



# "Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: [chs@concordheritage.asn.au](mailto:chs@concordheritage.asn.au)

[www.concordheritage.asn.au](http://www.concordheritage.asn.au)

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EDITOR  
**LOIS MICHEL**  
9744-8528

PRESIDENT  
**JANN OGDEN**  
9809-5772

PUBLIC RELATIONS  
**TRISH SKEHAN**  
4369-4172

SECRETARY/TREASURER  
**LOIS MICHEL**  
3 Flavelle Street  
(P.O. Box 152)  
Concord 2137  
Phone: 9744-8528  
Fax: 9744-7591

#### 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  
August, October, January,  
March, May and July  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Concord Citizens' Centre

##### Walker Estates Committee

4th Wednesday of  
September, November,  
February, April and June  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Concord Citizens' Centre

Derek Williams, 9746-9649

##### Other Committees

As arranged  
*Watch the newsletter*

##### Museum

Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

##### Archives/Local History

(Vacant)

##### 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 Domain and Royal Botanic Gardens

The Sydney Domain was set aside in 1788 by Governor Phillip as his private reserve. It covered the area east of the Tank Stream to the head of Woolloomooloo (Walla Mulla) Bay and contains the site of the first farm in Australia. The farm had been established for growing grain, but was soon moved to Parramatta, because of the poor sandy soil. The Farm Cove (Woccanmagully) area was then leased out for private farming for the next twenty years.

Governor Bligh attempted to reclaim the Domain c. 1808 and Governor Macquarie completed this task, extending the roads and gardens started by Bligh, and enclosing the Government Domain with stone walls and paling fences. The traditional foundation date of the Botanic Gardens is taken as the date of completion of Mrs Macquaries Road in 1816.

Our long history of collection and study of plants began with the appointment of the first Colonial Botanist, Charles Fraser, in 1817. The Botanic Gardens is thus the oldest scientific institution in Australia and, from the earliest days, has played a major role in the acclimatisation of plants from other regions.

Reminding us of the early days, Mrs Macquaries Point and Chair mark one of the sought-after photographic spots in Sydney with views across the Harbour to the Opera House and Harbour Bridge. The Governor's wife had the chair carved out of the rock so she could sit and observe the passing ships. Above the chair is an inscription recording the completion of Mrs Macquaries Road on 13 June 1816.

First Fleet Steps is the point where Queen Elizabeth II first set foot on Australian soil, and a commemorative wall plaque marks the event. The site is often used for large marquee functions with stunning views of the Opera House and Harbour Bridge.

Over the years the Gardens grew as the Domain was slowly whittled away, but remained an important buffer to the Gardens. The native vegetation was cleared and the gullies of Phillip Precinct filled. During the 1830s the expansive green space of the Domain was now opened to the public, who strolled and picnicked there. The Domain west of Mac-

quarie Street was then sold to pay for the construction of new Government House and Circular Quay.

In the 1850s the Domain was used for military, sporting, and ceremonial events, and was subsequently used for soap-box oratory and political meetings. From 1860 the Domain was opened up at night to pedestrians, allowing people to use this valuable recreational space on summer evenings. It became known as 'the Park where the Gates Never Close'. Carriage traffic however remained restricted after dusk for many years.

In 1862 Sydney's first zoo was opened within the Botanic Gardens and remained there until 1883, when most of it was transferred to Moore Park. During these years much of the remnant natural vegetation of the surrounding Domain was removed and planted as parkland. The Moreton Bay Figs, one of the major elements of this planting, continue to dominate the landscape.

In 1879 a substantial area of the Domain, south of the Government House stables (now the Conservatorium of Music), was taken for the building of the Garden Exhibition Palace. This building, 'an outstanding example of Victorian architectural exuberance, with towers and turrets deployed around a giant dome 100 feet in diameter surmounted by a lantern 200 feet above the ground', dominated Sydney's skyline and covered over two hectares.



### Bulletin Board

**Wed. 9th August** - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers and Committee

**Wed. 13th September** - Gregory Blaxell - "The Life of Gregory Blaxland" and "Brush Farm"

**Wed. 11th October** - Barbara Hancock, "Concord Post Offices"

**Wed. 8th November** - Claude Bennie, "Arnotts History"

The Sydney International Exhibition held in the Palace drew world attention to civilisation's advances in Australia, achieved in less than a century of European settlement. It also put on show the abundant natural wealth of Australia and provided a focus for horticulture and landscape design

This Exhibition attracted over one million visitors. However, the building was destroyed by fire in 1882 and the land, now known as the Palace Garden, was added to the Botanic Gardens.

The **Garden Palace** was a large purpose-built exhibition building constructed to house the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879.

Visually similar in many respects to the later Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, the Sydney building consisted of three turreted wings meeting beneath a central dome. The building was sited at the southwestern end of the Royal Botanical Gardens and was of primarily timber construction - a fact that was to assure its complete destruction when engulfed by fire in September 1882.

