



# THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER --- JANUARY

1976 --- 1977.

PRICE: 5c.

Registered for posting as a Periodical, Category C

---

---

---

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,  
BLAKEMURST. 2221.  
Phone 546 3932.

Hon. Treasurer:

Mrs. G. Johns  
32 Princes Highway,  
KOGARAH. 2217.  
Phone: 537 4343.

Hon. Secretary:

Mrs. D. Lutters,  
36 Louisa Street,  
OATLEY. 2223.  
Phone: 57 6954.

Vice Presidents: Mr. V.S. Smith and Mr. N. Kelly.

ACTIVITIES: 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 3 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 of 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.

CAROL MUSEUM: Open Sundays and Public Holidays from 1 to 5 p.m.  
Admissions: 30 cents Adults, 10 cents Children. Maximum 80 cents per 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 objects.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEWSLETTER: Contributions of articles and information of local interest for publication in this Newsletter will be welcomed forwarded to the Publications Officer:

Mr. V. S. Smith,  
26 Prince Edward Street,  
CARLTON. 2213.

Phone: 537 2938.

## DECEMBER AND JANUARY ISSUE

This publication combines the December and January issues of the Newsletter. The Management Committee decided to unite these issues so that the month of January could be used to prepare a number of historical monographs to be sold at the Museum. These monographs will incorporate many articles that have been printed in our Newsletter since its inception in 1971.

## CHRISTMAS NIGHT AT CARSS' COTTAGE - THURSDAY 9TH DECEMBER.

(Held in lieu of our December meeting)

Our Social Secretary, Sylvia Kelly, has reported that over 100 people have already put their names down to attend this popular annual function. If you have not added your name to the list it's not too late just give Sylvia a ring on 587 6986. The cost is \$2.50 for adults, and \$1.00 for children.

Activities will commence at 6.30 p.m. and our two Chefs, Noel and Jeff, will be serving their well known appetizing steaks from about 7 p.m. After the meal the Sutherland Light Orchestra Group will entertain us on the front lawn so be sure to bring along your chair or blanket. Should the weather be unkind our plans will not be upset as we have the use of the Sea Scouts Hall.

Please bring along your ticket butts for the Tea Liquor Set Raffle. Also to be raffled on the night is a beautiful carved tapestry rocking chair kindly donated by Miss G. Giersch.

We hope that all our members will come along and enjoy this very delightful evening.

## JANUARY MEETING

Our January meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday 13th January, on the second floor of the Civic Centre, in Belgrave Street, Kogarah.

In place of a speaker we will be holding a member's slide night. On this occasion members are requested to bring along about 6 to 10 slides depicting places of historic interest they have visited and could provide a short commentary about.

Our raffle prize has been kindly donated by Mrs. Burghart.

I am pleased to report that our Vice President Mr. Vince Smith is recovering well after undergoing an operation two weeks ago in St. George Hospital. We send to him our very best wishes for continued good progress.

---

#### MUSEUM ROSTER

		<u>To open</u>
December	5th - Mrs. J. Wright & Mrs. Kermond	Mr. Veness
	12th - Mrs. Johnson & Mrs. Aitken	Mrs. Butters
	19th - Mrs. G. Johns & Mrs. G. Taylor	Mrs. Johns
	26th - Mrs. S. Kelly & Mrs. Kermond	Mrs. Kelly
	27th - Mr. & Mrs. Lean	Mr. Lean
	28th - Miss Coxhead & Friend	Miss McEwen
January	2nd - Mrs. A. McOnie & Miss M. Foley	Mr. Veness
	9th - Mrs. D. Hatton & Mrs. M. Grieve	Mrs. Hatton
	16th - Mr. & Mrs. Schweikert	Mr. Lean
	23rd - Mr. K. Grieve & Mr. J. Wright	Miss McEwen
	30th - Mr. & Mrs. Howard	Mrs. Howard
February	6th - Mrs. S. Kelly & Mrs. J. James	Mrs. Kelly
	13th - Mrs. Fitzharding & Mrs. J. Wright	Mr. Veness
	20th - Miss P. Harry & Mrs. B. Dodd	Mr. Lean
	27th - Mrs. G. Johns & Mrs. G. Taylor	Mrs. Johns

If any date is inconvenient please phone me at 57 5940, or see me at the Christmas night.

Volunteers are requested for the New Years Day holiday and the Australia Day holiday.

Gwen Lean.

---

#### SPRING CLEANING???

Perhaps you have no further use for back issues of the Society's Newsletter. To complete the library files we especially need the following issues:-

February 1971

February, October and November 1973

June, July, August and October 1975.

