



Nurungi

Remembered

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

Walker Estates Committee

1st Thursday each month
(please contact to confirm)
Concord Bowling Club
Clermont Ave, North Strathfield
Graham Packett, 9743-3007

Other Committees

As arranged
Watch the newsletter

Museum

Fred Stansfield, 9743-1866

Archives/Local History

Kate Skillman, 9706-7479

Heritage

Bill Barlow, 9743-3662

Oral/Family History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

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**CONCORD
HERITAGE MUSEUM**
5 Wellbank Street

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

No. 94

January 2004

NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The beginning of the new year is celebrated in many ways - we celebrate with fireworks at Sydney Harbour, the English gather in Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus and wait for the chimes of Big Ben, but the Americans gather in Times Square for the lowering of the New Year's Eve Ball.

The Times Square New Year's Eve Ball

This ball was designed by Waterford Crystal.

It is a geodesic sphere, 1.8 metres in diameter, and weighs approximately 485.5 kilos. It is covered with a total of 504 Waterford crystal triangles that vary in size, and range in length from 12mm to 14.5mm per side.

For the 2004 Times Square celebration 72 of the crystal triangles will feature the new *Hope for Unity* design which consists of three flowing cut motifs converging to form one singular pattern from which scores of brilliant individual cuts radiate outward. The remaining 432 triangles feature Waterford designs from previous years (i.e. *72 Hope for Courage*, *72 Hope for Healing*, *72 Hope for Abundance*, and 216 *Star of Hope* triangles).

The 504 Waterford crystal triangles are bolted to 168 translucent triangular lexan panels which are attached to the aluminium frame of the Ball.

The exterior of the Ball is illuminated by 168 Brilliant Crystal light bulbs, exclusively engineered for the New Year's Eve Ball to enhance the Waterford crystal.

The interior of the Ball is illuminated by 432 Light Bulbs (208 clear, 56 red, 56 blue, 56 green, and 56 yellow), and 96 high-intensity strobe lights, which together create bright bubbling bursts of colour.

The exterior of the Ball features 90 rotating pyramid mirrors that reflect light back into the audience at Times Square.

The 696 lights and 90 rotating pyramid mirrors are computer controlled, enabling the Ball to produce a state-of-the-art light show of eye-dazzling colourful patterns and a spectacular kaleidoscope effect atop One Times Square.

The New Year's Eve Ball is the property of the building owners of One Times Square.

History of Times Square New Year's Eve Celebrations

The first rooftop celebration atop One Times Square, complete with a fireworks display, took place in 1904. *The New York Times* produced this event to inaugurate its new headquarters in Times Square and celebrate the renaming of Longacre Square to Times Square.

The first Ball Lowering celebration atop One Times Square was held on December 31, 1907 and is now a worldwide symbol of the turn of the New Year, seen via satellite by more than one billion people each year.

In 1942 and 1943 the Ball Lowering was suspended due to the wartime dimout. The crowds who still gathered in Times Square celebrated with a minute of silence followed by chimes ringing out from an amplifier truck parked at One Times Square.

The original New Year's Eve Ball weighed 317K and was 1.5m in diameter. It was made of iron and wood and was decorated with 100 25-watt light bulbs.



Bulletin Board

No General Meeting in January

21st Jan - Executive Meeting

5th Feb - Walker Estates Committee

11th Feb - General Meeting

New Year Celebrations

New Year festivals mark the pivotal point where time is deemed to begin anew and is observed on varying dates in different lands. New Year's Day is the first day of the calendar year and is celebrated in almost every country today.

However, few Westerners realize that their New Year horns and fireworks were once used as tools intended to banish evil spirits.

New Year's Day became a Holy Day in the Christian Church in 487 A.D., when it was declared the Feast of the Circumcision. Originally, parties were not allowed on this day because the pagans had followed that custom. However, in time, attitudes changed and it was deemed that celebrations could again be held. January 1st became generally recognized as New Year's Day in the 1500s, when the Gregorian Calendar was introduced. By this time, the Julian Calendar, once more out of calibration, placed the first day of the year 13 days later on January 14th.

Many ancient Roman traditions continue to survive, overlaid with new superstitions. In many areas, the first person to enter a house on New Year's Day is thought to determine the luck for the coming year. Bad luck is believed to accompany a woman...particularly one with fair or red hair. Tall, dark-haired men are highly favoured as "first-footers," supposedly bringing the assurance of a happy year to come.

