



# Nurungi

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

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**No.112**

**July 2005**

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### MEETINGS

#### General Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Concord Citizens' Centre  
9 Wellbank Street, Concord  
Phone: 8765-9155

#### Executive Meetings

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

#### Walker Estates Committee

1st Wednesday of month  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Concord Citizens' Centre  
Graham Packett, 9743-3007

#### Other Committees

As arranged  
Watch the newsletter

#### Museum

#### Archives/Local History

#### Heritage

Bob Jones, 8765-9347

#### Oral/Family History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

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### CONCORD HERITAGE MUSEUM

5 Wellbank Street

Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
on 1st and 3rd

Wednesdays & Saturdays

## The War at Home

*It is 1941. Rationing is affecting the home front and wedding dresses are hard to come by. In Brunswick Valley one dress and veil are being lent to brides throughout the district. The original bride keeps a tally in a small leather-bound book. Over the next decade a total of 51 names will appear. The wedding dress worn by 51 brides is just one of the items discovered by a study that is providing insight into life in times of war.*

Sarah-Jane Rennie describes this new project on war-related moveable heritage.

The War at Home project, managed by Museums and Galleries NSW and supported through the Heritage Incentives Programme, is one of two projects exploring NSW during the world wars. Our team is looking specifically at movable heritage material related to world War I and World War II and will be searching collections held in museums, historical society archives and local history collections in libraries.

This new project provides us with the opportunity to explore the impact of war on the communities and environment of NSW. While the battlefield was overseas, there was a huge paid and volunteer workforce in Australia supporting the war effort. This was particularly the case during World War II, where the threat of invasion put an added sense of urgency into many projects.

With the arrival of factories, military bases, airstrips and internment camps, the landscape of NSW changed at a faster pace than was ever possible in peace time. The entry of women into so many male-dominated roles had an equally dramatic impact on people's lives.

Through this project the Museums and Galleries NSW hope to get beyond the official face of the war to draw out an understanding of what war meant to local communities and individuals.

Items have already come to light that provide an interesting insight into life in times of war. The Coo-ee Heritage Centre in Gilgandra houses a collection of material from the 1915 Coo-ee March in which 26 men from Gilgandra set off on a month-long, 320-mile march to Sydney to gather recruits for the war. By the time they arrived in Sydney their numbers had swollen tenfold and they were greeted by a crowd stretching from Newtown to the Domain.

In Port Kembla the Breakwater Battery Museum houses a collection associated with



*Mrs. Eunice Douglas, nee Mortimer, was married in Mullumbimby on 26th April, 1941. She then lent her wedding veil, and sometimes the wedding frock and slip, to 51 brides during World War II and the following years. She recorded the name of each bride in this tiny book, no larger than a matchbox. (The photograph is by Robyn Gray, courtesy of the Brunswick Valley Historical Society.)*



### Bulletin Board

**10th August:** Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers.

**14th September:** The advertised speaker is unavailable so we will be entertained by a film about "Fatty Finn".

**12th October:** Pam Liell, speaking on her recently released book, "Dressed in their Best: 100 Years of Family Photos"

**9th November:** John Walmeant - African Safari Photographs

the Owen gun, the sub-machine gun known as "the Digger's darling". It was invented by Wollongong local Evelyn Owen and manufactured in Lysaght's Port Kembla factory.

Material associated with the Hay Prisoner of war and Internment Camp provides an opportunity to understand the experience of internment and also the impact such a camp had on a small rural community. The collection includes a searchlight from one of the watch-towers, mementos made by prisoners and a knife and camp blanket used during unofficial picnics between the Italian prisoners and the local community.

The first stage of this project is a survey to gain an overview of collections contained in museums and libraries throughout NSW. Once we have gathered the initial information we hope to contact organisations with key collections for a more detailed study. Significant items identified through this process will then be prepared for nomination to the State Heritage Register.

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Sarah-Jane is keen to hear from anyone aware of material that may be of interest to the study. Telephone the MGNSW on (02) 9339-9908 or free call 1800-114-311 (regional NSW) or email: sarahjaner@mgnsw.org.au.

