



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

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www.concordheritage.asn.au

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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

From the Archives



Recollections of Frances Jarvis (nee Ashton)

I was born in Sydney on 10 April, 1885. I don't remember ever learning to swim, but I know it was at a very early age. My father, Samuel Ashton, owned the Public Baths at Mortlake. As a matter of fact, he built the baths himself, all cut out from solid rock. They were 33 yards long and built on the Parramatta River at Majors Bay.

The baths opened in 1886, and were of the basin type, and my father devised a method of emptying and filling the baths with the assistance of the tides. I remember that every fortnight the baths were completely drained, and the bottom and sides all scrubbed down and whitewashed.

Admissions which included use of a towel and vees was threepence (2.5 cents). These baths were the first of their kind in the metropolitan area. I swam in races before I was in my teens. We had a swimming carnival every month and I competed in the racing events.

Our costumes were neck to knees with a collar band, short sleeves, and an all-over shirt. We had long capes that were worn until the race was being started, and we threw them off at the last moment. Very few girls went swimming in those days.

At the age of 16 years, I was teaching swimming. Then, one day, Major Reddish of the Boy Scouts, suggested I go to the Public Schools and see if some arrangement could be made about the pupils coming to Ashton's Mortlake Baths to learn to swim.

I went to the schools, and it was arranged that the teachers would bring the girls, providing I would be responsible for them. I always went in with them and gave them lessons. I showed the girls the way to use their arms and legs in the breaststroke method.

I had each pupil wear a specially designed canvas belt, buckled at the back, with a rope attached to the front, the girl would then swim toward me as I took up the slack in the rope. This proved a very successful method of teaching them to swim because the firmness of the belt, and the sight of the rope in the hands of the teacher produced in the pupil's mind a feeling of security and safety from drowning. The girls from the schools came to the baths for many years, and there were never any accidents during that time.

Ladies were admitted during the classes of the schoolgirls, but at no other time. That was until "Continental" bathing was introduced at my father's Mortlake Baths. This type of bathing meant that a man was not admitted unless accompanied by a woman. This bathing was only allowed at night.

I was trained for my life-saving certificate by the Sylvester method and was examined at the Domain Baths, receiving my certificate in March 1904 (see Sydney Morning Herald, 4th March 1904). As a matter of interest, I was the first single girl in New South Wales (and, I believe, the first in Australia) to receive a life saving certificate.

The Drummoyne Baths were built along the same lines as my father's Mortlake Bath, a Drummoyne Council alderman had asked his permission to copy them.

I applied for the position of manageress of the Lavender Bay Floating Baths at the age of 20 years. I had many references as well as my life saving certificates which were submitted to North Sydney Council, and I had little trouble in obtaining this position.

The Council had built a pile bath, and the old floating baths were passed on for the ladies. I remember that the swimming costumes available there were made of



Bulletin Board

**July 13 - John Clegg, co-author of
"Rock Art of Sydney" (see later
article).**

**August 13 - Annual General Meeting
& Election of Office Bearers**

unbleached calicos and were hired out for one penny. As far as I can recall, admission for adults was three-pence, schoolchildren twopence.

My salary was thirty shillings (\$3.00) a week for the summer months, the baths being closed during the winter. They opened from 6 am to 6 pm. I gave private swimming lessons there. The Sydney Ladies Swimming Club came each Saturday and held races.

In 1933, when the first Olympic Pool in New South Wales was to be opened at Bankstown I was appointed as manageress.

(Signed) F. Jarvis
per J. Jenkinson.

(An article held in our archives)

1901 Scandal:

"Now I Confess", says Frances, 90.

It took a tomboy to talk the young ladies of Enfield, Mortlake and Concord into taking swimming lessons back in 1901.

The schoolmarms of the day were scandalised when young Frances Ashton, then 16, walked in bold as brass and offered to teach their pupils how to swim. Some of the more progressive, however, decided to give it a try and the pupils came down to her father's public swimming baths once a week for lessons . . .

. . . "I swam in races before I was in my teens", recalls Mrs Frances Coskerie (the former Frances Ashton)

Mrs. Coskerie, now a patient at Concord Nursing Home, will be 90 years old tomorrow.

Ashton's public baths were filled in long ago and a paint-works was built on the site, but Mrs Coskerie remembers the swimming carnivals held there every month. "I wore a neck-to-knee costume with collar band, short sleeves and an all-over skirt", she said. "Over it I wore a long cape which I flung off right at the last minute as the race started.