Janus, Roman God of Beginnings

The first of January was dedicated by the Romans to their God of Gates and Doors, Janus. A very old Italian God, Janus has a distinctive artistic appearance in that he is commonly depicted with two faces - one regarding what is behind and the other looking toward what lies ahead. Thus, Janus is representative of contemplation on the happenings of an old year while looking forward to the new. Some sources claim that Janus was characterized in such a peculiar fashion due to the notion that doors and gates look in two directions. Therefore, the God could look both backward and forward at the same time. Originally, Janus was portrayed with one bearded face and the other clean-shaven, which may have symbol-

ized the moon and the sun, or age and youth. Later, he is most often shown with beards on both faces and frequently holds a key in his right hand. Very early statues of Janus (around the Second Century B.C.) depict him with four faces.

In his role as the Guardian of Exits and Entrances, Janus was also believed to represent beginnings. The explanation for this belief being that one must emerge through a door or gate in order to enter into a new place. Therefore, the Romans also considered Janus as the God of Beginnings and his name was an obvious choice for the first month of their year.

Janus was well-respected and highly-regarded as a God by the ancient Romans and his dual-faced image could be found on most city gates and many Roman coins. Given his role as Guardian of Gates, his position as the God of Beginnings and the esteem of having the first month of the year named in his honour, it is apparent that Janus played a significant role in Roman myth and religion. He was invoked at the start of each new day and often referred to as the Porter of Heaven. He particularly presided over all that is double-edged in life and represented the transition between the primitive and civilization.

Janus has no counterpart in the mythology of the Greeks.

Auld Lang Syne

The generally accepted practice throughout the English-speaking world on New Year's Eve is to gather at midnight (usually in such locations as Times Square in New York, Trafalgar Square in London and Sydney Harbour in Australia), drink a toast to the coming year and sing a rousing chorus of a song which has become indivisible with the celebration of modern New Year's festivities. That song is "Auld Lang Syne," with words in the Scottish dialect, transcribed by Robert Burns and written around 1788. The title means "old long since" or "long ago" and the melody is based on an old Scottish folk tune. The lyrics and music were first published together in Volume V of the "Scots Musical Museum" in 1796, approximately six months after the death of Scotland's Bard.

Not only sung at New Year, but also sung on Burns' Night, this song of friendship and salutation was by no means the first of its kind. In a note written to one George Thomson in 1793, Burns describes the song as "the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing." A similar "Auld Lang Syne" tune, however, was actually printed in approxi-

mately 1700 and is therefore much older. The Burns' version was adapted by Thomson (most likely with Burns' acquiescence), but Johnson (the publisher) had already reprinted Allan Ramsay's "Auld Lang Syne" (a different tune set to a love song rather than to a song of parting) in Volume I of the "Scots Musical Museum" in 1787. There also appear to be many even more ancient and/or intermediary variants of this New Year song. Nevertheless, the timeless Burns' version remains the one that is most treasured and, in Scotland, "Auld Lang Syne" gradually displaced the century-old "Good-night and joy be wi' you a'."

Despite the popularity of "Auld Lang Syne," it has aptly been described as "the song that nobody knows." Even in Scotland, hardly a single gathering sings it correctly, or without some members of the party introducing the bogus line: "We'll meet again some ither nicht" for: "And we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet," the words which Robert Burns actually rendered - and that is to say nothing of adding "the days of" to the original chorus.

Burns' Original Version

Chorus

*For auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

Verses

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!*

*And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

*We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fitt,
Sin auld lang syne.*

*We twa hae paid't i' the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.*

*And there's a hand, my trusty fiere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.*

Translations

jo = dear
ye'll...stowp = you'll pay for your
pint measure (of drink)
twa = two
braes = hills or hillsides
pou'd = pulled or plucked
gowans = daises
mony = many
fitt = foot or step
paid'l'd = paddled or waded
burn = brook or stream
dine = dinner time or noon
braid = broad
fiere = friend
gie's = give us
guid willie-waught = goodwill drink

The War Years at Mortlake Public School

For me, school life began at the start of 1941 – I can still remember my first day at Mortlake School. Even though I only lived three doors down in Archer Street, I still cried my eyes out when Mum left me there with the assurance that she would be back to pick me up in the afternoon. Miss Greig took me to her heart and put me on the rocking horse that they had in Kindy – I think we nearly all had rides on that rocking horse at some stage.

