The mural has been loaned to the Kogarah Historical Society for display at the Carss' Cottage Museum by the Owen Cavanough Fellowship, through its President, Alderman K. Cavanough, A.M.)

A HISTORY IN STONE
ROCKDALE METHODIST CHURCH

by C. W. Napper.

In the light of the present day bustling activities, centres on the shopping quarter of Rockdale, it is extremely difficult to envisage the tranquil rural scene that existed here in the early days of the eighteen-sixties. The narrow bush track, called by the grandiose name of Rocky Point Road, wended its way through dense forests of gum-trees, amidst the rocky ramparts of Rockdale Hill on the east, and the more shallow ridges and slopes descending eastwards from the sinuous divide along the crest of which the Gannon's Forest Road was carried. Near the intersection of the present Bay Street with Rocky Point Road (later Princes Highway), the very heart of Rockdale, was a sombre swampy region covered with paper-bark trees, casuarinas, and a dense undergrowth of ferns and reeds, the habitat of frogs and snakes. It is quite understandable why this secluded spot on the old road gained the name of FROG HOLLOW, although some folk preferred the more high-falutin name of WHITE GUM FLAT. At the time under review there were no shops, stores, or hotels, only rough grazing land, divided into paddocks by post and rail fences, cut from the neighbouring forest. It is possible that at this period the nearest residence would have been that occupied by William Bray, on a site contiguous to the present day intersection of Bryant Street with the Princes Highway, and the tiny home of the Skidmore's which was sited where the Rocky Point Road forded Muddy Creek opposite to the present Southside Plaza.

It is more than passing strange that the majority of the pioneering families, mostly fore-gathered around the fertile flats of Muddy Creek, roughly midway between Rockdale and Brighton-le-Sands, were devout Wesleyans, a circumstance which included the Beehags, Bowmers, Brays, Mascords, and the Nappers, amongst their number. The district at large came under the administration of the Newtown Wesleyan Circuit, and through the activities of William Beehag in particular, on behalf of the Home Mission interest, a "HOUSE OF PRAYER" was established on the eastern side of West Botany Street at Arncliffe. This primitive edifice, little more than a shelter from the sun, was constructed of sapplings, calico, and roffed with tea-tree, "with internal furnishings of a corresponding character". The temporary nature of the structure, known as THE BUSH HOUSE, was far from satisfactory, and several moves were made, including a temporary site on the land later occupied by Illie's ROSE VALE VILLA' nursery on Rocky Point Road at Rockdale. Then the roving congregation settled in "THE IRON HOUSE", evidently a small prefabricated structure of galvansied iron, which may have been imported from England on the package principle and was established on the western side of West Botany Street, near the intersection of Muddy, or Dark, Creek, on the property of Mr. Quirk. This site today constitutes the broad expanse of Rockdale Park. I quote, "Mr. Quirk, who though not of the Protestant faith, cheerfully lent his home for Methodist services, thus showing a tolerance that has not always been a distinguishing characteristic of his co-religionists".

However, the need for a permanent place of worship was generally felt, and at length the opportunity arose whereby two sites for a chapel were made available, one being offered by William Beehag, and the other by his brother James Beehag. The allotment offered by William Beehag was in the neighbourhood of the original "BUSH HOUSE" at Arncliffe, whilst that proffered by James Beehag was at the extreme western end, or rather apex, of his property, adjacent to the later intersection of Bay Street with Rocky Point Road. This last named site was finally accepted, and a Deed of Conveyance was duly signed on August 18th, 1858,

the trustees being named as follows:- James Barker. John Walker. Barnabus Shaw Walker. James Canham. Benjamin Barker. William Bailey. Robert Dunlop and John Andrews.

Plans were drawn up for a small neatly designed rectangular shaped building, some thirty feet in length and twenty feet in width, build from sandstone ashlar quarried from the neighbouring hill through which the alignment of Bay Street was later excavated. The roof was covered with wooden shingles, no doubt cut from the casurina trees which flourished around the margins of Pat Moore's Swamp. Three large windows were inserted in each of the side walls, and access was gained from the Western end of the structure, the headstone over the doorway reading "WESLEYAN CHAPEL, 1857".

