



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

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EDITOR

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Australia's First Post Office

The earliest mention of postal communications in the official documents of this State was in the "Sydney Gazette" on July 10, 1803. This contained directions for the carriage of letters between Sydney and Parramatta. There was then no post office in either place.

Unusual circumstances led to the establishment of the first post office in Sydney.

Ships arriving in Port Jackson brought letters and parcels from the homeland. These frequently contained valuables. The settlers were supposed to go on board ship to collect them.

Impersonation became so prevalent that the Lieutenant-Governor (Colonel Paterson) in 1809 appointed Mr. Isaac Nichols as the first

postmaster in Sydney. His duties were light. They consisted of collecting letters and parcels from ships and conveying them to his own office, where the addressees had to collect them and pay a fee of 1/- (10 cents) for each letter, 2/6 (25c) for each parcel up to 20 lb. and 5/- (50c) if it exceeded that weight.

Governor Macquarie, the following year (1810) confirmed this arrangement and issued a proclamation sanctioning the establishment of the first post office in Sydney, which was on a site near the fire station on Circular Quay.

(New South Wales was the first place in any country to adopt adhesive stamps for the pre-payment of postage.)



This was how George Street North looked in the early 1800s. The building on the left with the name over the door (Kemp and Dobson) is next to one that was the first post office. Mary Reiby's house is next, but was later replaced by the Fire Brigade Station.

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SECRETARY

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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

Reminder

Our financial year is coming to an end and enclosed with this issue of Nurungi is a dues notice. Please help by paying promptly.

If there is no notice enclosed then you have paid in advance and we thank you for the support.

Also, at our AGM in August, all positions on the executive will be declared vacant and nominations called to fill them. *Why not consider putting your name forward?*



Bulletin Board

May 14 - Our own member, Fred Stansfield will talk on "Shearing in the '60s"

June 11 - Noel Cruz, "Titanic"

July 13 - Lynette Ramsay-Silver (to be confirmed)

August 13 - Annual General Meeting

The Glass Bottomed Tankard

The huge wooden battle ships of the Royal Navy from the mid 1700's, and for almost 100 years, required a very large number of skilled and experienced seamen. By 1813 there were almost 150,000 men aboard British men-o-war fighting the French.

The harsh conditions aboard these vessels was not conducive to enlistment. The crew were crammed into any space between the guns, food was poor and many lost not only limbs but often their lives, even when not in combat, from falling onto the deck or into the sea from the rigging. Once incapacitated, they would be put ashore at the first British port and left to their own devices.

Press gangs, members of the crew of a battle ship, would scour the seaside pubs for likely recruits. Any seaman was fair game as long as he was drunk enough to be persuaded to accept the one shilling and a verbal commitment. Once on board it was too late.

The drinking vessels of those times were made of wood, animal horn or pewter, an alloy of tin and lead. Pure pewter would not be tolerated these days due to the very high lead content but the danger was unknown during that period.

A trick of the press gangs would be to buy a pint of ale for the unsuspecting recruit and slip a shilling into the tankard. English beer in those days was very dark and the coin would not be noticed until the vessel was drained. The recipient would then be dragged down to the dock for service in His Majesty's navy.

Tankards were made with a small circle of glass in the bottom so that the drinker could check if a coin had been slipped into his drink before he drank it and these tankards remain popular even today but are safe as the pewter alloy is now made without lead.

(Bill Barlow)



Guest Speakers

We have some interesting speakers in the next few months so make a note of the dates in your diary **NOW!**

May: Fred and Frank Stansfield have lived, worked and travelled all over NSW and have lots of interesting things to tell, so come and support them.

June: Those who heard Noel Cruz talk to us about his involvement with the movie industry will be looking forward to his talk on the Titanic.

July: This is our winter daytime meeting and we hope to have Lynette Ramsay Silver on this occasion. She needs no introduction and you can be sure of a very interesting afternoon.

Message to members:

Do you know of any speakers who would be of interest to our members?

Is there some subject you'd like to know more about?

Do you have a pet subject you'd like to speak about?

Give Trish a call on 0414-434-172 - she'd appreciate your help.

She's doing a wonderful job but it's not always easy to find suitable speakers nine times every year.

Shearing at Castlereagh

*The bell is set aringing, and the engine gives a toot,
There's five and thirty shearers here all shearing for the loot,
So stir yourselves, you penners-up and shove the sheep along,
The musterers are fetching them a hundred thousand strong,
And make your collie dogs speak up - what would the buyers say
In London if the wool was late this year from Castlereagh.*

*The man that "rung" the Tubbo shed is not the ringer here,
That stripling from the Cooma side can teach him how to shear,
They trim away the ragged locks, and rip the cutter goes,
And leaves a track of snowy fleece from brisket to the nose;
It's lovely how they peel it off with never stop nor stay,
They're racing for the ringer's place this year at Castlereagh.*

*The man that keeps the cutters sharp is growling in his cage,
He's always in a hurry and he's always in a rage -
"You clumsy-fisted muttonheads, you'd turn a fellow sick,
You pass yourselves as shearers? You were born to swing a pick!
Another broken cutter here, that's two you've broke today,
It's awful how such crawlers come to shear at Castlereagh."*

*The youngsters picking up the fleece enjoy the merry din,
They throw the classer up the fleece, he throws it to the bin;
The pressers standing by the rack are waiting for the wool,
There's room for just a couple more, the press is nearly full;
Now jump upon the lever, lads, and heave and heave away,
Another bale of golden fleece is branded "Castlereagh".*

Banjo Patterson (*The Bulletin*, 1894)

Sheep Shearing

Shearing has a strong identity in Australian history. Shearers have played an integral role in the nation-building industry that engendered the Australian colloquialism, "riding on the sheep's back".