"No I haven't a photograph of the outfit. It was improper enough to be seen in it. It would have been outrageous to be photographed. Very few girls went swimming in those days.

"When I was 16 Major Reddish, who was a Scout leader, suggested I approach the public schools and offer to teach swimming to the girls. . . .

Samuel Ashton allocated special times for women to use the baths until the new fangled "continental bathing" (mixed bathing) was introduced.

First Lifesaver

In 1904, when she was 19, Frances Ashton became the first single woman in NSW to win a life saving certificate. She trained at the Domain baths, using the Sylvester method. A year later she applied for the position of manageress of the floating baths at Laverder Bay, which had been handed over to women when the council built new pile baths for men.

She got the job after a swimming test in which she had to dive in, fully clothed, to rescue a man. Rescuing bathers in distress was an everyday part of her job, and no wonder. Girls could hire, for one penny, a voluminous bathing suit made of unbleached calico heavy enough to drag anyone to the bottom.

When the first Olympic pool was opened at Bankstown in 1933 Frances Ashton, then 43, was appointed its first manager. She was still swimming strongly well into her 80s, but had to give up when she became ill last year.

(Excerpts from an article by Margaret Davis, published in the *Aeroplane Press*, 9/4/1975)

(The above article brought a response from one of her children, printed as a Letter to the Editor in the *Aeroplane Press* of 30/4/75.)

Your very interesting article on Mrs. Frances Coskerie (nee Ashton) in the April 9 issue does not mention that she has spent most of her life as Mrs. William Charles Jarvis, and it was only many years after my father's death and much later in life that she became Mrs Coskerie.

Your readers who remember her would know her as Mrs Jarvis, and it was under this name that she managed the Bankstown Baths.

All her children were of this marriage and lived at Mortlake.

WANTED! An Archives Committee Chairman

The above articles, plus many, many more are held in our archives. They are in desperate need of sorting, cataloguing and filing so they can be made available to members and the public for research.

Won't you offer your services for this position at our coming Annual General Meeting. You'll find it to be a very interesting and rewarding position.



Interesting Workshops

Saturday, 19th July - LPI Workshop: Back to Basics: Primary Applications, Torrens Title & More.

Are you researching the history of your house or your locality? Do you know what kind of information is held at the Land and Property Information offices (better known to many as the LTO)? Do you want to learn how to research at the LPI? This workshop is for you. Historical Officer Peter Chadwick will also talk about the importance of Primary Applications for family researchers and different issues relating to Torrens Title.

Time: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Venue: History House Auditorium. Lunch \$5.50 per person. Cost \$16.50 for members, \$33.00 for 3 members of an affiliated society, \$22 for non-members

Friday, 1st August - Behind the Scenes at State Records, Kingswood.

A tour led by John Burke, Associate Director, Western Sydney. The Government Records Repository (GRR) is located in the Western Sydney Records Centre (WSRC) of State Records at Kingswood, adjoining the University of Western Sydney. It meets the records storage needs of public sector bodies in New South Wales, including Government agencies, local councils, universities and public hospitals.

The purpose-built records centre covers nearly 36,000 square metres and holds 250 linear kilometres of shelving and meets recognised international best-practice standards.

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm. Venue: meet at Reception at the WSRC, 143 O'Connell Street, Kingswood. Ample parking. Cost: \$6.60 members, \$9.90 non-members. (Tour numbers are limited so book early)

Both these workshops are organised by the Royal Australian Historical Society. Bookings are essential on (02) 9247-8001 or history@rahs.org.au.

Walker Estates Committee

This Committee next meets on Thursday, 7th August at 8:00 pm at Concord Bowling Club.

We would like all Tour Guides for Rivendell to be present to make final arrangements.

All visitors and interested people also welcome.

Guest Speaker - July

On 13th July John Clegg will speak about Archaeology in the Sydney region and history of Aboriginal Rock Art.

However, he awaits word about a trip overseas which might prevent his attendance.

If he is unavailable, Jan Bell of the Nurses' Museum at Concord Hospital will display early photographs of hospital construction, and tell fascinating stories of nursing life during WWII.

Don't forget, this is our daytime meeting, commencing at 2:00 p.m. and will be followed by light refreshments.

(John Clegg will have a short segment for Archaeology Week on Totally Wild, Channel 10 at 4:00 pm on Tuesday 15th July if you want to check it out.)

