



Nurungi

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: chs@concordheritage.asn.au

www.concordheritage.asn.au

EDITOR

PRESIDENT

TRISH HARRINGTON

9764-3296

PUBLIC RELATIONS

TRISH SKEHAN

9743-4172

SECRETARY/TREASURER

LOIS MICHEL

3 Flavelle Street

(P.O. Box 152)

Concord 2137

Phone: 9744-8528

Fax: 9744-7591

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MEETINGS

General Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month
at 7:30 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre
9 Wellbank Street, Concord

Executive Meetings

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

Walker Estates Committee

1st Thursday each month
(please contact to confirm)
Concord Bowling Club
Clermont Ave, North Strathfield
Graham Packett, 9743-3007

Other Committees

As arranged
Watch the newsletter

Museum

Fred Stansfield, 9743-1866

Archives/Local History

Kate Skillman, 9706-7479

Heritage

Bill Barlow, 9743-3662

Oral/Family History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

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**CONCORD
HERITAGE MUSEUM**

5 Wellbank Street

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

No. 101

August 2004

The House of the Future

At the Australasian Science Congress held in Hobart in January 1902, John Sulman, an English architect living in Sydney, read a paper entitled "A Twentieth Century House with suggestions on the solution of the Servant Problem".

He said: "It is probable that many middle-class households will, in the future, have to dispense with servants altogether, or depend on lady-helps, or assistance by non-resident servants for a limited time each day. In either case the existing type of house with its arrangements for two classes of inmates is unsuitable."

Sulman described the essential features of the house of the future. It would have a closed porch for hats and coats, opening into a general living room, like the hall of old English houses. There would be a small dining room close to a compactly planned and well-fitted kitchen. Every bedroom would have a fixed lavatory in a closed but ventilated cupboard and a large built-in wardrobe and chest of drawers.

"Cooking would be performed by gas or electricity", said Sulman. "A continual supply of hot water would be provided by a gas heater, or self-feeding coal boiler in the cellar, and washing up would be performed in a sink without handling, by first steeping in a chemical solution to remove grease, rinsing with clean water, and then drying by a gas heater fixed under the sink."

All rooms would be heated by gas fires, as coal and wood caused too much dust and labour.

Polished parquet floors laid on solid concrete and impervious cement walls with rounded corners would eliminate constant cleaning; furnishing would be simple, avoiding fluffy carpets and hangings which produced dust.

Washing was to be sent out, and possibly cooking, too. Sulman proposed the establishment of district co-operative kitchens which would deliver ready-cooked meals with table appointments, as in Sweden. His concepts were years ahead of his time.

By 1918, writing about "The Architect and the Future", the Queensland architect Robin Dodds was suggesting that the solution to

the servant problem was a form of communal living.

Twelve separate but similar houses would be grouped around a central building containing a dining hall, recreation rooms, a kitchen, laundry and accommodation for servants, whose services would be shared.

"Two or three cooks at salaries comparable to those now paid to University professors and with commensurate skill and training, could appear like prima donnas on alternate nights", Dodds suggested.

And a further advantage of this kind of living, he pointed out, would be that "a four for bridge would be as easy to get as on a P & O. steamer".

Liberty Plains – 1793

(conclusion)

The efforts of the free settlers to earn a livelihood at Liberty Plains being unsuccessful, much of the area remained practically in a state of fallow and neglect until the return of Powell from the Hawkesbury, where he had evidently combined farming pursuits with his duties as constable. On the Hawkesbury River he had acquired the thirty-acre land of M. Doyle, an area of land fronting the river on its right bank, about one mile upwards from the site of the Windsor bridge.