Shearing might be coloured with the romance often nostalgically spashed all over supposedly idyllic rural lifestyles, but the truth is that shearing is still one of the toughest jobs around.

Shearing a sheep is an arduous task. A single sheep weighs up to 200 lbs and, although they don't kick much, they can be uncooperative. A shearer needs a lot of strength to rotate the animal with one arm while clipping the fleece off with the other.

The fleece needs to be removed from the sheep in one piece, otherwise it degrades the quality of the product.

During the shearing season a sheep station would have some 15,000 animals ready for shearing. The shearers work in teams, often competing with each other on a sheep-per-hour basis. Teams can shear up to 500 animals in a day. The work is hot, backbreaking and very uncomfortable in temperatures up to 40°C.

Because of a shortage of shearers and the increasing demand for wool the Australian Wool Corporation have sponsored a broad based research programme into the application of robotics in the wool industry. Current research is working on two robots. The first, called ARAMP, holds the sheep still - its head and legs are clamped; the second, ORACLE, shears the sheep. The robots incorporate a lot of safety features such as a system of light beams to stop the machines if anyone gets too close.

Open Day at Rivendell

24th August, 2003

We have received permission to hold another open day at Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital (Rivendell) on the 24th August. As it is some time since our last one we need to start organising now.

We will need volunteers for tour guides and for Devonshire teas. We will also need helpers to be stationed outside various sections of the complex.

If you can help please come along to our next Walker Estates Committee meeting on Thursday, 1st May at 8:00 pm at Concord Bowling Club.

If you know anyone who would like to visit on the day, please let the secretary know as soon as possible. We already have quite a long waiting list and we will be sending out notification letters mid-June.

We can't take as many visitors as we do at Yaralla so it will be "*first in, best dressed*".

Friends of Rookwood

The Friends of Rookwood will be holding their bi-annual Open Day on Sunday, 19th October, 2003 between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm. with the theme "*More than 135 years of History at Rookwood*".

We will be having our own stall on the Anglican Village Green, where there will be other stalls, tours, food and refreshments and lots of entertainment for their expected 3000 visitors.

There will be a barbecue and Devonshire Teas served all day

They have asked if any of our members would be available to help them on the day serving food, selling raffle tickets, etc. (No tour guides needed.)

We were very thankful for their help on our 2002 open day at Yaralla and it is now our time to return the favour.

There are lots of interesting activities all through the day when you need to take a break from helping out.

If you are able to help please contact the secretary as soon as possible.

If you can't help out, then come along and enjoy the day.

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

Blue Mountains Historical Society will be visiting on Monday, 12th May, arriving at 10:30 am. We have one volunteer guide but may need another (depending on the number coming, 25-40 people). They will be there for morning tea and lunch, but will be bringing their own supplies - however, they would like us to supply boiling water. We will need to set up the tables and chairs and have someone in the display section. If you can help call the secretary now.

Bondi Junction Probus - will be coming on Monday, 30th June from 2:30 pm - bus load of 45 - so we will need two tour guides and some helpers at the display.

Prime Timers will be visiting on Tuesday, 19th August from 12 noon. They will be bringing their own lunch. Only 15 so we'll need one tour guide and people to set up tables and chairs, as well as in the display area.

Rosters: If you can help on weekdays or weekends, let the secretary know so your name can be put down on a roster to contact when needed.

From an American web site:

Kansas City Zoo's New Australian Exhibit.

Prior to touring the outback, a 5-minute movie introduces visitors to Australia.

Within the exhibit, which is designed as a suspended-disbelief environment, can be found not only free-roaming kangaroos, emus and sheep but also two bird aviaries as well as fenced dingoes and camels.

One portion of this exhibit has been designed as a sheep-shearing station, which includes replicas of a small, outback home and the station office. You will also find a special outback gift shop.

*Life must be lived forward but
it can only be understood
backwards*

Invitation

Parramatta and District Historical Society and holding their 16th Annual James Jervis Memorial Lecture on Saturday, 17th May at 2:00 p.m.

Venue: Centenary Uniting Church Hall, Cnr. Sorrell & Fennell Streets, Parramatta.

The lecture is free and will be followed by afternoon tea.

Speaker will be Lynette Ramsay Silver speaking on "Very Dangerous Members of Society" (The Battle of Vinegar Hill, Australia's Irish Rebellion.)

On the night of 4th March, 1804, Irish patriots transported to Australia rose in rebellion with the cry "Death or Liberty". Poorly armed, they failed miserably in their bid for freedom, put down ruthlessly by a far superior force.

