

# TRIBUTE

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FREE PUBLICATION

## St Marys & District Historical Society Inc - Quarterly Newsletter

PO Box 640, ST MARYS NSW 1790 – Street Address - St Marys Corner, Mamre Rd, St Marys – Parking via 29 Swanston Street.

### ST MARYS SPRING FESTIVAL – Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2012

Once again a great turnout from the public and the weather was kind. Some of our Society members participated in the parade down Queen Street that was once again lead by the Bennett Wagon.

*Photos courtesy of Neville Lowe, Carol Volkiene & Louise Norcott*



**HISTORY IS HERE** - At our Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, our Society members decided to dress in costume to have our photo taken in front of the Penrith Council “History is Here – Penrith/ St Marys” sign placed on the St Mary’s Precinct – corner of Mamre Road and the Highway, St Marys. At the meeting all the Executive Committee members have been retained again for 2012/2013 – President: Caroline Volkiene, Vice-President: Lyn Forde, Secretary: Marie Koen & Norma Thorburn as Treasurer.

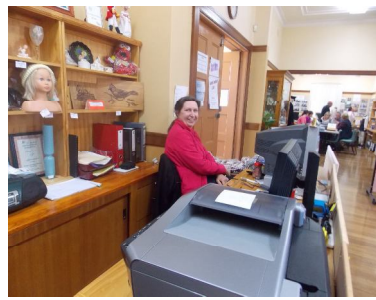
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Photos courtesy of Neville Lowe

**BACK TO ST MARYS REUNION** – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2012

The Chambers was the venue again this year and the turn out by members of the public was much better than last year because of the weather. The weather this year was a lovely spring day and many visitors enjoyed the pictorial display of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the railway coming to South Creek/St Marys. Paul Mills (who is now a member of the Society along with his wife Margaret) was once again on hand with his school photos that always proves popular with old St Mary's students ready to help with putting names to faces. Our President Carol Volkiene helped out her husband Vic with the BBQ and some of the other members and family were on hand to help out on the day. The Raffle prize of a hand crochet blanket (*in the colours of the Manly NRL*) was won by Bruce Robertson, and everyone agreed it was good to catch up with family and friends. Make sure you put it in your diary for next year – remember, the **FIRST** Sunday after Father's Day.



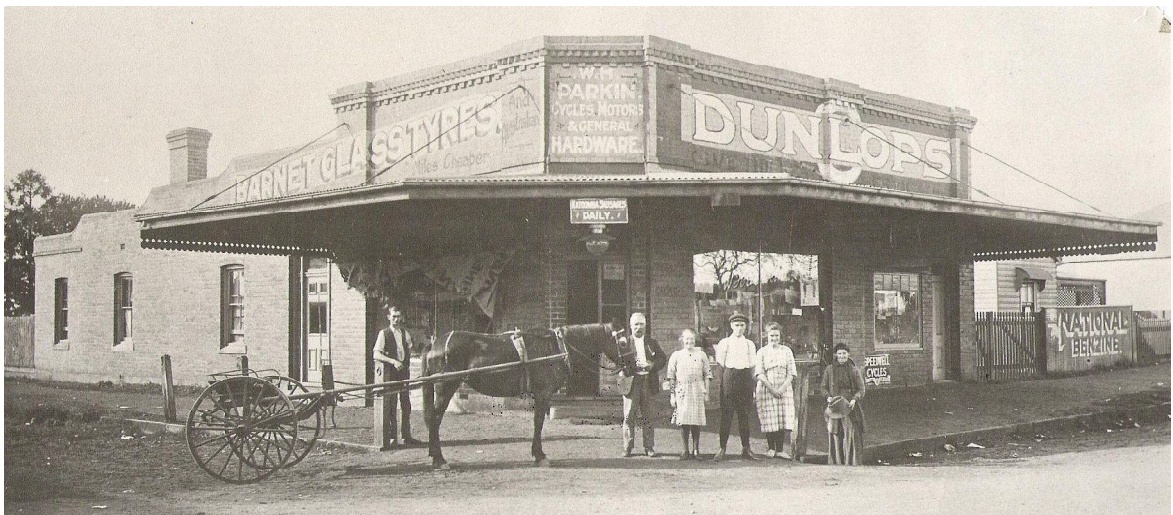
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Photos taken by Courtney Colclough & Lyn Forde