The only extant remains of the Garden Palace are its carved sandstone gateposts and wrought iron gates, located on the Macquarie Street entrance to the Royal Botanical Gardens. A fountain featuring a statue of Cupid marks the central point of the Palace's dome. The only artefact from the International Exhibition to survive the fire - a carved graphite statue of an elephant, from Ceylon - is on exhibit at the Powerhouse Museum.

The Garden Palace exhibition was so popular that the government bought many of the star exhibits and set up the Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum, the antecedent of the Powerhouse Museum. But in 1882, before it could open to the public, the Garden Palace mysteriously burnt down in a spectacular six hour fire. Fortunately some of the exhibits- and more importantly the momentum to build a museum- survived the Garden Palace fire.

*Sincere Sympathy is  
extended to  
Glenn and Tina Casey  
and their family  
on the sad loss of his  
mother.*

## The Powerhouse Museum and The Garden Palace

The Powerhouse Museum, along with the Sydney Observatory, make up what is known as the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. The Powerhouse Museum is the largest museum in Australia, and one of the most diverse in the world. Its exhibitions are noted for being educational as well as fun. Many of the exhibitions, especially those for children, are interactive and children learn as they participate in some way.

The building that houses this extraordinary museum was once the power source that fed the electric tram cars in Sydney. Constructed from 1899-1902 it was in use until 1961 when the trams stopped running. In 1979 the derelict building was sited as the new home for the museum and it opened as such in 1988.

Part of the old powerhouse can be observed as visitors tour the museum. The old boiler room and gargantuan smoke stacks are part of the museum as well as the Turbine and Engine Houses.

The history of the museum precedes its opening by one hundred years. Many of the collections were in the original museum that was to be housed in The Garden Palace. The Garden Palace had been built in 1879

for Australia's first international exhibition. The show was so popular that the government purchased many of the exhibits and set up a museum.

The Garden Palace was destroyed in a terrible six-hour fire before the museum could open. It was a miracle that a few of the exhibits were saved and a new museum planned. The Technological Museum, as it was called, moved into a new building in Ultimo just a block from where it stands today.

Exhibitions in the Powerhouse Museum change often as well as the museum supporting permanent collections. The Space exhibit, the Strasburg Clock, Success and Innovation, Brewing and Pubs, The Boulton and Watt Engine, Steam Revolution, Pills and Potions, Transport, and Musical Instruments are just some of the permanent collections available to the public.

Admission to the Powerhouse Museum is free the first Saturday of every month. There is a fee on other days, but children less than five and adults over sixty get in free any day also. The museum is open every day of the year, except for Christmas Day, from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m

## YOU'RE INVITED

**Rookwood Necropolis - Sunday, 24th September** - to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Central Railway Station.

To help celebrate, Steam Train 3112 will steam out of Central Railway at 10 am, past the Mortuary Station to Lidcombe, where vintage buses will provide transport into Rookwood Cemetery.

On arrival, tours will be conducted visiting important railway graves and the remains of the old railway line, as well as short heritage walks. Lunch is included . . . then join in the Mini Open Day.

Buses will leave Rookwood to transport you back to Lidcombe where you will rejoin the 3112 and be back at Central Station by 4 pm.

**For fare details** visit the website [www.3801limited.com.au](http://www.3801limited.com.au) or phone 1300-653-801.

If you don't want to take part in the

above part of the celebration, then just come along to the . . .

**Rookwood Cemetery Mini Open Day - 24th September**, from 9 am to 3 pm. There will be lots of activities and various tours as well as white elephant stall, plant stall, sale of Heritage roses, souvenirs, Devonshire teas, BBQ lunch, etc.

Behind the Scenes tours at Rookwood Gardens Crematorium, Memorial Avenue, every hour from 9:30 am.

**Enquires:** Robyn on (02) 9499-2415. Entry to this part of the day is free. No booking required.

**Have you ever wanted to be on television?** On Sunday, 20th August, from 10 am to 11 am, Channel 9 is coming to Rookwood to do some filming regarding the Friends of Rookwood and what they do. They would love to have a 'crowd' involved for the cameras. If anyone is interested in attending for an hour and being part of the crowd for the filming it would be much appreciated.

It might be a good opportunity to make some media contacts for our work with Yaralla and Rivendell!!!

## Bill Barlow's Memories

(continuation of a letter written to Concord School on their 150th anniversary)

A two lane tram track ran outside the school and came from Burwood. It turned into Crane Street then up Majors Bay Road and finally to Cabarita and another branch line to Mortlake.

They were open-sided 'toast rack' trams where the conductor clung desperately to the sides, collecting fares in all weathers. I still remember a sign in the tram 'no spitting'. On the opposite side the paper boys would risk life and limb holding on as they sold their wares to the passengers. Indeed, one of the pupils, 'Bowie' Morgan, was killed when he was struck on the head by a tram from the opposite direction. He was also a member of our First Concord Scouts Troop.

Those not wishing to pay their fare would also 'scale' the tram holding onto the hand rails opposite the conductor. They were expert at jumping backwards from a moving tram if confronted.