*This article appeared in the Autumn 2005 issue of Heritage NSW, the newsletter of the NSW Heritage Office and is reprinted with permission.*

## Coo-ee March & Concord

*Following our article in last month's newsletter, one of our members, Diana Mitchell, has sent us a copy of a letter from her father, Charles Savage, Mayor of Concord to the Mayor of Burwood.*

Town Hall, Concord  
1/11/15

Ald. F. Reed, Esq., Mayor of Burwood

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I regret that I will not be able to attend your meetings Wed. next to make arrangements for the reception of the Gilgandra men.

In a matter of this character it would be fitting for our Municipalities to act conjointly, and I would welcome the appointment of a committee from your meeting to act with a similar number from this Municipality.

The reception and entertainment of our visitors I would suggest be on the following lines,

We could meet them at the boundary of Concord and Homebush, a procession could be formed headed by a band, our visitors would then be marched along Parramatta Rd to St Lukes Park where refreshments would be served.

You will note that I (am) departing from the proposal made by Mr. Percy Hunter. I do so for the following reasons. When I received a copy of Mr. Hunter's letter to your good self I phoned that Gentleman and expressed my dissatisfaction at the summary way my Municipality had been treated.

Mr Hunter said that his proposals were

only tentative and were subject to our mutual agreement and that he would be willing to accept any proposal we choose to make.

I therefore do not consider his letter to you as final and suggest the substitution of St Luke Park for Burwood Park for the following reasons that we have facilities in St Lukes Park lacking in the Burwood Park such as a pavilion where we would be protected in all weathers and for the further reason that as your Municipality will have the pleasure of our visitors marching through your main street as well as other streets it is I think only fitting that we should have the honor of the use of our park for their entertainment.

I make this suggestion in all sincerity and would support is as a citizen of Burwood quite apart of my relations with the Municipality of Concord.

I have asked Mr. Ald. Correy, my deputy Mayor, and Ald Warbrick, Hon Secretary of our Soldiers Aid Association to attend your meeting. They will I feel sure receive a cordial welcome at your hands.

With best wishes,

I am yours sincerely.

*Does anyone know whether St Luke's Park was actually used on this occasion or did they stay with the original plan to use Burwood Park?*

## Memories of Concord - and the Gas Company - Some snippets from our oral history tapes

**Interview with Mrs. Annie Leggett, born Emily Street, Mortlake, in 1902.** Recorded on 26th January 1998, by Vincent Scerri . (Annie's parents came to Australia in 1886 with one child 12 months old).

Question: What was your father's occupation?

*"He worked on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Holder of the Australian Gas light Company for his first job"*

Question: You mentioned a game that you used to play as a child in the scrub of Concord, as it was in those days. What was the name of that game?

*"It was very exciting as children. There was all bush around Central Concord then but the few houses had lots of children around and we used to wait every night for the*

*lamplighter to come down the street and light the lamp opposite to where I lived, so that we could play 'Bobbies and Bushies' and we used to play in the twilight in those days."*

(In this interview, Annie Leggett spoke about an area known as Hillcrest – the area bounded by Flavelle, Patterson and Wellbank Streets and Majors Bay Road. There were about 7 houses there and the men all worked at the Gas Works).

Question: Did they walk to the Gas Works?

*"No. They used to get the tram."*

Question: You mentioned something also about dinners being taken over to the workmen at the Gas Works?

*"Yes, well I told you that the few men that lived in Hillcrest all worked at the Gas Works and their wives used to make them a hot meal on a plate, wrapped in*

*a tea towel and go down to the tram stop and the tram driver would pick up their lunches and their husbands would be waiting at the gates of the Gas Works for their dinner"*

Question: Could you fill us in a little about how lighting was in Concord, how did you light your homes in Concord in the early days of your childhood?

*"Yes, I can see my mother now still lighting the oil lamps every night by candle, it was all by candle. There was no electricity in those days, you had candles and you had oil lamps."*

*"There was no fancy washing machines, you had coppers, you had to burn the wood under the coppers to do your washing."*

Question: And the lighting in the street in the very early 1900's?



"I do not remember any lighting in Wellbank Street so I imagine that it was all over Concord. The only lighting that we know of, was that the lamplighters used to come every night, about six o'clock to light the lamps in the street and I don't remember any electric lights when I was very young."

Question: So some streets did have light?

"They must have done, you see I was very young and I was only interested in the street where I lived".

**Interview with Mrs. Grace Baker, born 1911. Recorded on 27th October, 1999 by Vincent Scerri**

Question: Can you tell us how street lighting was in those days?

