



"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
City of Canada Bay
Museum
1 Bent Street, Concord
9743-3034

Executive Meetings
4th Wednesday of
August, October, January,
March, May and July
at 7:30 pm in the
Museum

Walker Estates Committee
4th Wednesday of
September, November,
February, April and June
at 7:30 pm in the
Museum
Bob Jones, 8765-9347

Tours Organiser
Sandra Elliott
9797-1040
Museum
Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

Archives & Oral History
Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

Heritage
Bob Jones, 8765-9347

* * * *

**CITY OF CANADA
BAY MUSEUM**

1 Bent Street, Concord

**Watch this space
for opening date**

No.152

January 2009

Walker Chronicles (part 12)

Reflections on my life

We proceeded through a level open forest a distance of about twelve miles, the country being something similar to that through which we came yesterday, but upon the whole scarcely so good. The quality of soil, herbage and timber varies, of course, in this distance.

We crossed several small creeks, which were full of running water when Major Mitchell passed them but, excepting one within three miles of the river, were now quite dry, not a drop of water in the holes.

They camped beside one of the dry creek beds and next morning crossed the range by means of a road winding through slopes and hills for about four miles. The bullocks again became troublesome due to thirst and refused to go further, being jaded, tired and knocked up.

We tried every means to get them to go but without success. We resorted to that of unloading the dray, which they then dragged to the top of the hill. We carried the load to it. Even afterwards, descending on the other side, we had great difficulty in getting along. There were many blind creeks and ridges between to get over. This was the most troublesome job we had yet met with. Only the patience, perseverance, and labour of all hands enabled us to overcome it.

On getting late, by moonlight, to our camping place, great was our disappointment in not finding any water. Fortunately we had brought a five gallon keg full from the river, so that the bipeds did not personally feel that inconvenience. There was nothing for them to eat but dry, brown grass without the least moisture in it.

We were again obliged to watch them by turns during the night. I spent a lonely two hours - from eleven till one - with them in the forest, but it was moonlight and I rather enjoyed it.

There was a degree of sublimity in being all alone in the silence of midnight in the interminable forest, and an excellent opportunity for reflections is on such occa-

sions presented. The difference and change between that and my ordinary avocations are so great that the whole appeared to me more like a dream than any thing real.

I cannot say that I have yet at all felt tired of my journey, either mentally or physically, quite otherwise. I have enjoyed it and, were it not for the feeling that every day intrudes on me that I am wanted and ought to be in Sydney, I would be quite contented. Except for the score of duty, I feel no particular desire to be again in Sydney.

It is enjoyment to me to live so much in the open air, and to have so much exercise and relaxation from business. I have perfect health, and eat, drink, and sleep well, which is not the case in Sydney.

As soon as our short journey for the day is accomplished, we pitch our tent, which appears quite a home to us, and have every convenience and comfort the situation admits of, with respect to eating and drinking. I never lived better in my life, this department being under Dutton's management, who understands it well,

We have had game every day since our mutton had been done, besides corned beef, pork, ham, etc. We have excellent potatoes and fresh butter and flour loaves with coffee or chocolate to breakfast, and tea to every meal.

We also have books with us which, while waiting for the team to come up, I generally peruse lying on the grass in the shade. The day, I assure you, soon passes away though we get up and have breakfast before daylight every morning.



Bulletin Board

February 11 - Don Fraser, presentation on "Sydney Harbour Bridge"

March 11 - Michael Clark, Engineering Heritage Australia, "Building Sydney - its history and heriage".

Tin Boxes take the Biscuit!

When Joseph Huntley invented the tin biscuit box in 1830 he had no idea he was creating future collectables.

A baker in the English town of Reading, Huntley had been pondering an alternative type of packaging that would ensure his company's products arrived to the customer fresh and intact.

His solution was a tin box with the appropriate paper labels, describing the contents, glued on.

