



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER

1976

PRICE: 5c.

Registered for posting as a Periodical, Category C

Our next meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 14th October, on the second floor of the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah.

Following last October's "Open Night" which included items brought from our Museum and many from the homes of Members, we are all looking forward to a similar happy night this year.

Wear your badge and name-plate, won't you, for this will be the time for a chat with others.

And don't forget to bring an item of interest. Perhaps, in your home, you have some old photos of the district, or of an old home. Or perhaps an old clock - or piece of china - or an old garment or teapot.

Last year's Open Night was a great success -- and we are sure YOU could help make it even better this year.

SUPPER - This is a special occasion and each lady is asked to bring a plate of cakes or sandwiches.

Our Raffle Prize for this month has been donated by Mrs. Kingston.

SOCIAL NEWS.

A very pleasant day was spent on our Walking Tour conducted by Mr. Charles Gilbert --- more of this in another section.

PLEASE NOTE - October 23rd - 24th -- Bathurst - Hill End Tour. Starting time has been altered to 8 a.m. and here is the final itinerary. Leaving the Bus Stop outside Kogarah Newsagency 8 a.m., pick up at Hurstville Post Office 8.05 a.m., pick up from Strathfield Post Office 8.30 a.m. Morning Tea at Bilpin. Bring your thermos and sandwich or biscuits. Lunch at Bathurst (own expense) after which we will have a tour of the city - so bring your walking shoes. Dinner at night at the Bathurst Leagues Club, bed and breakfast at the Country Club Motel. Then on to Hill End. Lunch at Hill End (own expense) and home by 7.30 p.m. Please let me know if you are joining the Coach at Hurstville or Strathfield.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT -- CARSS' COTTAGE - Thursday 9th December (this takes the place of our December General Meeting). Now is the time to put your name on the list so you don't miss out. Barbeque - Adults \$2.50 children \$1.00. Entertainment will again be by the Sutherland Light Orchestra Group. Come and enjoy this very delightful evening with us.

Sylvia Kelly.

Thought for the month -- "The world is full of willing people - those who are willing to work -- and those that are willing to let them".

"WALKING TOUR OF OLD SYDNEY"

Sunday, 12th September, 1976.

- by Boris E. Evans.

What a glorious day Sydney turned on for our tour? The recent wet and windy weather had washed and cleaned the city. The fresh Spring green of the old trees, the brilliant blue of the sky and the waters of the harbour sparkled. On such a day one could well imagine Mrs. Macquarie taking her favourite walk around Farm Cove to the charming rocky spot, now known as Mrs. Macquarie's Chair.

Under the expert guidance of Mr. Charles Gilbert, who really knows his stuff, we tramped from one historic spot to the next, transporting ourselves back 150 years to the days of Lachlan Macquarie. Our Guide's story was so vivid that it was easy to visualize the scarlet uniforms of the N.S.W. Corps parading before Old Government House. It was easy, too, to form a picture of the rollicking, boisterous days of the 1820's, when the town was beginning to emerge from a mere convict settlement to a more permanent establishment.

Lachlan Macquarie was a man of vision who translated his vision into action. He, "Macquarie, the Builder", was truly the founder of our city, planning streets and buildings to bring some order out of the chaos of the original settlement.

Our starting point was the gracious old stone pile of St. James' Church, designed and built by Francis Greenway (a convict transported for forgery) in 1822. The Church was aptly described by Mr. Gilbert (borrowing liberally from Shakespeare) as "sermons in stone and wood". The pews are made of beautiful South Coast cedar. Memorial plaques round the walls read like the history of early Sydney. Macleay, O'Connell, Broughton and many other names incorporated in our streets and suburbs are prominent.

Next to the Church is the old Supreme Court building, at present unoccupied, awaiting whatever part it is to play in the new Law Courts complex at (Victoria Square). Here, by way of Mr. Gilbert's account, we met with Commissioner Bigge, sent out by the Colonial Office in London, to investigate Macquarie's inordinate spending of public moneys. Mr. Bigge was appalled at what he termed Macquarie's "extravagance". What did a convict settlement want with hospitals, schools and churches? - and a Convict Barracks, indeed!

