



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

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MEETINGS

General Meetings
1st Saturday of month
(except January)
at 2:00 pm in the
City of Canada Bay
Museum
1 Bent Street, Concord
9743-3034

Executive Meetings
4th Wednesday of month
at 7:30 pm in the
Museum
(all members welcome)

Walker Estates Committee
Meets at Yaralla on the
3rd Saturday of month
at 2:00 pm

Chairperson
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Museum Committee
Meets on 2nd Wednesday of
month at 9:30 am at museum
Chairperson
Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

Oral History Committee

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CITY OF CANADA BAY MUSEUM

1 Bent Street, Concord

Open Wed & Sat
10am to 4pm

Phone: 9743-3034

No.182

October 2011

Organ Recital at St Lukes Church

If you were unable to attend this event you missed a wonderful afternoon of music, played on their magnificent Hill Organ. Those in attendance were enthralled by the performance of the very talented Joshua Ryan. He is a young man who will go a long way on his talent and we will be proud to say "we knew him when". Perhaps we can repeat this event some time in the future for all those who missed out.



We are most grateful to the Rector and Parish Council who allowed us the use of the church and hall to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Dame Eadith Walker.

A special thanks also to the ladies from the church who helped Betty with the refreshments, this was greatly appreciated.

Elaine Peterson introduced the proceedings with a little of the history of the church and our own Trish Skehan spoke of the philanthropy of the Walkers. Both these talks were so interesting that we reproduced them in this issue.

Welcome to Saint Luke's Church Dame Eadith Walker Sesqui-Centenary Celebrations 19th September, 2011

Good afternoon and welcome to this special celebration of the life and contribution of Eadith Walker – a notable Concordian.

As St Luke's is the oldest church in the City of Canada Bay it is a special pleasure to join with the Concord Heritage Society for this afternoon's function.

It's a nice coincidence that Eadith Walker and Saint Luke's arrived in Concord about the same time. While the foundation stone of this church was laid in 1859 and two years ago we had the big public celebration of our 150 years, the building was not consecrated until May, 1861. So this year we have celebrated the 150th anniversary of that official blessing and opening of the church for worship. So this building was still very new indeed when Eadith was born in September that year. In a sense Eadith and St Luke's grew up together.

The church was much smaller then. It was actually been built in 3 stages. It began with the Central Nave, small porch, bellcote and a small rectangular Chancel - an Edmund Blacket "gothic chapel". The lancet windows and open timber roof are all part of Blackett's design.

By 1869, the church was so crowded it was decided to extend. In the terms of those days, the 'demand for sittings' was so great, more places had to be provided. Church finances were very different in the 19th Century. A serious parishioner booked his seat by the year - he rented his pew and the family name was on the pew, so you made sure no-one else sat there. It also made it very obvious if you were away!

If you look closely at the end of the pews now, you will see the mark where the little metal holder for the name cards used to be. If you were a visitor without friends in the parish, or too poor to afford pew rent, there were always some free seats.

Our parsimonious/independent forebears decided they didn't need to employ the architect again. We had a competent builder



Bulletin Board

Sat. 8th October at 2:00 pm. "The Controversial Major Mitchell", Emeritus Surveyor John Read

Sat. 6th November at 2:00 pm. Ken Bock, "Radio for the Print Handicapped"

December: Christmas Party, details to be advised

in the parish, William Coles, and he offered to design the extension. He produced his plans for adding two aisles on either side of the nave, but we decided we could only afford half the plan. So we got the north aisle, the north porch and a north vestry - though smaller than the present one.

Thirteen years later in 1882, the second half of the Coles plan was carried out. The south aisle was added with a new south porch. This was not the present large square one, which was added in 1938 as a memorial to Dame Eadith Walker.

We added an "Organ Chamber" on the southern side, which is today's Flower/Organ Vestry, while the Rector's Vestry on the north side was extended outwards. The back wall of the chancel came down, and the distinctive Romanesque apse behind the present communion rail was built. Four Gothic arches were created linking the vestries, church and chancel. At some stage the wooden panelling and doors were added.