Although this method kept the biscuits in good shape, the paper labelling often suffered while in transit. Something harder was required, and the next logical step was the introduction of transfers on to the tins.

In 1868 Huntley, who by then was in partnership with the Bristol-based Palmer Bros Baker, issued the first printed British biscuit tin.

Named after the printer who perfected the technique of applying decorative transfers to metal, the Ben George tin featured a busy design around a prominent family crest to publicise the company's newly-awarded Royal warrant.

The final improvement in biscuit tin decoration came in 1877 when Huntley, Boorne & Stevens, the boxmakers related to Huntley & Palmers, secured exclusive rights to a revolutionary new tin printing process – offset lithography.

A whole new aspect to packaging was born, with Huntley & Palmers taking full advantage of their newfound ability to produce imaginative and visually appealing tins in complicated shapes.

Correctly, they speculated consumers would buy more of their biscuits if the tins could later be used for some useful or decorative purpose.

For the next 60 years Huntley & Palmers, as well as other bakers and confectioners who hopped on to the bandwagon when H & P's exclusive copyright expired, produced hundreds of fascinating dual-purpose tins, especially during the Christmas season.

Often the tins doubled as toys, which must have been a boon to poor families with little to tuck inside Christmas stockings. There were coaches and prams, lorries and ships and even complete games such as bagatelle, dominoes and chess. Minutely detailed houses, top hats and teapots doubled as money boxes – a popular second-use theme.

Biscuit tins were made to please all ages. Mum would have been thrilled

to receive Egyptian-style vases filled with goodies, a "latticed" sewing basket or "gem-encrusted" jewellery box, and Dad would have appreciated the tin that simulated a stack of leather-bound books or the gilt-edged "painting" of huntsmen with hounds.

With class distinction so prevalent in Victorian Britain, it can be rightly said the humble biscuit tin succeeded as a great leveller of society where little else could. Every household, no matter how rich or poor, enjoyed biscuits and the tins in which they were sold.

More desirable are the novelty tins, but also sought after are the commemorative editions. Particularly valuable in this respect are tins issued in 1937 to mark the coronation of Edward VIII which, of course, never took place.

The other important tin producers included Jacob & Co., William Crawford & Sons, McVitie and Peek Freen.

But no collector would pass up the ingenious tins produced by European and American manufacturers for the



50 years prior to World War II.

As with all collectables, condition is almost as important a factor as rarity when contemplating a biscuit tin purchase. Missing parts, too many scratches or noticeable dents all detract greatly from the value of a tin

(Daily Telegraph 12/5/1993).

Speaking of biscuit tins - do any of our members and friends out there have any old Arnotts tins - or any other memorabilia - they would like to donate to our museum. We are planning an Arnotts display for the opening of the new City of Canada Bay Museum in the not too distant (we hope) future. Are there any photographs of shops in the area? Did anyone work for Arnotts? We'd love to hear from you.

He First Turned Grass into Lawn

Give praise, when you admire your garden this weekend, to a Mr. Edwin Budding, for it was he who invented the lawn mower.

Before 1830, only the very rich, who could employ half a dozen scythe-wielding stalwarts to cut the grass, had anything resembling a lawn around their homes.

Mr. Budding's invention was a cylinder or reel mower – relatively silent by today's standards – and it changed the style of landscaping forever. By the early 20th century lawns were the principal feature of mansions, parks, stately homes and suburban gardens alike.

Pushing a cylinder mower was hard work – as many readers might recall. Mr. Budding, possibly with his tongue in his cheek, suggested that "country gentlemen may find, in using the machine themselves, an amusing and healthy exercise".

But the cylinder mower remained hard

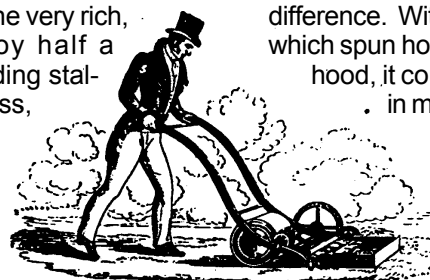
work, even when it was fitted with a petrol mower.

The rotary mower, developed just after the second world war, made all the difference. With relatively blunt blades which spun horizontally under a safety hood, it could clear rough grasses in minimal time without damage to itself, or too much exertion by the operator.

Nowadays there are many elaborate machines to help create a verdant carpet of

grass. A hovercraft mower which floats on a cushion of air, a whipper-snipper which clears grass from around trees and fence posts; electric or mulch mowers and, for the ultimate in luxury, mowers to sit on. You can drive around creating a lovely lawn, pretending you are taking exercise and enjoying a can of beer at the same time! Mr. Budding would be horrified.

(Ed: Make sure you come to our museum when it opens to see our lawnmower display! Just one of many plans on the drawing board)



Edwin Budding's first lawnmower of 1830

A Nation of Picnickers: a brief history of food and courtship

Outdoor entertaining was very much a feature of the colonial social calendar. "We are a nation of picnickers" proclaimed one writer for the Sydney Morning Herald in 1907.

Unlike England, Australia has a climate the nature of which was such that the picnic season could last the whole year. Many major occasions were celebrated by public picnics in Australia – from visits by royalty to race meetings.

At a Sydney picnic organised for the second son of Queen Victoria, Prince Alfred, in the late 19th century, participants were treated to stout and oysters in the morning and champagne and chicken and lobster in the afternoon.

Picnics were said to have originated in the second decade of the 17th century when a new form of outdoor entertainment was devised for the English Court. Each member of the Court was obliged to bring a dish. There was much vying to bring the most original delicacy.

By the 18th century, garden landscaping developed along picturesque lines which made nature a fashionable setting for the taking of tea, particularly after dinner. It must be remembered that dinner in the 18th century was served in the garden in the late daylight hours, a possible precursor of the 19th century afternoon tea.

The tradition of taking tea in the garden was naturally adopted in the colonies, particularly in the country regions. In Orange (NSW) by the turn of the century, elegantly fashionable ladies were known to take afternoon tea in the public gardens where "goldfish swim in the water and tall palms and shrubs please the eye".

Australian picnics have ranged from "bounteous" repasts of sandwiches, apple pie, preserve tart and plum pudding to tins of tongue and salmon, as well as fresh lobster and oysters. It must be noted that fish was considered unsuitable for early 19th century formal dinners but thought admirable for picnic consumption.

By the end of the 19th century women had freer access to public areas in England. Nevertheless, visits to the countryside were virtually the only times when chaperonage was light. Etiquette, outside formal dining and drawing rooms, was still observed since many manuals carried structures on conduct which aimed to cover all social contingencies, resorting to the

following advice just in case they missed any specific occasion: "All well-bred persons will conduct themselves at all times and in all places with perfect decorum".

By the early 20th century, sandwiches were deemed "tedious to prepare" and were inferior to "something of a more unexpected nature". What exactly constituted an unexpected nature was never fully explained but the sentiment was an interesting harking back to the novelty of the 17th century.

Few, if any, etiquette manuals specifically regulated behaviour at picnics. Although an alfresco meal lacked the formality of a dinner party, it is suspected most, if not all, of the do's and don'ts were applied to proper picnicking behaviour – from "refraining from picking one's teeth" to "resisting the temptation to smell the meat on one's fork".

The food offered at a picnic ranged considerably according to the number involved and the mood of the company. An impromptu picnic in Australia could involve the women bringing some staple provisions and the men going forth into the bush to find the main course: if one were picnicking at Mr. Macquarie's Chair in the early 19th century, the spoils would have included fresh oysters and crabs; if in the bush, a few wild ducks would have sufficed.

One distinct difference between English and Australian picnics was the English assumption that servants would ease the burden of carrying the provisions. In Australia, the servant problem was such that many families of similar social standing to their English cousins did not bother with the training, losing or putting up with servants who did not have that ingrained sense of inferiority to their employers/masters. Accordingly, advice concerning picnics differed between the two countries.

