



# "Nurungi" (Remembered)

Official Newsletter of the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society  
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#### GENERAL MEETINGS and Guest Speakers

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

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**Museum Committee**  
Meets on 3rd Wednesday of  
month at 10:00 am at  
museum  
(everyone welcome)  
**Chairperson**  
Lorraine Holmes  
9743-2682

**Walker Estates Committee**  
Meets as required  
**Chairperson**  
(vacant)

#### CITY OF CANADA BAY MUSEUM

1 Bent Street, Concord

**Open Wed & Sat**  
**10am to 4pm**

**Guest Speaker**  
on 1st Saturday of each  
month at 2:00 pm

Phone: 9743-3034  
during museum hours  
or email  
[museum@canadabayheritage.asn.au](mailto:museum@canadabayheritage.asn.au)

**No.210**

**FEBRUARY/MARCH, 2014**

## The Thomas Walker Hospital and the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1919

At our recent Rivendell Open Day, I met Mrs Philippa Poole, grand-daughter of the celebrated writer Ethel Turner, who wrote over 40 books, including *Seven Little Australians*.

Mrs Poole's aunt, Jean Curlewis, enlisted as a Voluntary Aid at the Walker Emergency Hospital during the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1919.

Jean corresponded with her family during this time, describing in sixteen letters, and in many typed pages of memories, the day-to-day and night-time life, and death, in the hospital wards. Many thousands died during that terrible episode in Australian history. Millions died in other countries.

In letters to her parents Jean kept the tone light-hearted so that they would not worry. But in separate letters to her brother Adrian, (Sir Adrian Curlewis) she was more forthcoming about the horrors of working long hours, in very difficult conditions. The hospital had been opened as a *shunned and quarantined ground* ten days before her arrival. Adrian, to keep her spirits high, sent her such hilarious letters in return that other nurses protested. Her giggles under the bed covers kept her room-mates awake.

I was privileged to spend several days with Mrs Poole at her homestead in Central NSW, and to transcribe the letters and memoirs into manuscript form. Jean's writing brought alive the lives of the doctors, nurses, nursing aids and orderlies.

"Once a man in a black mask and gloves came to enquire for the *keys of the mortuary, the death certificates and a tape measure to measure the bodies.*" He was from Wood Coffill Funerals. *"It made things rather real."*

She wrote vivid descriptions of the interior of TWCH, from the Great Hall to upstairs and the Nurses' rooms in the attic, where Jean described staying awake for want of warm blankets, listening to the ceaseless and terrifying noises coming from the wards below during her first night on site. In the side wards, cloisters, and on the river wharf (locations that we know so well) Jean tells a harrowing tale in an exceptional way while managing to keep her humour,

dignity and sanity.

In one chapter, titled Night Duty, we are taken through a typical night.

A gong announces the arrival of another ambulance and more patients. The nurses and aids were dressed from head to toe in unbleached calico uniforms, two masks and goggles, hoods and rubber gloves, looking more like women dressed in hijabs. In a picture sourced from the State Library archives only their eyes are visible.

Wearing this cumbersome gear, or 'ghostly apparel' as Jean called it, the nurses washed and dressed patients in the early hours prior to dawn, before the daylight exposed their terrible conditions to other patients. Red Cross screens concealed the dying from sight.

These girls had no specific training, learning on the job from more experienced nurses. Remember this occurred only months after the end of WWI, when most surviving doctors and nurses were still overseas in the war zones.

The description of the cleansing rituals each nurse endured daily must be read to be believed and understood. Such was the terror with which this dreaded disease gripped the nation. Not so much the influenza, but secondary infections ravaged their bodies.

Jean was considered rather frail and young, so was given a post answering the telephones and handling patient enquiries, but soon graduated to the women's ward. Her sense of duty was so strong, and her loyalty so fierce towards her fellow workers, that she would defy her family's attempts to bring her home out of harm's way.