We also gained the first of our treasure trove in stained glass. St Luke's windows are of fine quality - much better than the bricks, which were not. The new chancel was graced with five beautiful windows, donated by Thomas Robertson, whose home "Lansdowne", still stands just up the hill at No 25 Burton Street, Concord. They were given as a thanks offering after he had been successful in a Supreme Court action for libel.

Then in 1884, two years later, we received our next special treasure, the centrepiece of this afternoon's function - the Hill Organ.

It was the gift of Eadith Walker of the "Yaralla" estate. Actually her father, Thomas Walker, paid for it and gave it to the church as a celebration of her twenty-first birthday. It cost him five hundred pounds. However, she's the one to receive the Thank You Illuminated Address, which is one of the stars of our archive collection and which you will be able to inspect on your way in to afternoon tea.

Now, Eadith's twenty first was obviously in 1882 - but such a gift doesn't happen quickly. It was commissioned in 1883 and arrived to be installed in 1884. Originally it was placed at the back of the church, where it would have accompanied congregational singing. In 1892, it was moved to its present position, when the services were becoming more elaborate including a robed choir.

The organ was built by the famous English firm of Hill and Son, as is the organ of Sydney Town Hall. In its

present restored and well-maintained state, it is recognised by musical authorities as a rare and valuable instrument and is officially part of Concord's heritage.

The organ was not Eadith's only gift to the parish. In September, 1893, she gave us our first Parish Hall, built on the site of the old Parochial School Hall which, back in 1843, marked the beginning of Anglican worship in Concord. The Thank You Illuminated Address for the gift of the Hall, which you will also be able to see, has a delightful little painting of both this Hall and our new Rectory which was opened on the same day.

After her death in 1937, the parish was given a bequest which enabled us to build the present Art Deco South Porch - the much more spacious entry to the building, which you used to come in to this function.

Introduction of Organ Program:

So now it's time for the music. The program is in front of you. We invite you all to stand and join in the two hymns as Eadith would certainly have done in the days when she and her family members attended service here, as they did until after the opening of Holy Trinity, Concord West in 1913. Eadith donated much of the funds to build that church, one of St Luke's four "daughter" churches. It was of course much closer to her home, Yaralla.

Our organist is Joshua Ryan. We are very proud of Joshua - he has been our Organ Scholar for nearly two years, a student of Mr Mark Quarmbay, a noted Sydney organist. He is an outstanding young musician, who has just returned from a prestigious organ scholarship that has given him the opportunity to play in some of the great houses of worship in England, Holland and Germany.

Joshua is a Year 11 student at the Sydney Adventist College. He is very busy with final exams and recitals as he is about to begin his work for next year's Higher School Certificate. So we are very thankful he is willing to give up the time to prepare for today's function.

The recital as you can see is in two halves. We will just proceed through without further announcement from me until the end of part one, when I will introduce our Speaker. In case you are hesitant about clapping in church, I can say quite definitely that applause is a very appropriate way to express your enjoyment of the music.

You can practice by joining me in welcoming our organist, Joshua Ryan, to begin this afternoon's recital.

Elaine Petersen

Calling all Members

We know our members have an interest in the society, our museum and the Walker estates - otherwise they would not have joined us.

We also know that most of you would have a talent of some kind, whether it be carpentry, mechanical, sewing, knitting, designing and painting "display sets", public relations, marketing, computer knowledge, clerical experience and many others.

Even common sense and a pair of willing hands is all that you would need to be of assistance. Sometimes it not just what you know, but who you know, that can be of even greater assistance.

All of these talents and skills are needed if we are to continue to promote the museum and our society.

We need your help. Are you willing to share your skills and knowledge with us?

For our museum, we are planning several different displays during the coming year, and all need help of one kind or another.

However, there are two major displays planned where the scope is beyond the small group of volunteers we have at the moment.

In April-May we have "WWII - The War at Home" project. We need memories of your experiences during this time, display items (uniforms, posters, photographs, etc., which will all be returned if you only wish to lend them) which pertain to those worrying years.