Their ill fated battle, which will celebrate its bi-centenary in 2004, has largely been forgotten.

This colourful story will be brought vividly to life by Lynette, well known author and speaker, who was made a Fellow of the Australian Institute of History and the Arts as a result of her historical publications and research.

Bookings are essential for catering purposes. Phone 9635-6924.

Hawkesbury Pioneer Families Reunion

29/30th November, 2003

Did your ancestors originally come from the Hawkesbury districts - Windsor, Richmond, Wilberforce, Pitt Town, Wiseman's Ferry, Laughtondale, Macdonald Valley, St Albans, Ebenezer, Sackville, Mangrove Creek and Webbs Creek?

If so, you might like to attend the 2nd Reunion.

There will be a small entrance fee, all profits will go towards one of the Hawkesbury District organisations.

For details you can contact Lesley Uebel, ckennedy@bigpond.net.au.

(If you're not on the net I'll get her phone number for you.)

Dry Humour

The appalling drought hasn't stopped Aussies coming up with an amazing array of "so - dry" jokes. Here's a selection . . .

It's sooo dry the kangaroos have applied for a government subsidy to get across the country

It's sooo dry we have to drink our whisky straight.

It's sooo dry ducks are carrying waterbags and packed lunches

It's sooo dry that cows are giving powdered milk.

It's sooo dry we have to stick our stamps on with a pin.

It's sooo dry the trees are following the dogs around.

It's sooo dry we've had to put our pot plants on agistment.

It's sooo dry we have to put rocks on the corners of our property to stop it from rolling up.

It's sooo dry the bartender's putting real rocks in our scotch.

Jokes aside, good rain is wished for all those country areas in need.

Did you know . . .

GETTING DOWN TO BRASS

TACKS: Choosing the right fabric was a lengthy business of looking at many rolls of cloth in the old-fashioned draper's shop.

When customers had finally decided which one they wanted, it was time to get down to brass tacks.

The brass tacks or nails were hammered at one yard (or 0.9 metre) intervals along the counter and the shopkeeper measured out how many yards of material you wanted.

The nails were later replaced by measuring rules. But getting down to brass tacks still means being practical or getting back to basics.

PIN MONEY: A woman who wants to save or earn a little money for incidental expenses will call it her pin money.

The saying dates back to the 16th century when husbands had absolute

control of the household purse strings.

Wives started asking for a small sum to buy the handy new invention of pins so they could secure their hair, hat or shawl.

But from buying a few pins, women soon stretched their "pin" money into a dress allowance or for buying other incidentals.

Calling Volunteers

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

And with the Open Day at Rivendell and another one to Yaralla in October there will be lots of odd jobs to be done.

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

Dates for your Diary . . .

☛ **Thurs. 1st May** - Walker Estates Meeting - 8:00 pm at Concord Bowling Club. All members who will be helping with Thomas Walker Open Day are asked to attend. Any interested members welcome.

☛ **Mon. 12th May** - Blue Mountains Club visiting Yaralla

☛ **Wed. 14th May** - General Meeting - Fred Stansfield, "Shearing in the '60s"

☛ **Wed. 28th May** - Executive Meeting. If you can't attend please phone in your apology.

☛ **Thurs. 5th June** - Walker Estates Meeting (usual arrangements)

☛ **Wed. 11th June** - General Meeting - Noel Cruz, "Titanic"

☛ **Wed. 25th June** - Executive Meeting

☛ **Mon. 30th June** - Bondi Junction Probus visiting Yaralla

Please mark these dates on your calendar now so you won't forget.

William Cooper & Nephews

Concord has its own connection with sheep and shearing.

To understand the origins of the company you have to go back to England in 1843 when William Cooper started to produce his first sheep dip, this was the start of the company called Wm Cooper & Nephews.

William Cooper was born in 1813 and in 1833 he became a farrier like his father and grandfather, who were also named William.

A farrier did not mean a shoemaker, but one who practised as a horse doctor, a castrator and general practitioner in animal ailments. He was, in fact, the forerunner of the veterinary surgeon of today.

William started production of his sheep dip in 1843 following successful trials in 1841 and 1842.

The first nephew, William Farmer Cooper, was born in 1845, his father was Henry Cooper, William Cooper's younger brother. The other nephews were Richard Powell (born in 1848) and Herbert Henry (1850).

In the early 1880's the company started establishing an overseas network of dealers, starting with a factory in Chicago, USA.

In 1892 the Australian branch of Wm Cooper & Nephews was set up in Sydney

In 1895 they became the American agents for Wolseley shearing machinery and the first demonstrations and sales of this equipment were made in that year.

During 1919 /1920 Wm Cooper & Nephews built their Sydney factory and laboratories at Cabarita on the Parramatta River, and started local production of sheep dip.

In 1920 they purchased a tin mine at Ottery (near Tenterfield NSW) which produced arsenic used in the preparation of their sheep dip, but this was sold in 1934.

The Mortlake factory was in operation until the '60s or '70s.

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in a business, and is the counter-sign of friends. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen, for it is something that is of no earthly good to anybody till it is given away.