### DIARY DATES

MARCH 1 - Pierre Marcoux, "The Canada Bay Patriots - a portrait of survival"

APRIL 5 - Almis Simankevicus, "Macquarie's Kingdom"

MAY 3 - Stephen Browne, "The Early Post Office in NSW"

Jean continually implored her family to take every precaution against the 'flu, and decided not to come home on visits lest she accidentally infect them.

And yet, the story is far from depressing. For most of the narrative she speaks of the friendship between the nurses and aids, especially in the chapter titled 'A Cottage Morning', describing life in the little Joanna Walker cottage as full of charm and gaiety. Even the little kitchen maids, Ivy and Myrtle, love the nursing staff and treat them with '*excruciating kindness*'.

Throughout the story Jean worries about her young man, Leo, a third-year medical student who has also volunteered and runs another quarantine depot in the city, with '*half an aid, and a thousand patients*'.

As the death toll mounts, and numbers appear in the papers each day, Jean learns how important the will to live is, seeing which patients fight to get better, compared to those who rage and curse about the disease and quickly succumb.

Soon the cook becomes a patient, raving about others having to battle with the kitchen stove and peel the potatoes. The chapter, titled In a Ward called Hope, is stunning in its descriptions.

Patients are not patient at times, trying to escape by climbing out of the windows, or hurrying to catch the train in their pyjamas. And patients aren't the only things scurrying around the hospital after midnight.

When put in charge of thirteen convalescing children, who didn't have a toy between them, Jean sources picture books and other items to keep them amused. She also cares for a 13 month old baby on top of her main duties.

Jean describes walking along the Parramatta River shoreline, watching various boat crews training for rowing competitions. Her brother Adrian rows for Shore, against the rival Grammar crew. She describes the boats, with oars dripping silver, as she strives to catch glimpses of several friends in the crisp morning air. At other times she stands on the Dutch Water Tower wharf in the moonlight, with long shadows cast across the lawns, gulping in the fresh air.

Meanwhile, her girl-friends bombard her with invitations to dances, kitchen teas and other social events, not understanding the gravity of her situation. They are most peeved as she struggles to decline, without hurting their feelings.

One particular delight is Jean's description of the Matron, whom she comes to know well over the ensuing weeks. Her mother nearly has a breakdown worrying about Jean, so the young girl hurries to a meeting in the city to convince them she is staying put, although Headquarters has been informed that she is leaving. Threatening to take up another nursing post at a different hospital, Jean wins the day.

Other staff stricken with Influenza slowly recover, and eventually the epidemic ends. Sadly, after surviving such a harrowing time and living to tell the tale, Jean died in 1930 of Tuberculosis.

After her daughter's death, Ethel Turner never wrote another book.

Phillipa visited Rivendell especially to have her photo taken on the bottom step of the staircase, where Jean sat some nights, writing letters home. She was impressed with our volunteers and guides, and thanks Betty and her kitchen ladies for the delicious scones and

Patricia Skehan

## 1918 Influenza: A Treatment That Worked

by Kim Evans,  
citizen journalist(NaturalNews)

At least twenty million people died in the 1918 influenza epidemic and Eleanora McBean, Ph.D., N.D. tells us something interesting about it. "Drug-oriented medical doctors and hospitals", she tells us, "*were losing 33% of their flu cases*" while "*non-medical hospitals such as Battle Creek, Kellogg and MacFadden's Health Restorium were getting almost 100% healings.*"

Most people reading this already know that drugs are almost never the answer to what ails the body. But, do you know how they were achieving an almost 100% recovery rate at Battle Creek, a facility run by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg?

A 1918 article titled "Spanish Influenza Treatment", edited by Dr. Kellogg, shares his recommended influenza protocols.

First, the patients were given water enemas twice a day to clean their bowels. Using two or three pints of warm water would cleanse their colon until all of the filth was removed. The enemas started at the beginning of the disease and continued until complete recovery.

Second, the patients were drinking three or four quarts of water or fruit juice

each day to promote elimination through the kidneys and skin. A glass was taken each half hour during waking hours. Fibre, such as bran, was mixed into foods including oatmeal and rice to promote bowel movements and help the elimination of the problem.