Macquarie was forced to curtail his spending. Several of his "elaborate" schemes had to be compromised. For instance, he had planned the whole of this area as a Georgian Square. Greenway had been carrying out this plan. Now, the building designed as a school became the Court House. (It was here that the Third Charter, transferring Government from Military Control to Civil Justice was proclaimed in 1824). The proposed school was built on land now occupied by David Jones Store.

Across the square stood the Barracks, built by Greenway under Macquarie's order in 1817. It housed convicts, who, hitherto, had been left to find their own shelter. Thus adding to crime and confusion in the streets. Five hundred to one thousand convicts were accommodated here at any one time. There were 12 rooms where the men slept in hammocks. Four cell blocks (of which only one remains) stood one in each corner of the grounds. This, the oldest building still in use in Australia!

Hyde Park, originally the Common, was developed, at this time, to become the Race Course, where the officers of the regiment competed with the local gentry for trophies of the race.

Over where Park Street now is, stood the gallows, where condemned prisoners were summarily dealt with.

We paused to look briefly at the Mitchell Library. The building is modern, therefore not part of our present study, except to learn from Mr. Gilbert that a Light Horse Brigade Barracks once stood there.

Now, the Conservatorium commanded our attention. Built by Greenway for Macquarie as stables, the building is well-proportioned and architecturally gracious. It was to have been part of the major plan for a new Government House, modelled after the style of an old English castle. But alas! Macquarie's ideas on "the quality of life" were utterly and volubly condemned by Mr. "Money Bags" Bigge. The new Government House was not built in Macquarie's time. When later it did materialize it was a curtailed version of Macquarie's more grandiose plan.

Far away to the East we could see the Macquarie Light, a landmark on South Head, which replaces an earlier lighthouse, given to the Port of Sydney by Macquarie.

Trailing down Bridge Street we paused at the site of old Government House, where Governor Macquarie had lived and planned his plans, on the way to Macquarie Place to see the obelisk erected by him to mark the spot from which all mileages in N.S.W. are measured.

Going back in time, we were now on the site of Australia's earliest settlement. None of the buildings has survived. Only sites are marked. Mr. Gilbert had copious pictures and diagrams to show how things had been. In this way we noted the path of the Tank Street (the main reason for Sydney's particular location), the bridge across the Stream which gave Bridge Street its name, the location of the houses of Simeon Lord and Mary Reiby (noted merchants of Old Sydney), the place of the communal well, and the anchor of the "Sirius", the leading ship of the First Fleet to enter Port Jackson.

All these places were in close proximity to the Gun Redoubt which guarded Sydney Cove, and is the spot where Governor Phillip, on 26th January 1788, proclaimed N.S.W. to be part of King George III's domains. The Union Jack of that time is unfurled there (This flag is the union of the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew brought about when James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603).

So, ending our tour at Sydney Cove where it had all begun, we expressed our thanks to Mr. Gilbert for his informative and interesting discourse on Early Sydney. Thanks again, Mr. Gilbert!

Lesson to be learned from our thought-provoking afternoon? That history repeats itself!

How many times has Macquarie's unenviable experience been repeated in the building of our city? There has always been some money-orientated agent, crying poverty, to dampen the enthusiasm of our creative men. Think back to the building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Cahill Expressway, the creation of Martin Plaza and, of course, the classic example of the Opera House.

I wonder if Utzon ever read the story of Lachlan Macquarie? One fancies the spirit of L. Macquarie, wherever it be, smiled knowingly and a little bitterly when Utzon was sent packing as he, himself had been, under a cloud.

The last word, however, is with the Macquaries, the Greenways, the Bradfields and the Utzons of this world. Their work stands. Whatever did Mr. Digge achieve?

Since the Macquarie era our city has grown and grown. But changed - progressed? I wonder?

