



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: chs@concordheritage.asn.au

www.concordheritage.asn.au

EDITOR

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MEETINGS

General Meetings

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

Executive Meetings

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

Committee Meetings

As arranged
Contact Chairpersons
for details

Museum

Fred Stansfield, 9743-1866

Walker Estates

First Thursday each month
(please contact to confirm)
Concord Bowling Club
Clermont Ave, North Strathfield
Errol Grace, 9743-4301

Heritage

Bill Barlow, 9743-3662

Oral History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

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**CONCORD
HERITAGE MUSEUM**
5 Wellbank Street

Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Wednesday & Saturday

John Simpson Kirkpatrick (July 6, 1892 - May 19, 1915)

John Simpson Kirkpatrick, affectionately known as "the man and his donkey", was born on the 6th July, 1892 in South Shields, England. He landed at ANZAC Cove at 5 a.m. on the 25th April, 1915 and was mortally wounded in Shrapnel Gully, near the mouth of Monash Valley, on the 19th May, 1915 at the age of 22. During the 24 days he spent at ANZAC he operated as a sole unit with his beloved donkey(s) and is credited with saving the lives of probably hundreds of men. He has become a part of the ANZAC folklore and though recommended for the Victoria Cross, twice, and the Distinguished Conduct Medal, was never decorated for his actions.

His parents, Robert and Sarah, were Scottish. Robert was a merchant seaman. Each summer young John worked at Murphy's Fair, providing donkey rides for a penny a ride for the children. He looked after the donkeys from 7.30 am to 9.00 pm when he would ride one the 2 miles to his home. The animals responded well to his gentle, kind manner, he seemed to have an instinctive attachment with them. At age 17 he, like his father, answered the call of the sea.

In 1910 he joined the crew of the "Yedda" as a stoker and sailed for Newcastle, Australia. On arrival he and a dozen of the crew "cleared out". For the next few years he worked a series of jobs in different parts of the country, cane cutting, cattle droving, coal mining, "humping the bluey", working at the gold fields. He also worked on coastal ships, but jumped ship in Fremantle, WA, and enlisted in Perth just 3 weeks after the outbreak of World War 1.

He dropped Kirkpatrick from his name and took on Simpson as he probably thought that a deserter from the Merchant Marines might not be accepted into the army.

Simpson, a big strong lad, was allotted to the Field Ambulance as a stretcher bearer. He had hoped that, by joining the army, he might get a free trip back home to England which was where the initial Australian force were destined to go for their basic training. They were diverted to Egypt when it was realised that England wasn't prepared for this large colonial force. Exactly 8 months after enlisting Simpson landed at ANZAC Cove, Gallipoli, as a stretcher bearer, with

"C" section, 3rd Field Ambulance, 1st Australian Division, Australian Imperial Force.

"C" section rowed ashore from the transport "Devanha". Just before dawn, at about 5.00 a.m. on Sunday April 25, 1915, they leapt from the boat and waded ashore. Simpson was the second man into the water. The first and third men were killed. Casualties on the first day were appalling. Of the 1500 men in the first wave, 755 remained in active service at the end of the day. The remainder were killed or wounded. Those that did remain were badly affected by the shortage of food and particularly water in the sub-tropical sun.

A primitive Casualty Clearing Station was established on the beach, using the cover of the overgrown vegetation beyond the beach. By dawn on the second day the ANZAC's were holding onto a 500 acre piece of ground. The Turks held the high ground and looked down into the ANZAC position at almost every angle. Stretcher parties were under constant fire.

Simpson had already carried two heavy men down from the front lines and while responded to a call from another wounded man, he saw a donkey grazing nearby and decided to use it to help carry wounded to the beach. There was no saddle, stirrups or reins so he made a head stall and lead from bandages and field dressings for this first trip. He lifted the wounded man onto the donkey and held onto him as he guided the donkey to the beach.