Short hot baths and hot blanket packs were used to ease fevers and help with pain in the back and legs. A hot blanket pack entailed wrapping a person in a "*hot as they could stand*," wrung-out wet blanket for twelve to fifteen minutes. A wool blanket covered the outside of the wet blanket, and heads and faces were kept cool. If the pulse was rapid, an ice pack was held over the heart. For very high fevers, the hot blanket packs were used only for four or five minutes.

Cold compresses were used for headaches. For high fevers, a cold compress was used immediately after a short hot blanket pack to bring down the fever.

It wasn't said, because in 1918 it wasn't such a widespread problem, but obviously sugar, processed foods and junk foods should be avoided in the case of any flu or influenza. That's just common sense whenever your body is showing signs of problems. Patients were also kept in bed for several days after the fever was gone.

It was stated that these measures, applied intelligently, would bring the number of deaths from influenza, and the pneumonia that often followed, to a "negligible quantity." After the fact, we can see that statement was correct for those who applied them.

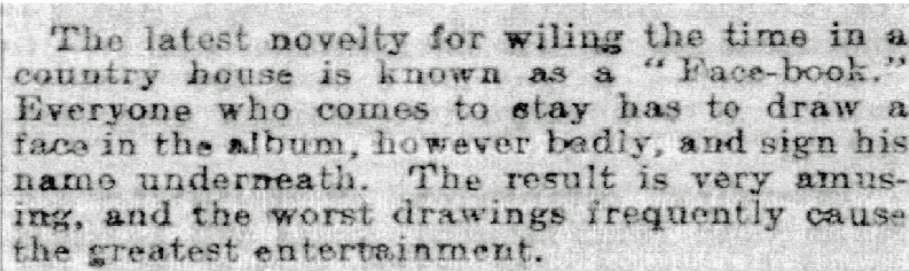
In the months that led up to the November 11 Armistice of 1918, the world's Armies and Navies had begun to disperse. On their way home, the demobilised took with them a virulent virus.

The fetid, rat-rich, body-rotting trenches provided ideal breeding grounds for the virus that would be responsible for more than five times as many deaths as the war itself. The virus was thought to have originated in chickens and mutated in pigs before emerging in humans in the spring of 1918.

In the autumn, the nation was struggling to come to terms with the catastrophe of the First World War. Nearly three quarters of a million British men were estimated to have died and more than a million and a half had been severely wounded during the conflict. Almost no surviving individual escaped the grief of losing a husband, father, son, fiancé, uncle, cousin or friend.

## Facebook's 10th birthday? Try 102nd!

As Facebook celebrates its 10th birthday this week, news archives from Findmypast.com.au reveal the term "Face-book" was actually coined in 1902. A clipping discovered in the British newspaper collection on Findmypast from the April 30 1902 edition of the Exeter newspaper, The Western Times, reports:



The latest novelty for wiling the time in a country house is known as a "Face-book." Everyone who comes to stay has to draw a face in the album, however badly, and sign his name underneath. The result is very amusing, and the worst drawings frequently cause the greatest entertainment.

Some would argue this wasn't much different from the modern day concept of Facebook!

Vicki Dawson from Findmypast.com.au said: "It's always intriguing when we stumble across societal trends from the past that have re-emerged in the modern day. It's fascinating how similar the 1902 Face-book resembles an offline version of the Facebook we know and celebrate today.

### Raffle Reminder

The raffle will be drawn at our meeting on 1st March.

**Please return books and money**, or unsold tickets to PO Box 152, Concord or drop in the **green mailbox** outside the museum door **immediately** as we have to account for all tickets - sold or unsold.

We thank you for your support. This money is needed to help the museum with future displays.

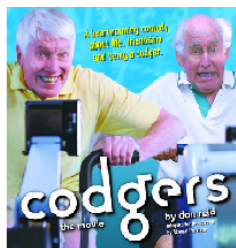
### Codgers, the movie

Because so many people - those who missed out last time and those who want to see it again - have asked us to put it on again, we are doing so.

On Saturday 15 and Wednesday 19 March we will be showing it at 2:00 pm. in our museum.

Then, again, on Saturday 22 March we will be putting on the show at the Five Dock Library at 2:00 pm.