Before long I was turning up for school before the cleaners, helping to fill the coal scuttle with coal from under the school. In those days each classroom had a fireplace which had a fire burning all day, and the cleaners had to clean the grates and light the fires before classes commenced so the smoke would be out of the rooms and the fires well alight before the children arrived.

During the war, when Australia began to get warning of an invasion from Japan, our parents were asked to work weekends digging air-raid shelters in the playground between the Primary School and the Infants' School. The shelters were dug within weeks, the Education Department had them roofed over and then covered with dirt. Duckboards were laid on the floor because of water seepage and seating put along both sides of the walls with heavy wooden doors at all exits.

One day Dick Moys and myself went to school early just to explore the air raid shelters before the teachers arrived. However, one of the cleaners, seeing the door open, closed and bolted it . . . and you can guess who was locked in and then had to be let out by the teachers.

Needless to say, we were "lined up" for a couple of days – that was the punishment in those days. You were "lined up" at the edge of the playground during playtime and lunchtime while all your mates played and you just stood there, not allowed to move.

Then came air-raid practice. The siren would sound (from somewhere over Concord West way, although I never did find out where it was located) and it could be heard all over Concord. The children were marched out into the air-raid shelters and seated. We had all been issued with a small round piece of rubber which we clenched between our teeth and were told if bombs were dropped we were to cover our ears with our hands,

bite on the piece of rubber and put our heads down between our knees. Thank God it didn't become a reality. The all-clear siren would sound and everyone would then march back into class.

We all felt safe during that time because the Army Camp was located on Concord Private Golf Course, equipped with Ack Ack guns and searchlights.

The pupils were asked to collect scrap aluminium pots and pans to be melted down for the war effort.

Our parents were not forgotten either – those who were not away in the war were asked to join in with the Air Raid Wardens to help with any crisis that may happen at the school.

One Saturday a simulated bomb blast on the Primary School was staged and all the parents were asked to help with the evacuation of casualties. My older sister Helen was winched down from an upstairs window, on a stretcher, with supposed head and leg injuries. She was taken to North Strathfield Public School, which was a casualty clearing station. The part she didn't like was having to walk home from there when it was all over.

We also had fire drills. A couple of houses in each street had a red bucket and a stirrup pump to put out any fires, plus the school had a red bucket full of sand to pour over incendiary bombs if they landed in the school grounds.

Thankfully all these precautions were never put into effect and are only now memories – memories of the lovely teachers we had like Miss Greig, Miss Minogue, Mrs. Kelsey and, in Primary School, Mr. Gibbons (Headmaster) and Mr. Stutchbury. Memories of Mr. Stutchbury calling you out to be caned, taking off his coat, getting out his cane from the cupboard, taking a couple of practice swings through the air, then telling you to be seated and not to misbehave again.

As I said, they are all memories now but what great days they were, playing footie in bare feet because mum couldn't afford shoes, holes in the back of your pants with patches sewn on them and the chapped legs in winter from short pants rubbing on your leg.

Memories!

Bill Green (1941-1947)

Ed: Do you have any memories you'd like to share with us? Write them down or call our Oral Historian, Lola Sharp.

Parramatta Road

It was under Governor Phillip, some time between 1789 and 1791 that a winding track was cut through thick bush between Sydney and Parramatta. Parramatta was known as Rose Hill at the time and its population of 1,970 exceeded Sydney's population of 1,170.

In 1802 Francois Peron, the French naturalist, described Parramatta Road as follows:

"A large road leads from Sydney Town to Parramatta, it is not paved but is well made and kept in good condition. It is almost everywhere wide enough for three carriages to pass abreast and bridges have been thrown over such parts of it as are interrupted by waters so that the traveller meets with no obstacle on his journey. Having been opened through vast forests that were never before assailed by the axe, this grand road appears at a distance like an immense avenue of foliage and verdure. The charming freshness and an agreeable shade always prevail in this continuous bower, the silence of which is interrupted only by the singing and chirping of the richly plumed parrot and other birds which inhabit it."

At that time the road was maintained through volunteer labour from landholding officers, businesses and settlers along the route. From 1810 a toll funded ongoing maintenance of the road by a private contractor.

Early farms made use of Parramatta Road, of note Grose Farm, Annandale Estate and Petersham Estate. Discovery of fertile land on the Hawkesbury plain appears to have discouraged further agricultural settlement.