Powell was a man of action, and had followed various pursuits, but while acting as constable for the protection of settlers in the Hawkesbury District he apparently exceeded his duty in being concerned in the



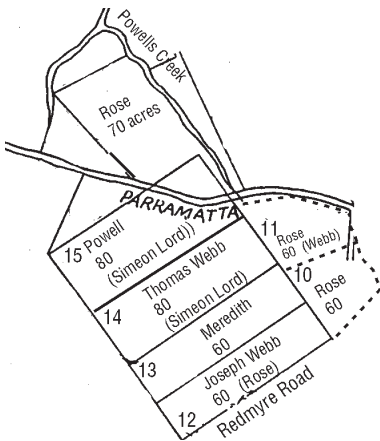
Bulletin Board

11th August - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers

8th September - Kevin Hatton, "The Red Cross Theatre" and photographs. He will be accompanied by Jan Bell from the Hospital Museum.

putting to death of two natives who had killed one of the convict settlers, which unauthorised action necessitated his resignation from the constabulary. This incident occurred in 1799, after which Powell retired to his farm, where he remained until about the year 1807 when, having disposed of his Hawkesbury farm, he returned to his former home at Liberty Plains, which he had again acquired in conjunction with the adjoining eighty acres formerly held by Thomas Webb.

Shortly after his return to Liberty Plains he was granted an additional area of nineteen acres adjoining his original grant on the northwest, with frontage to the Parramatta Road on the north and now Coventry Road on the west.



Anticipating the patronage of the travelling public, Powell erected a suitable building on the Parramatta Road, within his grounds, which structure he named the Half-Way House and, having obtained a licence to retail spirituous liquors, he established an hotel and store which, for a number of years, was retained on behalf of the travelling public as originally planned. Powell's life at the Half-Way House was, however, of short duration. He death was announced in the Sydney Gazette of October 12, 1814 as follows:

Died . . . at his residence on the Parramatta Road, Mr. Edward Powell, many years a settler in the colony, where he had been always much esteemed as a worthy character. He leaves a wife and large family to deplore his loss.

He was buried in his orchard beside the grave of his daughter, who died in 1810. On the decease of Powell, his widow administered the affairs of the estate until her death in 1818. In the following year her son Edward inserted the following adver-

tisement in the Sydney Gazette of May 8, 1819:

To be let for a term of years, that well known estate called the Half-Way House, on the Parramatta Road, which is well calculated for a commercial line of business, or for a private family – the Estate is situated in the district of Liberty Plains, comprising 500 acres cleared, part of which is in cultivation with a beautiful garden and orchard . . .

Of the first free settlers established at Liberty Plains, Thomas Rose was, as stated by Collins, "the best calculated for a bona fide settler" with regard to his knowledge of farming. His stay at Liberty Plains, however, was apparently of brief duration as his family records show the birth of his second daughter, Sarah, to be at Prospect in 1795, where he had been placed in charge, as overseer, of Government stock and farm. Although residing at Prospect in the employ of the Government, he apparently retained for a number of years an interest in his property at Liberty Plains where, in 1798, he had acquired an additional area of seventy acres adjoining Powell's original grant.

For twelve or more years his home appears to have been at Prospect, and afterwards at Wilberforce where he or his sons had purchased the thirty-acre grant of William Mackay, which grant is situated in the neighbourhood of that township. His death occurred on November 15, 1833, and his grave may now be seen in the Wilberforce Church of England Cemetery, surrounded by those of a number of his descendants.

As regards information respecting the members of his family who landed with him at Sydney in 1793, little is apparently known, other than traditional, and a somewhat similar obscurity envelops the career of Frederick Meredith. Meredith's name, however, appears in the Loyal Sydney Association Company's list dated November 9, 1802, and eight years later in that of the Sydney Constabulary Force of December 29, 1810. In the year 1809 he received an additional grant of 120 acres at the head of Salt Pan Creek near Bankstown and in 1814 another area of sixty acres on the Parramatta River, fronting Homebush Bay (as already stated). Through this latter grant now runs our Great Northern Railway, from Rhodes railway station to the bridge.

In later years Meredith and his son, also named Frederick, were recipients of land grants of sixty acres each, in the neighbourhood of

Bankstown, fronting the Liverpool Road on the south side. The deeds of these grants are dated March 8, 1831.

