



“Nurungi”

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY
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MEETINGS

General Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month
at 7:30 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre

Executive Meetings

4th Wednesday of month
at 7:45 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre

Committee Meetings

Contact Chairpersons
Museum

Fred Stansfield, 9743-1866

Walker Estates

Errol Grace, 9743-4301

Heritage

Bill Barlow, 9743-3662

Oral History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

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MUSEUM

5 Wellbank Street
Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Wednesday & Saturday

No. 76

June 2002

Next Meeting

Wed. 12th June - our own **Bill Barlow** telling us of “**Marco Polo and the Silk Road**”. This remarkable journey took Marco Polo over seventeen years and changed the culture of the west forever. He stayed with the mighty Kublai Kan in Cathay (China) in 1271 and brought back the latest Chinese ideas and inventions that astonished Europeans. *To learn more, please read the enclosed leaflet.*

This is a night not to be missed . . . so come along - and bring your friends.

Future Meetings

***Sunday, 14th July – Robyn Hawes** from The Friends of Rookwood, speaking on her favourite subject, “*Rookwood Cemetery*”.

**Please note change of date and time for July meeting.*

Wednesday, 14th August - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers. Although we have no regular speaker at this meeting it is, nevertheless, the most important meeting of the year. The president and the chairpersons of the various committees will be reporting to you, our members, on our achievements during the past year and our plans for the new year. This is *YOUR* society and we urge you to give your office bearers and committee your support. After all, they can only make suggestions for our future, we need you to put them into practice.

This is also the time to elect the officers and committee members for the coming year. We can always use new blood and fresh ideas so if you think you have something to offer get someone to nominate you, nominate yourself, or contact the secretary who will add your name to the list of nominations.

If you become part of the committee you will be made most welcome and you will certainly find it a rewarding experience. It only involves you in one extra meeting per month - any extra time you put in is all voluntary.

So, don't hesitate - nominate *NOW!!*

A Grass By Any Other Name

The Story of Greenlees Couch Grass (*Cynadon dactylon*)

When a lawn bowler sends down his bowl towards the Jack, or perhaps to remove the competitors shot, he spares little thought to the surface he plays or walks upon. The Club Greenkeeper has prepared a surface that is level and firm and the bowl responds to the conditions. How often does the player think that the surface is the product of a very chance occurrence?

In most New South Wales coastal bowling greens, Couch Grass (*Cynadon dactylon*) is the grass of choice and in particular a variety known as 'Greenleaf Couch'. The use of 'Greenleaf' by the turf industry was a corruption of 'Greenlees Park Couch' or more correctly, 'Greenlees Couch', the name of the grass that was first introduced to a bowling green purely by chance.

The story starts in 1950, when I was returning to Concord from a position in Tenterfield in the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales. I had resigned from my first professional appointment with the butter factory and sought to accompany Mr. Cecil Cowan, who had just completed constructing a bowling green for the local club. He was returning to West Ryde with his truck and equipment. Cecil had been staying in the same boarding house in Tenterfield. This chance association later was renewed and is the focus of the story of 'Greenlees' Couch Grass.

In the 1950's a determined effort was being made to start a Bowling Club by residents in the Concord area around the shopping centre. David Wallace owned a sports store in Majors Bay Road and was the moving force for the new club. William Lee, my mother's brother of 1 Wellbank Street, who lived next door to us, together with my father Ernest Leggett and his cousin Charley Leggett were also foundation members and deeply involved.

After my return from Tenterfield and before I started my nursery in Burwood Road, Con-

cord, Uncle Bill asked me if I would like a few days work to assist in the construction of the first green being laid at the site of the proposed Greenlees Park Bowling Club in lower Wellbank Street. It was located below and also at the rear of the MSWB pumping station and on land that had been mainly reclaimed from the swamp. It was, of course, a little surprising to find that Cecil Cowan was the contractor. With Uncle Bill and my dad, we were the labour force that assisted to construct and lay the green. The green was sown with couch grass seed. For some reasons that I do not recall, a patchy germination resulted and the surface cover was in need of repair. By default, Uncle Bill became the voluntary greenkeeper, a position he held for many years until the club could afford a paid employee..

On the strip between the houses 1a, (Leggett) 1 (LEE) and 3 (vacant) and Wellbank Street, and also on the opposite side of the road alongside the house owned by Miss Mack and fronting Warbrick Street, footpaths had been originally laid in tar and gravel and this had cracked badly over the years. All through this area a couch grass was growing prolifically. I had noticed it when I was a child and later because of its very fine leaf, when my studies turned rural.

Uncle Bill Lee took some of the runners that he dug up from the area outside his house and replanted the bare areas in the number one green. It grew well and melded into the sown couch. Uncle Bill then established a stock area in the flower garden he had established on the car park entry alongside the pumping station and this he used to repair the green.

Because of the association, Uncle Bill and all the Bowling Club of that time knew this couch cultivar as 'Greenlees Couch'. It was to be seen and admired by many bowlers and greenkeepers in the years that followed and transferred to many bowling clubs from his stock plot.

In 1974 The Turf Research Institute of NSW had invited my immediate superior in the Pasture section of the Division of Plant Indus-

try, Department of Agriculture, Mr. Tom Atkinson, Principal Officer (Pastures), to attend their meeting. While he and I were talking about grass species used in bowling greens, the topic of 'Greenlees Couch' was raised by me so that he would be aware of the strain that grew in Concord. He asked me to record the history of the cultivar, as it should be given to the Turf Institute. This document, produced in 1974, has been lost from my records and I am not aware if it ever delivered to the Turf Research Institute.

