

# Kogarah Historical Society Inc

Carss Cottage Museum, Carss Park

Postal Address PO Box 367, Kogarah 1485

[www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com.au](http://www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com.au)

**Patron:** Kevin Greene, Mayor

**President:** Beverley Earnshaw

## *Newsletter*

*January/February 2020*

*Volume 11 No.6*



*The Endeavour at anchor in Tahiti, painted by Sydney Parkinson (see story inside)*

### **Meetings and Speakers**

**Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**Jessica North will speak on**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Fleet Convict, Esther Abrahams**

**Thursday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**Annual General Meeting &**  
**Elections**

Meetings start at 2 pm in the School of Arts, Bowns Road/Queens Avenue Kogarah. 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*



# Happy New Year!

The President, Committee and members of Kogarah Historical Society wish their friends and wish each other a happy, healthy and successful year in 2020. This is a very special year as 2020 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of Kogarah Historical Society. We salute all those who were founders of the society and look forward to a new generation of members keeping up the high standard they set in –  
PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE.

## Sunday Museum Roster Opening Hours 1 pm-5 pm (Summer hours) January 2020 February 2020

5 <sup>th</sup>	Pat Young & Robert McGarn	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Wendy Agzarian & Elaine Filewood
12 <sup>th</sup>	Gill Whan & Heather Campbell	9 <sup>th</sup>	Adele Ryan & Joe Spinelli
19 <sup>th</sup>	Betty Goodger & Harvey Langford	15 <sup>th</sup>	Betty Goodger & Gill Whan
26 <sup>th</sup>	Australia Day (see below)	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Miryam & Niver Rodriguez

### Roster for Australia Day, January 26

12 noon – 2 pm Cath & Leo Sullivan.  
2 pm – 4 pm Beverley Earnshaw & Arcangela  
4 pm – 6 pm Ann Williams & Robert McGarn

### Committee 2020 (\* denotes Executive)

President*	Beverley Earnshaw	Ph. 9546 1091
Vice President*	Adele Ryan	Ph.9593 1898
Secretary*	Gill Whan	Ph. 9546 4623
Treasurer*	Cath Sullivan	Ph. 9570 6149
Public Officer*	Robert McGarn	Ph. 0425 706 579

**Committee Members:** Wendy Agzarian , Barbara Davids, Glynn Pulling, Robert McGarn, Rodger Robertson, Adele Ryan, Mavis Ward, Pat Young.

### Committee Meeting Venues:

February 10 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Gill Whan., 11 Dewrang Street, Carss Park. (9546 4623)
March 9 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Adele Ryan, 5 Endeavour Street, Sans Souci. (99529 6730)
April 6 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Pat Young, 25 Culver Street, Monterey. (8593 1898)

**WELCOME!**  
To our new member, John Lucke.  
We hope you enjoy your time with the Society.

## KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY 1970 – 2020

This year, 2020, marks the Golden Anniversary of Kogarah Historical Society. The founding of our society came about in the following manner.

In 1970, celebrations marked the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the *Endeavour* in Botany Bay, commanded by Lieutenant James Cook. The 'Captain Cook Bicentenary Committee' was set up to oversee the festivities. Two members of that Committee were Kogarah Alderman Ken Cavanagh and Mrs Doris Hatton.

Perhaps due to their influence the Committee recommended that a Historical Society in the Kogarah District be formed and it would be appropriate to establish that Society in the bicentennial year of Captain Cook's 'discovery' (?) of Australia..

On February 9<sup>th</sup> the Mayor of Kogarah, K.R.Cavanagh, chaired a Public Meeting called by the Council and Kogarah Historical Society became a reality. Mrs D.A.Hatton was elected President and it was resolved that the Mayor of Kogarah should become Patron. Since then the serving Mayor has always been invited to become our Patron.

The first General Meeting was held on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1970, and following meetings were held on the second Thursday of each month in the Municipal Council Chambers, Belgrave Street, Kogarah. It was envisaged that in the near future there would be a museum and for this a sub-committee was formed.

The Society's first newsletter appeared in October 1970, edited by Peter Orlovich. Articles of historical interest were invited and a call went out for donations towards the proposed museum. A press release went out to all newspapers inviting people to contribute items for display in Kogarah Historical Society's Museum. One of the Society's first initiatives was the decision to erect a plaque of gunmetal on a sandstone plinth on William Carss' grave

Since 1970 the Society has operated continuously for 50 years.  
Beverley Earnshaw



*Kogarah Council Chambers in 1968.  
The first meetings of Kogarah  
Historical Society were held there  
until the building was demolished in  
1973.*

## 1769 Lieutenant James Cook and the Transit of Venus

The *Endeavour*, under the command of Lieutenant James Cook, sailed from Plymouth, England, on August 26, 1768. Its primary mission was to observe the Transit of Venus from the South Pacific, after which it carried sealed orders not to be opened until observation of the Transit was accomplished.