"Yes. It was all by gaslight and as darkness started a man used to come around called Mr. Smith and he had a long stick which had a flame on the end which he lit the gaslights."

**Interview with Ian Gordon of Mortlake (probably born in 1920's). Recorded on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2001 by Lola Sharp**

Question: How long did you work for the gas works?

"Dad didn't want me to work at the gas company but I just went down there for 6 weeks to wait to my deferred pay came and I stayed there for 43 years."

Question: I understand there were a lot of fathers and sons and in some cases, their grandfathers.

"Yes. That's right. My best mate, down there, he probably, his uncles and that, they had probably about three hundred years up between them, just working, all brothers and relatives, you know".

Question: And what sort of work did you do there?

"I was a rigger and a scaffolder and I finished up, I've worked on the holders and climbing all over the place, and then I finished up when all the natural gas came in. I was a crane driver, a mobile crane driver up till I retired in '87. And I was a leading hand, I was my own boss and I had a lot of, I was a bit lucky, I sat for a lot of exams and got a lot of tickets and they kept me on down there more or less for my qualifications."

Question: And what was the impact on the area when AGL finally closed down?

"Well, there was a terrible lot of people, I'll say this much for the gas company, they never ever sacked anybody down there and they were very good to the sick people but then, everybody had to diversify and they'd go out and they learned. I was lucky, they kept me on down there, I still had a lot of work. I helped build the gasket and helped demolish it and right up till I retired (in 1987) up till about 1990, they kept the crane there and then there was nothing left.. Everyone got jobs outside. They went to different depots, learned plumbing and gasfitting."



**to all committee chairmen . . .**

We need your annual reports (in writing) for our Annual General Meeting on 10th August. If you can supply it on disc that would be even better - ready to print in our August newsletter.

**We still need guides and Devonshire Tea helpers for the following events -**



**Wed. 3rd August** - Group to Yaralla, 9:30 am - 1 or 2 guides, and Devonshire Tea helpers.

**Tuesday, 9th August** - Group to Yaralla, 2:50 pm - 2 guides - Devonshire Tea helpers. We will also need to organise sandwiches for them to take away.

**Sunday, 21st August** - *Our own OPEN DAY AT RIVENDELL - ALL HANDS ON DECK*

**Sunday, 18th September** - Friends of Rookwood have asked for assistance with their open day - can you spare half a day?

**Sunday, 23rd October** - *our OPEN DAY AT YARALLA - ALL HANDS ON DECK.*

Please put these dates in your diary NOW and if you know you will be free and able to assist please call the secretary as soon as possible. These days take some organising and it is nice to know in advance what help will be available.

## The Return of a Mortuary Station Angel

Late in November 2004 I received a phone call from Jean who, along with her sister and brother-in-law, had visited the Crematorium on our special Open Day. This led me to her home at Rydalmere, Sydney, where she handed me a timber sculpture of an angel's head, surrounded by a pair of wings. When I looked at it I realized that it had come from Mortuary Station No.1, which had stood in the centre of Necropolis Circuit at Rookwood until the building was removed in 1957 and re-erected as All Saints Church in Ainslie, Canberra, ACT.

The lady told me that about 15 years ago she and her late husband had been helping an old lady move into a retirement village when they found the angel head in her garage, in a pile of rubbish set aside to be taken to the tip. When I asked her about it she said that her brother had brought it home from the station at Rookwood many years before. She told them that he was always bringing home things he "found", but he had passed away before Jean and her husband got to know this lady. They took the angel home to Rydalmere, put it away in their garage and then forgot about it until the family visited the Open Day at Rookwood.

The Mortuary Station, in Rookwood Cemetery opened in 1869. It was a beautiful sandstone structure, with a timber interior. Each roof truss was decorated with an angel. The last train left from there in 1948.

Some time in the early 1950's the woodwork in the building caught fire, destroying the roof and its beautiful timber features. The angel that I was given would have had to have been taken from the building before the fire and it is probably the only surviving timber object from there.

The angel has been added to our museum collection and will be on display in All Saints Chapel at Rookwood on our Open Day on Sunday, 18th September, 2005.

