



# "Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: [chs@concordheritage.asn.au](mailto:chs@concordheritage.asn.au)

[www.concordheritage.asn.au](http://www.concordheritage.asn.au)

EDITOR  
**LOIS MICHEL**  
9744-8528

PRESIDENT  
**ALAN WRIGHT**  
9743-4869

PUBLIC RELATIONS  
**TRISH SKEHAN**  
4369-4172

SECRETARY/TREASURER  
**LOIS MICHEL**  
3 Flavelle Street  
(P.O. Box 152)  
Concord 2137  
Phone: 9744-8528  
Fax: 9744-7591

#### MEETINGS

##### General Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Concord Citizens' Centre  
9 Wellbank Street, Concord  
Phone: 8765-9155

##### Executive Meetings

4th Wednesday of  
August, October, January,  
March, May and July  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Concord Citizens' Centre

##### Walker Estates Committee

4th Wednesday of  
September, November,  
February, April and June  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Concord Citizens' Centre  
Bob Jones, 8765-9347

##### Other Committees

As arranged  
*Watch the newsletter*

##### Museum

Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

##### Archives/Local History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

##### Heritage

Bob Jones, 8765-9347

##### Oral/Family History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

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#### CONCORD HERITAGE MUSEUM

5 Wellbank Street  
Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
on 1st and 3rd  
Wednesdays & Saturdays

**No.135**

**August 2007**



## Your Society Needs YOU

Another successful year has concluded and our success is due, in many ways, to the dedicated members of our Executive.

These people carry out the mundane work of seeing that the Society runs smoothly so that our many aims and objectives can be achieved.

However, many of us are not getting any younger and we need more members to put their hands up to accept nominations for the various Offices and the Committee.

At the moment some of our members are carrying double loads, holding two offices, so that we can continue operating

efficiently. This is not an ideal situation and is not fair on those carrying the extra load.

Being part of our Executive can be very rewarding in many ways and you could bring fresh ideas and new methods to take us forward.

We ask you to give this matter some serious thought and come to our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> August to offer your support and assistance.

Your only obligation would be to attend our Executive meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every second month – after that, it's up to you to decide how much more you want to give.

**See you there!!**

## The Wreck of the Dunbar

The Dunbar was wrecked during a period of great social and economic growth in Australia. The Australian gold rushes of the early 1850's had greatly accelerated demands for goods and services that could only be met by expansion within agriculture, industry and commerce. The Australian goldfields and the associated demand for passenger ships persuaded shipowner Duncan Dunbar to order the construction of a clipper from the English shipbuilding firm of James Laing and Sons, Sunderland, in 1852.

Named after its influential owner, the new vessel took more than sixteen months to build at a cost of over £30 000. At the time of completion in 1854, the 1167 ton Dunbar was said to be the largest vessel ever built at Sunderland. With a hull and frames of British oak and deck of East India teak, the Dunbar was a first class sailing vessel.

The doomed ship arrived off Sydney Heads on the night of Thursday, 20 August, 1857. It was a dismal evening. Heavy rain impaired vision, obscuring the cliffs at the entrance to Port Jackson. The voyage had begun in Plymouth on 31 May that year. After 81 days of confinement, the impending disembarkment at Sydney Cove was a comforting thought to passen-

gers and returning colonists.

Captain Green had made a number of visits to Sydney however he appears to have made a fateful error in the driving gale. On squaring up for the run into port, Green may have believed they were overshooting the entrance near North Head. When the shout "breakers ahead!" was heard, the Dunbar was still south of the entrance, almost under the Macquarie Lighthouse. The ship broached and was driven by the swell heavily into the towering black cliffs. Alternatively, it has been suggested that they mistook "The Gap" for the entrance to the harbour when tacking towards the Heads.

The impact brought down the topmasts, mounting seas stoved in the lifeboats and the Dunbar heaved broadside to the swells. Lying on its side, the ship began to break up almost immediately. One crewman, Able Seaman James Johnson, found himself hurled onto the cliffs, where he managed to



Bulletin Board

Aug, Wed. 8 - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers and Committee

gain a finger hold. Scrambling higher, he became the sole survivor amidst a sea of bodies.

One hundred and twenty-one people perished, including all 63 passengers and the remaining 58 crew. Dawn gradually unveiled the enormity of the tragedy to the community of Sydney, still a relatively small country town. The death toll staggered the population. Thousands were drawn to the scene and the morbid task of identifying relatives, friends and business associates soon began.

James Johnson clung to his precarious hold on the rock ledge until the morning of the 22nd when he was noticed from the cliff top. He was rescued some 36 hours after the *Dunbar* ran aground. He later served in the lighthouse at Newcastle and, ironically, assisted in the rescue of the sole survivor of the steamer *Cawarra* on the Oyster Banks in 1866.

