



“Nurungi”

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

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MEETINGS

General Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month
at 7:30 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre
(except July)

Executive Meetings

4th Wednesday of month
at 7:45 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre

Committee Meetings

As arranged
Contact Chairpersons
for details

Museum

Fred Stansfield, 9743-1866

Walker Estates

First Thursday each month
(please contact to confirm)
Strathfield North Public School
Correy's Avenue, North Strathfield
Errol Grace, 9743-4301

Heritage

Bill Barlow, 9743-3662

Oral History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

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**CONCORD
HERITAGE MUSEUM**
5 Wellbank Street

Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Wednesday & Saturday

No. 78

August 2002

The Big Submarine

Holbrook Landmark

In recent years Australia has become home to a large number of man-made giants — weird and wonderful creations such as the Big Pineapple, the Big Banana, the Big Sheep and the Big Potato.

These are all intended to be a bit of fun, a way to catch the attention of passing motorists, who may stop and smile, spend a few dollars and perhaps have their photo taken next to a weird and wonderful giant.

But there's a giant of a different kind that resides in the town of Holbrook, which is on the Hume Highway about midway between New South Wales and Victoria.

Holbrook's best known feature is a full-sized submarine, the *HMAS Otway*. Motorists cannot help but see it as they drive through the town, and once seen, curiosity runs rampant. Why in the world does this little dot on the map of inland Australia have its very own submarine?

It all began in World War I

The story begins during World War I. Then Holbrook was known as Germanton. Given that our country was engaged in war with Germany the town elders wisely decided that a name-change was in order.

At about this time Lieutenant Norman Holbrook became the first naval Victoria Cross winner of the war for his gallantry in sinking a Turkish battleship with the submarine he commanded.

It was soon decided that the town could do no better than be named after a great war hero, and so in 1915, Germanton became Holbrook. Ever since then it has maintained a special link with submarines.

Submerged in history

Holbrook Council acquired the *Otway* when it was decommissioned and scrapped. The above-the-water section was rebuilt and is now on permanent display in Holbrook's Germanton Park. It measures 90 metres from bow to stern.

Also on display, are an actual torpedo of the kind used by Lieutenant Holbrook. Nearby, at the Woolpack Inn Museum you'll find an extensive collection of Lieutenant Holbrook memorabilia, including replicas of his VC.

Perhaps next time you're down Holbrook way you'll stop awhile, and like me, you'll become "submerged" in the town's unusual history.

(Reprinted courtesy of author Bill Condon, [http://users/bigpond.com/billcondon/homepage.html](http://users.bigpond.com/billcondon/homepage.html) and Australia/New Zealand for Visitors <http://goaustralia.about.com> where it was first published.)



Bulletin Board

Wednesday, 14th August - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers.

At this meeting all positions will be declared vacant and nominations will be called to fill them ALL. If you would like to become part of the Executive, please let the secretary have your nomination prior to the meeting.

Just a Reminder: *Membership fees and due and payable prior to this meeting. Please assist by paying yours as soon as possible.*

Wednesday, 11th September - Peter Reynolds, "Horbury Hunt (Architect) and the Horbury Hunt Club"

Horbury Hunt designed Ardill House (Our Children's Home) in Davidson Avenue.

Wednesday, 9th October - a representative from the **Western Suburbs Lapidary Club**, or a representative.

Wednesday, 13th November - to be advised

Wednesday, 11th December - **Annual Christmas Party at Rhodes Park.** Cost \$10.00 per head, all food supplied. BYO liquid refreshments.

Rookwood Cemetery Tour - Sun., 27th October

Everyone enjoyed Robyn Hawes talk to us last month so much that we have organised a bus tour to see all the things she told us about.



We will meet at the Museum at 9:15 am (leaving promptly at 9:30) and proceed by bus to the Cemetery where we will meet up with Robyn.

We have arranged this tour in two parts in case you feel that a full day would be too much.

The half-day tour will cost \$22.00 per person (which includes the cost of the bus) or the full-day tour will cost \$30.00 (including the bus cost).

We will be able to travel through the area by bus but there will be some walking to specific places during the day.

We will need to bring our own picnic lunch and we will have access to chairs and tables.

For those who only want to do the half-day tour the bus will take them back to the museum during the lunch break.

We need to have numbers as soon as possible because if we can't fill the bus (maximum 48 people) we'll have to look at alternative means of transport.

This should be a wonderful day out and the gardens should be magnificent as they are holding their Spring Garden Fair the week before.