From this day on Simpson decided to act as an independent unit. He did not report back to ambulance headquarters for instructions and for the first four days was technically a deserter until his Command-



Bulletin Board

April 9 - Patricio Parague, Postcard Collector, showing some of his collection of cards depicting Old Sydney, and other interesting places.

May 14 - to be advised

ing Officer, seeing the value of his work, agreed to turn a blind eye and approved his actions. Later he made a saddle from bags and blankets and used ropes for the head stall and lead. Some of his friends made a small bell from the nose cone of a shell.

Simpson and his donkey would make their way up Shrapnel Gully, the main supply route to the front line, into Monash Valley and onto the deadly zone around Quinn's Post where the opposing trenches were just 15 yards apart. To the left of Quinn's Post was Dead Mans Ridge, held by the Turks, from where they were able to snipe right down Shrapnel Gully. Simpson would start his day as early as 6.30 am and often continue until 3.00 am. He made the one and a half mile trip, through sniper fire and shrapnel, 12-15 times a day. He would leave his donkey under cover while he went forward to collect the injured. On the return journey he would bring water for the wounded. He never hesitated or stopped even under the most furious shrapnel fire and was frequently warned of the dangers ahead but invariably replied "*my troubles*".

It is unclear whether he used one donkey or several but he certainly only used one donkey at a time as the terrain was too restrictive to use more.

The need for fodder led him to the only source, which was at the foot of Shrapnel Gully, in the form of the 21st Kohat Indian Mountain Artillery Battery. The Indians had brought mules to haul their artillery and had brought plenty of fodder. Simpson set up camp with them, slept and ate with them and was idolised by them. The Indians called him "*Bahadur*" which means "the bravest of the brave". To the other troops he was known as "*Scotty*", "*Murphy*", "*Simmie*", and generally "the man with the donk".

Almost every digger knew about him. The question was often asked: "*Has the bloke with the donk stopped one yet?*" It seemed incredible that anyone could make that trip up and down Monash Valley without being hit. Simpson escaped death so many times that he was completely fatalistic. He seemed to have a charmed life.

Simpson had a strong sense of humour, of devilment and a sheer exuberant enjoyment of life. He would quickly become popular with virtually anyone with whom he came in contact.

When Captain Buchanan took over as Simpson's commanding officer he officially warned Simpson of the grave risks he was taking with the possibility of wounding "*or worse*". Simpson's

reply was "*my troubles*" and he continued on with his work. He sometimes even acted against orders. *When the firing down the valley was at its worst and orders were posted that the ambulance men must not go out, the Man and the Donkey placidly continued their work. At times they held trenches of hundreds of men spell-bound, just to see them at their work. Their quarry lay motionless in an open patch, in easy range of a dozen Turkish rifles. Patiently the little donkey waited under cover, while the man crawled through the thick scrub until he was within striking distance. Then a lightning dash, and he had the wounded man on his back and was making for cover again. In those fierce seconds he always seemed to bear a charmed life.*

On May 19, 1915, at 3.00 am, the Turks mounted a major counter-offensive. 45,000 Turkish troops attacked all along the front line with orders to drive the enemy into the sea. By 11.00 am, 8,000 Turks lay dead and wounded in no-man's land without capturing a single section of trench. The great assault had finished and failed. The attack was called off. It was during the final fling of the attack that Simpson made his way up the gully towards Courtney's Post where the fighting had been most furious. It was his habit to stop at the water guard and have breakfast. On this day he was too early and breakfast wasn't ready. "*Never mind,*" said Simpson as he continued on his way "*get me a good dinner when I come back.*" He picked up a wounded man, placed him on the donkey and made his way towards the beach. On his way he passed and chatted briefly with a couple of friends. It was as he reached the very spot where a General had been hit four days before that a Signaller, who was dug in beside the track, shouted to him "*Watch out for that machine gunner. He's got a couple of blokes this morning already.*" Simpson waved back in acknowledgement and, grinning, continued on his way. Moments later the Turkish machine gun opened fire. Simpson was hit in the back. The bullet passed out the front of his stomach killing him instantly. The force of the bullet picked him up and threw him face down in the dirt. His friends and others ran back to Simpson but it was too late. The wounded man on the donkey was wounded a second time and as he grasped the donkey's neck, passed out. The donkey, frightened, and still with the wounded man on his back ran down to his usual destination, No.2 Dressing Dugout. There, the Padre helped lift the wounded man from the

donkey. He recalled "*I turned the donk around. I slapped its rump. It slowly moved off from whence it came, I followed. Moving slowly, the donk browsed what rough feed he could, and went along the track made familiar by use until we came to the place, where Simpson's body lay.*"