This astronomical event was of interest not only to Britain, but to nations around the world. By observing the time Venus took to cross the face of the sun, scientists believed they could calculate the distance of the sun from the earth. This was important information for navigation at a time when latitude and longitude were calculated by the position of the heavenly bodies<sup>1</sup>. It was also hoped it would give information about the size of the solar system but at that time only six planets were known to astronomers, (Uranus, Neptune and Pluto had not been discovered).

The Transit of Venus was first observed in 1639, but it was a rare phenomenon. Transits of Venus came in pairs eight years apart and then were not seen again for more than 100 years. Thus if James Cook's expedition failed, there would not be another opportunity until about 1874.

Many nations participated. Observations were needed from different parts of the earth and it was essential that some calculations should be made from the Southern Hemisphere. But the Pacific Ocean was neither explored nor charted and there were no known points from which to take the readings.

Then in June 1767 Captain Samuel Wallis in *HMS Dolphin* returned to Britain and reported that he had discovered Tahiti. Not only was it in the optimum geographical area, but Wallis had its precise latitude and longitude. This was to be James Cook's destination.

The *Endeavour* sailed via South America calling at Rio and Tierra del Fuego before confronting the turbulent conditions around Cape Horn. Heavy seas and stormy weather



assailed them as they rounded the horn and five crewmen were lost, but finally they emerged into the tranquil waters of the Pacific Ocean. There began a ten week voyage across the lonely sea. There was no contact with 'home', no radio, no weather information, no birds, no sight of land or another ship. The isolation produced anxiety among the crew and one man threw himself

overboard in distress. Instruments were primitive. Cook navigated using an hourglass and knotted ropes to assess the ship's speed and a sextant and almanac to estimate the *Endeavour's* position by the stars. They were crossing thousands of miles of open ocean to find a spec of land only 20 miles across<sup>2</sup>.

They reached Tahiti on April 13, 1769, seven weeks before the transit was due. The people were friendly, food was plentiful and Joseph Banks described the island as '*the truest picture of Arcadia, idyllic and peaceful ...*'.

It was necessary to set up an observatory on land in order to provide a stable base for the scientific instruments. Two days after their arrival they came ashore to utilize a sandy spit of land on the north east end of Matavai Bay which Cook named Point Venus<sup>3</sup>. There they set up a mini fort with earthworks on three sides and the fourth side facing the river. At this time,

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Brunton lecture to Lismore City Library 2010

<sup>2</sup> Dr Tony Phillips: *James Cook and the Transit of Venus*, Science@ NASA

<sup>3</sup> Alistar MacLean: *Captain Cook London*, Fontana 1974 p.54-55

England and France were fighting the seven years war. Mounted guns were brought from the ship. Fifty-four tents were pitched to house the crew, officers, scientists, blacksmith and kitchen, while a special shelter was erected as an observatory.



*The fort erected by Cook's men on Venus Point to observe the Transit of Venus*

There was uncertainty about the exact date the Transit would occur. Cook sent a party led by Zachary Hicks to the eastern side of the island in case the weather or cloud cover should impede observation. He sent another group of thirty-eight men led by John Gore to a neighboring island. They were briefed and supplied with the necessary equipment.

The Transit appeared on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1769. It took the form of a small black dot moving across the face of the sun. It took six and a half hours. Observations were made by Astronomer Charles Green, Cook and Solander. Cook wrote in his journal –

*'This day prov'd as favourable to our purpose as we could wish, not a Clowd was to be seen the whole day and the Air was perfectly clear, so that we had every advantage we could desire in observing the whole of the passage of the Planet Venus over the Suns disc: we very distinctly saw an atmosphere or dusky shade around the body of the Planet which very much disturbed the times of the Contacts particularly the two internal ones. Dr Solander observed as well as Mr Green and myself and we differed from one another in observing the times of the Contacts much more than could be expected. Mr Green's Telescope and mine were of the same magnifying power but that of the Dr was greater than ours.'*<sup>4</sup>

Cook's and Green's observations differed by as much as 42 seconds and the Royal Society was to be very disappointed with the results collected. The observation of the Transit of Venus had been an international endeavor. Nations around the world participated and it was viewed from 76 points around the globe, but when all these results were collated scientists were still unable to determine the size of the solar system.

Their calculations regarding the distance of the sun from the earth were more successful although the observers in 1769 would never have known how close they had come to the true figure. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and using modern technology, scientists calculated that the sun is 93,726,900 English miles from the earth. Using the figures obtained from the 1769 transit it seems that the 18<sup>th</sup> century scientists aboard the *Endeavour* arrived at a figure of 92,955,000 miles. This is a difference of only eight tenths of one percent which is a remarkable effort considering the primitive instruments they had to work with<sup>5</sup>.

With scientific observations finished the time came for the *Endeavour* to leave Tahiti. More importantly, it was time for James Cook to open the sealed orders he had brought from Britain to determine where the expedition should go next.

B.Earnshaw (to be continued)

<sup>4</sup> Beaglehole J.C. ed.1999: *The journals of Captain James Cook &c ....* Boydell Press p.182-183

<sup>5</sup> Teets Donald (December 2003): *Transits of Venus and the Astronomical Unit: Mathematics Magazine.* 76 (5)

## Vale Daphne Kingston

We are sorry to report the passing of a long standing member of the Historical Society, Daphne Kingston. Daphne was a loyal member and a renowned artist. She died peacefully on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in New Zealand. We hope to publish a tribute to her in our next newsletter.

### TRIVIA QUIZ GREAT INVENTORS

- (1) Who invented the telescope?
- (2) Who invented the electric light bulb?
- (3) Who invented dynamite?
- (4) Who invented paper?
- (5) Who invented the parachute?
- (6) Who invented the lightening rod?
- (7) Who invented the steam engine?
- (8) Who invented the battery?
- (9) Who invented the pedal bicycle?
- (10) Who invented the pneumatic tyre?
- (11) Who invented radio?
- (12) Who invented the bagless vacuum cleaner?

1. Gallileo, 2. Thomas Edison, 3. Swedish Chemist Alfred Nobel, 4. Chinese Cao Lun (50-121), 5. Leonardo Da Vinci, 6. Benjamin Franklin, 7. James Watt, 8. Alessandro Volta, 9. Kirkpatrick Macmillan, 10. John Dunlop, 11. Guglielmo Marconi, 12. James Dyson.

## What's On

**Georges River Art Prize Exhibition 2019**, is still showing at Hurstville Museum & Gallery, open until 30<sup>th</sup> January. Also works submitted for the Junior Art Prize are on display at Kogarah Library.

**Street Parade** Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 10 am, Forest Road Hurstville. Come and welcome in *The Year of the Rat*.

**Australia Day Festival at Carss Park**, January 26<sup>th</sup>. Free entry into the museum from 12 noon to 6 pm.

**Dead Central**, featuring the history of the Devonshire Street Cemetery, is open until May 3, 2020 on Level 1, Mitchell Library Galleries. Come and discover what once lay beneath Central Railway Station.

## OUR TRIP TO GARDEN ISLAND NAVAL BASE ON NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2019

Thirteen people braved the ‘poor quality air’ to attend. Security was tight and we were issued with passes and then coloured vests to identify us while on the base. First stop was to watch a DVD history of the Island in the building used by the Naval Historical Society of Australia.

We discovered that Garden Island was so named because crops were originally grown there after the arrival of the First Fleet. The island originally had two hills; part of the northern hill remains and the southern hill was flattened as the island was developed for naval purposes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It ceased to be an island after the Captain Cook Graving Dock was opened in September 1945. Its construction added about 12 acres to the area and was an immense engineering undertaking. The work was done round the clock due to World War Two.

The Dock was impressive with a huge floating Caisson at its entrance to keep the dock dry. Ships in the Dock have to be manoeuvred very accurately to be exactly on the blocks when the water is removed. Powerful pumps can remove all the water in about four hours. The Dock is also used to repair modern cruise liners and other ships but naval ships always have priority. Less engineering work is now done due to changes in ship propulsion and it is no longer called a dockyard as it has been privatized.

The major buildings we saw were built in the 1880s & 1890s, one lovely one designed by James Barnet the Colonial Architect of the time. We saw the multi denominational Chapel (originally the rope works) which also has smaller Anglican & Roman Catholic Chapels. It seems to be mainly used now for special events, christenings, weddings, funerals. We were told that attendance at services used to be compulsory but this ceased in the 80s – prisoners also attended but were hidden from view above the congregation behind a wooden section. The stained glass windows were beautiful, and there was lots of polished wood, much of it used from old ships. There are many plaques for naval officers and ships in the large Chapel.

Garden Island has been used for military purposes since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and is now the main naval base on the east coast. Our guides were all ex-navy and had intimate knowledge of the base. The tour was advertised as 90 minutes but we were there for over two hours. The group adjourned for lunch to a café in Woollloomooloo after the tour.

Robert McGarn



*Our happy group about to start the Garden Island tour. (Please folks, sunglasses off next time).*

## ANYONE FOR A GUINNESS?

Sir Hugh Beaver had enjoyed a brilliant international career as a civil engineer, but his most memorable achievement had nothing to do with his scholarship in science and industry.

In 1946, at the age of 56, Sir Hugh became the managing director of *Arthur Guinness, Son and Co.Ltd*, distillers of the world famous stout. In 1951 he went on a shooting party in County Wexford, Ireland, and became involved in an argument – Which is the fastest game bird in Europe, the golden plover or the grouse? It was a trivial argument, but later that evening Beaver realized it was not possible to resolve such things from any reference book. He thought there must be numerous other questions debated nightly in the 81,400 pubs in Britain and Ireland and a book supplying the answers to these types of questions might prove popular.

Sir Hugh's idea became a reality when he heard that Norris and Ross McWhirter had been running a fact finding agency in London and he commissioned them to compile what was to become *The Guinness Book of Records*.

In 1954 the first edition of 1000 copies was printed to promote the Guinness products. Beaver said "It was a marketing give away – it wasn't supposed to be a money maker". But the following year on, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1955, the first 198 page bound edition containing about 4000 entries was launched and went to the top of the British best seller list by Christmas. The next year it launched in US and sold 70,000 copies. Since then it has become a record breaker in its own right, with sales of over 100 million copies in 100 different countries and 37 languages. Now called *Guinness World Records*, the book is the world's best selling copyright book ever.



Hercules, the world's largest dog



Smallest cat in the world

### 2020 SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

**Just a reminder that membership subscriptions for the year 2020 are now due. Our financial year runs from January to January.  
Fees are Single \$15, Couple \$20 and a subscription form is enclosed.**

## **EBENEZER ADDIS**

### **Crimean War Veteran – Kogarah Pioneer**

When the Kogarah Historical Society Newsletter began in 1970, the first article contributed was a reminiscence from the early childhood of Mrs May Grieve, a respected and well loved member who died at the age of 101. We were fortunate to harvest Mrs Grieve's memories of a colorful local character, Ebenezer Addis.

Ebenezer Addis was an old soldier who had purchased for £120, 75 acres of ground along the shores of Shipwright Bay, originally part of the grant made to Robert Townson. There he established a Pleasure Ground. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Pleasure Grounds were fashionable and provided a favorite social and recreational activity. They were ideal places for family day trips and picnics, providing a day in the bush, a ferry ride along the river, and created the illusion of being a million miles from care while still being within suburbia. Entry to his Pleasure Ground cost sixpence per horse.

Ebenezer was born in 1837. In those days young lads joined the British Army at the age of 10 or 12 years as drummers or buglers and by the time he was 17 his regiment was fighting at the Crimea. He was involved in the battle of Sebastopol where he was wounded. For years afterwards he would display a large scar on his leg, proudly claiming the wound had been dressed by Florence Nightingale herself.

No sooner did the regiment return to Britain than it was sent to India to help quell the Indian Mutiny (1857-1858). There he was caught in the siege of Lucknow where 4000 British and local Indian troops withstood a siege by 10,000 Sepoy mutineers. He was also a witness to the atrocities at Cawnpore where he saw bodies hanging from trees.

His move to Australia would have been a peaceful respite from the turmoil of regimental life. He settled and farmed his land at Tom Ugly's Point but unfortunately his wife, Martha Matilda Geddes, proved to be intemperate and ran away in 1876. She was found living with one, Robert Taylor, as his wife and Ebenezer divorced her for adultery in 1879.

Records show he was involved in public affairs. In 1885 he was a signatory on the petition for the Incorporation of Kogarah and in 1896 he was lobbying for repairs to Woniora Road which ran through his property.

But his major project was the establishment of his pleasure ground. On the day the Illawarra Railway opened from Redfern to Hurstville, Ebenezer Addis advertised that a waggonette would meet certain trains at Kogarah Station and convey passengers to the Woniora Pleasure Ground for a fare of sixpence per passenger. Prior to the opening of the railway, access to the pleasure ground had been by water. The Botany Bay & Georges River Steamship Company operated the steamer *Young Mat* which ran from the Botany Wharf (tram terminus) to Sans Souci and Tom Ugly's Point. But the official opening of the Woniora Pleasure

Ground did not take place until November, 1889<sup>6</sup> with Mr E.Addis as the licensee. The grounds provided a sandy beach for children to play on and became a popular destination for cycling and driving parties.

