

Kogarah Historical Society Inc

Carss Cottage Museum – Carss Park
Postal Address PO Box 367, Kogarah 1485
www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com.au

Patron: The Mayor of Kogarah

President: Beverley Earnshaw (9546 1091)

Newsletter

March/April 2016

Volume 8 No 1



Beverley Earnshaw, President of Kogarah Historical Society, Historian and Author receiving her award as Kogarah Citizen of the Year from Mayor Stephen Agius on Australia Day 26 January 2016

Meetings and Speakers

Thursday 10 March 2016

AGM. John Johnson, Local Studies Librarian – “What’s going on in our area in 2016”

Thursday 14 April 2016

Dr Michael Sheret, Golf Historian – “Golf in Sydney in 1839” – NB: at Community Hub, 49 English St, 2.15pm

Meetings start at 2pm in the School of Arts, Bowns Rd/Queens Ave Kogarah (except April 2016). Enjoy the speaker, then 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.

Find us on Facebook



Mondays at the Museum

21 March 2016 – David Russell

The History of Medicine Library is located in Macquarie Street and David Russell from the Library will tell us all about it. Please note that this is not the usual fourth Monday due to Easter – back to normal for the next one. As always we will start at 10 am with morning tea in the courtyard and stay outside for the speaker if the weather permits. Cost is \$5 which covers morning tea and gives you the chance to win a door prize. **Please book** as space is limited and it helps with catering. To reserve your place, ring Adele Ryan on 9529 6730 or leave a message on her answering machine.

Sunday Museum Roster

March 2016

6th Carole Tier & Ken Grieve
13th Mavis Ward & Betty Reynolds
20th Betty Goodger & Pat Young
27th Closed Easter Sunday

April 2016

3rd Gill Whan & Deirdre Schroeder
10th Adele Ryan & Joe Spinelli
17th Betty Goodger & Pat Young
24th Warren & Irene Selmon

Welcome and thank you to Joe Spinelli who has agreed to go on the roster every 2nd month.

Hours 1 pm – 5 pm.

Problems – If you need to exchange days with someone please try and do so between yourselves, otherwise contact Gill Whan, 9546 4623

Current Committee 2015 (*denotes Executive)

President:*	Beverley Earnshaw	Ph: 9546 1091
Vice Presidents:*	Vacant	
Secretary:*	Gill Whan	Ph: 9546 4623
Treasurer:*	Cath Sullivan	Ph: 9579 6149
Public Officer*	Janette Hollebhone	Ph: 9529 7117

Committee Members: Beryl Butters, Lawrie Corry, Trudy Johns, Rodger Robertson, Adele Ryan, Carole Tier, Mavis Ward, Pat Young

Committee meeting venues

7 Mar 7.00pm Pat Young, 25 Culver St., Monterey (9588 5835)
11 Apr 7.00 pm Gill Whan, 11 Dewrang Street, Carss Park (9546 4623)
9 May 7.00pm Beverley Earnshaw, 15 Hamer St., Kogarah Bay (9546 1091)