"*We covered his body and put it in a dugout beside the track and carried on with our job. We went back for him at about 6.30 pm and he was buried at Hell Spit on the same evening.*" The grave was marked by a simple wooden cross with the inscription "John Simpson". One of the 1st Battalion missed him from the gully that day and asked "*Where's Murphy?*" The Sergeant replied "*Murphy's at Heaven's Gate, helping the soldiers through.*"

That night there was a hush throughout the trenches when the news circulated that "*the man with the donk*" had finally "*stopped one*". He had become such a part of life at ANZAC that it was hard for them to believe that he was gone. An artilleryman told Captain Evans, the Officer commanding the Indian Field ambulance, "*Evans Sahib, what do you think? Murphy's stonkered.*" Evans did a thing which astonished all who knew him. He sat on a packing case and covered his face with his hands and prayed out aloud. "*O God. if ever a man deserves Heaven, he does. Give it to him!*" The Indians gathered around and asked Evans what was wrong and when he told them Murphy Sahib had been killed they immediately went down on their haunches and wailed and threw dirt on their heads.

Although he only spent 4 years in Australia, Simpson embodied that larrikin character, that inability to respect for the sake of respect, that dislike of authority that has come to be known as the ANZAC spirit. Unfortunately the authorities at the time didn't have the same admiration for this spirit that we have. And though Simpson was nominated several times to be decorated for his bravery, these nominations were declined. It is apparent that all who saw his work felt he was deserving of the highest awards.

After the armistice a commemoration stone replaced the cross. The inscription reads:

**JOHN SIMPSON
KIRKPATRICK SERVED AS
202 PRIVATE J SIMPSON,
AUST. ARMY MEDICAL CORPS,
19TH MAY 1915 AGE 22
HE GAVE HIS LIFE
THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE.**

Some Elaborate Hoaxes from Around the World

Alignment of the Planets: In 1976 the British astronomer Patrick Moore announced on BBC Radio 2 that at 9:47 am a once-in-a-lifetime astronomical event was going to occur that listeners could experience in their very own homes. The planet Pluto would pass behind Jupiter, temporarily causing a gravitational alignment that would counteract and lessen the Earth's own gravity. Moore told his listeners that if they jumped in the air at the exact moment that this planetary alignment occurred, they would experience a strange floating sensation.

When 9:47 am arrived, BBC2 began to receive hundreds of phone calls from listeners claiming to have felt the sensation. One woman even reported that she and her eleven friends had risen from their chairs and floated around the room.

The Interfering Brassieres: Women often complain about uncomfortable bras, but this hoax took problem bras to a whole new level. In 1982 the British Daily Mail reported that a local manufacturer had sold 10,000 "rogue bras" that were causing a unique and unprecedented problem, not to the wearers but to the public at large. Apparently the support wire in these bras had been made out of a kind of

copper originally designed for use in fire alarms. When this copper came into contact with nylon and body heat, it produced static electricity which, in turn, was interfering with local television broadcasts.

Apparently the chief engineer of British Telecom, upon reading the article, immediately ordered that all his female laboratory employees disclose what type of bra they were wearing.

