

Kogarah Historical Society Inc

Carss Cottage Museum – Carss Park
Postal Address PO Box 367, Kogarah 1485

www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com

Patron: The Mayor of Kogarah

President: Janette Hollebone (95297117)

Newsletter

March/April 2013

Volume 5 No 1



Griffith House, formerly Weroona and home to Peter Herrmann and family, now to be demolished to make way for development of St George Hospital (see story on p.7)

Meetings and Speakers

Thursday 14 March 2013

Show and Tell (bring along your memorabilia) and Annual General Meeting

Thursday 11 April 2013

Kirsten Broderick, Local History Librarian
Rockdale, *Sans Souci*, *Sydney's playground*.

Meetings are held at the School of Arts, Bowns Road Kogarah, at 2pm. Enjoy the speaker, then the opportunity to chat over afternoon tea. A short business meeting follows. Apologies for non-attendance at meetings should go to the Secretary, Gill Whan (9546 4623). Visitors welcome.

Mondays at the Museum

25 March 2013 – Alan Turing

Wendy Cornish is a well known speaker in the area and she will tell us about Alan Turing, British mathematician and war time code breaker who came to a tragic end at age 41 years. Join us at 10 am for a delicious morning tea in the courtyard and then adjourn to the Kogarah Room in the Museum for the presentation. Cost is \$5 which also gives you the chance to win a door prize. Please book as numbers are limited and it helps with the catering. Ring Adele Ryan on 9529 6730 (leave a message if she is not there) to reserve your place.

Museum Roster

March 2013		April 2013	
3 rd	Carole Tier & Ken Grieve	7 th	Gill Whan & Deirdre Schroeder
10 th	Mavis Ward & Mary Williams	14 th	Adele Ryan & Lawrie Corry
17 th	Trudy Johns & Elizabeth Emerson	21 st	Trudy Johns & Elizabeth Emerson
24 th	Betty Goodger & Janette Hollebone	28 th	Betty Goodger & Janette Hollebone
31 st	Cath and Leo Sullivan		

Hours 1 pm – 5 pm. Problems, contact Gill Whan, 9546 4623 or Elizabeth Emerson, 9579 4118

We are always looking for members to volunteer for either a regular spot at the Museum or to go on the emergency list. Training given. Contact one of the Committee if you are willing to help.

Committee 2012/13 (* denotes Executive)

President:*	Janette Hollebone	Ph: 9529 7117
Vice President (1):*	Beverley Earnshaw	Ph: 9546 1091
Vice President (2):*	Mavis Ward	Ph: 9546 5704
Secretary:*	Gill Whan	Ph: 9546 4623
Treasurer:*	Cath Sullivan	Ph: 9579 6149
Committee Members:	Beryl Butters, Lawrie Corry, Trudy Johns, Adele Ryan, Carole Tier,	

Committee meeting venues

4 Mar 7.00 pm	Beryl Butters, 36 Louisa Street, Oatley (9580 6954)
8 Apr 7.00 pm	Trudy Johns, 2/900 Forest Rd, Peakhurst (9534 7737)
6 May 7.00 pm	Beverley Earnshaw, 15 Hamer St., Kogarah Bay (9546 1091)

Annual General Meeting

14 March 2013

Nominations are invited to join the Kogarah Historical Society Committee. All positions are declared vacant and we would welcome new people, new ideas. A nomination form is included with this newsletter and all nominations must be received by 2 pm on 14 March. Send by mail or present them to Returning Officer at the meeting.

An Item from the Museum

THE EMU EGG

By Beverley Earnshaw

The Kogarah Historical Society holds a collection of thousands of artefacts which is housed in the Carss Cottage Museum. The inventory includes historic documents, domestic memorabilia, needlework, paintings & photographs, toys and a wide range of miscellaneous treasures.



One of the most fascinating objects in the collection is a decorated emu egg, currently on display in the Kogarah Room and this has aroused considerable comment from visitors. This ornament is over 100 years old as the slaughter of native birds and the pilfering of their nests was outlawed in 1893 by the *Birds Protection Act*, an initiative of Sir Joseph Carruthers.

Emu eggs are dark green in colour and the shells are multi-layered. Etching uncovers layers of different colours so that they may be carved with cameo-like artistry. This is a specialized skill. The average emu egg weighs 25 ounces and measures about 14 centimetres in length, roughly the equivalent, of 14 eggs of the domestic fowl, which made them an important food source for the Aborigines. However, Aborigines did not carve them but mixed the yolks with ochre to produce the rich yellow ceremonial body paintⁱ.

In the mid 19th century, objects made from emu eggs emerged as a distinctive Australian art form and enjoyed unprecedented popularity. They were usually mounted in silver and fashioned into claret jugs, condiment sets, testimonial vases, table centre pieces and a unique range of domestic ware. Articles designed to hold liquids were lined with silver plate to render them useable. But the most popular application of emu eggs in Colonial art was their use in sporting trophies. Such was the demand from sporting, yachting and racing clubs that manufacturing jewellers advertised regularly for supplies and for a while the price of emu eggs soared. In 1860 they were bringing between ten and twenty shillings each in Melbourneⁱⁱ. Graziers supplemented their incomes by collecting them but plentiful supply reduced the price. In 1894 one man sent 1123 eggs to Brisbane to be sold for ornamental purposes, but they only realized twelve shillings per dozenⁱⁱⁱ. Emu eggs were legitimate Colonial produce and the price was listed under commodity prices in Australian newspapers.

Boxes of emu eggs are recorded in the cargo manifests of every ship sailing to Britain in the second half of the 19th century. Some Australian merchants commissioned leading London silversmiths and goldsmiths to incorporate them into objects of fine art before returning them to Australia for sale. Jeweller, T.E.Rudd of 350 George Street, Sydney, advertised –

The undersigned ... has just received a number of very elegantly designed and superbly mounted Prize and Testimonial Vases, to an inspection of which he respectfully invites all patrons of Colonial art These beautiful cups (the whole of which have been manufactured to order by one of the first English houses), are richly and appropriately ornamented in solid silver (hall marked) ... the body of each is formed from an Emu egg, the interior being delicately lined with silver plate in order that the article may be rendered useful as well as ornamental ...^{iv}

Designs for the trophies were drawn by a young Australian born artist, whose name at the moment remains unknown. The eggs were mounted on a plinth or pedestal and surrounded by elements of Australiana, dingoes, emus, wallabies possums and Aborigines in various poses with their weapons. Yachting trophies featured aquatic birds, gulls, cranes and swans. Other trophies were mounted with