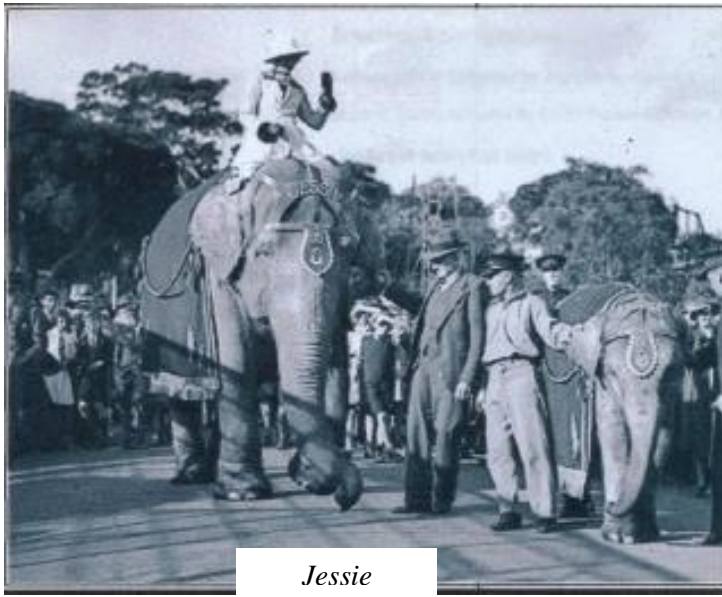
Annual General Meeting

10 March 2016 at 2pm

**All positions vacant, please consider nominating
for the Committee to keep our Society viable.**

Jessie the Elephant – Australia’s Darling

By Beverley Earnshaw



Jessie

This year, 2016, is the one hundredth anniversary of the opening of Taronga Park Zoo. In the 19th century exotic animals held a fascination for the Australian public. Zoos were a great family and holiday activity for a community lacking in recreational facilities, and people flocked to them to show their children lions, leopards, apes and creatures brought from the other side of the world.

Sydney’s first zoo opened in 1848 in Hyde Park as an adjunct to the Australian Museum. But in 1850

the animals were moved out to a rather inaccessible site at the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel at Botany. Unfortunately for the public there was no transport to the remote Prince of Wales Hotel until a tramway was built in 1882.

In 1879 a Zoological Society was formed and in 1883 the Sydney City Council granted “permissive occupation” of an area in Moore Park known as “Billy Goat Swamp” for the purpose of a zoological garden. This land is now the site of Sydney Girls’ High School.

The Society sought money from the Government to buy and feed large animals and in 1882 £3000 (\$6000) was placed upon the estimates for the purpose.

This zoo was laid out by Charles Moore (after whom Moore Park is named), Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens and included a bear pit and elephant house and the trustees set about importing Australia’s first elephants.

The first was *Jumbo*, a 7 year old Asian elephant standing 8 feet high. He arrived on July 13, 1883 aboard the steamer *Nelson* from China, a present from King Chulalongkorn of Siam in exchange for Australian animals, birds and plants.

Australian *Jumbo* is not to be confused with his namesake, a huge African bull elephant at the London Zoo. London *Jumbo* was difficult to manage. He frequently broke out of his quarters to terrorize the neighbourhood and was eventually sold to the Barham Circus in America.

At Moore Park Zoo the new young *Jumbo* was giving rides to children as well as making himself useful for any heavy drawing or lifting work that was needed on the site. But in 1894 *Jumbo* attacked his keeper and from that time was confined to his enclosure away from the public. In 1896 he died of natural causes. After his death his skeleton was given to the Australian Museum where it has been displayed ever since and forms a conspicuous part of the Museum’s Osteological (skeletal) collection.

On October 30, 1883 the zoo’s second elephant, a 17 year old female called *Jessie*, arrived aboard the *Newcomen* from Calcutta. She was accompanied by two Mahoots, Parbuck and Elibuck, who stayed with her for six or eight months to see her settle in. *Jessie* was a docile, sweet natured elephant who would sit down or roll over at her Mahoot’s command. A special ‘howdah’ was made to fit her back, i.e. a small platform saddle with seats all round for children

to ride on. And thus began *Jessie's* long time career of padding around the zoo with a howdah full of delighted children on her back. *Jessie* was not only the children's favourite, but the zoo's most popular attraction. She was famous and universally loved.

On a Saturday alone, *Jessie* would attract up to 600 visitors who paid an admission fee of sixpence (5 cents) per adult with half price for children. The cost of feeding and maintaining an elephant was £6 (or \$12) per week, so she more than earned her keep.



In 1910 the site at Moore Park was deemed too small for a zoo and the Government chose a new site on the northern side of the harbour at Athol Bay, the zoo to be called *Taronga Park*. It was to be the most modern zoo in the world based on a design seen at Hagenbeck's Gardens in Hamburg where the animals were housed in "barless cages". Even the large carnivores were to be housed in areas surrounded by

rock walls and enclosed by a moat.

In July 1916 Moore Park Zoo closed and so began the task of transferring 177 animals and 329 birds to their new home. The transfer progressed without incident. The monkeys and apes did as they were told. The carnivores stepped from their cages into portable cages and were taken to be ferried across the harbour.