Please make a note of the date now in your diaries and phone the secretary to make your booking. First come, first served.

Relatives, friends and neighbours are welcome to join us for the day.



... to a fundraising dinner in aid of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway on Friday, 16th August - 7 for 7:30 pm at the Concord Function Centre, Majors Bay Road Concord.

The price of the tickets is \$80 per person (includes pre-dinner drinks, beer, wine, soft drinks and a 3-course meal).

Guest speakers: Mr. Rusty Priest, AM and Mr. Charlie Lynn, MLC.

Be entertained by a "Between the Wars" Fashion Parade, to the music of the Charleston era! Three-piece Navy Band.

Further information from Alice Kang on 9757-8488.

... to the Strathfield District Historical Society's C.S. Malcolm Memorial Lecture on Saturday, 7th September at 1:45 for 2:00 pm, in the Community Centre, 1B Bates Street, West Strathfield (near Airey Park)

Lecturer: Dr. Barrie Dyster, teacher and author. Subject: "Who was Sir William Walkley - and Why?"

R.S.V.P. 26th August to PO Box 117, Strathfield, 2135 or phone 9746-6960 (Doreen Rich) or 9642-3142 (Lucy Stone)

To all those tracing their family tree .

Am I Really Me?

I started out calmly tracing my family tree to find if it would be the making of me,

And all that I had was great-grandfather's name, not knowing his wife's or from whence they both came.

I chased him across a long line of States and came up with pages and pages of dates.

When all put together, it made me forlorn; I proved poor great-grandpa had never been born.

One day I was sure the truth I had found, determined to turn this whole thing upside down;

I looked up the record of one Uncle John, then found the old man was younger than his son.

But then when my hopes were growing quite dim, I came across records that must have been him.

The facts I collected, they made me quite sad - dear old great-grandfather was never a dad.

I think someone surely is pulling my leg, I'm not at all sure I'm not hatched from an egg.

After hundreds of dollars I've spent on my tree, I can't help but wonder if I'm really me.

(Ron Callaway, The 1788-1820 Pioneer Gazette. Printed with permission.)

John Horbury Hunt

(1838-1904)

John Horbury Hunt, architect, was born in Canada. The son of a carpenter, he trained at Boston under the significant architect, Edward Clarke Cabot. When the Civil War broke out he embarked for India and en route arrived at Australia in 1863, where he stayed to work with Edmund Blacket, the leading Sydney architect. By 1865 he was chief assistant but left in May 1869 for a brief partnership with John F. Hilly. Later that year he established his own practice.

For the ensuing thirty years Hunt's free-Gothic mastery of complex form and asymmetrical balance, combined with outstanding skill in timber and brickwork, produced many significant buildings such as the cathedrals at Armidale (1871) and Grafton (1880), and churches at Denman (1871), Branxton (1873) and Dapto (1882). The stone-vaulted Chapel of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay (1896), is his finest work. His houses, Booloominbah, Armidale (1888), Camelot, Narellan (1888), Pibrac, Warrawee (1888), and Highlands, Wairoonga (1891) are distinctive. He also designed such schools as Frederickton Public, Balmain West (now Rozelle Public), St Alban's and Barrengharry.

As president of the Institute of Architects of New South Wales (1889-95), his campaign for professional status led to schism. He reconstituted the institute, saw its incorporation in 1891, and alliance with the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1893. Eccentric, quick-tempered and argumentative, he was extremely fond of animals and was an active member and vice-president of the Animals Protection Society.

Hunt's practice collapsed in the 1890s depression and he spent the last ten years of his life in penury at Sydney where he died on 27 December 1904. His wife, Elizabeth, predeceased him in 1895."

Did you Know . . .

The ice cream sundae got its name from a law in Illinois in the US in the 1800s, which ruled you couldn't buy fountain sodas on Sundays. Ice Cream Parlours devised a way of getting around the law by inventing a soda syrup for ice cream, without soda water.

They sold it legally on Sundays and it became known as an ice cream sundae.

Rookwood Cemetery - A beautiful and historic place to visit.

Rookwood Cemetery is the largest cemetery in the southern hemisphere - it is a total of 777 acres. The first burial was in 1867.

Today it is a beautiful, peaceful place, with an interesting assortment of old and new monuments, in a (somewhat overgrown) park-like setting. Although the idea of walking (or even picnicking!) in a cemetery may seem bizarre, once you see the place, you will realise that this isn't so. Wildlife of various kinds is abundant, including native birds, lizards, even snakes.