MUSEUM ROSTER.

| October 10 - Mrs. A. McOnie & Miss | | To Open. |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Oct. 10 | Mrs. A. McOnie & Miss M. Moley ----- | Mr. J. Veness |
| 17 | Mrs. D. Hatton & Mrs. M. Grieve ----- | Mrs. D. Hatton |
| 24 | Mr. & Mrs. E. Schweikert ----- | Mr. J. Lean |
| 31 | Mrs. G. Johns and Mrs. G. Taylor ----- | Mrs. G. Johns |
| Nov. 7 | Mr. K. Grieve & Mr. J. Wright ----- | Miss C. McEwen |
| 14 | Mrs. S. Kelly & Mrs. J. James ----- | Mrs. S. Kelly |
| 21 | Mr. & Mrs. J. Howard ----- | Mrs. J. Howard |
| 28 | Miss P. Harry & Mrs. B. Dodd ----- | Mr. J. Lean |
| Dec. 5 | Mrs. J. Wright & Mrs. Kermond ----- | Mr. J. Veness |
| 12 | Mrs. Johnson & Mrs. E. Aiken ----- | Mrs. B. Butters |

If any date given is not convenient please contact me by phone (57-5940) or see me at the next meeting.

I would also like to hear from any other members wishing to add their names to the roster list on a regular or occasional basis, or for one of the Public Holidays in the Christmas-New Year period which rapidly approaches once again!! Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Gwen Lean.

THOUGHTS ON COLLECTING.

- by E. Howard.

Nearly everywhere we go these days, as a tourist I mean, it is possible to visit a museum. I have been to quite a number, in fact, it is probably true to say I collect Museums, and like to reminisce every now and again about this one or that, and think of some of the beautiful or amazing memorabilia in each one. Sometimes I don't remember all the items so well as the friendly guides and hospitality that provides each place with its own particular character.

For museums and libraries fill a unique place in our lives, linking the past with the present. History is about people, and the activities that concerned people of the past, and people today, full of curiosity, are collecting, presenting, writing and talking about those activities of earlier times. Any collection, in a museum or library, will reflect the interests and attitudes of the people involved. If documents and books are collected over a lifetime or a period of years by one person, family or firm, the collection will tell something about the mind of the collector, and a social historian will gain much knowledge of the life-style and period while the collection was growing.

On a recent visit to Camden Park I saw part of the library collected by the Macarthur family over 140 years. Book shelves were set in alcoves in the high walls when the house was built, and the sight of those rows of well-used books gives an immediate impression of country life at its most comfortable and gracious. Not all the books are particularly valuable, as they were mainly bought for pleasure and information and give a significant insight into the tastes of a unique family.

Unfortunately not all Historical Societies are able to find anything like a Macarthur collection in their area. Of 79 Historical Societies questioned by Theo Barker (1) regarding the main objectives of such a society - the first choice is "to collect documents and objects". Other objectives include: to conduct a museum, to study Australian history, to be a meeting point for history enthusiasts and to provide social contacts with meetings, picnics and visits to places of historical interest.

On the subject of collecting, however, he stressed that Museums should play down the things that are everywhere, and play up the things that are nowhere else. A popular social activity is an organized walking tour when information may be gathered about local structures*and streets named after early families or industrial activities.--(Street names may reflect new items of the past, family names associated with a great early house in the area, or industrial occupations. It cannot be assumed that they were named at the time of the happenings, however). The collection of knowledge to be analysed and authenticated may help provide new evidence, from local sources, for the study of self-government, trade unionism, federation, the World Wars or industrial archaeology. Too much of our history has been written down as rehashed generalisations. How many of us would find it difficult to name another gentleman farmer other than Macarthur, or another emancipist farmer other than John White. What about all the people of our area who participated in historical events of regional or national importance. Are you satisfied that enough information has been collected about Kogarah?

Reference - 1. A view of local history, by Theo Barker. Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society. Vol.61 Part 2. June 1975. Based on a paper read before that Society 28.8.73

Footnote - * A detailed inventory could be made of local structures of any kind that have dates on them or can be dated from their architectural style and features. However dates can be misleading as a date on a building does not necessarily mean it was the first in this position or that at the date shown it had all the extensions (fences, annexes) you see now.

NEW HERITAGE BILL

-by Colleen McEwen.

Recently an announcement was made that the New South Wales State Government proposes to introduce a Heritage Bill into Parliament before the end of this year which will put an end to the destruction, by intent or neglect, of the State's historic heritage.