The burning question became how to move *Jessie*, the zoo's largest and most popular attraction. A four ton elephant could not be coaxed into a cage, and even if this succeeded, nobody could then move the cage. *Jessie* would have to walk. But in her 34 years of residence she had never been outside the zoo. She was not used to trams, lorries or cars and this caused the staff much apprehension. Should she panic, nothing would be able to hold her.

At first it was suggested she would walk to the harbour between two 'nurse' elephants borrowed from Wirths Circus. Circus elephants were used to parading up and down city streets amid loud music and traffic noise, but this did not eventuate.

At 5.30 am on Sunday September 28, 1916, *Jessie* left the Dowling Street entrance of Moore Park Zoo. The Head Keeper, Mr Miller, walked ahead of her and she seemed content to follow him. Her two elephant keepers walked on either side to give her an occasional reassuring pat and the zoo's veterinary officer followed by car.

She seemed to rely on her keepers to see that everything was all right and whenever a strange object or noise alerted her she would feel around with her trunk to make sure the two keepers were beside her. She passed through narrow streets and across tram rails with a nervous glance on either side. She walked a distance of four miles via Dowling, Flinders, Booth, Woolloomooloo and Palmer Streets, through the Domain to Macquarie Street and reached Fort Macquarie at a quarter past six. There, a vehicle ferry in charge of Mr Bart, the traffic superintendent of the Sydney Ferry Company, was waiting to take her direct to Taronga Park.

Without hesitation she stepped on to the punt, ran her trunk over it to see if she would dismantle any part and was severely spoken to by her keeper. For the rest of the journey she stood still as a rock and reached Taronga Park at ten minutes to seven. The only anxious moment came when the landing pontoon dipped at *Jessie's* weight and she drew back from it. She had to be severely spoken to before she would walk across it on to the wharf. From there she walked to her

new home in the elephant pavilion at Taronga where she lived for the next 23 years.

Jessie was the zoo's star attraction. Over the years she carried thousands of children on her back. *Jessie the Elephant* became a household word when people with an excess of self-assertion were said to have *The hide of Jessie*. But in 1939 her health began to fail She no longer worked every day. When the press reported she was dying, zoo patrons flocked for one last chance to see their beloved elephant. She lay on her side in her enclosure and on September 26, 1939, *Jessie the Elephant* died. The public was bereaved and she was universally mourned.



Trivia

All about 'M'

1. Prime Ministers of Australia surname starting with "M"?
2. US presidents starting with "M"?
3. English and GB monarchs with "M"?
4. Countries in Africa starting with M?
5. Car manufacturers (not models) starting with M?
6. Metro railway stations in Sydney starting with M?
7. Captains of the Australian Test Cricket team starting with M?
8. States of USA beginning with M?
9. Capital cities of Europe starting with M?

Answers:

1. Sir Robert Menzies and William McMahon and for the smarties "Macolm"; James Madison 1809-1817, James Monroe 1817-1825, William McKelvey 1901-1997
2. 1558, Mary II of William and Mary 1685-1694 then William alone till 1702.
3. Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique
4. Mazda, Mercedes, Mini, MG, Mitsubishi - now some would include Maserati and McLaren and there are a few obscure others- so if you got those then fine.
5. Macarthur, Macdonaldtown, Macquarie Fields, Macquarie Park
6. Macquarie University, Marayong, Marriickville, Martin Place, Mascot Meadowbank, Merrylands, Millers Point, Minto, Miranda, Mount Clichy, Mount Druitt, Mount Kuring-gai, Mulgrave, Mordial and Museum.
7. Billy Murdoch 1880-1890, Hugh Massie 1835, Percy McDonnell 1887-1954, Arthur Munn 1951-1954
8. Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana
9. Madrid, Moscow, Monaco, Minsk

Just in case our March speaker, John Johnson, Kogarah Local Studies Librarian doesn't cover ALL the activities coming up (and there are lots), check out the booklet available at the library – **2016 Life Festival** and the regular two monthly events booklet.