The dux of Concord School in 1942 was John Dart followed by Eric Ellis and, of the girls, it was Lilian Sims followed very closely by Jean White. They together, with Shirley Cox and Marie Artis, moved on to the Fort Street selective schools.

It may be interesting to note that there were very few obese children in those days. In fact, I can only remember one and he was taunted with, "fat, fat the water rat" or 'fatty boom sticks' by the other children.

I moved on to Croydon Park technical high school where I, only just, gained my Intermediate Certificate. I remember my mother being incensed when she was told by a vocational guidance officer that the only occupation I was suitable for was a tailor's assistant or a picture framer. When asked what I liked most about Concord Public School, I replied "the library" which was then located on the south side of the top floor.

I became a King's Scout, the youngest ever member of the Sydney Society of Model Engineers, started an apprenticeship at 15, captained the junior Western Suburbs ice hockey team at 17 and became a professional musician at 20, as well as an engineering draftsman at the Commonwealth Aircraft Engine factory, Lidcombe.

I married my childhood sweetheart, Jean White, who I met at Concord school, and on the 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2005, we celebrated our Golden Wedding (50 years) anniversary.

Have a good reunion for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Bill Barlow.

## Oxley Historical Museum, Wellington NSW.

Next time you drive through Wellington NSW, take time to stop at the Oxley Historical Museum in Percy Street. This historic former bank is a very elegant two-storey brick building erected in 1883 for the Bank of New South Wales.

The staff are welcoming, particularly if you tell them that you come from our society. Don't miss the photographic display of Wellington in flood, or the only bridge in town after a large truck demolished it and ended up in the river.

Plenty of interesting exhibits to see - there is a 19th-century kitchen, bedroom and an Edwardian parlour. The kitchen contains a very unusual round storage unit, with arched bins that swing out to hold a multitude of kitchen supplies.

The museum is open from 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm on weekdays and at other times by arrangement. Tel: (02) 6845 232

Wellington is the second-oldest town west of the Blue Mountains, and is located 369 km north-west of Sydney. It is a relatively large centre with a population of around 5700, a considerable proportion being Aboriginal.

It is a typical Australian country town, located in the Wellington Valley at the junction of the Macquarie and Bell Rivers near the foot of Mt Arthur.

Once thought to have been occupied by the Wiradjuri people, the first European visitor was John Oxley who headed north-east after being blocked by reeds in his exploration of the Lachlan River. He is believed to have climbed Mt Arthur and, from there, gazed down upon the Wellington Valley, which he named after the Duke of Wellington who, just two years before, had defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.

Descending the mountain, he recorded in his journal that he had 'scarcely rode a mile' along the banks of the Bell River before he came across a junction with the Macquarie River. He wrote of 'bright transparent water dashing over a gravelly bottom with a brilliance equal to the most polished mirror' and was delighted by its contrast to the muddy, marshy waters of the Lachlan River.

In 1823, Oxley's glowing report on the area's agricultural potential inspired Governor Brisbane to send Lieutenant Percy Simpson to establish a camp with convicts and soldiers. Although wheat was successfully grown, the settlement was abandoned in 1831,

becoming a government stock station then, in 1832, the headquarters of an Aboriginal mission.

**Lion of Wellington Inn.** The most notable inn is just over the bridge at Montefiores in Gipps St. The Lion of Waterloo Hotel was licensed in 1842, making it the oldest licensed hotel still standing, west of the Blue Mountains.

The last 'official' duel fought on Australian soil was said to have been waged with pistols outside the Lion of Waterloo in 1854. Once a changing station for Cobb & Co coaches, today the inn has been restored and operates as a licensed tavern, art gallery and restaurant.

**Lake Burrendong.** The Burrendong State Recreation Area is adjacent to a huge artificial lake. This lake, in area three and a half times the size of Sydney Harbour, was built between 1946 and 1967 to irrigate farmland west of the town.

**Wellington Caves and Phosphate Mine.** The area's major tourist attraction is situated 8 km south of Wellington along the highway, and is well signposted.

The first European to see the caves was believed to be a member of Lieutenant Simpson's settlement in the late 1820's. Hamilton Hume provided a written account in 1828 when he noted: 'The inside of the cave is beautifully formed, some parts of it are supported by pillars 50 feet high and beautifully carved by nature.'

Two years later, a magistrate named George Rankin found fossil bones of both a diprotodon and a giant kangaroo in the caves. The diprotodon was herbivorous, with its teeth well adapted for grazing. It roamed this area during the Pleistocene period.

Rankin returned there with Sir Thomas Mitchell and collected a huge variety of bones from the caves. These remains became the subject of an address to the Geological Society of London in 1831. Since then, the cave has been a source of information about ancient geology and fauna.. Phosphate mining commenced in 1913 and continued until 1971, destroying priceless relics, now fertiliser used by farmers.

In 1882, the caves became a reserve. By 1888 over 1500 people a year were visiting them. Today over 50 000 people visit the caves and abandoned mines annually.

Trish Skehan