It has been related that "during the progress of erection, while the floor was yet unlaid and the roof open, Mr. Finlayson preached within the walls of the new building". On Sunday, 26th December, 1858, the dedicatory services were conducted by the Reverend Richard Amos, a missionary from the island of Tonga, who had that year returned to the Colony of New South Wales. The inevitable tea meeting followed on the Monday, and in the notice of the event, as recorded in the "METHODIST" newspaper of the time, it was stated that "A large number of friends assembled. The day was fine, and the excursion to the bush was enjoyed thoroughly by all. After tea, addresses were delivered and subscriptions were handed up, which placed the Chapel in easy circumstances". The new church was regarded as the finest public edifice for some miles around; an estimate which does not appear unreasonable when it is compared with buildings of contemporary date erected for similar purposes. Amongst the old people's reminiscences of the occasion there "was a fear lest they had been too audacious and ambitious in their enterprise, and had built a church that would never be filled".

For night illumination a number of the "B" Burney type oil lamps were purchased. However, owing to the lack of made approach roads to the Chapel it was customary to hold the Sunday services at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., an arrangement which gave the worshippers an opportunity to negotiate the bush tracks during the hours of daylight. The building became extensively used in the early days for public meetings concerning the welfare of the small community, and also served as a public school, conducted by John Andrews, where most of the children from the surrounding farms and residences gained the rudiments of their education.

The old Chapel has acquired three additions in the course of its long history, and was placed at the disposal of the National Emergency Services during the Second World War, when it came into use as a First Aid Post. In 1955 the ancient structure was completely reconditioned, and the interior beautifully adorned and furnished as a "Beginner's room for the Sunday School. It later came into use as a "Childhood's Sabbath Home". It is pleasing to note that the Chapel of 1857 is maintained in excellent order by the Trustees, and the little building can certainly be grouped amongst the few structures of the pioneering days of the St. George District which have been suffered to remain in situ.

At the time of its dedication in 1857, the Rocky Point Chapel, as it was then known, was attached to "the Newtown Circuit", which at that time included such distant and outlying preaching places as Achfield, Botany, Camperdown, Botany Bay, Canterbury, Moorfields, and Peakhurst. The superintendence of the Circuit was in the hands of the Reverend W. A. Quick, who had arrived in the country from England in 1855, and after a year in Maitland, had been appointed to Newtown in 1857 and at the conference of 1859 was appointed to the charge of Norton College in Tasmania. He states in a letter "Mine was but a two years residence in Newtown and my circuit was extensive and, for one minister, its

working was difficult. Rocky Point was, I think, 'taken up' towards the close of my time, so that I was there but a few times".

During the thirty years of its association with the Newtown Circuit, Rocky Point was one of a number of preaching places which owed a large debt to local preachers, as the minister of the circuit could but rarely take Sunday appointments in the smaller more distant places. The names of men like Saxby, Findlayson, Butcher, Dunlop, Popplewell, Bowmer, and others have honourable places in the annals of the Rocky Point Chapel. Mr. Findlayson related, many years ago, that after his examination at the hands of Mr. Quick, for admission as a fully credited local preacher, his Sunday round of appointments often meant a walk from Newtown to Peakhurst, or Rocky Point in the morning; thence to Moorefields for the afternoon, and on to Canterbury for the evening service; and after that back to his house at Newtown. And such a round trudged over difficult roads, was a frequent experience in those early days.

Of the group of workers in the Rocky Point Chapel of the early period, Mr. James Canham occupied a position of honoured pre-eminence. Superintendents of the Sunday School when the chapel was built, there are traditions of his walking to morning school, carrying his lunch in his handkerchief, to be partaken of under the trees on the chapel ground in the interval between the morning and evening services. Fellow worker with Mr. Canham, and later his successor, was John Andrews. Born in London, he came as a youth to New South Wales and continued for nearly sixty years as a faithful member of the Rocky Point Chapel, for fifty-seven years of which period he was a local preacher and for fifty-two years a class-leader; for forty years secretary of the Rockdale Trust, and for twenty-three years its treasurer, and for thirty years in unbroken succession superintendent of the Sunday School. "His life presents a record of Christian service so honourable and so rare as to justify this minute particularisation".

Amongst others associated with the work of the Chapel should be mentioned the names of John Bowmer, and Messrs. Morse, Warren, Colborne, Godfrey, Shelton, Goode, Wilson, and Charles Napper. Mr. William Bray began to teach in the Sunday School in 1862, whilst Thomas Mascord was an early secretary of the Sunday School. It is my pleasure to record the names of these men, coming from such well known pioneering families of our district, in reference to their stirring worth and their association with Rockdale's historic Chapel.

(Part 2 of this Article will appear in the July Newsletter.)