Tuesday 15 March – Launch of a project to install a series of plaques to commemorate our history and heritage. 11 am at the Library. RSVP 9330 9551

1-10 April - Seniors Week. Concerts, bus trips, tours and tea etc. Enquiries 9330 9551

14, 15 and 16 April 10.30-11.30 am at Kogarah Library. Local History talks by Garry Darby on **Sans Souci, Rocky Point Road and Primrose House/Aqua Flora Park.** Ph: 9583 9916

50 Ways to love Kogarah in 50 days

A program of varied activities from 4 April. Beverley Earnshaw will be one of the speakers on 5 May at 11 am – **Kogarah Revealed.** All activities at Community Hub, 49 English Street.

Bookings and Info from Ph 9587 6622

**KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR 2015-2016**

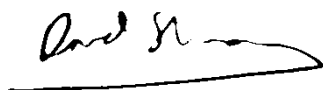
EXPENDITURE:

	\$
Energy Australia	435.95
Telstra	718.26
Insurance and Affiliations	671.40
Museum Cleaning & Post Box	1,208.89
Museum Expenses & book purchases & Trove contribution	6,636.37
Donations and Catering and Coach Trips	2,828.54
Petty Cash	600.00
Newsletters and Postage	1,877.14
Administration, Equipment and Publications	1,324.54
Total	16,301.09

INCOME:

	\$
Annual Subscriptions	1,470.00
Museum Admission - Sundays	1,089.60
Groups and Mondays at the Museum	1,481.50
Outings, Raffles, Pens etc	2,880.10
Publications, grants, donations	3,235.60
Withdrawn from IBD	7,000.00
Other interest from IBD	2,323.09
Total	19,479.89

Signed



David Shaw
CPA 1443198

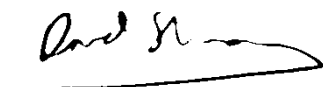
NB: Originals held by Secretary

KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC RECONCILIATION STATEMENT 2015-2016

	\$
Balance at Bank as at 1 February 2015	7,857.50
Add Income to 31 January 2016	19,479.89
Total	<u>27,337.39</u>
Less Expenditure from 31 Jan 2015 – 31 Jan 2016	16,301.09
Total	<u>11,036.30</u>
Bank Balance as per statement 31 January 2015	11,036.30
Fixed Deposits at St George Bank	60,000.00

I have audited the records of Kogarah Historical Society Inc. and in my opinion the records are well kept and the financial statements drawn up for the period 01-02-2015 to 31-01-2016 reflect fairly the position of the organisation.

Signed



David Shaw
CPA 1443198

NB: Originals held by Secretary

The History of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts

This article is part two taken from a talk given by Winsome Allen, Vice President of the SMSA to the Kogarah Historical Society in November 2015

The Library

In an era where there were no public libraries, the SMSA's library was the only place in Sydney where people could come to read and borrow books that they could not otherwise afford. The Reading Room and Ladies' Reading Room were stocked with newspapers, journals and magazines from across Australia and the world, allowing members to stay informed and up to date.

Working Men's College

Vocational and technical training were offered to the mechanics, the tradesmen. With a huge demand for skilled workers in a rapidly expanding colony, the need for vocational training had grown. Visionary SMSA Board Members like Charles Windeyer, a prominent Sydney judge, and renowned engineer Norman Selfe, advocated for the creation of a college under the umbrella of the SMSA, that would be dedicated to technical education. The Working Men's College opened in 1878 with dedicated workshops and laboratories in a newly constructed building on George St, behind the School's main building. It was hugely successful, and by 1880, 1047 students were enrolled.



Because of the success, the Government pushed hard to takeover, and in 1883 the School finally accepted the "offer". The Working Men's College eventually became Ultimo College in 1893 and from there, a direct forebear of the TAFE system, the University of NSW and the University of Technology, Sydney. This effectively ended SMSA's role as a provider of technical education.

Debating Club

The School's Debating Club, which existed for nearly 100 years from 1844 onwards, could possibly be called the Q&A of its time – and like Q&A was not without controversy. The up and coming political figures of the day came together regularly to discuss the hot issues like Federation, suffrage and conscription. The debates were regularly reported in the major papers of the day like the Sydney Morning Herald, the Sydney Gazette, and the Illustrated Sydney News.