Social Gatherings of Old and other Things

Ploughing Matches

Can you imagine a ploughing match causing excitement among young and old, and being regarded as a social event in the same way as the Bong Bong or the Tirranna picnic races. According to the "Herald" of March 1, 1850, Kiama made a great social event of it.

Under the auspices of the Kiama Agricultural Society, a ploughing match was held at Jamberoo. The cheering spectacle was presented of 13 ploughs starting to test their respective merits, and truly the judges had difficulty at the close of the contest to decide whom should be awarded the palm of superiority.

Kiama boats of its Agricultural Society, but what gave the gathering such éclat and what formed not the least attraction, was the presence of so large and so beautiful an assemblage of what the poet calls "the sex whose presence civilises ours". Advance Kiama! And may thy lovely daughters never be the least attractive of the features.

In the same issue Mr. W.G. Moore of Pitt Street, offers for sale 43-1/4 acres, 10 miles from Sydney, on the right of the Liverpool Road, all fenced in, 10 acres cleared, on which is built a four-room cottage, verandah all round, with detached kitchen, stables, coachhouse, barn and orchard, with 300 fruit trees in bearing, free of all encumbrances. Price £250. Mr. Lyons is reported as having sold by public auction, a two-storied stone and brick dwelling-house in Clarence Street, with a frontage of 25 ft and a depth of 100 ft, to Mr. William Speer for £366.

Visit to Camden area and the Camden Museum

We have tentatively set a date for Saturday, 15th November, 2003 to visit this very modern and attractive museum and the historic Camden area. We will leave Concord at approximately 9:00 am and return around 5:00 pm

If you would be interested in this visit will you please make a note in your diary now and then contact the Secretary as soon as possible to register your interest.



Depending on cost and the number attending we will look into hiring a bus or, alternatively, drive our own cars down taking passengers with us.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you think you will be joining us.

Rivendell Open Day

The time is getting closer - Sunday, 24th August - and we need to know who will be available to help us on the day. If you are coming, but have not yet been in touch, please do so as soon as possible so we can allocate the various jobs.

The day is already completely booked out (over 250 people) with at least as many still on our waiting list for next time.

A reminder to those who will be acting as tour guides, please come along to the next Walker Estates meeting on Thursday, 7th August if possible.

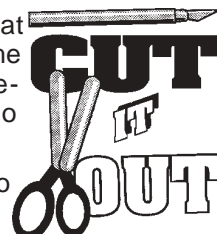
Newspaper Cuttings

We still have a large pile of old newspapers to go through. This is easy work, just read through the papers and cut out any references to the old Concord Council area.

These cuttings are important items to add to our archives for future reference and the old papers are deteriorating rapidly.

You can do this at your home or come down the secretary's home and do it there.

But, please, we do need your help



There are Statistics, and there are statistics!

In the census returns of 1881 it was shown that a certain district in Ireland contained an unprecedented large number of deaf and dumb. Not only was the record of the proportion to the hearing and speaking broken, but the relative increase in the afflicted was so alarming that special inquiry was made into the matter, with a view to ascertaining, if possible, what were the local conditions which had brought so many afflicted mortals into existence.

The explanation was at once simple and reassuring. The enumerator, with a genius for actualities thoroughly Irish, had included under the heading Deaf and Dumb all babes who had neither learned to speak or to understand what was said to them.

(Taken from an article entitled "How the deaf and dumb are educated" by Edward Salmon in The Strand Magazine, volume II, 1891.)

(Reprinted from April issue of The 1788-1820 Pioneer Gazette)

Want to start tracing your Family Tree?

There is a New Starters Kit CD by Carolyn Harris now available.

It has been put together to help the beginner in Genealogy. It contains many forms to print out to help when going into places that hold records.

It can be ordered from Carolyn Harris, PO Box 4157, Myaree Business Centre, WA, 6960 at a cost of \$10 (inc. GST) posted in Australia

Fellowship of First Fleeters

In January 2004 this association have planned an event to which descendants of First Fleeters and other interested people are invited to take part.

Plans are in place to hold a one-day conference with keynote speakers and a workshop for young people on Saturday, 24th January. In the evening an Australia Day Celebration Dinner will take place.

On Sunday, 25th January First Fleet Family Reunions are planned so that different families can gather to have a picnic and share fellowship with one another.

Venue: Panthers at Penrith.

Further information can be obtained from the association on 9360-3788.

