



TRIBUTE

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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.

TURNER FAMILY VISIT TO ST MARYS. At 2 pm on Friday, 16th May 2014 in the cemetery of St Mary Magdalene Anglican Church at St Marys, there was a commemoration held for the 100th anniversary of the burial of John Frederick Turner. The grave of John was previously unmarked and unknown from 1914 when he died until the new headstone was placed on his grave especially for this commemoration by his descendant, Brian Turner and the Turner family. Brian planned the day from his home in Perth with the help of Lyn Forde, Vice-President of the St Marys & District Historical Society who arranged the festivities from the St Marys' end. The day was well attended by the descendants of the Turner family as well as the Society members – Caroline Volkiene and Lyn along with Tom & Norma Thorburn who dressed in 1914 costume. The weather couldn't have been nicer; the religious service by the Rev. Collins, and the family information on John Frederick Turner and the Turner family produced and presented by Brian Turner was very interesting and well presented. The church was opened for the families to enter and then an invitation to afternoon tea at the "Chambers" was arranged by the Historical Society. John Frederick Turner died at his residence in Orchard Hills in 1914 at the age of 73 years. He was suffering from heart problems and died suddenly in the arms of his wife who had been warned by Dr Higgins that this might eventuate. He worked for the railway and was believed to receive one of the first superannuation pensions from the Railway Department. He was married twice and had 16 children.

Photos courtesy of Lyn Forde



Turner Family members at the gravesite



John Frederick Turner's black headstone



Caroline, Norma & Tom with Rev. Collins



Reverend Mark Collins

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Lyn, Carol, Norma, Tom & Rev. Collins



Brian Turner talks about his family history



Turner family at the Chambers



Turner family at the Chambers

Caroline Volkiene our President and some members attended the Anzac March at St Mary's Victoria Park and the dawn service at the St Marys RSL Sub-branch as well as the **Boer War commemoration** at the RSL where a small crowd listened to the service and placed flowers and tributes at the memorial.



Photos courtesy of Lyn Forde



Caroline & Norma place a tribute at the Boer War Service along with Federal MP Tanya Davies & Councillor Jackie Greenow who are our Patron and Lifetime members respectively.

The Society participated in the ArtsWest exhibition at the Precinct by holding a collection of the Society's hats with interesting information on the dates of the hats from our member Marion McLeod. The Society provided coloured pencils and paper for the children to draw any hat they liked to take away with them as a memento of the day.

Photos courtesy of Lyn Forde



Caroline Volkiene in period dress



Vale Jean Priest – our member Jean passed away on the 5th April. She was an interesting member of our Society and had good recall. She loved her cricket so much that she came to our Christmas party with her trannie so she wouldn't miss anything. Her funeral on the 18th May was held at the St Mary Magdalene church at St Marys and was attended by many family and friends also members of our Society. Jean was laid to rest in the St Mary's General Cemetery in Sydney Street.

Photo courtesy of Jean's family

Our Local History – Did you know?

The two main thoroughfares in St Marys were unlit at night for a very long time. The Municipal Council was incorporated in 1890 but nothing was done until 1898 when the Mayor proposed that the Great Western Road and Queen Street be lit by eight kerosene lamps to the railway station. In 1903 the members of council again brought up the subject of lighting and called a public meeting to give ratepayers the opportunity to say whether or not there should be lights in the streets. More than 100 people turned up, but many of them were not ratepayers and had no right to vote. By 1907 lamps were erected along the Western Road and Queen Street but the lighting was so bad that civic minded citizens were volunteering to place lamps outside their premises along the roads. From 1910 the lighting of the principal roads and streets with kerosene lamp standards were made and were attended to daily by a lamp lighter until the coming of electricity in 1931. The evening of 17th December, 1931 (83 years ago) was a red-letter day for the citizens of St Marys because it was then that their two main thoroughfares were illuminated with the brilliance of 600 candle power lamps by the use of Council electricity. The switch-on ceremony was performed at 8 pm by the Mayor, Alderman Robert Hope on a wooden platform especially built for the occasion on the awning of a butcher's shop on the corner of the Great Western Road and Queen Street. The evening ended with a banquet. *Source: St Marys – Mt Druitt Star*