In England, Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management made several recommendations concerning picnics. A household was advised that for a party of 40, a large number of items were essential. It was advised that the picnic hamper needed to include 56 separate dishes of food as well as 'plates, tumblers, wine glasses, knives, forks and spoons . . . teacups and saucers, 3 or 4 teapots . . . (and) 3 corkscrews.

In Australia, by the first decade of the 20th century, practical Australian

women were rapidly coming round to the notion that paper plates and serviettes were advisable as replacements for one's best china, cutlery and damask napkins. It was commented that some men refused to "go to a picnic twice with the same party after having their arms nearly broken by lifting immense weights" and, since of the major advantages of picnics was to engage the attention of that certain gentleman in less constraining social situations, any fly in the ointment concerning romance and matrimony was dealt with quickly, practically and economically.

Motor picnics, where young ladies and gentlemen had the opportunity to travel together with little or no chaperonage, were very popular, as were the strolls after the picnic debris was cleared. Pasteboard or paper dishes which could be gathered up into a "neat little bonfire" hastened these pleasant interludes.

But it was the picnic itself that could determine a young gentleman's opinion that a particular lady would become a suitable wife. Not only was a woman's skill as a cook perfectly showcased, but even her manner of eating was a good indication of the type of wife she would become: "Get to see her at work on a mutton chop or a bit of bread and cheese" was one such advice. "If her jaws move in slow time, if she squeezes rather than bites the food, if she cannot make up her mind whether to eat it or leave it, she is incorrigibly lazy".

Nevertheless, picnics were one of the best and most popular social occasions at which to form marriageable alliances and, despite manuals which endeavoured to give "social instruction" to the young colonial gentlemen, Australian women rose to the challenge since they were indeed bred in a lifestyle that was reputedly calculated "to make a woman practical, independent, energetic and unconventional".

(This article by Antonia Lomny was published in the June 1992 magazine of the Royal Australian Historical Society. Printed with permission.)

General references:

"A History of Courting", G S Turner (1954)

The Passing Parade of Picnics and Pleasures: Early Australian Times, Valerie McKenzie.

Sydney Morning Herald, 18 Feb 1904, 28 Nov 1906, 16 Jan 1907.

Dinner Parties for Australia Day

January 26, 1817: Nichols the Post Master entertained 40 'elite and respectable guests' 5pm to 10pm over the Post Office. Mr. Michael Massey Robinson's Odes were recited and Mr. Robert Jenkins sang a song to the tune of 'Rule Britannia'.

January 24, 1818: In honour of the 30th Anniversary of the Colony, Governor Macquarie ordered that on the Monday following, the 26th, a salute of 30 guns should be fired from the Battery at Dawes Point and directed 'the artificers and labourers in the immediate service of the Government be exempted from work on Monday next in honour of the memorable occasion, and that each of them receive an extra allowance from the Government'.

January 26, 1818: Mr. Greenaway [sic] made a likeness of Governor Phillip at Government House. In the morning Governor Macquarie received the 48th Regiment. Mrs. Macquarie gave a Ball at Government House. Mr. George Nichols also gave a party.

January 26, 1819: Dinner party for 70 guests at Hankinson's Tavern Rooms.

January 26, 1820: An elegant dinner, though there was an outcry at the excessive cost, 40 shillings per head.

January 26, 1821: Grand dinner at Ganville's rooms, Hyde Park; 100 guests. President, Dr. Redfern; Vice President, Simeon Lord.

January 26, 1822: First reference to the Royal Standard being flown at Fort Phillip: Union Jack at Dawes Battery. Minute guns (34) fired. Grand dinner; 70 gentlemen at Hill's Tavern.

January 26, 1825: Dinner, price \$5.(?) President, W.C. Wentworth; Vice President, Dr. Redfern. Political toast, "Freedom of the Press".