UFO Lands Near London: Thousands of motorists driving on the highways outside London on March 31, 1989 looked up in the air to see a glowing flying saucer descending on their city. Hundreds of them pulled to the side of the road to watch the bizarre craft float through the air, making it fortunate that no distracted driver caused an accident. The saucer finally landed in a field on the outskirts of London where local residents immediately called the police to warn them of an alien invasion. Soon the police arrived on the scene, and one brave officer approached the craft with his truncheon extended before him. When a door in the craft popped open, and a small, silver-suited figure emerged, the policeman ran in the opposite direction. The saucer turned out to be the creation of Richard

Branson, the 36-year-old chairman of Virgin Records. He had specially commissioned the construction of a hot-air balloon resembling a UFO. His plan was to land the craft in London's Hyde Park on April 1. Unfortunately, the wind blew him off course, and he was forced to land a day early in the wrong location.

The Taco Liberty Bell: In 1996 Taco Bell took out full-page ads in national newspapers announcing their purchase of the Liberty Bell. Although the historic treasure would still be accessible to the public for viewing, the ads declared, it would be renamed the "Taco Liberty Bell." The money from the sale of the Bell would supposedly be used to reduce the national debt. Taco Bell likened the purchase to the widespread corporate practice of adopting sections of highways.

The announcement touched a raw nerve in the many people who were already wary of corporate intrusions into public life. Thousands of them angrily phoned the National Historic Park in Philadelphia where the bell is housed to protest the sale.

*If you want to see more, go to . . .
www.museumofhoaxes.com
or buy the book
"The Museum of Hoaxes"*

Any valuables should be handed to the Matron for safekeeping
The Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital

PARRAMATTA RIVER

RULES FOR WOMEN

1. Visiting days and hours for patients' friends are Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2 to 4:30 p.m.; at no other time without special permission from the Matron, and NOT on SUNDAYS. Visitors must not remain in the grounds after 4:30 p.m.
2. Every patient shall on admission, unless the Doctor directs otherwise, take a hot bath.
3. Patients may not go beyond Parking Notices on the drive and at no time on to the wharf.
4. Wines or spirits are strictly forbidden, unless ordered by the Doctor
5. Patients must not pick the flowers or fruit
6. All patients are asked to help the Sister in charge by making their beds, sweeping, dusting, &c, unless she is satisfied they are unable so to do
7. No patient may go out in any boat on the river without permission from the Matron.
8. All pins must be carefully removed from any soiled linen before sending the same to the Laundry
9. Any complaints should be at once reported to the Matron, who is in her office daily from 9 to 10 a.m.

N.B. This card to be returned to the Matron before the patient leaves the Hospital

On this day . 9th April

1914 — Brothers G and J Coles opened a variety store in Collingwood, Victoria.

1891 — National Australasian Convention, Sydney ends. Delegates agree to adopt the name "Commonwealth of Australia" and to draft a Constitution. Henry Parkes makes his 'One People One Destiny' speech.

Some other April happenings . .

6th, 1895 — A.B. (Banjo) Paterson's song "Waltzing Matilda" is first performed at the North Gregory Hotel in Winton, Queensland.

8th, 1817 — The Bank of New South Wales, Australia's first trading bank is opened by Governor Macquarie in Sydney. John Thomas Campbell is the first President and, E.S. Hall is the first manager and teller.

8th, 1826 — Sydney's first street lamp, an oil lamp is lit in Macquarie Street.

8th, 1863 — Rose Isabella Barton and Andrew Bogle Paterson are married. They become the parents of Andrew Barton Paterson (Banjo) Paterson, one of Australia's great balladists.

8th, 1903 — Alice Emily Walker, aged 26, marries Andrew Barton (Banjo) Paterson, aged 29.

Seniors Week 2003

Our Society, in conjunction with the City of Canada Bay has been very active in this celebration during March. We listed three functions: an Open Day at our Museum on the 8th; an invitation to attend our regular meeting on 12th; and a Mystery Tour on the 13th.

This latter, in conjunction with the Drummoyne Community Centre, brought a small bus load of people from Drummoyne to tour the historic sites of Concord, with an afternoon tea at Yaralla.

This was voted an outstanding success by the 17 people who came along and we hope to host more of these in the future to introduce the Drummoyne residents to our past.