Perhaps you were in one of the services such as the Land Army, or worked in one of the factories doing war work, or volunteering in the various organisations, or were a war bride. Can you help, or do you know anyone who can help with articles for display?

The second major project is for December to encourage children as well as adults to visit. We desperately need people who can do work such as make rag dolls, sew up a simple costume, make papier mache models of animals or heads. We need people with good imaginations to help us plan how to build up a "set" to demonstrate a theme. This particular project will be quite large and will need a lot of support to put it together properly.

Can you help us? Why not send us an email, write us a note, make a phone call or just drop by the museum on a Wednesday or Saturday to let us know what you can offer our Society.

Of course, there is much, much more that just needs your ideas. It's easy to pick a subject theme for display, but we need the input of lots of people to actually plan and set one up to the best advantage.

Do you want to be part of our enthusiastic group? We would welcome you with open arms. Men particularly welcome to help with some of the lifting and other heavy work.



The Walker Family and Their Philanthropy

Thomas Walker was born in Leith, the sea-port of Edinburgh, in May 1804. His father, James Thomas Walker, British MP, sent his teenage son to Australia in 1822 with a promissory note for 1 MILLION POUNDS, with instructions to buy 1 million acres of land for the British Crown at 1 pound an acre.

Thomas' name is listed amongst those who formed the Pastoral Association in 1823, with well-known Australian explorers Blaxland, Hume, Hovell, Darling, Wentworth and Lawson. Stuart and Ludwig Leichhardt joined later.

In 1826, Thomas was the director and major shareholder of the newly opened Bank of Australia, running in opposition to the 'Convict's Bank', formed by Macarthur and his friends. It was robbed in September 1828. Australia's first bank robbery remained unprecedented for many years in its skilful planning and daring execution?. Thieves tunnelled under the basement cornerstone, after removing brickwork from inside the Tank Stream drain. The basement vault had walls nine feet (2.7 metres) thick and was considered to be burglar-proof.

Thomas explored parts of New South Wales in 1837, travelling overland with several others to Port Phillip. His memories of those days were recorded in an 1840 self-published journal, titled 'A Month in the Bush with Four Gentlemen', and mentioned visiting Macarthur's Camden estate.

His great gifts of observation and practical knowledge of the land guided his purchases. The large pastoral holdings he acquired in many areas of New South Wales, and his astute business sense, made him one of the richest and most respected businessmen in Australia.

He bought much land during those years, and was elected one of Port Phillip's representatives in the first NSW Legislative Council in 1843.

Thomas was among those who petitioned Queen Victoria to make a new state called Victoria, and later would work with Henry Parkes to establish a northern state - Queensland.

He was a director of the Bank of New South Wales during the 1843 economic crisis. He loaned money to Isaac Nichol's sons with their Woodbine estate in Concord as security. When they defaulted on the loan it came into the hands of Thomas Walker. However, he continued to live in Lower Fort Street in Sydney Town for many years.

Politics did not agree with Walker, who wrote many scathing open letters to the people of New South Wales, printed in the Sydney Gazette. They warned of the dangers of settling on land where rainfall and terrain were not suitable, given the severe climate differences in the vast northern regions of NSW, particularly around the New England and Tentertield areas, where he repossessed hundreds of square miles of property.

In his late fifties and still single. Walker visited his ancestral home in Edinburgh. There he met

and proposed marriage to Jane Steele Hart, a spinster aged 28. He married Jane in the Garrison Church in June 1860. She gave birth to their only child, Eadith, in September 1861, but Jane remained in poor health due to tuberculosis.

Thomas remembered his visit to John Macarthur's Camden Estate in 1837 and, influenced by that grand mansion, commissioned colonial architect Edmund Blacket to build a cottage at Concord. The family is believed to have moved into Yaralla about March 1870. They celebrated their first Christmas Day in their new mansion and Jane died in his arms on Boxing Day 1870, when Eadith was just nine years old.