Other early development was related to the road's communication function. Longbottom Stockade and Government Farm was established at Concord in 1792. This was an overnight stopping point, prison, police barracks, government farm, timber mill and agistment area. It became famous as the place of incarceration of the French Canadian Exiles. Hotels developed as an important supporting function to travel along the road.

The preferred route between Parramatta and Sydney was, in fact, the Parramatta River until it was superseded by the railway line in the 1850s. It was only with the proliferation of motor cars in the 1920s and 1930s that Parramatta Road became the principal transport route between the two cities.

Suburban growth south of Sydney Harbour followed the road and railway routes from the city centre. Along Parramatta Road the suburbs of Glebe, Annandale, Leichhardt, Stanmore and Petersham evolved, although the road itself made no universal contribution to their development. Stanmore and Petersham were fostered by the railway whilst Glebe, Annandale and Leichhardt profited from tram routes which eventually fed the suburbs directly. Were it not for the presence of a tram line along Parramatta Road as far as Norton Street it could be argued that the ribbon of retail development might not have occurred.

The twentieth century saw the development of a significant manufacturing sector along the road. Icon sites such as Bonds, Arnotts and AWA provided employment for substantial numbers of workers. Parramatta Road also grew to be the most important car sale area in Sydney. In recent years manufacturing sites have been rezoned and redeveloped as residential sites.

The Parramatta Road project commenced its third phase, planning and design, with the appointment of the Place Manager in November 2000. An urban design competition was staged in 2001 and following that the Master Plan for the full length of the road is being developed.

(www.parramattaroad.net/resources_02history.html)

I've Learned...

... no matter what happens or how bad it seems, life does go on and it will be better.

... you can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle these three things: a rainy day; lost luggage; and tangled Christmas lights.

... making a 'living' is not the same as making a 'life'.

... life sometimes gives you a second chance.

... you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands ... you need to be able to throw something back.

You're Getting Older

- * Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work
- * The gleam in your eyes is from the sun hitting your bifocals
- * You feel like the night after, and you haven't been anywhere
- * The little black book contained only names ending in M.D.
- * You get winded playing chess
- * Your children begin to look middle aged.
- * You're still chasing women but you can't remember why
- * You know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions
- * You look forward to a dull evening
- * You walk with your head high, trying to get used to your bifocals
- * Your favourite part of the newspaper is "25 Years Ago Today . . ."
- * You turn out the lights for economy reasons rather than romance
- * You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going
- * Your knees buckle and your belt won't
- * After painting the town red you have to take a long rest before applying a second coat
- * You're startled the first time you are addressed as an old timer
- * You can't stand people who are intolerant
- * The best part of your day is over when the alarm clock goes off
- * You burn the midnight oil until 9 pm
- * Your back goes out more than you do
- * A fortune teller offers to read your face
- * Your pacemaker makes the garage door go up when you watch a pretty girl go by
- * The little grey haired lady you help across the street is your wife
- * You have too much room in the house and not enough room in the medicine cabinet
- * You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.

Just for a Laugh

While working for an organisation that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my four year old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered: *"The tooth fairy will never believe this!"*

(*Legacy Torchlight - Summer 2003*)

Open Days at Yaralla and Rivendell

With three major functions coming up in the early part of this year (see below) there will be quite a call for volunteers.

We will need the usual helpers and guides for the Open Days at Yaralla and Rivendell.

We will also need 2 or 3 guides for grounds and for the house and also volunteers for Devonshire teas for the Walker family reunion.

Would you please make a note in your diaries now and let the secretary know, as soon as possible, if you will be available for any of these days.

We could also do with some more helpers for Devonshire Teas so that people need not be in the kitchen for the whole day but could get a break.

We also need more people to volunteer as guides for these days, and also for weekday group visits to Yaralla. It's not difficult and all the information you need is in our "Guide Books". Please give it some thought and raise your hands.

Some Special Dates to Remember . . .

Four Winds Fountain Dedication - Sunday, 7th March

Yaralla Open Day - Sunday, 4th April

Walker Family Reunion - Sunday, 2nd May

Rivendell Open Day - Sunday, 23rd May

Put them in your diary or calendar now so you won't double book the dates.

And please give some thought to becoming a tour guide - we need you.

Dates for your Diary . . .

- ☛ **Wed. 28th January - Executive Meeting**
- ☛ **Thurs. 4th February - Walker Estate Committee**
- ☛ **Wed. 11th February - General Meeting**
- Wed. 25th February - Executive Meeting**