A mass funeral for those who died and who, in most cases, could not be identified was held on Monday, 24 August. The bodies were buried at St Stephens Cemetery at Newtown.

Some 20 000 people lined George Street for the funeral procession. Banks and offices closed, every ship in the harbour flew their ensigns at half mast, minute guns were fired, and seven hearses and over one hundred carriages slowly moved by.

Just nine weeks later, the timber barque *Catherine Adamson* wrecked on North Head with the loss of over twenty lives. They were later interred in the *Dunbar's* mass grave. These combined disasters led to the construction of the red and white Hornby Lighthouse at the tip of South Head, to mark the actual entrance.

The wreck of the *Dunbar* lives on as one of the worst maritime disasters in Australia's history.

#### References:

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24, 25 August, 1857

*Register of British Ships*, London

*The Shipping Gazette*, 24 August, 1857.

<http://abc.net.au/backyard/shipwrecks/nsw/dunbar.htm>

## Rowing - one of Australia's Oldest Sport

Rowing became one of the Australia's earliest sports. After European settlement in 1788, races between crews of visiting ships were staged, although the first recorded event occurred in 1818 when a four-oared gig race was held between Bradley's Head and Sydney Cove.

By the 1850s professional sculling had emerged as a major colonial sport. In 1876 Ned Trickett won the World Professional Sculling Championship in England, becoming Australia's first world champion in any sport.

Between 1876 and the early 1900s seven New South Welshmen dominated that World Championship, holding the title for 22 years out of 31. That group included George Towns, Henry Searle and probably the most famous of them all - the Illawara blacksmith, Billy Beach.

Along with test cricketers, scullers were Australia's first sporting heroes.

The amateur side of the sport also flourished. Australia's oldest regatta is the Royal Hobart which started in 1827. Inter-colonial competition in fours began in 1863, moving to eight-oared competition in 1878. By 1902 all States were involved in a competition which was to become the Kings Cup after the World War 1. The Cup was won by the AIF eight at the Peace Regatta in London in 1919. This was Australia's first major international sweep-oared success.

Women's rowing was formalised in the early years of the 20th century and by 1912 women's interstate competition was underway. Women's rowing took a giant leap forward with the foundation of the National Championship Regatta in the early 1970s.

Men's rowing was introduced into the second Olympic Games in Paris in 1900, with Australia's first Olympic participation coming in the form of a men's eight at Stockholm in 1912.

Women's rowing was introduced into

the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal. The women first raced over 1000 metres, stepping up to the full 2000 metre course in 1988.

Australia's patchy success in Olympic rowing is probably a by-product of old State rivalries. Each State invariably rowed a different style and winners of interstate championships generally gained Olympic selection.

It is only a fairly recent innovation for composite crews to be selected across State boundaries.

[http://abc.net.au/olympics\\_1996/rowing.htm](http://abc.net.au/olympics_1996/rowing.htm)

### What A Record! Rowing

Back in the early years of the Olympic Games, a gold medal did not necessarily mean acceptance in society.

Australia's first gold medallist in Olympic rowing, Bobby Pearce, learned this the hard way.

After winning the Olympic Games single sculls in 1928, Pearce wanted to compete in London's prestigious Henley regatta, but was denied entry because he was a carpenter, and unemployed to boot.

When Canadian whisky manufacturer, Lord Dewar, heard of Pearce's plight he offered him a job as a salesman. Pearce accepted, moved to Canada, and because of his new status, gained entry to the Henley Regatta, which he won convincingly in 1931. He went on to win a second single sculls gold medal for Australia in Los Angeles in 1932.

It is unlikely that the status of Russia's Vyacheslav Ivanov and Finland's Pertti Karppinen as the greatest scullers will ever be challenged. Each won three successive gold medals in Olympic competition: Ivanov from 1956 to 1964, and Karppinen from 1976 to 1984.

[http://abc.net.au/olympics\\_1996/rowing.htm](http://abc.net.au/olympics_1996/rowing.htm)

## In Memoriam.

The club and members were saddened to learn of the death this week of one of the club's most valuable members, SOMEONE ELSE.

Someone's passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with the club for a very long time and he did far more than a normal member's share of the work. Whenever there was a job to do, a social function to attend, funds to be raised or a meeting to attend one name was on everyone's lips - let "Someone Else" do it.

It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the largest contributors of his time to the club. Whenever there was a need for volunteers everyone assumed Someone Else would volunteer. Someone else was a wonderful person, sometimes appearing superhuman, but a person can only do so much.