In again alluding to the progress of settlement in this locality we learn, upon examining official maps, that much of the country around the Liberty Plains homestead areas became alienated, from time to time, in considerable areas. On the east Captain Thomas Rowley was granted a consolidated grant of 750 acres, and on the south James Wilshire was equally favoured in receiving 570 acres. On the north west D'Arcy Wentworth erected his homestead, named *Homebush*, which is now the name of the adjoining municipality.

The name *Liberty Plains* was at first applied only to the ground and its immediate environs, occupied by the "first free settlers", but in later years it included the areas now embraced by the Municipalities of Strathfield, Burwood and Enfield. In the Sydney gazette of October 27, 1821, the district of Liberty Plains is officially described as bounded on the north side by the Sydney Road leading to Parramatta, on the west side by a line passing southerly to the Liverpool Road (the position of this boundary line is not stated), on the south side by the Liverpool Road and Cooks River to Johnson's Farm (Rev. R Johnson's Canterbury Farm), on the east of Johnson, Lucas and Piper Farms, to the head of Iron Cove Creek on the Liverpool Road, and thence by that creek to the Parramatta Road.

During the latter half of the 19th century many of the old semi-rural land grants within the Liberty Plains district, especially along the principal lines of traffic, became subdivided into homestead areas and later into residential allotments, to meet the requirements chiefly of professional men, merchants and Government officials. Among the favoured localities, the Homebush-Redmire district had, for a time, an ample share of the Sydney elite, but gradually the lure of the Sydney Harbour scenic grandeur induced the establishing of fashionable residence along the steep foreshores of that bay instead of on the gently undulating grounds of the western suburbs.

In briefly continuing the story of the Half-Way House, it may be stated that on February 28, 1823 Edward and Mary Powell transferred their interests in that property to their brother-in-law, James Underwood, for value received and about two years later the establishment was advertised *to be let for*

a term not exceeding seven years, evidently as a private residence. Upon the termination of that period, according to information received, James Kerwin (otherwise called *Jimmy the Jockey*) reopened the Half-Way House as an hotel under the name of *The Horse and Jockey* (which name it still retains).

In 1855 the opening of the railway through the Underwood property practically confined the public resorts and conveniences of the locality to the north side of the railway, whilst on the south side the land would appear to have remained open country until subdivided for sale in the year 1878, or thirty-four years after the death of James Underwood, who died in England in 1844.

In the *preliminary notice of the Underwood subdivision at Homebush*, which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald of November 2, 1878, we read: "*That a portion of the estate, close to the railway station, has been laid out as the Village of Homebush*". And on the 16th of the same month we are again informed that the subdivision (of the remainder of the estate) "*is now being made upon the ground by Mr. Surveyor Binstead*".

On the day of auction sale, December 9, 1878, the public was informed that the ground was "*allotted into fifteen sections, intersected by streets*" and it may be mentioned that the names then given to the streets are practically identical with those in use today.

This latter subdivision, which is on the south side of the railway, includes Portion No.13, the area granted to Meredith, but when and how it was acquired by Underwood or his estate agents we are not informed. The ownership of the land adjoining Portion 13 on the south, which formerly belonged to Thomas Rose, was for some time a matter of dispute regarding which, we are told, the rights of possession ultimately required adjusting in the law courts.

*Strathfield District Historical Society
Newsletter, March 2001
(with permission)*

Yaralla Tours

We have the following bookings and need your help. Please give us a call.

Tuesday, 17th August - The Wanderers Club - 10:15 am - 15 visitors. We need 1 guide, plus Devonshire Teas helpers. Let the secretary know if you can help.

Monday, 28th August - South Strathfield Probus Club - 10:00 am - 15-20 visitors. We need 1 guide and Devonshire Tea helpers.

Wednesday, 22nd September - St Mark's Church, Ermington - 10:00 am - 12-15 visitors. 1 guide plus Devonshire Teas helpers needed.