The greenkeeper from Greenlees Park Bowling Club was to lay claim to the discovery in the mid 1970's and marketed it very successfully, but even he seems to be unaware of its origin. Since that time it has been registered as 'Greenleaf Couch' and it is used exclusively.

I cannot suggest how the original stand was established on the side of Wellbank Street. My grandfather, Samuel George Lee, established his nursery on the site of Nos 1A, 1 and 3 (and leased land to the east) in Wellbank Street in 1904. Early photographs I have taken of cars outside in the late 1920's seem to indicate the grass was then covering the area. I would advance two theories: (1) it was brought into Australia as an unknown cultivar from a site that was geographically separate to the seed that was imported, or (2) it was a mutated type that was isolated in this one area.

Whatever its origin, its commercial use commenced in 1950-1951 with the chance use by William Lee of runners of the couch grass growing in Wellbank Street, Concord for the repair of the first green established on the site of the Greenlees Park Bowling Club in Wellbank Street Concord. The early members and visitors of the club knew it as GREENLEES COUCH.

So what is in a name? Hopefully the origin and use of this grass will now be recorded as part of Concord's heritage.

Eric K. Leggett, BA, HDA, HDD, JP
Umina Beach

30 March 2002

On This Day in History - June 12

- 1365 — King Edward III bans football in London, orders archery practice.
- 1767 — The first human blood transfusion is administered by Dr. Jean Baptiste.
- 1826 — Gas lighting is installed by shopkeeper J.T. Wilson of Pitt Street, Sydney. It is the first recorded use of gas lighting in Australia.
- 1902 — Votes for women in Australia finally becomes law, giving them the right to vote and stand in federal elections. Aboriginal women have to wait until 1962 for uniform voting rights.
- 1956 — Free mass vaccination programme with Salk polio vaccine begins in Australia.
- 1962 — San Francisco: Three convicts dig way out of Alcatraz with spoons.
- 1964 — A crowd of 300,000 greet The Beatles on their arrival in Adelaide.
- 1964 — Macquarie University was founded at North Ryde, Sydney.
- 1999 — Sydney's Olympic Stadium is opened to a colourful spectacle of music, entertainment and sporting events, in which 90,000 people see the Socceroos defeat the All Stars team 3-2.

Parramatta Road – a Short History

First track cut: 1789 - 1791. Population of Parramatta: 1970; Population of Sydney: 1170.

1792: Establishment of Longbottom Stockade and Government Farm at Concord

1803: "Forced March" - Irish settler's uprising against British in reaction to bloodshed in Ireland. The Irish were marched from Constitution Hill to Vinegar Hill and hung.

1810: First toll on Parramatta Road to assist with the cost of road maintenance

1820's: Stagecoach service established.

1920's: Introduction of motor vehicles

1930's: First 'work for the dole scheme' on Parramatta Road established by Premier Jack Lang, to restore road surface in Auburn area. Premier Lang despaired at the inability of Councils to work together to maintain the road and its environs.

1989: First "Parramatta Road Urban Design Competition"

1992: IMROC establishes Parramatta Road Steering Committee including Councils, Roads and Traffic Authority, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning in consultation with stakeholder groups.

1997: The Hon Carl Scully MP allocates \$150,000 for development of Strategic Framework for Parramatta Road 2000 and Beyond Project

1998: Strategic Framework released. Councils along road commit funds to Parramatta Road 2000 and Beyond. Minister Scully allocates \$70 million to road improvements and completion of City West Link.

2000: Parramatta Road Place Manager appointed, projects commence to implement Strategic Framework

2001: Parramatta Road Urban Design Competition launched.

Beyond 2001: Development of Master Plan and implementation of capital works projects.

Reference IMROC Website

Did You Know?

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PETROL PUMP was installed in Melbourne in 1920. Previously petrol was only sold in cans.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS: The first traffic lights in Australia operated in Melbourne in 1928 on the corner of Collins and Swanston Streets. Sydney's first set came in 1933 at the intersection of Kent and Market Streets.

MOTHERS: The mother of one of Australia's most famous poets was also one of Australia's first feminists.

Louisa Lawson (1848-1920), mother of Henry Lawson, was a founding member of the Australian Suffrage League at the turn of the nineteenth century

(1891 to be precise). She also helped establish "Dawn", an early magazine especially for women.

CANBERRA: Australia's capital city was designed by an American and founded by a Canadian. Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937), the city's designer, was born in the U.S.A. King O'Malley (1858-1953), who drove in the first survey peg, was born in Canada.

CAMELS: The first camels to be imported into Australia arrived in 1840.

ABC: Why is the ABC known as "Auntie"?

The idea is that aunties are staid and cautious. We weren't the first to call our national broadcaster "Auntie". It started with the BBCV in Britain, probably during the 1950s when commercial television was introduced.



*Happy 100th Birthday
to
Anne Leggett*

*On 20th June friends everywhere
will be raising their glasses to
'our Annie' to wish her continued
health and happiness on this
happy day*

Diary dates:

☛ *Wednesday, 12th June - Bill Barlow,
"Marco Polo and the Silk Road".*

☛ *Wednesday, 26th June -Executive
Meeting*

☛ *Sunday, 14th July, at 2:00 pm -
Robyn Hawes from The Friends of
Rookwood, speaking on her favour-
ite subject, Rookwood Cemetery.*

☛ *Wednesday, 24th July, Executive
Meeting.*

☛ *Wednesday, 14th August - Annual
General Meeting and Election of
Office Bearers.*