Were the truth known, everybody expected too much of Someone Else. Now Someone Else is gone. We wonder what we are going to do? Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow but who is going to do the things Someone Else did?

When you are asked to help, remember - *WE CAN'T DEPEND ON 'SOMEONE ELSE'*.

Dear Lois:

My thanks again for the Newsletter, which is a fascinating reminder both of the district you serve, and of the difference in the methods and activities of our two societies. We for instance have no museum or premises: we have an archive, almost totally of printed material, and meet at a local council-owned hall.

We have a record 400 members, and after problems with finding enough willing workers, we have revived with some active new members, older ones who have been re-energised, so to speak, and we are advancing positively.

Good luck with the Society.

Murray Hedgcock

*(Ed. Murray became a subscriber to our newsletter some time ago and follows our activities via it. We thank him for the following article.)*

## Mortlake to Mortlake

Sydney's Mortlake is of course named after Mortlake in Southwest London, an ancient village now a busy suburb, on the banks of the Thames, eight miles from central London.

For many years the district was dominated by Watney's brewery, which at its peak employed 1,400 men and women, and provided the main working opportunity for local people. It is now part of the Anheuser Busch empire, producing Budweiser.

A history of the brewery has just been published by the Barnes & Mortlake History Society, drawing on material in the old Watney house magazines which began publication in 1919. First called *Hand in Hand*, then *Beer and Skittles*, and finally *The Red Barrel*, the company publication recorded the life and times of Mortlake's biggest industry.

The author is not a genuine local, and not a beer enthusiast, but Australian journalist Murray Hedgcock, who has lived in Mortlake for forty years - and has never tasted beer in his life. Formerly on *The News* in Adelaide, he took early retirement in 1991 after 25 years with the London bureau of News Limited, and still works for News Corporation as a consultant.

"I became interested in the brewery history from learning of the activities of the Watney Sports and Social Club, which was a focus for local sport", he explains. "I was fortunate enough to obtain a nearly complete set of the Watney magazines, which provide a fascinating record of the changing life both of the brewery, and of the society around it".

The book, *Hand in Hand - Watney's Mortlake World*, records the life and times of the brewery and its workers

through much of the Twentieth Century. It begins with "The Twenties - Years of Advance", running through the Depression years, World War Two, postwar revival, and then the expansion of Watney's far beyond its Mortlake boundaries.

Anecdotes include *Hand in Hand* in 1931 reporting somewhat indignantly how a Fleet Street newspaper had written - in all seriousness - that a trained monkey had the duty of ringing the bell to advise Watney workers when lunch-hour arrived. It got out of its cage, and rang early, sending workmen rushing to eat well before time. The magazine commented: "We understand that the gentleman who does ring the bell has decided not to bring an action for slander".

The loyalty of Watney staff was demonstrated when a circular was sent during World War Two to seven hundred former workers, serving with the Armed Forces, to ask if they wished to return to the brewery when peace came. Only two said they did not.

And the story is told of the devotion to duty of Mrs Ada Surridge, the cleaner of the main Mortlake offices, who would arrive at work at 4 a.m. - and never had a day off, continuing "through the doodle-bugs and all the other inconveniences of the war years". She had to be persuaded to retire in 1946 - aged 86.

A feature of Watney's wartime activity was the formation of a pig club, the animals tended by members until they grew to the stage of providing a welcome change to rationed menus.

The BMHS has a new website which will remind Concord Heritage Society members of a very different world from their own.

Try it on [www.barnes-history.org.uk](http://www.barnes-history.org.uk)

## Yaralla Open Day Sunday, 16 September

*Calling all guides, potential guides, Devonshire tea and other helpers!*

*Please let the Secretary know as soon as possible if you will be able to help on the day. We need to get our rosters organised.*

*We need more guides for both grounds and house tours. Have you considered volunteering in this capacity? We'll supply all documentation you'll need and organise for you to do tours with some of our regular guides to get the feel for it.*

## YOU'RE INVITED

### The Wreck of the Dunbar - Sesquicentenary.

A Commemorative Service will be held at St Stephen's Church, 189 Church Street, Newtown at **10:00 am on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2007**

To remember this tragedy, sometimes known as Australia's Titanic, a morning of reflection, re-enactment and information will be held in the Camperdown Cemetery.

**Dunbar Tomb Restoration:** Fund raising for the restoration of this historic tomb will be in the form of book, DVD and food sales, and cemetery tours on the day. (Graffiti removal from the Dunbar site alone, was quoted this month at \$6,000.

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**Strathfield & District Historical Society** are holding their Annual C.S. Malcolm Memorial Lecture on **Saturday, 1st September, 2007**. Light Lunch at 1:00 pm, speaker at 1:45 and meeting concludes by 3:30 pm.