Members included NSW Premier William Holman, and Prime Ministers Edmund Barton, George Reid and Billy Hughes, as well as the Father of Federation, Sir Henry Parkes and many other political and cultural leaders. In fact Parkes' newspaper *The Empire* was very much a part of the SMSA scene.



Louisa Lawson

Louisa Lawson, a well-known journalist and advocate for votes for women, (and, Henry Lawson's mother) overcame fierce opposition to become the first woman admitted to the Debating Club in 1891. From her photo one can see that she is formidable and not a person you would say "no" to. Other women soon followed in her footsteps. Two years later, in 1893, Louisa became the first woman on the management committee but it was not until 1976 that another woman, Moira O'Connor, was elected to the committee.

Other Prominent Members

Billy Hughes, as a young man, valued the educational opportunities given to him by the School so much that he went without meals and dressed in worn-out clothing so that he could afford to join the SMSA. Remember, in 1918, the fees were £1/7/6 per year! Hughes later credited his 'great awakening' and his political career to his nights studying in the School's library and the training ground of the Debating Club. A young **Henry Lawson** used to spend his nights reading at the SMSA and **Sir Henry Parkes** as an old man used to visit the School regularly.

The poet **Henry Kendall** (does anyone remember learning his poem *Bellbirds* by heart at school?) used to give lectures at the school regularly and – rather romantically – met his future wife at a lecture he gave on 'Love, Courtship and Marriage.' In July 1852, the School awarded **Edward Hargreaves** an Honorary Membership in recognition of his discovery of gold in the colony. The ill-fated explorer **Ludwig Leichhardt** was invited to give a series of lectures in 1842 on the botany of Sydney before leaving on one of his many successful expeditions.

In the late 1890s, the more 'Bohemian' members – people like **Henry Lawson**, painters **Tom Roberts** and **Julian Ashton** and **J. F. Archibald**, the founder of the Bulletin for whom the Archibald prize is named – called themselves the Dawn and Dusk Club and met regularly over supper to discuss literature and the arts.

Norman Selfe, engineer, inventor and visionary first started at SMSA as a technical drawing teacher and later became a board member who was instrumental in the formation of the Working Men's College. Selfe's innovations included designing and building his own velocipede from scratch, and proposing an early plan for a Bridge across Sydney Harbour.

Writer **Miles Franklin** was a regular attendee at SMSA's talks. She was decidedly unimpressed when she heard famous suffragette **Adela Pankhurst** speak at the School. Her diary rather scathingly states "am convinced she is a moron... she babbles without coherence."

William Chidley, on the other hand, was – and I quote: "A noted eccentric and sex reformer", whatever that means. He advocated fresh air, sunlight and unrestrictive clothing as well as the abolition of class distinctions. Imagine the uproar and scandal when he entered the rather staid Library wearing a short Greek-style tunic with his knees showing. The Secretary asked him to leave on the spot, and at the next board meeting it was decided that Mr Chidley's membership should not be renewed.

Probably the most notorious member was **Thomas "Lemonade" Ley**. A tee-totaller (hence the nickname "Lemonade"), Ley was a State and then Federal politician. He first joined the SMSA as a teenager in 1896 and was active for many years in the SMSA's Debating Club. At one time he was the NSW Minister of Justice and the local member for the St George/Sutherland Shire and as such his name appears on the official opening plaques of many Schools of Arts, including Bexley and Sutherland. However, Ley's political achievements were somewhat overshadowed by later events.

He is listed in the Australian Dictionary of Biography under "politician and murderer" and is described there as "a grubby and sinister character". One of his opponents mysteriously disappeared without a trace and yet another critic was discovered dead at the bottom of the cliffs at Coogee in 1928. Under suspicion, he fled to England with his mistress whose husband had also died under mysterious circumstances. And he didn't learn. In 1947, Ley was finally found guilty of planning the murder of the same mistress' supposed lover. His death sentence was commuted, and he was imprisoned in the Broadmoor Criminal Asylum where he died 4 months later.

To be concluded next newsletter

LANGLEA

A One-time Locality in Kogarah.

Part of Kogarah, centred around Park Road, was once known as Langlea. The name has now disappeared but was used for a considerable time. I have found subdivision plans in the 1920s giving the location as Langlea and several references in the Council's Minutes.