“Council Capers” – Costly lighting. Provision of 10 fluorescent lights in Victoria Park would cost Council \$928.72 annually. Alderman Brian King questioned the high cost of street lights at the last Council meeting but they decided it was necessary for parks to be well lit. In addition to the annual charge payable to Prospect County Council, another contribution of \$150 must be paid. *Source: Penrith/St Marys District Star – 19th March, 1975.* An interesting article in the Nepean Times of February, 1903 reads (*tongue in cheek style*) – “Scene – Gidley Street. Well known residents returning from meeting, after striking half a box of matches: Well, now if our Aldermen would only put a light at the end of the street so that we might know where we are. When, oh when will they find the footpath!”

The old Public School Building at South Creek that has for some time past been used as a School of Arts, has been destroyed by fire. There was an excellent library valued at £70 in the room and many books and papers were destroyed, but most of the forms and also the doors and windows were removed. By then the old shingle roof had ignited and efforts were then made to save the adjoining residence - the late teacher's residence being within a few yards of the building. An inquest was held and a verdict of arson was returned against persons age unknown. Also that a reward should be offered. *Source: Cumberland Mercury, 13 April 1878*

Drive-in closure end of an era



WHEN "The End" hits Penrith Drive-In screen next Wednesday it will also mark the end of an era.

Penrith Skyline Drive-In, O'Connell St, Kingswood, is closing down, along with two others in the Greater Union chain, Fairfield and Parklea.

The twin 35mm projectors and other equipment at Penrith will go into storage.

But this move is contrasted by booming business at Blacktown where the drive-in will be upgraded soon as a twin.

"Videos have taken over," said Penrith Drive-In manager, Eiuest Grant, 37.

"The future's not very bright, actually. One industry—like video—goes well, another goes down. It's probably a change in attitude toward entertainment, I think.

Video has changed attitudes

"People aren't going out at night. Any sort of entertainment is down. Maybe it's unemployment, who knows."

For generations the drive-in has been an important part of growing up.

"Particularly for my generation. These drive-ins started back with television in the late 50s and they held it well. But not against video."

Mr Grant has been in the business for six years. He will stay employed by Greater Union.

"I'm going to be on what they call holiday relief, moving from drive-in to drive-in as temporary manager."

What other factors

contributed to the death of the drive-in?

"Maybe the programs haven't been there. I think the weather's been bad, too. Usually, we can get over that hurdle..."

"It's difficult to say what our most successful program has been. A couple of years ago we had some real good programs for a while.

"Best one I ever think I had was The Man from Snowy River and Ginger Meggs. I think it was. That was a real good show."

Creep Show and Zapped was also a very popular double.

"We're as sorry as everybody else. But if we can't make money we can't operate. It's as simple as that. Maybe the wheel will turn a complete circle in a couple of years' time.

"You know, I haven't even got a video. How about that! And I haven't ever watched a video movie!"

Many residents of St Marys and Penrith attended the drive-in, especially when it was first introduced in the area. Before that we went to Blacktown drive-in. Penrith drive-in was great for kids who didn't need to get dressed but could go in their pyjamas and stay in the car while mum or dad went to the kiosk for the refreshments and the kids played in the children's area. Many a local grownup or child will remember the drive-in with fondness, and for those who were courting it was a bonus to be able to get away from the parents to be on their own. Many local children were surely conceived thanks to the drive-in atmosphere.

Like us on



Memories of St Marys - South Creek NSW, Australia

The St Marys & District Historical Society meets every 4th 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 Tanya Davies - Liberal Member of Parliament for Mulgoa.

ALL WELCOME

Back issues of the "Tribute" can be found on our website at
www.stmaryshistoricalociety.org

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