In 1905 he advertised in the Daily Telegraph, *'Wanted to buy and pull down, an old weatherboard building – E.Addis, Woniora Pleasure Grounds, Blakehurst.'* In 1906 he was advertising for a photographer and there was a hall on the property which he was promoting – *'Dancing Parties, Pavilion to let, splendid floor, large platform, good piano. E.Addis, Woniora Pleasure Grounds, Blakehurst.'*

Mrs May Grieve nee Marcussan was a young child when her family moved to Tom Ugly's Point. She remembered 'It was a lonely spot, the residents in the immediate vicinity could be counted on both hands. The scenic beauty was enhanced by virgin bushland. From our home we had a panoramic view of the Georges River, Botany Bay, Kogarah Bay and Shipwrights Bay.' She goes on to say 'Ebenezer, a patriarchal old figure had four huge silver medals for service in the Indian Mutiny and the Crimean War. Once a year he polished them, renewed the ribbons and set forth resplendent for the War Veterans' Annual Dinner.



We children collected his mail and did other sundry jobs. He had a winter residence and a summer residence at the extremes of his property. In the winter he moved to the house with the easterly aspect. It was a four roomed structure which he had built himself from stone quarried from the land. His back door was always open. The second bedroom was occupied by his big black horse; his white leghorns had free passage from room to room. One of the latter, blind in one eye, was named Florence in honor of Florence Nightingale. He had a fat goanna which used to emerge from under cupboards or down the rafters at unexpected moments.

In return for services rendered we always demanded payment, not monetary payment, but the telling of a story. Although we had heard his stories over and over again they never lost their savor. *'Tell us about when you were shipwrecked in the Bay of Biscay on your way home from India!'*. *'Tell us about the time you were ambushed by Sepoys and saw some of your dead comrades hanging head down from the trees!'*

After we had had our share of anecdotes we bargained for another treat and for an armful of sticks for the fire we demanded a tune on the old violin, one of his most treasured possessions. Taking the instrument from an old battered case under the bed, he tuned it with great precision and sang in a sweet tenor voice *'Good Old Jeff'*. By the time he reached the last sad line we were almost in tears. Inevitably this was followed by something more distressing, namely, *'A Sailor's*

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<sup>6</sup> Kogarah Council Minutes Vol.2 p.83

Grave'. Then he would exclaim 'Why is everyone so sad?' and then he would sing 'Never buy tripe on a Friday.'

Often during his visits to the Seabreeze Hotel on Tom Ugly's Point he could be induced to swim the Georges River to Sylvania and back for a small wager. It was a sight to be remembered, this giant of a man wearing old dungarees cut off at the knees, and a long sharp knife in his belt to combat the finny monsters of the deep. Most of the spectators crossed the river in the punt and spurred him on with cheers and shouts of encouragement. On the Sylvania bank, with his silver grey hair and long white beard he looked for all the world like the ancient Viking emerging from the sea. After a short rest at Sylvania he swam the return journey and was welcomed back with tumultuous applause.

Ebenezer Addis died on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1920. His obituary in the Hurstville Propeller Newspaper read:

*DEATH OF CRIMEAN VETERAN Mr Eber Addis, a well known resident of Tom Ugly's Point died at his residence on the 20<sup>th</sup> instant aged 83 years. He had lived alone for a number of years, his only companion being a dog. He was owner of Woniora Bay Pleasure Grounds, a well known picnic resort, which is now being cut up into allotments to be sold at an early date. It is believed that he left property valued at £7000. The late Mr Addis was an old Crimean Veteran having gone right through that historic campaign. He was at Sebastapol and Lucknow and won three medals and clasps .... interred in the Church of England portion of Sutherland Cemetery.*

Early contributors to our Society's Newsletter did very well with the resources they had but during the following fifty years many more resources have become available, e.g. digitized documents and Trove. It would be good if present and future members of the society could add to the story of Ebenezer Addis, a colorful Kogarah pioneer.

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## Valentine's day

Legend says that St.Valentine was an ancient Roman priest who suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Claudius. The modern practice of giving and receiving love tokens on his feast day has nothing to do with the original St.Valentine.

It seems that present Valentine's Day customs are but a diluted version of the rituals that took place in Roman times as part of the pagan festival of Lupercalia. With a focus on Spring and fertility, one Lupercalian rite involved men running naked around the city walls, being flayed with thongs of skin, in an effort to cure sterility.

When Christianity swept the world, the pagans needed an acceptable occasion on which to celebrate Lupercalia. They chose St.Valentine's Day, February 14<sup>th</sup>.

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# CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON 2019

