
MAY MEETING:

Through a most unfortunate and regrettable combination of circumstances, the scheduled speaker, Mr. B. E. Weston, was unable to attend the May meeting of the Society. Word having been received only an hour or so before the meeting, a desperate situation required a desperate remedy. The previous month's speaker was brought on again to continue the story of Dapto, this instalment covering the clearing-lease period, the making of early roads, and the development, up to about 1860, of the township which grew up around Brown's inn and mill at the point where the main road crossed Mullet Creek.

The course taken was without precedent in the Society's history, and no one hopes more fervently than the speaker that it will not be taken as a precedent for the future!

We all greatly regret having missed Mr. Weston's address, but the Society hopes that it will be possible for him to speak later in the year.

PERSONAL:

Our old friend and Past President, Mr. Norman S. King, now a Life Member, has taken up residence at Unit 405, Diment Towers, and sends good wishes to all.

We have also heard that foundation member Cyril Law, now a stalwart of the Sutherland Society, has had a spell in hospital and is now on the way to recovery. —A.P.F.

DENTISTRY AT LITTLE MILTON:

News of the threatened demolition of "Little Milton" has prompted Mrs. Elizabeth Bland, of Lithgow (before her marriage Miss Elizabeth Galiagher of Keiraville) to write to the Society, recalling that as a girl she worked there for three years for Dr. Lee and his family. She recollects that the Lees had a monkey which used to climb the big pine tree in the garden, and that when it was suffering from toothache Dr. Lee extracted the tooth under an anaesthetic — better treatment than most human sufferers received from the dentists of those days.

YES, VIRGINIA, THERE WAS A MR. GEARD!

In the course of discussion after the May meeting a question was raised as to the origin of the name of Geard's Hill. No one knew who Geard was, and it was suggested that Gerard Gerard, Esq., of Kembla Grange, might have spared one of his names for the hill and that this might have become slightly garbled with the passage of time.

It appears, however, that Geard and Gerard were not identical. Edmund Geard, apparently a confirmed petitioner, is on record among the signatories of petitions in 1844, 1845, 1848 and 1851; and in 1856 a "Mercury" ad offered for sale his "very choice and valuable freehold
property...Mr. Geard having determined on removing to Sydney”.

On 18 January 1858 the Mercury advertised the forthcoming sale of Mr. E. Geard’s household furniture and other effects, which would be sold “for cash only, as Mr. Geard is leaving for England by the Duncan Dunbar, on or about the last of February”.

So there was a Mr. Geard, after all; and it appears that he owned property near the top of Geard’s Hill — which seems to answer the original question.

The following description of the property (offered for sale in three lots) is not without interest; and someone may be able to answer the further question: are the houses described, or either of them, still standing?

“Mount Pleasant”:

“Is situate at the junction of the Mount Keira and Dapto Roads. The quantity of land is 28 acres, 3 roods and 30 perches, all cleared, nearly all stumped and securely fenced and watered by a never-failing creek, from which with a trifling outlay in the construction of a dam, any quantity of water for manufacturing and any other purposes may be secured in any season. Upon it is erected a handsome brick cottage, containing six rooms, detached kitchen, and pantry; large dairy shed, two-stall stable, flagged; large barn, granary, servants’ house, coach-house, stock and pig-yards, drafting-yards, milking-bails, etc., etc., etc. The premises are supplied with water from a tank, bricked and cemented, fitted with a pump, and securely enclosed. The garden, in which the house stands, contains about two acres; it is planted with the choicest fruit-trees and vines, now in most luxuriant bearing, as well as ornamental shrubs and flowers.

“Brighton Villa”:

“This lot contains 30 acres, more or less, well cleared and stumped, watered by the same creek as Lot 1. It has a very large frontage to the Mount Keira Road, and is only separated from the splendid house and grounds of John Stewart, Esq., (formerly Mr. Justice Therry’s), by that road. Upon this lot Mr. Geard has just erected a first-rate house, containing five large and lofty rooms, pantry, and kitchen, with verandah all round. It is built of brick and cemented, with slated roof and is, in every respect, finished in a most substantial manner, with the best materials, upon a massive stone foundation. This is a first-class property, as a gentleman’s residence. The paddocks are sown with artificial grasses, and are now bearing a most surprising crop; the soil is the deepest and richest alluvium.”

“Palm Valley”:

“This allotment contains about 65 acres of the justly-celebrated brush land of Illawarra, and is the best selection o the Mount Keira Estate. It is watered by a running creek from which the town of Wollongong could always be supplied with water, equal in quality to that which supplies the city of Sydney. It is partly let on improving leases; but about 35 acres are in the proprietor’s hands, of which the purchaser can have immediate possession. The leases have three years to run from November next, and the tenants are bound to clear and fence. All the small and valueless timber has been burnt off, but the large trees for building and fencing purposes have not been destroyed. It is richly ornamented by nature with palms, cedars, and other beautiful trees, and it is a most delightful spot.”