However, there is a sense of sadness when you compare photos of the cemetery at its peak, with fountains and streams, rose gardens, paved pathways, and the serpentine canal running beneath bridges and past beautiful summer-houses.

In Victorian times people placed a great deal of importance on mourning and monuments, and families would destitute themselves to create a proud monument for their missing family members. Widows therefore were extremely grateful for money collected by work-mates towards the

cost of the funeral and its trimmings, even if this money could have been used for essential items such as feeding and clothing the often large families.

Later on, however, less importance was placed on this aspect of life. When motor vehicles replaced trains and horses, some of the impressive signs of the typical funeral disappeared. Large amounts of money were still used to pay for headstones and carving, but less money was available for the upkeep of the graves.

Gradually the cemetery began to lose its glory. The summer-houses and other buildings fell into disrepair. Gardeners were no longer employed by the cemetery, and the roses and other plants became overgrown. Headstones fell over, and were not returned to their original positions.

Finally, as traditional society values disintegrated, the vandals moved in. Gravestones were overturned and broken, wings and arms were broken off cherubs, mausoleums were broken into and destroyed, and worse things happened.

Despite these misfortunes, the cemetery is still a beautiful place. It can be peaceful and relaxing to sit under the shade of native trees in the older sections, and feel the peace and quiet, or walk among the roses, or admire the beautiful statues of angels and cherubs, and the intricate carving on many of the headstones.

Some people use the cemetery for more active recreation, such as walking dogs, and even jogging!

In recent years several groups of people have become interested in the preservation and restoration of the cemetery. As part of a job-training project local youths have been employed to clear overgrown vegetation and provide other maintenance work.

Also, much work has been done in trying to restore it to its previous grandeur and on our tour you will have a chance to see what has been done.

The inscriptions on the gravestones have also been recorded, for the sake of history, and to help people researching family histories.

(Can anyone see a parallel with our own Yaralla estate?)

Australia's Postal Service

The beginning of the postal service

It began on April 25, 1809 with the appointment of Isaac Nichols as Postmaster to the then infant settlement of Sydney, in the Colony of New South Wales. In 1812 a postal service was established in Tasmania; Western Australia in 1829; South Australia and Victoria in 1837. In 1859 Queensland became a separate colony, with its own postal service. Until then its postal services and government had been part of New South Wales, with the first Postmaster appointed in Queensland in 1833. As the colonies were settled, the mail services went out with them - lines of communication by foot, by horse, and by coach.

In 1854 the Telegraph service arrived. In 1873 the telephone was introduced. These services were brought under the control of the colonial postal departments as they appeared. In 1901, with the Federation of Colonies, the Commonwealth Government created the Post Master General's Department, bringing the State posts and telegraph departments under one administration.

The 1920's and '30's saw the birth of regular air mail services - first within Australia and then with overseas

countries.

By 1939 the Australian Post Office handled just over 1,000,000,000 postal articles for the first time, and the full-time staff stood at 33,821. Today the post offices handle more than triple this amount.

The origin of the city delivery service and its development.

The story of the city delivery service is brief. In 1830 the first men and youths were employed to deliver mail to addresses in Sydney and Hobart. Some rode horses and they were all required to accept mail from the public for dispatch to other places. This requirement was dropped with the appearance of street letter receivers in the 1850's and 1860's.

The pattern of development was similar in the other capital cities. The postboys and postmen were provided with uniforms, which distinguished them on their duties, by the respective Colonial Governments. Following Federation in 1901 and the amalgamation of the Postmaster-General's Department, they all received a similar uniform.

Today there are 4,800 postmen in Australia and the vast majority of

them are employed in the major capital cities. They make one delivery a day and visit 2,000,000 addresses each day. If he rides a bike he covers from 16 - 20 miles and by foot 8 to 10 miles.

The rural mail service and what it has meant to the people residing in the country.

Like the famous Canadian Mounted Police, Australia's equally famous outback mailmen have been finding their men for generations. They have made the slogan - 'the mail must get through' - a reality, in conditions in which most people would not survive.

Perhaps the most famous was one called 'The Fizzer' (no one seems to know his real name) who brought the mail out back in the Northern Territory. He travelled 1,000 miles under shocking conditions on horseback. One of his predecessors died of thirst on the same run. Finally 'Fizzer' was drowned trying to save the mail in a flooded crossing, his first trip on a different run.

Before and since 'The Fizzer's' day, heroic men have been getting the mail through to the outback corners of our

(continued next page)

continent - to the lonely mining camps, the tiny townships of two or three buildings and to the cattle stations where homesteads are sometimes 100 miles or more from their front gate.