Sunday, 17th October - Australian Garden History Society - 9:30 - this is a large group of up to 200 people so we'll need about 8 grounds guides - plus many hands for the Devonshire Teas

Sunday, 7th November - our own Open Day at Yaralla - **all hands on deck!**

... and we've already got a booking for next year.

If you can help with any of these, please contact the Secretary as soon as possible.

Don't miss this . . .

New TV series: Some time back many groups such as ours was contacted asking people with unusual history/mystery stories to contact the producers of a new ABC programme. It has finally been produced and as people interested in history we want to convince the ABC that history is a popular hobby of many.

Starting on **Sunday, 1st August**, at 9:25 pm, and continuing for 25 weeks, the ABC (Channel 2) will be broadcasting a fascinating series - **Rewind on Australian History - an amazing gallery of rogues, heroes, scandals and mysteries**. Read stories - our stories.

City of Canada Bay ..

will be hosting two events which should be of interest -

Wed. 18th August - 10 am to 12:30 pm - **Mind Your Memory** - a memory expo with information on: memory changes that occur when people age; how people can enhance their memories; what changes people should be concerned about; where to go for more information.

Venue: Drummoyne Community Centre. Phone 9911-6580. Booking essential.

Mon. 23rd August - Free Hearing Test - it will take only 15 minutes.

Venue: Council's Drummoyne Office. For further information call 9911-6580. Appointments necessary.

Mortlake & Breakfast Point

Captain John Hunter led the first British exploration of the Parramatta River in February 1788. On the 5th February, while having breakfast he made the first contact with local Aboriginals of the Wangal Clan.

The location is referred to as Breakfast Point on the survey map of 1799. The Wangal called the area Booridiow-o-gule.

The adjacent point was variously known as Bachelors Point, Pleasant Point and Green Point but eventually became known as Mortlake Point, named after a town along the Thames River in Britain.

Mortlake was long dominated by the significant AGL (Australian Gas Light Co.) industrial site which was developed from 1884 to produce gas for domestic and industrial use in Sydney.

The 32 hectare site includes several buildings of historical interest from an industrial perspective.

Today the land is being rehabilitated and developed as a residential area known as Breakfast Point.

(www.siwvl.nsw.gov.au/libraries/canadabay/mortlake.html)

Annual General Meeting & Election of Executive Committee - 11th August.

A reminder to those concerned that all committee reports should be in hand prior to this date. If you are again standing for office, please let the secretary know as soon as possible.

All positions will be declared open on the night and nominations will be called to fill them. We need to have a full committee to carry out the work of our society so if you would consider becoming part of this group (particularly if you will not be able to attend this meeting), please speak to the secretary and we'll be happy to list you as a nominee. We need members who are willing to attend the executive meetings on the 4th Wednesday of each month and give us their thoughts and ideas for the betterment of our society. Don't be shy! Put your hand up!

This can be very interesting and rewarding and give you a better insight into the workings of our society. We need the fresh thoughts and ideas that you could bring to us to improve our society.

Children's Games

Back in the days when children were neither surrounded by mass-produced toys nor lured indoors by the hypnotic eye of the television set, they had many traditional amusements that now seem to have disappeared.

Do any of these bring back memories?

After the traditional Sunday dinner of baked leg of lamb, you rescued the knuckle bone from the joint. After you had collected five of these you got your mum to boil them clean and you then had a set of Jacks. To be quite fancy you could put on colours with your paint box, or your mum would dye them different colours for you.

These were tossed, singly or several at one time, and caught on your palm or the back of your hand. After you became proficient there were many manipulations that could be performed during the time the one (or more) you tossed was still in the air.

With your trusty penknife you could whittle an aeroplane propeller, which you fastened to a long stick with notches all along one edge. If you rubbed another stick along this notched edge the propeller would turn. The faster you rubbed, the faster the propeller would turn.

You could serrate the rims of a cotton reel and put an elastic band through the middle, with a little wooden peg at one end to hold it and a match stick at the other. You wound the match stick round and round, put the whole thing down on the floor, and let it go - a cotton-reel tank. It whizzed over the ground, over obstacles and up and down.

You could go into the bush and find a proper forked branch for a shanghai (catapult). You had to notch it and con someone for a bit of inner tube and some leather for the little pouch. Seeds, pebbles, or other small items made the ammunition to shoot at tin cans on a fence - or other boys.

You could climb into an old motor car tyre, hunch up your knees and tuck in your head, and get someone else to bowl you along the road - down a hill at about 30 miles an hour. You whirled round and round. Thankfully there was little traffic in the late 1920s.

You could get a fruit case, pinch a paling from someone's fence, and buy iron axles and iron wheels - three-pence a pair - or an old set of pram wheels and make a bilycart - and scar your arms and legs when you fell off and get splinters in your bottom on the ride.

Marbles were greatly prized by boys. Each had its own value, like coins. Aggies (agates) were the best - clear with a spot of colour in the middle, or strips of colour coming from the centre. Connies were coloured glass; some had cats' eyes - which were very rare and valued - and others streaks. Clayies, or clay dabs, made of baked clay were ordinary - commonohs. It was a good trick to get hold of a steelie (ball bearing) which usually broke the others in games like big ring, little ring or threes.

Boys never played with girls, except at parties. Party games included three-legged, wheelbarrow, egg-and-spoon, and sack races, treasure hunts, pinning the tail on the donkey, and, a nasty trick - "sometimes three or four eggs were put on the floor in a row and a person was blindfolded and had to walk between the eggs. But before they started, the eggs were quietly removed and peanuts put down instead, so the victim went crunching over the peanut shells"

It was mostly the girls who skipped - to odd lines and fragments of verse such as: "Andy Pandly sugar candy"; "Salt . . . mustard . . . vinegar . . . pepper" (getting faster). And, with two others holding the rope, a gaggle of little girls chanted "all in together, this fine weather", and would all jump in and skip together.

Why do we say . . .

THROW IN THE SPONGE: This saying originated during the prize fight days of the 19th century. The sponge used to wipe fighters' faces would be thrown in the air, signalling it would not be needed any more, when one of the contestants wanted to surrender.

Nowadays we are said to throw in the sponge, or the towel, when we give up on something.

A towel is still thrown into the ring by a boxer's second to signal he is giving up.

Dates for your Diary . . .

- ☛ **Thurs. 5th August - Walker Estates Committee Meeting**
- ☛ **Wed. 11th August - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers**
- ☛ **Wed. 25th August - Executive Meeting (*new committee members please note date - details on front page*)**
- ☛ **Thurs. 2nd September - Walker Estates Committee Meeting**
- ☛ **Wed. 8th September - Kevin Hatton, "Red Cross Theatre" (at Concord Hospital), assisted by Jan Bell from the Hospital Museum**

From the Secretary's Desk

Yaralla/Rivendell Tours: Have you completed and returned the white questionnaire regarding these functions? We're anxious to hear from you so that we can have some type of roster as these tours are becoming more and more popular and are a good fund raiser for our renovation works on the estate.

Apology: Our notice about the Quong Tart special exhibition in last month's newsletter was a mere 12 months late. We apologise to anyone who was misled.

Annual Subscriptions are now due. If you have not yet paid there will be a reminder in this newsletter and we look forward to hearing from you.

Annual Reports. Just a reminder to committee chairmen that their written reports should be prepared by the night of the meeting.

Children's Games: Did this article bring back memories for you? Why not put pen to paper and let us have some of your childhood or early memories. If you don't feel you can write well enough, just jot down the basics and we'll polish it up.

The Gas Collection -

Mortlake and Five Dock experience.

Our Local History Librarian, Evelyn Uyloan is preparing an exhibition for the week of September 11 - History Week.

However, she has very little local history information regarding Concord, Mortlake and Rhodes and would appreciate the loan of any material our members (or friends) could supply.

If anyone has any old photographs, programmes, memorabilia or anything at all to do with the gasworks, Evelyn would be very appreciative.

Our Society really needs to assist with input in the Concord side of the Local History Library.