There are two basic principles of the proposed Bill. One is the prevention of further destruction of buildings and sites, and second, by a policy of "dynamic conservation", to preserve historic relics in a useful role for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Government believes the latter can be achieved by assisting owners to maintain historic buildings in a viable and economic use by a selective system of rate and land tax relief. This provision is designed to ensure that historic buildings do not become irreparably damaged by the unwillingness or the inability of the owners to make necessary repairs. It is also designed to prevent the circumvention of demolition controls by allowing buildings to deteriorate into heaps of rubble through wilful neglect. In cases of proven hardship of the owners the Government will meet the cost of the repairs, and such outlays will be repaid on the sale of the property or from the estate of the owner, whichever occurs first. At the Government's discretion, purchase may be considered where it is thought to be vital to the survival of a building or site of outstanding merit.

The proposed Act provides also for the preservation of natural beauty reserves and urban areas.

The legislation will establish a Heritage Council to replace the former Historic Sites and Buildings Committee. The 10 members of the Council will include representatives of the Government, the National Trust, planners, architects, local government, the State Labour Council and conservationists.

The Minister for Planning and Environment will have power, on the recommendation of the Council, to protect buildings and areas by declaring them historic. Local Councils, historical societies, and other interested bodies, or individuals will be able to ask for the declaration of a building or area as historic or architecturally interesting and worthy of preservation.

FACT OR FICTION? I remember seeing a film of two schoolmasters, one very English and one very French. Both teachers took their respective groups to the heights of the Cliffs where Wolfe stormed the French in Quebec many years ago. The stories they told their students were basically the same in one fact only, viz. the date.

---When Frankie Gardiner, one of Ben Hall's Mob had served his sentence for bushranging he sailed for and lived in San Francisco. Here he married and had twin sons.
At the turn of this century two, twin, male Americans, booked in at the 'local' at Grenfell. After numerous beers with the 'locals' they hired a horse and dray -- the next day they hired picks and shovels as they thought they'd try a bit of 'this here prospectin'. These two men were never seen again. --- Frank's share of the \$14,000 odd 'rip off' from his and Ben's infamous gold stage coach hold up has never been recovered. Funny, isn't it?

Kevin Plummer.

LAST MONTH'S ARTICLE ABOUT KISSING POINT.

In a weak moment, when not feeling very well, I was given an article about Kissing Point which had been presented by the Country Women's Association.

Realising that I was not really well enough to produce the September Newsletter, I made arrangements for others to lend a hand but unfortunately allowed the Kissing Point article to appear in the September issue.

Our friend, Mr. Philip Geeve, has kindly come to the rescue and the attached letter and extract from his book "A place of Pioneers" sets matters aright. Our sincere thanks go to Mr. Geeves. V.S.C.

"Dear Mr. Smith,

Re 'The Story of Kissing Point' in your September Newsletter.

I am fascinated to know how Mrs. Murray could possibly 'vouch' for the authenticity of a hoary old legend which, in countless variations, has been bandied about the Parramatta River for longer than anyone can remember.

Mrs. Murray suggests a dialogue between people who could never have known one another. She would have us believe that Tom (Thomas Charles) Farnell, the husband of Mary Ann Squire, was an intimate of Governor Hunter during his term of office in New South Wales ('I told Hunter to be here before low tide'). The fact is that Governor John Hunter surrendered his office to his successor, Philip Sidney King, in September 1800 and returned to England the following year. Hunter died in London on 13 March 1821, whereas Farnell, who married James Squire's daughter, Mary Ann, did not arrive in New South Wales until 1822.

As evidence of the proliferation of this ridiculous surmise about the origin of 'Kissing Point', I enclose photocopies of relevant passages from my centennial history of Ryde, "A Place of Pioneers".

Kind regards,

Sincerely,

Philip Geeves."