As we are limited as to how many we can seat at each of these venues we will need people to **book by calling 9744-8528**



## What's in a Word?

### The names behind the words

**BLOOMERS:** Amelia Jenks Bloomer, editor of an American magazine, the *Lily*, was a fervent supporter of dress reform for women. In an attempt to be free of the tightly laced corsets and voluminous dresses in vogue in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Amelia Bloomer advocated wearing a jacket and knee-length skirt; beneath the skirt was a pair of trousers tucked into boots.

The outfit - which had in fact already been designed and worn by a contemporary dress reformer, Mrs Elizabeth Smith Miller - caused a storm of controversy. "Bloomer girls" were refused entry to churches and other public buildings, and the *New York Herald* went so far as to declare that "those who have tried it will very likely soon end their career in the lunatic asylum, or perchance, in the state prison."

It was not long, however, before "bloomer dress" became popular on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly as a practical outfit for the newly popular pastime of bicycling. And the term *bloomers* was soon applied to just the trousers or any sort of long undergarment.

**MAE WEST:** "I've been in *Who's Who* and I know what's what, but it's the first time I ever made the dictionary!" is attributed to the inimitable Mae West when she learned that the inflatable life jacket had been named for her.

## Some Snippets from The Evening News - Sat., Nov. 26, 1910

### AN EXPENSIVE KISS

A youth named Clive Abbott was charged at the Water Police Court this morning with behaving in a disorderly manner. The evidence showed that on Saturday evening a constable saw the accused in Davis Street, City, go up to a young girl, throw his arms round her and kiss her, whereat the constable arrested him.

The magistrate imposed a fine of 1 pound, with the alternative of seven days in prison

### THE BETROTHAL CAKE:

I tasted my first bit of "betrothal cake" the other day. It came in a sealed-up tin from Perth. I have been hearing how smart and up-to-date the Perthites are, and this proves it, for a "betrothed cake" is quite the newest thing at the chic engagements. It hasn't taken the place of the engagement ring, or the wedding cake. Not half - and "no such luck" sighs mere man - it is merely another burden added to those already born by the engaged young man. It's an unsuspected way of bearing down upon the bread-winner, a little concrete reminder to the would-be bridegroom of his promises and pledges.

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"The poor young bachelor", groans the world. "House rent soars upwards, food keeps it company, dresses and hats ascent by bounds, the modern girl can't wash or cook, or nurse, or do anything she should do and now there is a betrothal cake to think of - too bad!

### THE CANAL QUESTION:

"The great question of the day is the canal question"

"Which canal, the one on Mars?"

"No, the alimentary one. How to keep food going through it at present prices."

### THE COST OF LIVING

Mr Robertson has given notice in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly of his intention to move for a select committee to inquire into and report upon the cost of living, the increase of same during the past ten years and the cause of such increase; also for a committee to inquire as to what is a living wage, and why men and women are not paid equally for equal work.

(NOTE: *The more things change, the more they stay the same*)

## From the Museum Committee

Your committee has been working hard for the last couple of months - and will continue to do so in the months ahead.

Currently, we have the **"Fun and Games for Young and Old"** display of old board and other games. It will only be up for a few more weeks so why not pop in soon to have a look for yourself. You can even play many of the games.

Bring the young ones so they can see how us oldies survived without all the current electronic gadgets, and still had a really good time.

When this event closes the next one will be **"Coins and Postage in Colonial Days"** - a display of coins and stamps from the early days together with stories about our Isaac Nichols, who was the first Postmaster in the Colony.

This will be followed by a display of some of the items from our own collection.

After that we will have a **"The Anniversary of the beginning of World War I"**. Do you have, or know someone who had a relative who served in WWI? We'd like to have your stories and photographs to honour those who served.

And our final display to see the year out will be **"Christmas Around the World"**. We would like to hear from people who have come to us from overseas to tell us about the different customs and ways they celebrated this occasion. If they would like to lend us some objects they have which have special significance for them and their families this will help make a very visual display. We need to start hearing from you now as this project will need a lot of preparation.

