



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1977

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FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday the 10th February, on the second floor of the Civic Centre, in Belgrave Street, Kogarah.

On this occasion our Librarian, Elaine Howard, will give an address entitled the "Townson Brothers of Botany Bay".

Ladies on the SUPPER ROSTER - Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. Buchanan.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT REPORT

Our Christmas night at the Cottage is all over for another year, and how lucky we were with the weather once again. I am sure everyone enjoyed the night. Many thanks are due to many people, to President Jeff, and Vice President Noel for cooking the delicious steaks, to Val and Jean for their help in the afternoon as well as the evening, to Beryl and Elaine, Ken and Colleen, to Bill Wright who does so much in a quite way, to Dick and Ron for their assistance and also to Jack Howard who was a tower of strength with the raffles. My thanks especially to Mrs. McEwen who spent the night washing up and getting things ship shape in the kitchen and to Gwen and Jack for having the Museum looking so beautiful.

Our music was delightful and we were lucky indeed to have the privilege of listening to the Sutherland Light Orchestra Group - it was very much appreciated.

We missed our friends Mr. & Mrs. Smith but knew they were thinking of us and watching the weather to see that all was well.

To Miss Trudy Giersch a special thanks for the donation of the beautiful chair (we were all envious of the lucky lady who won it).

From our Treasurer we found we had made the wonderful amount of \$229.40. This would not have been possible without the help and support from so many members and friends, and now we look forward to a busy and I hope successful 1977.

Sylvia Kelly

SOCIAL REPORT

Illawarra Theatre Guild - Saturday 12th February - \$2.00
Twenty (20) tickets are available for February 12, not the 19th as suggested at the last meeting. "I Killed the Count" is a murder mystery in the traditional British manner, lightly laced with comedy, and should be very entertaining. Tickets to be collected and paid for at the next meeting.

Bessemer Luncheon - Tuesday 8th March - 60¢
Mrs. Val Burghart has arranged for a Bessemer Luncheon to be held at the Sea Scouts Hall, Carss Park, on Tuesday March 8th, commencing at 10.30 a.m. 60¢ admission. A very nice light luncheon will be served and the Bessemer demonstration will be most enjoyable.

Your support for these two functions will be appreciated.

Sylvia Kelly

MUSEUM ROSTER

February	13th - Mrs. Fitzharding & Mrs. J. Wright	Mr. Veness
	20th - Miss Harry & Mrs. Dodd	Mr. Lean
	27th - Mrs. Johns & Mrs. Taylor	Mrs. Johns
March	6th - Mr. & Mrs. Schweichert	Ms. McEwen
	13th - Mrs. McOnie & Miss Foley	Mr. Veness
	20th - Mrs. Hatton & Mrs. Grieve	Mrs. Hatton
	27th - Miss McLean & Mrs. Kermond	Mr. Lean

If any date is inconvenient please contact me by phone (57-5940) or see me at the next meeting.

Gwen Lean

HISTORIC DECISION ON THE BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN KOGARAH AND HURSTVILLE MUNICIPALITIES

Hurstville and Kogarah Councils approved an historic agreement in December 1976 after a combined meeting of the two Councils.

It was agreed that the boundary line at Hurstville be defined as the centre of the rail tracks which means more satisfactory management of development applications for the Super Centre.

The following people represented Kogarah Council at the combined meeting:-

Alderman F. Cavanagh
Alderman F. Baker
Alderman K. Cavanough
Alderman J. Colvin
Alderman B. Langton
Alderman G. Wood

Town Clerk J.K. Forbes
Deputy Town Clerk J. Allison
Kogarah Council Engineer D. Kate

BOOK REVIEW

THE HILLSIDES DEW PEARLED: A Story of Kangaroo Valley by Dorothy Coleman, with drawings by Daphne Kingston

In this book Dorothy Coleman expresses her gratitude to the pioneers "who forged the way so that I, and many others like me, could experience the joy of living in this beautiful place". I feel that she also makes a restrained and practical plea for continued care of the environment in futureland and river development in the Valley.

For those of us who knew Kangaroo Valley as children this is a special book, with many reminders to treasure, but everyone will enjoy the nostalgia leavened by humour, lyrical descriptions and practical historical recording. The chapter about the achievements of Farmer, Henry Osborne Cox, brings us right up-to-date with the rural situation, and since the publication of "The Hillsides Dew Pearled", H.O. Cox has been awarded the O.B.E.

In "The Hillsides Dew Pearled" the author may be recognized as the "dirty faced Princess on top of the hay with dogs frisking round in the dreamy midday sun"; and is there anyone who has knowledge of the Dairy Industry Authority's rigorous milk requirements of today who does not recall nostalgically (if not regretfully) scenes like: "Ofen before school I would go into Campbell's dairy and watch one of the sisters scrubbing down the shelves where the milk cans and shiny cream crocks stood. The churns were scalded twice a day and they skimmed the milk by hand. The butter was smooth and yellow and Miss Edith used big wooden spoons, flat with lines down them to turn it into balls. It was a good life for a child and once having known it you never cut loose from the memory."