The lecturer will be Caroline Mackness, co-author of the book *Sydney - Now and Then*. Caroline's topic will be "75th Anniversary of the Harbour Bridge".

RSVP 24/8/07 to Jan Jenkins on 9764-1174 or [rossjan1@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rossjan1@bigpond.net.au)

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**Sydney Harbour History Cruise**, initiative of the History Council of NSW, leaving from Commissioner's Steps, Circular Quay, at 10:30 am on **Sunday, 16th September**, returning 2:30 pm. You will travel aboard MV Proclaim, a beautifully maintained heritage timber ferry, with expert commentary on the legacy of the past being restored for modern development,

Cost: \$25 adults and \$15 children 5-18 years. This includes entry into the Royal Australian Navy Heritage Centre, a map and photographs. BYO picnic lunch to enjoy on Garden Island.

The tour organiser says: *Anyone with a keen interest in history and a love of the water will want to book their place aboard. Sydney Harbour's history is rich, diverse and entertaining. Would you like to know more about the Japanese midget submarine attacks on the Harbour during WWII? Come and see first hand the scars on Fort Denison as a result of this attack by joining us in September.*



*You're invited*  
to join us for the dedication of the  
**Restored Italian Balustrade**

*a striking feature at the rear of*

*Yaralla Mansion*

*Nullawarra Avenue, Concord West*

*on*

*Sunday, 26th August, 2007*

*at 2:00 for 2:30 pm.*

*The ceremony will be followed by afternoon tea*

*RSVP 20/8/07*

*Phone: 9744-8528*

*or chs@concordheritage.asn.au*



## Tour Guides and Others

Following the success of our meeting with these volunteers earlier this year the opinion was expressed that we should do this on a regular basis.

We agreed with this though and will be holding another meeting on **Sunday, 7th October** commencing at 10:30 a.m. in the Stables Complex.

We would like all guides, whether it be Yaralla or Rivendell, and all potential guides to come along and share their experiences with our last two Open Days. Other members welcome too.

The feed-back from the last meeting was most helpful to all concerned and we need this to help us continue to make these tours the resounding success they are.

## Thank You Barbecue for Volunteers

The above meeting will be followed, about 12:30 pm, by a Barbecue to thank all our wonderful volunteers for the time and effort they give. This in-

cludes member and non-members alike who volunteer to work for us in so many different ways.

Make a note in your diary now.

## For Your Diary

**Wed. 8th August** - Annual General Meeting and Election of Committee

**Wed. 22nd August** - Executive meeting

**Sun. 26th August** - Dedication of Italian Balustrade

**Wed. 12th September** - General Meeting

**Sun. 16th Sept.** - Yaralla Open Day

**Wed. 26th September** - Walker Estates Meeting

**Sun. 7th October** - Special meeting of tour guides and other volunteers

**Sun. 7th October** - Thank You Barbecue for all our Volunteers

**Wed. 10th October** - General Meeting

**Wed. 24th October** - Executive Meeting

*Make a note of these dates in your diaries now - particularly any new members of the Executive*

## From the Secretary's Desk

**Rivendell Open Day.** This was, again a great success and we would like to thank all those who assisted in making it so. We had several new volunteers helping with Devonshire teas and this was most appreciated by the regulars.

**Chairman:** Alan Wright will not be standing again for this position. Do you know of anyone willing to stand? Or you can nominate yourself! It is not a difficult job and we're all pretty easy to work with, so don't be frightened.

**New Member:** This month we welcome Margaret Wilson and look forward to seeing her at functions.

**Balustrade Dedication:** We have recently completed this work at a cost in excess of \$18,000 so we want to celebrate this in style. Among our VIP guests will be Angela D'Amore, Member for Drummoyne, John Murphy, Member for Lowe, and Mayor Angelo Tsirekas as well as many others with an interest in Heritage and Yaralla. Please come along and give your support on this auspicious occasion. Visitors welcome. Just let us know

**Annual Christmas Barbecue:** Don't forget to make a note on your calendar now to keep Wednesday, 12th December free for our annual party for all our members. Friends and visitors also welcome

## Things I've Learned . . .

- \* regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life
- \* making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life"
- \* that one should keep one's words both soft and tender, because tomorrow one may have to eat them.

## Can you help?

Monique would like to find out a little more about the history of her home at 31 Bertram Street, Mortlake.

She understands that it was the original publican's house from the Palace Hotel and that it used to have a 'moonshine' licence.

She would love to see any old photographs if anyone has them.

Do you have any information, or know anyone who might be able to help?