*This article is from the March 2005 issue of "Rookwood in Profile" and is reprinted with permission.*



## Now is the time to put your hand up!

On Wednesday, 10th August we will be holding our Annual General Meeting. This is one of the most important meetings of our year where the chairs of the various committees will submit their annual report on our activities over the past 12 months.

Also, it will be time for the election of Office Bearers and members of the Executive, who help to carry out the work of our society.

This year several of the officers will not be standing for re-election so there are quite a few vacancies that need to be filled.

This is your society and we need to run it to suit you - this is your opportunity to see that we do so.

Please come along and put your hand up when nominations are called for the various positions. Don't just sit back and say "so and so" has done a good job, let's just put him/her back into office. ALL positions will be declared vacant and any member can nominate or be nominated for any position.

Put your thinking caps on and come along with a list of members you think should be nominated to become part of the Executive.

The more nominations the better it will be for our Society.

Come to the meeting and have your say.

**See you there!!**

## Did you Know . . .

"OUGH" can be pronounced eight different ways. The following sentence contains them all: "A rough-coated dough-faced ploughman strode through the streets of Scarborough, coughing and hiccoughing thoughtfully."

**NO VOWELS:** "Rhythm" is the longest English word without the normal vowels - a, e, i, o or u.

## Today's Grandma

By Shirley Lawrence

*The old rocking chair is empty  
For Grandma no longer is in it;  
She's off in her car to visit or  
shop  
And buzzes around every minute.*

*No one can shove Grandma  
back on the shelf,  
She is versatile, forceful,  
dynamic.*

*That's not a pie in the oven my  
dear,*

*Her baking today is ceramic.*

*You won't see her trundle off  
early to bed*

*From her place in a warm  
chimney nook;*

*Her typewriter clickety-clacks  
through the night,*

*For Grandma is writing a book.*

*Grandma never takes a hesitant  
step*

*To slow down her steady  
advancing;*

*She won't tend the babies for you  
any more*

*For Grandma has gone out –  
dancing*

*She's no longer content with the  
crumbs of old thoughts,*

*With meager and second-hand  
knowledge;*

*So don't bring your mending for  
Grandma to do,*

*For Grandma has gone back to  
college.*

*The above verse first appeared in Perth Legacy Bulletin in 1989 and was re-printed in Torchlight in April 1990. It is brought to you again in the hope that you might enjoy it – and to demonstrate that, as you will have noticed, it's already out of date. What self-respecting 21st century computer-literate Grandma would deign to use a typewriter?*

## From the Secretary's Desk

**A note for tour guides:** To all tour guides and intending tour guides . . . we have updated our Tour Guide Books. Some of our guides have received these. If you haven't, please contact the secretary to get yours. There is also a second book with details of plantings, etc. If you haven't got this make sure you get one before our open day.

**Thomas Walker (Rivendell) Open Day:** If you will be able to assist on this day please contact the Secretary very shortly so that rosters can be organised. To date I only know of one Devonshire Tea helper.

**Photographs:** We still need some help to do a rough sort of our photographs so they can be identified and indexed for reference.

**Photocopying, Filing and Typing:** Can you spare an hour or two, here and there, to help with this? It's mounting up.

**Old Newspapers:** We still have several bundles of these old newspapers that need to be gone through. Can you spare some time?

**Group Visits to Yaralla:** These are becoming more popular and are a good money raiser, but we need a roster of people who can help out with Devonshire Teas on week days and weekends. It only needs about an hour of your time. If you want to add your name, please call the secretary.

**P.S.** We can always use extra tour guides too, if you would care to give it a try.

**Rookwood Open Day:** We have been asked if any of our members would like to act as tour guides on their open day. If so, please contact Robyn Hawes on 9477-3289 (H) or 9499-2415 (W)

**Auditor Needed:** Do you know of anyone who would be willing to act as our auditor - preferably in an honorary (or reduced rate) basis? Please make some enquiries on our behalf ready for next year's audit.

**Guest Speakers:** Have you heard any interesting guest speakers lately? Do you know anyone who would be prepared to be a guest speaker? Would you like to be a guest speaker? Trish Skehan has done a wonderful job over the past years but she is now standing down and I'm sure the incoming Public Relations Officer would be glad to hear of any possibilities.

For your  
Diary

Wed. 3rd August - Walker Estates

Wed. 10th August - AGM & Election of Officers

Wed. 24th August - Executive Meeting