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 13th August, 2003

Please give some thought to nominating yourself (or ask someone to nominate you) to serve on our Executive Committee.

We have several positions that weren't filled last time. These are very important offices which need to operate to keep our Society functioning.

It only involves you in a short meeting once a month - but we do need fresh blood with fresh ideas to keep us from falling into a rut.

You can do it! Give it a try!

Help Wanted!

Although I've been promised an assistant secretary for 2004-2005, I still need someone for the coming year to try and learn the ropes so that if anything happens to incapacitate me the work will carry on.

Also, there's always plenty of filing (newspaper cuttings) and other odd jobs that need doing, as well as various odd jobs from time to time, such as handling bookings for our open days, sending out tickets, etc.



Can you spare some time on a fairly regular basis?

I'd love to hear from you.

Dust to Dust

*Trust if you must, but wouldn't it be better
To paint a picture, or write a letter,
Bake a cake, or plant a seed.*

Ponder the difference between want and need.

*Dust if you must, but there is not much time,
With rivers to swim and mountains to climb!
Music to hear, and books to be read,
Friends to cherish and life to lead.*

*Dust if you must, but the world's out there
With the sun in your eyes, the wind in your hair,
A flutter of snow, a shower of rain,
This day will not come round again.*

*Dust if you must, but bear in mind,
Old age will come and it's not kind,
And when you go, and go you must,
You, yourself, will make more dust.*

Author unknown

(Reprinted from April issue of The 1788-1820 Pioneer Gazette)

Old "Pinchgut"

An historic landmark

How many of those who pass Fort Denison on their daily ferry trip to the city know the history of "Pinchgut Island" on which it stands?

The old fort is one of the landmarks of Sydney, and a feature of the harbour; but the rock on which it is built has a story all its own. Its history goes back to the days of Governor Phillip, who named it Rock Island. It was thickly wooded, but had the advantage of perfect isolation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Governor should have deemed it a fit sanctuary for the more refractory of his prisoners. Within two weeks of the arrival of the first fleet several convicts were sent there for punishment, some of them being sentenced to bread and water.

Indeed, this tiny domain became so associated with the unsatisfied appetites of its temporary inhabitants that they dubbed it "Pinchgut" - a name which has stuck to it ever since.

About 1841 the idea of fortifying the island gained ground, and the preliminary step of cutting down the rock to an appropriate level was taken shortly afterwards. It was not until the Russian War scare in the 1850s, however, that the present fort was built and named after the then Governor, Sir William Denison.

The battery, tower and barracks cost £16,550, and the barracks accommodated 50 men. At first garrisoned by detachments of Royal Artillery, it was in later years manned by volunteers.

The popular belief that the structure as it now exists was used as a prison has no foundation in fact.

(SMH special 50th anniversary issue, April 1931)

From the Secretary's Desk

Rookwood Open Day

If you haven't put your name down to help Rookwood with their big event on Sunday, 19th Oct. please contact me as soon as possible.

Help Wanted

We still need volunteers to go through newspapers collecting clippings on Concord, photocopying and then filing them for future reference. It's easy, why not give it a try?

Annual Subscriptions

These are now due - have you paid yours? If you haven't, there'll be a reminder in this newsletter. Please ensure you are financial prior to the AGM in August.

Election of Executive

Have you given any thought to nominating to serve on this committee? We meet once a month on the 4th Wednesday and can always use new blood and new ideas.

Yaralla Open Day

Don't forget, we're having another Open Day at Yaralla on Sunday, 12th October, so to our helpers, please make a note of the date in your diary now and be ready to let us know later if you will be free to help.

While speaking of our Executive Committee . . .

We the willing few, led by the unsure, are doing the impossible for the ungrateful. We have done so much, for so long, with so little - that we are now qualified to do anything with nothing, for anybody against all opposition.

(Of course, this isn't our committee.)

Dates for your Diary . . .

- ☛ **Sun. 13th July** - Daytime General Meeting - John Clegg and Jan Bell
- ☛ **Wed. 23rd July** - Executive Meeting
- ☛ **Thurs. 7th August** - Walker Estates Meeting
- ☛ **Wed. 13th August** - Annual General Meeting & Election of Officers
- ☛ **Tues. 19th August** - Prime Timers tour of Yaralla
- ☛ **Sun. 24th August** - Open Day at Rivendell
- ☛ **Wed. 27th August** - Executive Meeting