The drawings by Daphne Kingston add lustre to the prose, and it is difficult to choose a favorite. Mrs. Kingston is a member of our Society. She studied drawing at Julian Ashton Art School where she won the Phillip Musket prize for landscape painting and drawing in 1976, and some of her sketches of old homes and buildings are in the Mitchell Library collection.

Perhaps in a less inflationary future time this unique little book will be abailable in the craftsman's binding which it truly deserves. Printed by C.H. Begg, Turrella; price in the shops \$3.50. There will be some copies available at our February meeting at a special members' price of \$3.00

Elaine Howard

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EMDEN

A recent acquisition to the Museum was a large chest containing memorabilia collected by Vivian Agencourt Spence Little, and his family. Amongst the treasures were a number of letters written by Reverend Little to his Mother covering the period 1911 to 1916, when he served as the first Methodist chaplain in the Royal Australian Navy.

One letter describes the encounter between the Emden and the H.M.A.S. Sydney on the morning of November 9, 1914, off the Cocos Islands. The German cruiser had been doing considerable damage to allied shipping and shore installations in the area, but the Sydney put a stop to its endeavours when in battle she drove the Emden ashore, a shattered and helpless wreck. It was Australia's first significant victory in World War I, and it was greeted in great jubilation.

H.M.A.S. SYDNEY

16th November, 1914.

Dear Ma,

We are again in the heat of the tropics. I shall be very glad to have a time on the mountains to recover a bit of freshness.

By this time you have probably heard of our exploit against the Emden. This ought to bring great credit to the Australian Navy. Nearly everyone, more or less, laughed at the Australian Navy and the Captain of the Emden swore to his crew what he would do if he ever met an Australian ship again.

The thing happened suddenly and hardly anyone thought anything actually would happen. When I woke up that morning I noticed we were travelling at a high speed and so hurriedly dressed and found that a message had come by wireless that a strange war ship was at Cocos Island. We were sent off to see about it. It was about 40 miles away. At 9.15 a.m. we sighted a ship which immediately began to move and at 9.40 she opened fire at 10,500 yards range about 6 miles. We replied and then firing continued for about 1 hour 40 minutes. Beyond her first two or three broad sides, she did not do us much damage. Three men died of wounds that day, and another after, but 11 others are recovering. About 190 of her crew were killed one way or other. For several days we had 160 officers and men (about 30 wounded) on board besides 18 chinamen and others taken from a collier which the enemy had captured and was sunk after the fight. The cruiser was battered into an awful wreck and was run ashore. Soon after the fight began she was on fire for about 150 ft. of her length as well as another fire forward.

Our ship was handled with great skill by the Captain and that amounts largely for our light damage. We had much more

speed and heavier guns. The destructive speed of our shells was terrible.

Next day we took off the survivors. Their wounds were a terrible sight. In many cases they were just done up anyhow, by anyone who could help and were often found to be septic. Several of them died, though now there is good hope of recovery for the majority of them

Signed Vin

CREATIVE ART OF ELIOTH GRUNER

One of the most treasured possessions in the Museum is a painting by Elioth Gruner of the English home donated by Mrs. Rose Schneider who lived next door to Gruner when he resided in Kogarah at 233 Princes Highway in 1910.

The painting is prized because it shows a house which belonged to one of our early pioneers, Patrick English, but is no longer standing; plus the fact that it was painted by an artist who holds a prominent place in the history of art in Australia.

Bill Wright came across the following article in the December 17, 1923, edition of the Sunday Times which reviews a book on the work of Gruner edited by Messrs. Sydney Ure Smith and Leon Gellert.

New Message of Nature

.... the volume contains articles by Julian Ashton and Norman Lindsay. Mr. Ashton's breezy account of the knicker-bockered boy who was brought to his classes is printed below. Mr. Lindsay, in his article, goes deeply into the philosophy of art, and examines the secrets which make Gruner's work so beautiful. Mr. Lindsay says:

Until Gruner made his analysis of clear morning light, I had never observed such a problem either in paint or in Nature. Such phenomena may be seen, but certainly not observed, till they have been defined in form which reveals the nature of their being....

As far as I am concerned, Gruner has brought a new message of Nature into being and since the universe is only conceivable as an aesthetic fact, Gruner is the creator of such an essence in Nature.

Boy in Knickerbockers

By courtesy of Mr. Julian Ashton, the distinguished Australian painter, who has taught and inspired so many great artists in this country, we take from the volume

the Reminiscences which he writes concerning Gruner from the day when the boy first came into his studio. Says Mr. Ashton:

A days work was over. I remember standing at one end of the long, empty classroom and looking beyond the collection of stools and easels to where a shaft of light fell upon Donatello's Niccolo da Uzzano.