Thank you Mrs. Burghart for the issues you were able to supply.

Elaine Howard.

---



CHRISTMAS LETTERS

Contributed by E. Howard

Exmoor (Queensland),  
December 27, 1862.

My Dearest Etta,

I thought very much of you on Christmas Day, and of my last Christmas at home. Do you remember how bright and cold it was? And how we went out on Christmas Eve and bought a great branch of holly and dressed the drawing-room? Here we hung up over the pictures some Australian mistletoe, and pretty parasite, with bright-yellow drooping branches - like willow in the autumn - which grows in the gum-trees here. Beckford Simpson, Mr. Devlin's nephew, nearly broke his neck in climbing for it, as a branch gave way, and he only saved himself by catching the trunk of the gum-tree and sliding down.

Your most affectionate sister,

Rachel Henning.

(From - The Letters of Rachel Henning, edited by David Adams.)

Nottingham,  
February, 1901.

Dear Will and Florence,

I think Evelyn has told you all the news. Thank you for the Illustrated Paper about the Central (Commonwealth Inaugural) Celebrations; you had a most exciting time and did it in style. Only just in time too before our beloved Queen died, somehow we never thought of losing her. I sent you papers all about the ceremony etc.

I shall forward, probably next week, John's Cabinet photo. You never said whether you got the little one of John. Fancy telling me I look ancient, and then next paragraph saying you had taken to glasses, a thing I do not need either for sewing or reading. Can see the smallest print, even the miniature Telegraph you sent. Also I quite appreciated the Xmas card, but shall like to have the children's photos when you can manage it.

Your loving sister,  
Lizzie Pagett.

(From - Letter sent to Mr. & Mrs. W. Budbury, Old Kent Road, Punchbowl).

Christmas Letter from Australia -

'Tis Christmas, and the north wind blows; 'twas two  
years yesterday  
Since from the Lusitania's bows I looked o'er  
Table Bay,  
A tripper round the narrow world, a pilgrim of the  
main,  
Expecting when her sails unfurled to start for home  
again.

I fancy I can picture you upon this Christmas night,  
Just sitting as you used to do the laughter at its  
height,  
And then a sudden, silent pause intruding on you glee,  
And kind eyes glistening because you chanced to think  
of me.

It is not quite a Christmas here with this unclouded  
sky,  
This pure transparent atmosphere, this sun mid-heaven  
high,  
To see the rose upon the bush, young leaves upon the  
trees,  
And hear the forest's summer hush or the low hum of  
the bees.

And now good-night and I shall dream that I am with  
you all,  
Watching the ruddy embers gleam stewart the panelled  
hall;  
Nor care I if I dream or not, though severed by the  
foam,  
My heart is always in the spot which was my childhood's  
home.

Douglas B.W. Sladen.

(From - The Australian Christmas, by Frank Cusask.)

CHRISTMAS DAY 1791 - The following abstract comes from the  
Journal of David Collins:

"From the state of the provision stores, the governor,  
on Christmas day, could only give one pound of flour to each  
woman in the settlement. On that day divine service was  
performed here and at Parramatta, Mr. Bayne, the Chaplain of  
the new corps, assisting Mr. Johnson in the religious duties  
of the morning. There were some among us, however, by  
whom even the sanctity of this day was not regarded; for at  
night the marine store was robbed of two-and-twenty gallons  
of spirits."

(From - Sydney Cove 1791-1792, edited by John Cobley.)

## THE STRANGE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CARDS

Have you ever wondered about how the tradition of the Christmas card began? Our Secretary, Beryl Butters, found the following newspaper article in the December 6, 1952 edition of the Sydney Morning Herald which relates the story.

..... People were shocked by the first Christmas cards when they appeared just over 100 years ago in London. Temperance advocates bitterly condemned them. They called them "portraits of dissipation" and tried to have them banned on the grounds that they encouraged and even glorified drunkenness.

The cards had a picture of a prosperous looking gentleman and his wife at a table with glasses of wine raised in a toast to the recipient of the card, while a young couple sat opposite arm-in-arm and the children drained a bottle on the far side of the table. Beneath were the words "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". There were two smaller pictures on either side in a rustic framework showing the feeding of the poor and the clothing of the naked, but (at least for some critics) they failed to atone for the wine-bibbing.