A special thank you to all the volunteers who assisted with these functions.

And, speaking of Seniors Week . . .

Each Council can select two individuals and one organisation to receive a Premier's Seniors Week Award in recognition of the significant contributions that older people make to families, friends and the broader community.

Congratulations

. . . to Fred Stansfield, who was recognised for his contribution to the community. A well deserved award. The other recipients were David Austin and the Concord Uniting Church Op-Shop.

Last Meeting

If you missed our March meeting, you missed out on a most unusual guest speaker. Unfortunately, our advertised speaker was out of the state and at very short notice Trish had to source a replacement.

Tom Wards, an International Clairvoyant and Business Consultant, who writes articles and appears on TV and radio 3AK, 2GB and 2UE, to mention some, just happened to be in Sydney and agreed to fill in.

Although not our regular type of speaker he was, nevertheless, most entertaining - just ask some of the people who were there.

Members should make an effort to attend our meetings - you never know what surprises are in store.

Dates for your Diary . . .

- ☛ *Wed. 26th March - Executive Meeting - 7:45 pm*
- ☛ *Trish's Book Launch - Saturday, 29th March - Yaralla Stables*
- ☛ *Yaralla Open Day - Sunday, 30th March*
- ☛ *Walker Estates Committee Meeting - Thursday, 3rd April*
- ☛ *General Meeting - Wednesday, 9th April*
- ☛ *Executive Meeting - Wednesday, 23rd April*

Yaralla

Things are starting to move - the pieces of the Four Winds Fountain have been picked up and work on the restoration has commenced. It is hoped it will be in place before our open day later this year.

A quote has been received for some work on the Squash Court and this too should be underway before the end of the year.

Yaralla Open Day

If you will be able to help, in any capacity, on this day would you please telephone Lois as soon as possible so that rosters can be organised.

Group Tours (Yaralla)

We are now receiving bookings from groups wanting to do week-day tours of the grounds, and some wanting morning or afternoon tea. We need to draw up a list of people who can spare some time to help with these - grounds tours, Devonshire teas, or just talking to the people. If you can help please telephone the secretary

Thomas Walker (Rivendell)

We have arranged for another Open Day at this complex on 24th August. There is already a waiting list of people wanting to visit, so if you know of anyone please tell them to phone the secretary as soon as possible to get their name on the list.

From the Secretary's Desk

TRISH'S BOOK LAUNCH: All members welcome at 2:00 pm on 29th March at Yaralla Stables for the launch of Trish's second book on the Walker's Royal connections.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY:

This was an outstanding success. With the help of the Westpac Volunteers, the local Scout group, our own members and volunteers who turned up on the day we were able to cover the entire inner section of the estate, removing about 40 bags of rubbish.

A big thank you to all concerned.

Next year we intend to approach Rivendell for the cleanup.

MUSEUM CLEAN UP

This too was a great success. We managed to clean out the storeroom, removing a lot of unnecessary bits and pieces stored there and changing the display a little. Thanks to all who gave time to help.

The museum is now re-opened and a new roster should be going out shortly.

There are still some things, such as paintings, etc., to be sorted but we can tackle these bit by bit at weekends.

If you are not currently on our Museum roster but would like to help - particularly on a Wednesday - we'd love to hear from you.

PROGRESSIVE DINNER

This too was an outstanding success, resulting in a profit of \$780.00 and a fantastic night out for all who came. Thanks also to our hosts - the Graces, Packetts and Wrights. The company was delightful and the food delicious. A good time was had by all.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

We are still in need of help with photocopying old newspapers - filing correspondence and newspaper clippings, etc., etc.

Just give the secretary a call when you have a free couple of hours.

HAVE YOU CALLED LOIS ON 9744-8528 ABOUT . . .

- ☛... Yaralla Open Day help - 30th March
- ☛... Yaralla Group Tours Roster list - for weekdays
- ☛... Helping with newspaper cuttings
- ☛... Helping with photocopying, filing, etc.