January 26, 1831: Dinner at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, 18 shillings George Nichols, chief speaker.

January 26, 1832; Dinner at Cumming's Hotel, 25 shillings. W.C. Wentworth in the Chair.

January 26, 1838: To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Colony, January 26 was proclaimed an annual public holiday. Grand dinner at 42 shillings at the Pultney Hotel for the classes, a Regatta for the masses.

(Note: These extracts and numerous others indicate that in N.S.W. and its derivative States, January 26 has traditionally been recognised as the national holiday.)

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Xmas BBQ

Our final get together for 2008 was our annual Barbecue at Rhodes Rotary Park on December 10.

The weather was kind, the rain holding off until the end of the evening; the food was fantastic; and the company delightful.

Thirty members and partners were in attendance and a pleasant evening was enjoyed by all.

Special thanks to our two cooks - Errol Grace and Mark Durance. Thanks also to those who supplied salads and other delightful treats.

WANTED!

Our museum needs your help? Do you know where we can obtain . . .

- ★ Single Concrete Laundry Tub
- ★ Terrazzo kitchen sink/draining board
- ★ Gas Copper
- ★ Old fashioned wire soap holder
- ★ Light shade (the old fashioned white one that sloped up towards the fitting at the top)
- ★ A 1930s wall calendar (like the ones from the corner shop or local tradesman)

If you can help or know someone who can help, or if you see one in the Council cleanup, please let us know.

The Computer Swallowed Grandad

The computer swallowed grandad;

Yes, honestly, it's true!

He pressed 'control' and 'enter'

And disappeared from view

It devoured him completely

The thought just makes me squirm.

He must have caught a virus

Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin

And files of every kind;

I've even used the internet,

But nothing did I find.

In desperation, I asked Jeeves

My searches to refine.

The reply from him was negative,

Not a thing was found 'on-line'.

So, if inside your 'in-box'

My granddad you should see,

Please 'copy', 'scan' and 'paste' him

And send him back to me!

From: It's a Surfer Grandma! Courtesy of Pine Needles November 2008 Newsletter

From the Secretary's Desk

Change of Name: Have you given this matter any thought. We'd like to hear from you - soon.

Welcome to new members: Irene Davidson, Cabarita; Phillip Castle and Deborah Laurie, Concord West; Harleen Haylings, Daleys Point; We look forward to getting to know you.

Museum Report: We are still waiting for the insurance company to organise the laying of the new carpet after the flooding. Until that happens we are unable to work on actual displays. However, we are filling in time making props and planning the displays - even if it's only on paper at this stage. Many thanks to Terry Robinson and his willing helpers who have been doing the physical work.

Arnott's Biscuits: One of our plans is a display on Arnott's. Do you have any old biscuit tins, posters or other items that we could incorporate into the display? Give us a call!

Nurungi Mail Out: If you are still receiving your copy of our newsletter in the mail but would be happy to either receive it as an email attachment or by notification when it has been posted to our web site, please let us know.

With postage now up to 55c per item, this adds up to a considerable amount over the year. Just send me an email with a note as to how you would like to receive it (chs@concordheritage.asn.au)

Australia Day Parties: The George Nichols referred to in this article is the son on Isaac Nichols)

Concord Library is regularly featuring talks by Australian Authors. If you haven't attended yet try not to miss the next one featuring Peter FitzSimons.

It is one 9th February at 2:00 pm at the Library. Cost \$5 includes refreshments. Bookings 9911-6210.

The previous talks have been varied and most enjoyable. Make a note in your diary now.

Museum Committee: Our next meeting will be at the Museum on Tuesday, 20th January at 9:30 am. This is your museum so why not come along and give us the benefit of your ideas, your memories and anything else you have to offer?

For Your Diary

Wed. Jan. 28 - Executive Meeting

Wed. Feb. 11 - General Meeting

Wed. Feb. 25 - Walker Estates