The man who published these cards was Sir Henry Cole, a model of Victorian respectability and a prominent charitable worker. Late in 1843 he had asked an artist J.C. Horsley, R.A., to design a special greeting form to save himself the task of writing Christmas letters which the best people in his day wrote on notepaper ornamented with some Christmassy verse or design. Horsley drew the two biblical scenes and the family celebrating Christmas on a flat card and Cole had 1,000 copies printed in black and white and coloured by hand. Although they met bitter criticism as soon as Cole published them there was nothing greatly original about the idea.

A little earlier - in 1841 or 1842 - a Scotsman, Thomas Shorrock, of Leith, had issued a card with a picture of a laughing face and the words: "A Gude New Year to Ye". W.M. Egley engraved cards in 1842 with illustrations of Christmas dinner and musicians playing in the streets on Christmas night, while W.C.T. Dobson, a Birmingham artist, designed cards with scenes from the Bible and sent them to friends at Christmas in 1844.

These were the beginnings but Christmas cards did not become popular until 20 years later when cheaper methods of colour reproduction and penny postage brought prices down and publishing firms began a campaign to capture popular fancy.

Well known artists were commissioned to design cards. Some of these artists acquired the standing of fashion dictators, changing the vogue from gnomes, sprites and fairies to thatched cottages, hunting scenes, Japanese temples and cherry blossom and then to cows, horses, dogs, cats and rabbits.

---

A new vogue emerged in the 1870's in the form of Christmas card "pin-ups" which shocked many Victorians - and sent sales soaring. Righteous Victorians who asked the well established firm of De La Rue in 1878 to see cards that had been advertised as "Classical Studies" were shaken to find that they were paintings of nudes bathing in clear pools. Thousands who had never bought a Christmas card in their lives before rushed to buy these. They were designed by W.S. Coleman, one of the leading English artists of his day. His cards received so much publicity and sold so quickly that he followed them up with series of "Youthful Beauties" and "Blowing Bubbles".

Sales continued to rise and it was not long before flattering notices appeared in the press. "Punch" praised "the elegance and variety" of De La Rue's cards, but it added the admonition; " 'Punch' must protest against nudities at Christmas time. It is too cold for them if there were no other reason".

In 1882 one company alone paid £5,000 in prizes; another paid £7,000 for original drawings. These competitions greatly improved the standard of Christmas Card production and in 1884 the first folded cards or booklets appeared. They had portraits of the poets Burns, Thomson and Pope on the covers and quotations from their works inside for poets as well as artists were attracted by the big money in the industry.

Towards the end of the last century trick cards became popular. All sorts of novelties had a vogue for a time - cards with matches and keys attached, frosted cards, cards with silk fringes and sachets and padded cards. There were cards made of imitation tortoise shell mother-of-pearl and ivory, velvet and lace, seaweed, moss celluloid and slabs of cork cut to represent bridges, castles and rocky coasts. Shops even sold cards made to represent razors, burnt cigars, slices of bacon and teeth extracted by the dentist.

Even more ingenious were cards which appeared during World War I, especially in America. Among the best sellers were cards with letters attached in sealed envelopes which were to be opened at stated times throughout Christmas day, and brightly-coloured 9" by 15" poster cards designed to be hung on the wall or in the window to wish visitors or passers by a Merry Christmas. Most original and most popular of all were decorated boxes which contained 6" gramophone records on which Christmas greetings were sung by a rich baritone voice.

Personal cards which first appeared just over 50 years ago always have a special attraction. The Gaekwar of Baroda ordered one which measured 10" by 12" and was made of pure ivory and set with diamonds "each as large as the pupil of the human eye". It consisted of 8,000 miniature scenes carved by leading Indian craftsman. The finished card was worth more than £500,000.

## THE "MARCONI" OF ARNCLIFFE

by Philip Geeves F.R.A.H.S.

Some years ago I was asked by a local historical society "did Marconi ever live at Arncliffe?". Some old residents were apparently convinced that he did. The answer, of course, was a firm "no". Indeed, the Italian inventor who gave wireless to the world was never able to find time in his busy life to visit Australia.

But the story of Arncliffe's "Marconi" is worth telling because his activities brought the suburb to national notice.

In the first decade of this century, Australia became acutely aware of a new technological development which was destined to shrink the world - wireless telegraphy, or "wireless" for short. The two leading systems of spark telegraphy were Marconi (British) and Telefunken (German). Unfortunately, the Australian Government had no experts capable of evaluating the different systems, so, finding itself in a dilemma, did practically nothing about the adoption of wireless communication.

By 1910 wireless-equipped ships, including vessels of the Royal Navy, were already in Australian waters, but there was not a single official land station to accept their messages. Naturally, the Federal Government was criticized severely for neglecting the potentialities of this novel form of communication.