My first thought was that a homesick settler was remembering the name of his far off home in England, but I could not find an English town of that name. There were two named Langley, meaning a long meadow, but not a trace of how the name conferred was found.

However the Kogarah Progress Association¹ was negotiating with the Postmaster General's Department in 1918, through Alderman P.J.Wheeler, to have a Postal District of Langlea declared. They suggested the boundaries should be:-

“North Andover Street, Francis Street, Kogarah Road, Lacey Street to causeway
Eastern Causeway to Blake's Creek
South Blake's Creek to Bellevue Parade, along Bellevue to Railway Line
West Railway Parade; and please place both sides of the streets in the boundary line.”

The part fronting onto Kogarah Road, today's Princes Highway, was on the original grant to William Barton and the portion up to the railway line was on Captain John Townson's grant made in 1810.²

On 6 November 1918, the Postmaster General notified Kogarah Council that they would need to have the NSW Lands Department define and gazette the area as Langlea before any further action could be taken by them, a Commonwealth department. The correspondence continued until 16 September 1919 but no action seems to have been taken by Kogarah Council.

When St Cuthbert's Anglican Church was established in 1908 as the second branch church of St Paul's, Kogarah, it was known as St Cuthbert's, Langlea. In 1942, St Cuthbert's became the provisional district of Langlea. In February 1949 the name of the parish was changed from St Cuthbert's Langlea to St Cuthbert's South Kogarah and in November 1973 was changed again to St Cuthbert's South Carlton.³

There was a **Langlea Voluntary Workers Association** which built homes for returned servicemen. Approval for a weatherboard house in Massey Street was given by Council on 2nd November 1919. There was also a **Langlea Labor League**, which nominated candidates for the Council elections in 1922.⁴

Music lovers formed the **Langlea Operatic Society** in 1914 “for the purpose of performing musical plays”. Our Newsletter of June 1979 (p. 10) reports on a social evening of the Langlea Operatic Society in the 1920s. The President was James E. Moore. Members met in the School of Arts in Carlton, then in the Municipal Band Hall in Cameron Street, Rockdale and paid a subscription of 2/6 to join and 6d. a week.⁵ In 1935 they celebrated their 21st anniversary with a performance of *The Vagabond King*. In 1940 they produced *The Vagabond King* again but World War 1939-1945 had begun and their male singers were otherwise occupied, and they amalgamated with the Premier Musical Society to form the **Langlea Premier Operatic Society** “for the express purpose of making available to the music loving public of the Illawarra and surrounding districts, the very best of popular musical productions and artists.”

Rockdale Local History Library has programmes from 1933 to 1942. Was the Society forced to disband as the War engulfed more of our world?

KHS has a programme for the Quaker Girl produced in 1934 and photographs of members of the Society in costume. Some of these are used in *The Land between Two Rivers*, by B Earnshaw - p.47 Pirates of Penzance 1914 and p.171 a concert, *When the Empire Calls* 1914?

There is also a poster for the performance of Frasnita, a Gipsy Maid, a Sparkling & Colourful Musical Romance, in June (but the year is not noted) and the best seats would only have cost you three shillings and sixpence – reserved, too!

The Langlea Operatic Society must have given pleasure to its members and audiences for at least 28 years.

In May 1956 the **Langlea Players** produced Blithe Spirit at Rockdale Town Hall. What inspired them to choose this name? Are they a new and different group? Did they have grandfathers and grandmothers in the Operatic Society?

I can't help but regret that the name Langlea fell into disuse. The district still has Park Road at its centre, carrying busy traffic from Hurstville, across even busier Princes Highway, to Sans Souci., but bears the more prosaic name of South Carlton.