As you can see, we are a very active committee but we are always looking for new members with new and fresh ideas. We now meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am in the museum. Please come along and see if you'd like to join us.

We also have a great line up of guest speakers who come to the museum on the first Saturday of the month at 1:30 for 2:00 pm start. These talks are not just for members - everyone is welcome. Please spread the word.

## Bumper Stickers

- \* Amnesia used to be my favorite word, but then I forgot it.
- \* The shortest distance between two points is under construction.

## Yaralla Open Day Sunday, 13th April

At last we are able to resume our Open Days at Yaralla.

It has been some time since the last one so there will need to be some refreshing of plans.

For all those who are involved with the Open Day - in any capacity - we are holding a **briefing day at the Museum on Saturday, 8th March at 2:00 pm.**

This will give the regular guides a chance to share their knowledge with some of our newer members who wish to become guides. We also need to have a chat to see if there is anything we need to change to improve the day.

The briefing day we had just prior to our Rivendell Open Day was such a success that we decided we need to do it for Yaralla.

We also need to allocate the other static jobs around the area and organise the Devonshire Tea workers.

Anyone interested in helping with the event, no matter in what capacity, is encouraged to come along.

Also, as our buildings haven't been used for many, many months they will need a good clean out - mostly leaves and dust - and we will have to do a stocktake to make sure that we have everything we need. We have arranged to work on this at Yaralla on **Sunday, 6th April from 10:00 am.** Please come if you can - many hands make light work.



**Concord Community Hostel** will be holding their **55th Annual Luncheon** on Wednesday, 12th March, 12 noon for 12:30 pm. Students from The McDonald Collage will entertain you.

Venue: The Concord Function Centre

Cost: \$35.00 per person

RSVP: 5th March

**Admission by ticket only**

Contact Jenny Nicholls, 9743-0613

**Concord Garden Club** will be holding their **60th Autumn Flower, Vegetable and Floral Art Show** on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 April at the Concord Community Centre in Gipps Street. Admission \$3.00.

Official Opening by Judy Horton on Saturday at 12:30 pm.

## From the Secretary's Desk

**SIGNWRITER WANTED:** When Yaralla was being renovated at one time the writing above the fireplace was inadvertently painted over. We would very much like to have this restored and we need a signwriter who can do the job. Do you know anyone.

**BOLTON'S DAIRY:** We are currently researching the Bolton family who had a Dairy in Flavelle Street, Concord many years ago. Does anyone know of any family members who might still be around?

**MUSEUM ROSTERS:** We are in need of some new people willing to be put onto the museum roster - particularly for Wednesdays. You would probably only need to be on roster approximately every 6 weeks.

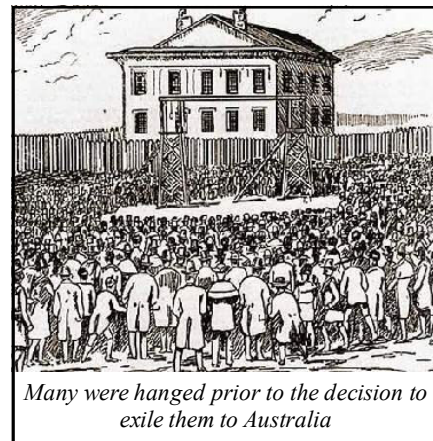
**MUSEUM COMMITTEE:** To all members of this committee, as well as anyone wanting to join us, the regular meeting date has now been changed to the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am in the Museum. Everyone welcome even if you only want to see what we do.

## Guest Speaker

Our speaker for Saturday, 1st March is Pierre Marcoux, a descendant of Joseph Marceau, the only Canadian Exile who did not return home but stayed in Australia and raised a family here

Through photographs, Pierre will tell about the background of the French Canadians who were exiled here to be incarcerated in the Longbottom Stockade - from their capture in the 1838 Lower Canada Rebellion to their voyage to Australia - and beyond.

If you have ever wondered where our suburb, City of Canada Bay, got its name now is the time to find out. Please spread the word.



Many were hanged prior to the decision to exile them to Australia