John Conway Bourke could probably be described as Australia's first mailman. He was the first to undertake carrying mail from Melbourne overland to Sydney on horseback. His first trip on January 1, 1838 took 6 days to reach the Murray River near Albury. He had to cross the Murray with his saddle and pack horses, and mail, and hand over to another horseman farther up the track. On other occasions he was attacked by hostile natives on this trip.

In more recent times, another outback mailman, Tom Kruse was awarded the O.B.E. for his efforts in carrying the mail over the Birdsville track. Another outback mailman is Jim MacDowall, a veteran who carried the mail on packhorses for 17 years in the far north of Queensland. Every fortnight he rode a hazardous 350 miles round trip using up to 12 packhorses. Each fortnight he spent 13 days in the saddle riding 30 miles a day. The odd day was spent checking his gear. Everywhere he went he was liked and respected, and if word got round that he was overdue, there would be many anxious enquiries. He died "in the harness" in 1951 - on the trail.

The longest and loneliest mail run is from Meekatharra to Marble Bar in Western Australia, a distance of 1164 miles. Incidentally Marble Bar is the hottest township in Australia, with temperatures between 100 and 120 degrees most of the year. This run is done by motor vehicle taking a week for the round trip, and doing it twice a month. Another run in the Southern Alps of New South Wales, is snow bound for several months, and if the mailman cannot dig his vehicle out of drifts he dons skis to get to his destination. Some mail is delivered by boat to lighthouses. Things are changing in the outback however; more motor vehicles are being used, and in some cases, air service is more practicable. One airline company in Alice Springs covers more than 10,000 route miles served regularly by surface transport. The benefit is illustrated by the case of one outback mail run which had to be undertaken by horseback, taking 13 days. Now a plane serves the route in one day.

(Printed with permission of the author, Bryant W. Rogers. Source: <http://sdayouth.cybersite.com.au/pathfind/honours/recreat/files/stamps.rtf>.)

From the Secretary's Desk

I'M BEGGING NOW!!

I desperately need the help of an assistant Secretary who can spare a half day or an evening once or twice a month for general help. No experience necessary. If you can help please nominate or let me nominate you at the AGM this month for the position of Assistant Secretary.



MUSEUM ROSTERS: We still need helpers for the Wednesday Museum Rosters. Can you spare a couple of hours?

CHRISTMAS PARTY: We have booked the Rhodes Park Barbecue area for our Annual Christmas Party - 5:30 to 8:30 pm. Mark the date in your diary now so you won't double book. This is always a good social evening, enjoyed by all, so make sure you're there.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS: We're still waiting to hear from all those who volunteered earlier to help with this. Were you one of them? We need your help.

Got a couple of hours to spare once a month . . . ?

. . . then why not nominate yourself to become part of our Executive Committee. We have several vacancies, particularly for someone to take care of our archives and the secretary could do with one or two assistants to ease the work load, or you could just become a member.

We need some new blood and new ideas, and we need you to supply it. **Won't you offer?**

It's a great opportunity to become more involved with the work we do and learn more about what goes on behind the scenes.



On This Day - 14th August

1880 - Construction of Cologne Cathedral completed (began in 1248)

1945 - V-J Day; Japan surrenders unconditionally to end WW II

1966 - 1st US lunar orbiter begins orbiting Moon

Yaralla Open Day - Sunday, 29th September, 2002

Our next Open Day is coming up fast and we need your help to make the day a success.

We always need guides to take on the tours of the mansion and the grounds. We have a very comprehensive book which gives you all the information you would need - the only other requirement is a love of and interest in this magnificent estate.

If you doubt your capabilities, why not come along and accompany some of our regular guides to get a feel for the job.

We also need helpers for the Devonshire Teas and Souvenir/Display area. If you can spare some time on the day please contact the secretary.

Dates for your Diary . . .

- ☛ *Wednesday, 14th August - Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers.*
- ☛ *Wednesday, 28th August - Executive Meeting*
- ☛ *Thursday, 5th September - Walker Estates/Yaralla Committees*
- ☛ *Wednesday, 11th September - Peter Reynolds, "Horbury Hunt and the Horbury Hunt Club"*
- ☛ *Wednesday, 25th September - Executive Meeting*
- ☛ *Sunday, 29th September - Open Day at Yaralla*
- ☛ *Thursday, 3rd October - Walker Estates/Yaralla Committees*
- ☛ *Wednesday, 9th October - a representative from a Lapidary Club*