Few could have imagined the Italianate mansion, extended by John Sulman and which survives on the site, would become the hub of Sydney society in the 1920s when the Prince of Wales came to stay, before his abdication. The house was visited in 1927 by the Duchess of York, later Queen and Queen Mother, to whom the Walkers were distantly related through Thomas Walker's paternal grandmother Katherine Lyon of Glamis.

Thomas acted on John Wesley's famous rule, accepted in Victorian society: '*Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can*'.

In 1877 he attended a public meeting held by the Mayor of Burwood, for the purpose of building a cultural institution in the area. He contributed money and a site for the Burwood School of Arts. Here, religious, cultural and educational events, balls, concerts, magic lantern shows and an extensive library provided wholesome entertainment for the populace.

Thomas raised Eadith to appreciate her wealth and position in society, but also to recognise her obligations, especially during times of financial depression and social upheaval.

He often toured local suburbs on the lookout for destitute people needing help. Later he would check to see how they were faring.

Before one overseas trip, to escape the small-pox epidemic of 1881-82, he entrusted two bank colleagues, Thomas Buckland and Shepherd Smith, with £10,000 to carry on his philanthropic work, although it's said he insisted that his daughter account for every penny she spent. In his will he directed that £20,000 be distributed to charities.

Thomas worked for the Bank of New South Wales as a director and served as the President for the last 17 years of his life.

Shortly before his death in 1886, he added a codicil to his will, giving £100,000 to build a memorial hospital in his name. The Thomas Walker Memorial Hospital (Rivendell) is situated at the end of Hospital Road, Concord West.

Though many considered him to be a miser, his obituary in the Sydney Mail, dated September

1886, reported: *The deceased gentleman was an ardent believer in the principles of Christianity and recognised the obligation which the Founder of the system imposed on believers to do good to all men according as they had opportunity. He lived a pure life and relieved much misery and suffering and, in so doing, he established a claim to always be regarded as one of the worthiest of our citizens.*

Eadith helped to establish the Red Cross Society and donated her country estate, Shuna, to the Junior Red Cross. She endowed several hospitals with libraries, and established a tent city hospital at Yaralla, complete with all that soldiers who contracted TB during WWI would need. Eadith paid for doctors and nurses. She received a DBE in 1928 for her generous work.

She arranged for a film, *Cupid Camouflaged*, to be produced and it raised over 45,000 pounds for the Red Cross.

She paid for Holy Trinity at Concord West.

Dame Eadith selected the first Headmistress of Sydney University, Louisa MacDonald, when women were finally allowed to attend university, and matched, pound for pound, the money raised to build the Women's College and fund the library.

She supported the Kindergarten Association, Ashfield Infants' Home, women's rights and gave children's parties at Yaralla. She supported The Arts, paying for a large exhibition of Australian paintings to be shown in London in the 1890's.

Golf was first played on her land at Yaralla and she was a keen sportswoman and rower.

At her 60th birthday she arranged for directors of the Australian Ballet to see her butler's daughter dance. Frances Lett went on to become a prominent ballerina and teacher of ballet. Among her pupils were Rhonda Russell, Elaine Fifield and Marilyn Rowe.

Eadith died in 1937. The estate auction was the largest ever held in Australia.

Patricia Skehan

Wanted!!

Do you have any old Nursery Rhyme Books you no longer need? Condition doesn't matter as we need to pull some apart. Keep an eye out at fetes, etc. if you don't have any.

We also would like any stuffed toys that represent characters in nursery rhymes - e.g. mother goose, cat, dog, cow, etc.



Dedicated to Grandparents Everywhere

Grandmas are moms with lots of frosting. ~Author Unknown

What a bargain grandchildren are! I give them my loose change, and they give me a million dollars' worth of pleasure. ~Gene Perret

Grandmothers are just 'antique' little girls. ~Author Unknown

Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild. ~ Welsh Proverb

A grandmother is a babysitter who watches the kids instead of the television. ~ Author Unknown

Never have children, only grandchildren. ~Gore Vidal

Becoming a grandmother is wonderful. One moment you're just a mother, the next you are all-wise and prehistoric. ~Pam Brown