B. Goodger

REFERENCES

1. Correspondence Kogarah Council 9 October 1918-16 September 1919
2. Parish Map of St George 1924
3. St Cuthbert's South Carlton 1908-2008, by Beverley Earnshaw. 2008 pp 3,7,20,25. Map of Parish inside back cover.)
4. St George Call 27 October 1922
5. 1935 programme for The Vagabond King



The Museum



Heather Watson from Bexley visited recently and told us how she used to work for St George County Council as a secretary. One of her jobs was to type up the recipes and Roneo them on the Gestetner for use in the cooking demonstrations held at the St George County Council building in Regent Street Kogarah, now the site of the St George Bank. She remembers that audiences were good, many women were not working in the early 60s, they usually brought their knitting and after the demonstration they would taste the food and be given the recipe. All designed to sell the idea of using electricity. Our book of oral histories of Kogarah in the Museum reminds many visitors of days gone by. Heather also remembered learning to swim at Ramsgate baths where the water was often murky, and buying pineapple fritters afterwards.

If you would like the full story of St George County Council, Laurice Bondfield has written an excellent article in the St George Historical Society Bulletin Jan-Mar edition 2016.

Next we had a visit from Doug Minty, clock maker who was a speaker at Kogarah Historical Society a few years back. He is a member of the Clockmakers Association and has offered their assistance to restore our large railway clock in the foyer of the Cottage. Apparently it is one of only nine such clocks in NSW and Doug is confident that we can have it in working order in due course. When it is completed, Doug will bring a group from the Association for a tour of the Museum and we will mark the occasion with a small ceremony. The clock will need to be wound once a week – another duty for our volunteers before they leave each Sunday!

.....Vale

Lorna McClelland, a long-time member who died on 1 February 2016. Doug and Lorna McClelland have been associated with the Society and of course the local area for many years. She was described in The Leader as 'the guiding light behind one of St George's most prominent political families'. In addition she was a vibrant and charming person and will be much missed.



When Cannon Balls Crashed into Sydney

Australia has never been invaded, but on the afternoon of May 20 1814, the residents of Sydney were given a small taste of what it might involve.

Two weeks earlier the *Three Bees*, 459 tons, under Captain John Wallis, had reached the Colony from Cork, Ireland carrying 210 Irish Convicts. She had discharged her cargo and was lying at anchor near the Government Wharf when at about 4.30 pm dense volumes of smoke were seen to be pouring from her hold. There were known to be 30 casks of gunpowder in her magazine – a number which increased with rumour to 130 – and if this blew up the damage could be disastrous. The fire had already gained too great a hold to be checked and there was no chance of scuttling the ship. Fortunately the wind was from the south so the anchor lines were cut and she began to drift towards the entrance of the Cove. Other ships in the vicinity hurriedly raised anchor and moved from their berths to keep well clear of her and panic-stricken residents deserted their homes and fled.

The situation was described graphically by the Sydney Gazette “a ship of nearly 500 tons burden, cast loose, it may almost be said in the middle of town, unmanageable, and pouring forth columns of smoke and fire, threatening desolation all around her with her guns all loaded. First pointed upon one object and then upon another, and every instant expected by her explosion to throw down or to cover the dreadful blast all the buildings near her.”

The first gun went off at about 6.30 pm and the shot whistled over the premises of Graham Blaxcell, merchant, and the barracks guard house, before it thudded safely to earth. Then came 13 shots in rapid succession and in random directions. There were several hairbreadth escapes the Gazette reported but the only actual damage was caused when a swivel ball crashed through a window into Captain John Piper’s parlour, destroying its inner shutter and taking the corner off a portable writing desk.

Soon afterwards the *Three Bees* drifted onto the rocks at Bennelong Point at the eastern entrance of the Cove and there, well clear of the main settlement, her magazine finally exploded at about 8.30 pm. “It was not by any means as awful as had been expected” the Gazette wrote, almost with disappointment, “and the damage to the buildings facing the Cove was nil.” What remained of the ship continued to blaze dramatically through the night and by morning she was burnt to the water line.

Beryl Butters, taken with permission of John Ives, from the Heron Flyer magazine



Beverley and family, 26 January 2016

Congratulations to Beverley Earnshaw, our esteemed President, historian and author on being awarded Kogarah Citizen of the Year 2016

Note: April meeting is at 49 English St (Community Hub) as the School of Arts is being refurbished.
Speaker: Michael Sheret on Golf in 1839.

Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. Rules said ‘Gentlemen Only....Ladies Forbidden – hence GOLF!