There was, however, a small group of dedicated amateurs experimenting with wireless in Australia. Although they were forbidden to transmit messages, they were permitted to explore the airwaves, listening for wireless signals. Radio telephony - the transmission of voice and music - was not yet practicable, so all "wireless" was limited to Morse code signals, composed of dots and dashes.

One of these young enthusiasts was Mr. Jack Pike of Arncliffe, a trainee draftsman. He lived with his parents on the western side of Eden Street: the family home was named "Marella". Like all our pioneer experimenters, Pike and built his own equipment because there were then no radio shops in the whole of Australia. He rigged a receiving aerial on his parents' home and sat down to listen for dots and dashes coming from the great silent expanses of the "aether". Most listening was done at night, when wireless messages were distinctly more audible than during daylight. That much was already known in 1910 but it was to be many years before this curious phenomenon was explained by an English scientist, Oliver Heaviside.

Early in 1910 the citizens of Sydney - and particularly the residents of the St. George district - were astonished to open their newspapers and see a banner headline .... WIRELESS

---



FROM AUCKLAND. FIRST MESSAGE RECEIVED. PRIVATE SYDNEY EXPERIMENTER. WONDERFUL RESULTS CLAIMED. The story continued ... "On Friday night, for the first time in history a wireless message from New Zealand was received in Australia. It was sent by H.M.S. Powerful, steaming along on the other side of New Zealand, a few hours out of Auckland harbour. It was received by Mr. J.H.A. Pike, a young unknown private experimenter, at his small station authorised by the Commonwealth Government at Arncliffe. There is no station in Australia capable of sending back a message, and at this moment H.M.S. Powerful does not know that her messages have been received. The next day, Saturday, the Powerful moored in Auckland harbour. That night Mr. Pike detected on his instrument several times before 10 o'clock a very faint shrill note. It was not at the time readable, but it was the effect of an instrument working, and similar to the peculiar note made by the Powerful's spark.

"Mr. Pike's messages have been received on an instrument which he has constructed himself, and with an exceedingly sensitive and delicate detector, his own invention. With aerial wires only 50 ft. in mean height, he is catching messages which pass the warships and liners in the harbour, which have far higher aerials, without affecting them at all.

"The P. and O. steamer Malwa left Sydney on Thursday", Mr. Pike said. "That night, when she was about 200 miles down the coast, I heard her calling up the warships in the harbour. The Warships in the harbour were calling her up also. But neither of them heard one another. I could hear both".

And much more in this vein. In the days that followed, the Sydney press treated its readers to further chapters of Jack Pike's extraordinary achievements. Like pilgrims visiting a holy shrine, sightseers travelled out to Arncliffe at weekends to gape at the source of these communication marvels. They loitered about Eden Street, gazing at the aerial and taking photographs.

Pike himself was summoned to Melbourne for discussions with the Postmaster General. Perhaps the Government felt that the young man from Arncliffe could provide some valuable advice about Australia's belated adoption of wireless.

Needless to say, nothing came of it. Jack Pike was merely a talented amateur with no professional training in the complexities of wireless communication. For many years he remained a pillar of the Wireless Institute of Australia and was privileged to see the flowering of the science which now enables us to receive colour television from outer space and to give complex orders to a sophisticated electronic device analysing soil samples on the bleak surface of Mars.

## NEW RESEARCH INTO ST. GEORGE HISTORY

The following article appeared in the Hurstville Council Comment No.13, May, 1976. Our thanks to Charles Gilbert for drawing our attention to the review, and to Ken Lander and Hurstville Council for permission to reprint the article.

Recent research by a local resident into certain aspects of the history of the St. George area has thrown much important new light on the development patterns of this district. The study, entitled "A History of the Subdivision Pattern of the St. George Area", was undertaken by Kenneth Lander in 1974 as part of his Bachelor of Town Planning Degree studies.

No-one needs reminding about how much it costs to buy land in the St. George district these days. Such expense contrasts markedly with the first years of the new Colony. From the first grant of 200 hectares in the vicinity of Kingsgrove to Hannah Laycock, wife of Quartermaster Thomas Laycock, until 1831, land in the area was free for the asking! Of course, it was not as simple as that in practice.

The land usually went to those with considerable private wealth or with friends in high places. This system was so abused that the free land grant system was abolished in 1831, and a price of five shillings per acre was asked by the Crown for the land. Small landowners were now in a position to purchase property themselves and to farm it productively.