Grandchildren don't stay young forever, which is good because grandfathers have only so many horsey rides in them. ~Gene Perret

When grandparents enter the door, discipline flies out the window. ~ Ogden Nash

Grandmas hold our tiny hands for just a little while, but our hearts forever. ~ Author Unknown

If I had known how wonderful it would be to have grandchildren, I'd have had them first. ~Lois Wyse

My grandkids believe I'm the oldest thing in the world. And after two or three hours with them, I believe it, too. ~Gene Perret

If becoming a grandmother was only a matter of choice, I should advise every one of you straight away to become one. There is no fun for old people like it! ~Hannah Whithall Smith

It's such a grand thing to be a mother of a mother - that's why the world calls them grandmothers. ~Author Unknown

Grandmother-grandchild relationships are



simple. Grandmas are short on criticism and long on love. ~Author Unknown

You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother. ~Proverb

An hour with your grandchildren can make you feel young again. Anything longer than that and you start to age quickly. ~Gene Perret

I wish I had the energy that my grandchildren have - if only for self-defense. ~ Gene Perret

Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children. ~ Alex Hale

A grandparent is old on the outside but young on the inside. ~Author Unknown

One of the most powerful handclaps is that of a new grandbaby around the finger of a grandfather. ~Joy Hargrove

It's amazing how grandparents seem so young once you become one. ~Author Unknown

Grandmas never run out of hugs - or cookies. ~Author unknown

Grandmother-grandchild relationships are simple. Grandmas are short on criticism and long on love. ~Author Unknown

If your baby is 'beautiful and perfect, never cries or fusses, sleeps on schedule and burps on demand, an angel all the time', you're the grandma. ~Teresa Bloomingdale

Grandparents are similar to a piece of string - handy to have around and easily wrapped around the fingers of their grandchildren. ~ Author Unknown

Grandchildren are God's way of compensating us for growing old. ~ Mary H. Waldrup

Grandchildren don't make a man feel old; it's the knowledge that he's married to a grandmother. ~G Norman Collie

From the Secretary's Desk

SOCIETY KEYS: Reminder that we need to know what keys you hold to either Yaralla or the Museum. Please contact us ASAP.

OCTOBER MEETING: Please make a note that, due to a public holiday weekend, our October meeting will be held on the 2nd Saturday..

MEMBERSHIP: There are still some outstanding dues. If you do not intend to rejoin our Society would you please let us know so that we can stop contacting you.

NEW MEMBER: We welcome Margaret Lawther and look forward to getting to know her better in the months to come.

McDONAGH SISTERS DVD. If you missed the showing in September, there is still an opportunity to repeat as we own the DVD. If you missed out last time but would like to see it, please let us know.

YARALLA: We will not be holding another Open Day at Yaralla this year as we are still waiting to see what is happening about the renovation work to be carried out on the main building.

MUSEUM ROSTER: Volunteers wanted for museum duty on Saturday, 1st October and Saturday 8th October. (*NOTE: Alan and Mark, it's a rather drastic way to get out of your museum duty!*)

OUR SATURDAY GUEST SPEAKERS: Please feel free to invite friends and neighbours to come along. We try to have interesting speakers, but it is disappointing when attendance is low. It is always followed by a delightful afternoon tea and a chat.

 **Get Well Soon**
Two of our regular members, Mark Durance and Alan Wright, are in Concord Hospital for operations. We wish them all the best for a speedy recovery and hope to see them back on deck in a few weeks.

WANTED!
ABLE BODIED MEN
We have a few jobs around the museum which need assistance from our male members. This work can be done on a weekend. It involves helping to pick up a large item to bring to the museum; we also need to bring a display case from our storage area into the museum. There are also some small carpentry jobs that need doing. **Can you help?**

With its soft-textured white and salmon-pink plumage and large, bright red and yellow crest, it is generally recognised as the most beautiful of all cockatoos. It is named in honour of Major Sir Thomas Mitchell, who wrote "Few birds more enliven the monotonous hues of the Australian forest than this beautiful species whose pink-coloured wings and flowing crest might have embellished the air of a more voluptuous region".