"----During that period another place-name came into general use along the Parramatta River -- Kissing Point -- and we must examine its origins before continuing because James Squire, who looms large in Ryde's early history, did much to put Kissing Point on the map. The name Kissing Point was already an official designation less than seven years after Sydney was founded; Ann Thorn's grant, dated 11 November 1794, described Thorn Farm as "lying and situate at Kissing Point in the district of Eastern Farms". By 1800 the name Eastern Farms was being replaced by the more romantic-sounding appellation. The small promontory in the river, still marked on official maps as Kissing Point, soon lent its name to the nearby settlement, then to an entire reach of the Parramatta River as well as to the district thereabouts.

If only one of the First Fleeters had taken the trouble to record the origin of the name we would have been spared a tiresome and seemingly endless controversy. The theories advanced claim that one of the early governors attended a picnic party on the river and, having partaken not wisely but too well, he went to sleep. The ladies present discussed whether they should kiss the governor awake and then claim the forfeit -- a pair of gloves. Another version has it that the governor's wife played the romantic lead. Unfortunately for this legend, Arthur Phillip's wife

remained in England, John Hunter was a bachelor and William Bligh's wife pleaded seasickness to avoid accompanying her husband to foreign parts. Nor were there any shops in the colony selling fancy merchandise, such as ladies' gloves.

Variations of the story continued to swell our folklore for years. By the 1850s Governor Macquarie had been dragged into the legend. He had supposedly landed on the Point, drunk a toast to Caroline of Brunswick, the unhappy queen of the royal rake who became George the Fourth, then exclaimed 'a health to the ladies, I kiss you all round'. The simple fact is that Kissing Point was in use as a place-name fifteen years before Macquarie's arrival in New South Wales.

Much more acceptable is a nautical explanation that the 'kissing point' marked the limit of river navigation for seagoing vessels, the spot where their keels would 'kiss' the shelving riverbed; the word was accepted naval parlance, meaning 'to touch lightly'. During the 1830s the navigable channel in the Parramatta River posed constant problems for the colony's engineers. In 1834 Governor Bourke let a contract 'to open the navigation at all times of tide for vessels and steam boats' but the contractors 'had experienced difficulty in ascertaining whether the effect of the tides and the currents would not again fill up the channel'. When that efficient Royal Engineer, Major George Barney, the man who built Fort Denison and Victoria Barracks, arrived here from England, his energies were quickly directed to 'removing obstacles in the channel of the Parramatta River'. An 1866 directory noted that the river was navigable for vessels up to 600 tons only as far as Ryde. On modern hydrographic charts the river at Kissing Point is 230 yards wide and the channel averages about six fathoms in depth, but above that point the water shoals rapidly.

Many years ago one of the Blaxland family, with a rich fund of local lore, stated that Kissing Point owed its name to passing boats bumping or 'kissing' the rocks which extend into the river for some distance. But whatever the reason for the name it was soon being used to denote the surrounding district and continued to enjoy general acceptance for half a century until displaced somewhat tentatively at first, by Ryde.

The most notable early resident of Kissing Point was unquestionably James Squire; the 'Sydney Gazette' even referred to him as 'the Patriarch'. His enterprise and his produce attracted to Kissing Point men of every station -- Exclusives and Emancipists, Sterling and Currency. They came to Squire's jetty on the Parramatta River not merely to bandy words, but to sample his brown ale, for James Squire (or Squires as many called him) put his faith in Englishmen's thirsts and prospered accordingly. Sailors of many nations who were vague about the locations of Nineveh or Babylon, could find their way to Squire's in a thick fog.

Born in 1754, James Squire was tried at Kingston-on-Thames in April 1785 for highway robbery and sentenced to seven years' transportation beyond the seas. He sailed with the First Fleet in the transport 'Charlotte'. He was one of the colony's pioneer brewers and was certainly the first to produce ale from local hops, an industry he established at Kissing Point. Whilst still a government servant in Sydney, Squire brewed small quantities of beer which he sold at 4d. a quart. Officers of the New South Wales Corps, including two lieutenant-governors, gave him their custom, so Squire could justly claim to be Australia's very first vice-regal brewer....."

THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council)

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

President:

Mr. J. E. Veness,
6 Lance Street,
BLAKEHURST, 2221

'Phone: 546 3932

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Hon. Secretary:

Mrs. B. Butters,
36 Louisa Street,
OATLEY, 2223.

'Phone: 57 6954

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.