One of the most interesting conclusions Mr. Lander reached in his work was the complex inter-relationship which was found to exist between the availability of capital for investment, the level of communications, and the rate of migration to Australia.

In every instance, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an economic boom in the general economy fuelled much increased subdivision in the St. George area.

During this period, farming would have been the main occupation on these lands together with timber cutting and lime burning. In fact, quite a flourishing ship-building industry existed for a time, and Lime Kiln Bay owes its name to this period when lime burners used to gather shells in the area and burn them for lime.

The 1830's were the first boom time for the region. British capital was flowing into the Colony, and this together with the opening of important road links with the Liverpool Road, led to much land speculation. Communications with the main centre of Sydney were immeasurably improved with the opening of a permanent road link across Cook's River in 1839.

---

One historian paints a clear picture of this period:

"Frenzied speculation in land had built up in 1839 and accelerated in 1840. If the golden fleece was the magnet attracting English migrants, the lure of city land was also a powerful additional incentive to investment and speculation....."

This boom was brought to an abrupt end by a severe drought late in 1840. The result was a severe depression and collapse of land market. The discovery of gold in New South Wales in 1851 provided the impetus for the next boom time in the Colony.

By 1860, a radical change had occurred in the area. Nearly all the Crown land had been sold, and the large estates of the early years of the century were being subdivided into smaller farms. The opening of Forest Road in 1864 greatly aided this process.

A new road was also decided upon between Rocky Point Road and Tom Ugly's Point, and the crossroads were made at the site of one of the early inns of the area, Prendergasts. Prendergasts Inn blossomed in late years to become a fully fledged hotel, the Gardener's Arms. Here the first meeting of Kogarah Council was held on March 9, 1886. The twentieth century saw the building continue in this type of role when it became the headquarters of the St. George Leagues Club. However, after approximately 100 years of satisfying the worldly needs of men it went on to satisfy their higher spiritual needs and became part of St. Patrick's Church!

Of even more far-reaching significance than the road system was the decision, in 1881, to build the Illawarra railway line at a cost of £1,020,000. Built in 1884, some idea of the impact of the railway can be gained from the fact that, where as in 1871, one in seventy people in the Sydney Metropolitan Area lived in the St. George district, this figure had increased rapidly after the building of the railway to become one in thirty-eight by 1891.

1883 saw the entry of Thomas Saywell into the affairs of the area. He purchased about 100 acres of land around Lady Robinson's Beach, Botany Bay, and proceeded to build a hotel, swimming baths and holiday homes. Grand Parade was formed into a promenade, and together with Samuel Cook he planted the famous Norfolk Pines at Brighton.

Unscrupulous land speculation seems to have been as much a fact of life, and as much looked upon suspiciously, in those days as it is today. For example, when one subdivision came up for sale in 1885, a reporter of the time spoke of "Little farms .... passed now, for the most part, into the hands of speculators, building companies and auctioneers, who map them.

---



out in the old chequer-board fashion, and dispose of these in pieces that resemble cemetary lots rather than building spaces."

By the turn of the century, the area was rapidly losing its predominately rural character, and was well on the way to becoming the suburban dormitory region it is today. The proximity of the region both to the city and to the Botany/Alexandria industrial zone made the area ideal for residential purposes. Proper Town Planning was assuming an ever greater importance and this was recognized in the Local Government Acts of 1906 and 1919.

The County of Cumberland Planning Scheme of 1951 officially recognized the now fundamentally residential nature of the area, and it does not seem likely that there will be any major departures from this policy for a long time to come.

---

#### CAROLINE CHISHOLM'S EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT FOR YOUNG LADIES

From 1863 to 1865 "Tempe" (known as "Greenbank") was occupied by Caroline Chisholm who used the residence as a school.

Her advertisement said that:

"Mrs Caroline Chisholm begs to intimate to her Friends and the Public that she has removed her

#### EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT for Young Ladies

to that delightfully situated residence, Green Bank, Tempe, Cook's River, formerly the property of A.B. Sparks, Esq., when she will be able to receive a few more additional pupils. The Rooms of the House are spacious, lofty and well-ventilated and the outbuildings are excellent. There are about 12 acres of Pleasure Grounds and Gardens attached with a fine large and open Orchard of Fruit Trees, intersected by wide and shady walks. There is also a good Bath-House adjoining the House, where the Young Ladies will have the further benefit of Sea Bathing, as often as may be deemed desirable.

Buses run from Sydney and Newtown, to within five minutes walk of Tempe.

The Quarter to commence from the date of entrance of a Pupil. No notice of removal required."

---