There was a knock at the studio door and a strongly-built, capable-looking woman entered followed by a little boy. "Mr. Ashton?" she asked. I assented and placed a chair. The boy, a little chap in knickerbockers stood beside the table and looked shyly about him.

He's my youngest," said the woman, "and even when he was a baby he could always be kept quiet with pencil and paper; now that he's getting a bit older he's at it all the time. When he hasn't got pencil and paper he draws on his slate, and when his slate has been left at school, he draws on the wall with a burnt stick. All our walls that he can get at are covered with ships and trees and men. My neighbors say he ought to learn, and that's why I brought him here. This painting business Mr. Ashton, is it a good trade?"

Trade -- and Life

"as a trade madam", I said, "it is not; but if you have the gift and can work incessantly, counting hardships as nothing, it's a great life!" "Well," she said, "he'll have to make his living."

I turned to the boy who, I should imagine, was twelve years of age. "So you want to learn to draw, sonny?" I said. He looked up very shyly. A slim little figure, delicate, I thought. "Yes", he said, rubbing one boot over the other. "And, I suppose, to paint?" He hesitated and looked at me again, and it struck me that he possibly thought I wished him to become one of those white-coated individuals who cover our doors and woodwork with inharmonious tones. I corrected myself. "You want, I suppose, to colour your drawings?" There was no hesitation in his answer and I fell to discussing details with his mother.

If my memory serves me, this was in 1894, and it was my first introduction to Elioth Gruner.

Norwegian Father

Gruner's father was a Norwegian with a gift of tongues. This helped him as an interpreter in

in his journey through life. Mrs. Gruner was an Irishwoman intelligent and perhaps masterful, with a philosophy which is owed rather to life than to books -- albeit she was a great reader.

Ashton the Taskmaster

All his spare moments were spent in my classes. I think now and then he must have thought me a hard taskmaster with my insistence upon his observation of form, and it was with a sigh of relief that he at last pushed his way into an investigation of the mysteries of color.

Even in those pre-war days, the cost of color was a mighty consideration in the calculations of the poor Art student and I remember that for quite a period his experiments were conducted with a palette consisting of white chrome yellow alizarin crimson, and Prussian blue, these being the only pigments that his purse could afford.

George Lambert's Gift

Even when his natural taste and the conscientious fulfilment of his duties at the store added somewhat to his means, he looked upon cadmium, cobalt, and rose madder with awe. And I remember when flamboyant, George Lambert, many years his senior, came upon him attempting a still life, with a very meagrely furnished palette. "Sonny", he said, "you can't make pictures without paint, any more than you can make omelettes without eggs," and he squeezed out half a tube of cobalt and rose madder. Poor Gruner looked with horror at the amazing recklessness of this hero of art students.

Still, they were good days, and, as time went on and he began to try his hand out of doors upon the problems of light and foliage, his naturally happy and cheerful disposition expanded with his growth.

It must have been in 1901 that he first exhibited with the Society of Artists, and, though time after time much of his work was rejected, I do not think that a year passed without some of his experiments finding a place upon the walls of the yearly exhibitions.

Like all ardent and sensitive young souls, he was unconsciously affected by the work of his abler contemporaries, and it was not until 1915 that he began to find himself.

Constant Advance

Since that time, each year has seen an advance in the sincerity of his work, and the charm of his handling. He has tackled many problems, and is always ready for new adventures in the way of light and atmosphere.

When in 1911 some of us started a little shop in Bligh Street, in which only works of art produced in Australia were to be sold, Mr. Gruner was asked to take charge. When this was closed, owing to the war, I asked him to help me in the Sydney Art School. He agreed though he was offered a higher salary elsewhere.

From that time, for several years, he laboured assiduously, not only in the direction of classes, but in the management of the Society of Artists, which fell almost entirely upon our shoulders.

During a three months' illness of mine he took complete control with energy and direction for which I must always be beholden to him.

Hilder's Death

The untimely death of that talented water-colorist J.J. Hilder, produced a deep feeling in his brother artists that something should be done to perpetuate his memory. It seemed to be that nothing better could be achieved than a collective exhibition of his work. Gruner threw himself heart and soul into the project, with the result that we were able to place, in the rooms of the Sydney Art School, a memorial exhibition of Hilder's work, which will not be easily forgotten.

Then after a time, I came to realise that Gruner would never be happy until he devoted himself to the art of landscape painting. We separated, each to fulfil his own destiny...."

* * * *

POSTSCRIPT

Gruner was awarded the Wynne Prize seven times (five times between 1921 and 1939); his work grew in popularity and he held a prominent place in the Australian art world until his death in 1939.

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,
BLAKENHURST. 2221.
Phone 546 3932.

Hon. Treasurer:

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

Hon. Secretary:

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

Vice Presidents: Mr. V.S. Smith and Mr. W. 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.

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

Admissions: 30 cents Adults, 10 cents Children. Maximum 60 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 if forwarded to the Publications Officer:

Mr. V. S. Smith,
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