



# 'Nurungi'

(Remembered)

Official Newsletter of the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society

email: [heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au](mailto:heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au)

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

EDITOR  
**LOIS MICHEL**  
9744-8528

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PRESIDENT  
**ALAN WRIGHT**  
9743-4869

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

#### GENERAL MEETINGS

1st Saturday of month  
(except January)

at **12:30 pm in the**  
City of Canada Bay  
Museum

1 Bent Street, Concord  
9743-3034  
followed by

**our Guest Speaker**  
at **2:00 pm sharp.**

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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)

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**NOVEMBER 2015**

## CULLENS – the landmark on the corner

Imagine three-year-old Nigel Freeman seeing his father off to work from his home in Gipps Street, North Strathfield and then venturing out for a tour of the area in his pedal car. Concerned at his absence, his mother Margaret mounted a search of the local streets, which eventually led her to Concord Road where there was still no sign of the pedal car with its little driver.

With hastening pace she moved down to the corner and into Parramatta Road, where a block of shops was busily servicing the morning trade. Margaret enquired as to sightings of her 'runaway' driver but alas, no-one had seen him.

Increasingly anxious, she wandered into the local motor dealer, Cullens of Concord, and with great relief she found young Nigel deep in conversation with the mechanics who explained, "He's just popped in for a grease and oil change!"

The year was 1956 and our maintenance-conscious Nigel was visiting the well-known premises of one of the most enduring dealerships in Sydney.

### Opportunity Knocks

The landmark site on one of the busiest intersections in Sydney was chosen by Ed Cullen, a motor mechanic who lived in Majors Bay Road, Concord. He had lost his job during the Depression but rented a tiny garage in Burwood where he went around door knocking the local area to build up his clientele.

Ed's growing reputation and expanding business led to the opening of a service station in Burwood Road, and then in 1939 he built what was, at the time, a very modern service station at the corner of Concord Road and Parramatta Road. No self-serve in those days, there was someone putting air in your tyres, someone filling up the tank and the oil and another washing down your windscreen. There

was a row of petrol pumps with a variety of fuel brands.

### Drove My Chevy

Business progressed well and during World War II Cullens was enlisted to carry out repairs for the armed forces. Petrol was the backbone of the early years before car sales took off, when he eventually became a sub-dealer of Stack and Co. for General Motors cars. The dealership sold Holdens, Pontiacs and Chevrolets.

Ed's first new car was a 1949 Chevrolet which was a lovely pale green colour, according to his daughter Elaine (now Elaine Burrow) who currently plays an active part in the firm. Elaine recalls that in the 1950s her father always drove a different flash American-type Chevy or Pontiac every year, at a time when obtaining the delivery of a new vehicle was extremely difficult. Unlike today, you couldn't walk into a dealer and drive a car out, as lack of availability ensured a long waiting list.

### Turning Japanese

With great foresight Ed made the dramatic changeover to the Nissan brand in the early

60s. His visits to the Company's factories in Japan, where he was impressed by the quality of the Japanese cars which were newly allowed into Australia, had undoubtedly convinced him of the viability of the product.

Ed sold new and used cars before adding a panel shop to the company's

services. He worked very long hours, and the family didn't see much of him, his two daughters usually in bed by the time Dad arrived home. Ed was obviously mindful of his expe-



## DIARY DATES

NOV 7 - Don Napper, "James Barnett,  
Colonial Architect"

DEC 5 - Christmas Party

Meetings resume in February 2016