**William “Billy” Parkin – A St Mary’s Poet.** - St Mary’s residents were spoiled for choice with several well known and loved shops over the years. Shops such as Jim Mills, Spiro’s, Green & Petritch, Sandy Lang’s, Hope’s Bakery, Neale’s, Curry’s, Beacraft’s, Harvey & East’s Butchers, hairdressers Armstein, Jim & Pat Hackett, Victor Brangwin and Mick Codner’s, Barber Shop, Lammings and many more, One early shopkeeper was William Henry Parkin, who was a self made man and an enthusiastic St Mary’s Poet. You can also add house builder and bicycle assembler. William, along with his brother George, became prominent builders in and about St Marys in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both expert estimators of material required for building with very little waste. It was William who was best remembered for his bicycle business and poetry. “Billy” as he liked to be known, was a man of “generous” proportion, with a happy disposition, who weighed in at seventeen stone but with remarkable small feet, easily fitting into a size 4 shoe. For over seventeen years he was a regular advertiser of his wares in the "Nepean Times" newspaper, always in poetic form these poems appeared regularly in the "St Marys News" column, usually just four lines long. The following are just four of those poems:-

- \* There was an old woman who lived in a shoe, she bought the boys bikes, and the girls all a toy, from Parkin's new shop, now its nothing but joy.
- \* Rose Marie I love you, I'm always thinking of you, and its all because I know you own, a Billy Parkin's bike and gramophone.
- \* A Happy New Year to all, to whom good luck fall, they'll find as they found before, good values got from Parkin's store.
- \* He can sing who likes, till his throat swells like a canary’s, but he can't sing too loud, to satisfy the crowd, who live in good old St Marys.



In 1912, his shop and residence was situated a few doors away from the "Wagon Wheel Hotel" (*now called the Park View*) and he was the local agent for Bennett & Woods "Speedwell" bicycles and motor cycles. Billy also built his own "Flash" bicycle and stocked all kinds of musical instruments, toys etc, in his store. About 1918, the owner of a vacant block of ground at the north-east corner of Princess Mary Street and the Great Western Road (*now the St Mary's Band Club's front car park*) wanted to sell and accepted the offer of £50 from Billy who soon started work on the site and erected his well built brick store (*demolished by fire in 1995*) along with his weather board residence on the eastern side of it (*it was demolished in December, 1981*). The photo shows the store and part of the house. Here he conducted a much larger business than before and started the "St Marys Bicycle Club" with its quarter mile circular training track on Hackett's racecourse. This racecourse was on land that is now occupied by the "Duration Cottages" and St Mary's Senior High School. The entrance to the racecourse was via Queen Street and was owned by townsman James Hackett. Billy also organised road races on Saturday afternoons and sometimes took part himself. He died on the 10th March, 1937 at Lewisham Hospital at the age of 62. His obituary in the Nepean Times reads "Death of Mr William "Billy" H Parkin (Snr) - Born at Castlereagh in 1873 - the son of the late Mr and Mrs Christopher & Ann Parkin, he, with his brother George had much to do in the erection of a number of houses in St Marys. He stocked Edison phonographs and records, all kinds of musical instruments, bicycles, motor cycles and accessories, hardware, tobacco, cigar, cigarettes, pipes, fishing tackle, paints and varnishes, horse and cow rugs up until a few months ago, when he sold out to Mr Guy. Since then he has been residing in his adjacent cottage in Victoria Street (*Great Western Highway*). He married at St Marys to Miss Betsy Sheppard of this town who died five and a half years ago". Two of Billy's nephews who were sons of his brother Jonathan, served in World War 1 – Richard "Dicky" Parkin served in the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse and Camel Corps and William "Billie" Gifford Parkin served in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pioneer Battalion. Both returned from the war to St Marys.

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The St Marys & District Historical Society meets every 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday at 1 pm - at the St Marys Precinct "Chambers" Building - Mamre Road, St Marys. **No meetings in January or December.**  
Patron of our Society is Sister Mary Louise Petro

### **ALL WELCOME**

Back issues of the "Tribute" can be found on our website at  
[www.stmaryshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.stmaryshistoricalsociety.org)

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Please contact: us on 0450132181 & leave a message

(While care is taken to ensure that all articles are accurate, the opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society)  
Any comments on this Newsletter are encouraged



**PLEASE, DON'T THROW OUT AUSTRALIAN HISTORY. OLD PHOTOGRAPHS, BOOKS, LETTERS, RECEIPTS, DOCKETS, NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES. IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY**