



# "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  
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

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

##### Heritage

Bob Jones, 8765-9347

##### Oral/Family History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

#### CONCORD HERITAGE MUSEUM

5 Wellbank Street  
Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
on 1st and 3rd  
Wednesdays & Saturdays

## Concord Post Offices

Longbottom (later Concord) Post Office was introduced in 1851, the first suburban post office. This was operated by a Mr. Peter McGrath in his shop on Parramatta Road, opposite Concord Road and next to the lock-up.

The next Post Office, Beaconsfield, was opened in 1882 in Wharf Road (now Burwood Road) near Wallace Street, in a shop run by a Mrs. Eliza Warren. It was closed in 1885 when Mrs. Warren resigned.

At Concord Council's request the office was transferred to Mr. Broadhurst on the Parramatta Road and the name was changed to Concord. However, this was closed in 1886 due to lack of use.

Due to the development of the Australian Gaslight Company at Mortlake, and the great increase of population around the area, a non-official Post Office (Mortlake) was opened in 1887 in a shop at the corner of Burwood Road (now Tennyson Road) and Macdonald Street.



Robert Stirrat was appointed Postmaster. In 1900 it was temporarily removed to premises nearer the river but returned to the original site in 1906, remaining there until the 1930s when it was moved to new premises adjacent to the original store. It finally closed in 1977.

In 1890 residents urged the establishment of an office in a central position. Services for Concord residents were provided then by the letter carrier from Burwood delivering once daily and the non-official post office at Mortlake.

The Council offered to partition a section of the Council Chambers, then situated in Wharf Road (now Burwood Road), Concord on the corner of Burton Street. It was opened in 1890, with official status. In 1895 it moved to rented premises nearby, where a telephone was installed for sending and receiving telegrams.

In 1898 it was decided to erect a Government

building at Concord for the Post & Telegraph Office. The new building was erected in 1899 on land adjoining the Concord Town Hall and business commenced on 30th January, 1900. However it was gradually downgraded and finally closed in 1927.



The official Concord Post Office was removed to a shop at 6 Burwood Road and in 1937 the name was changed to Concord East. In 1975 the office moved to premises 100 yards south along Burwood Road, crossing the boundary between Concord and Burwood, and was then renamed Burwood North.

An Allowance Post Office opened at Central Concord in 1921. This was made an Official Post Office in 1927 when the old Concord Post Office in Burwood Road closed.

In 1930 a new brick building, Central Concord Post Office, was erected in Majors Bay Road, Concord and became the official Post Office in the area.

In 1937 the name was changed to Concord Post Office.



### Bulletin Board

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

**Wed. 8th November** - to be advised

**Wed. 13th December** - Our Annual Christmas Barbecue at Rhodes/Rotary Park, Concord West.

# Where the Blue Wattle grows - Book Launch August 2006

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August, about 150 people attended Concord RSL's auditorium, for the launch of our latest Yaralla Book, titled *Where the Blue Wattle Grows*, by Patricia Skehan and Jill Hodder. Sketches by Terry Robinson.

Our current President, Mr Alan Wright, acted as MC and read apologies from The Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard; Mr John Murphy MP; Mrs Carmel Tebbutt MP; Mr Chris Lloyd MP; Carolyn Bruyn, Archivist AMP, and several others.

To commence the proceedings, we watched footage of author, Di Morrissey, wandering through Yaralla as she talked about its history and the launch of her fictional Yaralla book, *The Last Rose of Summer*.

Our guests were then treated to a short screening of some rare restored films from Dame Eadith's collection. They grinned at the antics of Felix the Cat; watched a young lad and his dog fishing down by the creek, and roared with laughter as Charlie Chaplin led Keystone Cops on a merry chase.

Terry Robinson and Jill Hodder talked about their involvement in the manuscript. Terry reminisced about his sketches and told anecdotes of drawings on frosty mornings. Jill read the foreword, written by Di Morrissey, and also read a letter from Naomi Hart, one of the children featured in the book as a young student at Yaralla Primary School in 1997.

Inspired by her acclaim at a public protest meeting called by our Society at this venue in 1997, Naomi has now advanced in public speaking, and could not attend our launch due to debating commitments.

Natasha and Johanna Davidson posed for the cover, but Johanna could not attend the launch either, due to other commitments in 'Tournaments of the Mind.'

Natasha Davidson and Dominique Monaro presented a brief reading from the fictional diary entries (Chapter Three) which detailed Eadie's thoughts following her Mama's death.

Dominique, who agreed to do the part only one week prior, amazed us as she recited the whole text from memory, ably assisted by Natasha as a young Annie Masefield, arriving at Yaralla and meeting her new family for the first time.

Trish Skehan then presented these girls and each of the attending Yaralla

and Rivendell tour guides with a complimentary copy of the book.

The work of the guides is featured throughout the book's text. Trish thought it would be a fitting tribute to each guide, and could show others how rewarding, interesting and easy it is, to lead tours of the grounds or mansion.

After informing the audience about how ideas for the book came from earlier conversations with Jill and Terry, and from some strange outside sources, Trish spoke about visiting Cambridge University last year, and obtaining a book called *Lanhydrock Days*. That story of an old estate, complete with sketches, motivated Trish to write an even better story using Yaralla as the setting.

Many people had asked Trish to write about the spooky experiences that occurred at Yaralla or during her research. Stating that 'ghosts are simply the spirits of those who have lived and died at a place, and return to tell us something important or to teach us a lesson,' she spoke of her idea to introduce them to the schoolchildren in a ghostly timeline.

The latest spooky event occurred during the photo shoot for the front cover, when a gust of wind lifted Natasha's hat, and she grabbed for it, with a startled expression on her face. Sunlight flooded the top upper section of that shot. Trish almost wiped it. Later, she tried adjusting the contrast, and found that white window blinds, in the background, had turned black, and gave the impression of two eyes staring out at the girls. As Thomas Walker's crest featured the 'all-seeing eye', Trish felt that this was, indeed, the perfect cover shot. Foliage around the photo's edge had turned blue, inspiring the title's theme of Blue Wattle.

As we had young Dominique representing Eadith Walker as a child, Trish thought it only fitting to also feature Eadith as a more mature woman. She asked her editor, and our Society Secretary, Lois Michel, to represent Dame Eadith and launch the book. Although Lois had the flu and a very sore throat, she managed to make the launching announcement.

During the sale of books, afternoon tea and light refreshments were served, while Trish, Jill and Terry signed copies.

My thanks to all those members and friends, especially Pat Corbitt, who

helped with catering arrangements, and Mrs Eve Stevens, Erin Hodder and Daniel Collins, who greeted guests on our behalf and handed out door prize tickets.

A big 'thank you' to Mister Bob Comtesse of Concord RSL, who always supports our Society's work. Bob donated the use of the club's auditorium for the afternoon launch.

Thank you also to the ABC's Macca, who interviewed Trish on Sunday morning, and broadcast details of the launch. The club reported a number of calls enquiring about it.

Copies of the book can be obtained from Lois Michel, Jill Hodder or Trish Skehan. Dymock's bookstore in Westfield Burwood, and Concord Newsagency also have stock. RRP \$14.50.

## Yaralla Kid's Club Launch.

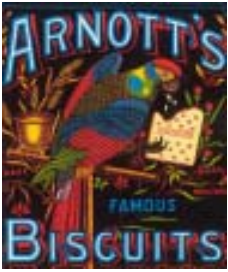
At the event we launched Yaralla Kid's Club, an idea put forward, some years ago, by our youngest member, Johanna Davidson. This free internet-based club will encourage school children who have read the book, and visited Yaralla or Rivendell, to keep in touch with us, exchange letters and sketches, complete games and puzzles, or enter monthly drawing competitions. They can win free Open Day family passes or other suitable prizes.

Children who do not have access to the internet can still join, by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Yaralla Kid's Club, P O Box 301 Concord NSW 2137.

Matthew Stevens, aged 6, who contacted Concord Heritage Society some time ago about cleaning up the sunken garden at Yaralla, was presented with a Membership Certificate and a small gift. Matthew's interest prompted us to fulfil Johanna and Natasha Davidson's dream of the Kid's club, an idea praised by many members at the launch. Twelve children have now joined and more will be welcomed as word spreads.

### Photos Wanted

As the TWT's editor and photographer could not attend this launch as promised, we are looking for launch photos to publish in our next Nurungi. If you have taken some snaps, or know of someone who has, please contact Trish or Lois on (02) 9744 8528. We will gladly pay for copies.



## Arnott's SAO Biscuits Celebrate 100 years

William Arnott was born in Scotland in 1927. During his teens he became an apprentice journeyman baker and pastry cook, earning two shillings and sixpence a week.

At the age of 20, he and his younger brother David set sail for Australia, a journey of 135 days. It was during the voyage that William met the young woman who would become his wife.

After arriving in Sydney they moved to Maitland, where they found work as bakers but William became swept up in the gold rush fever that hit Bathurst. Although he didn't find any gold, he set up a successful bakery on the goldfields and made enough money to return to Maitland and open his own bakery.

Following the disastrous Maitland floods of the early 1860s and the death of his wife, William moved to Newcastle with his five children. Newcastle was a busy coal port with a growing population and offered good business opportunity.

In 1865 William re-married and rented a small shop in Hunter Street where he built a small oven at the back. As the demand for his goods increased William worked around the clock.

Eventually the demand became too big for this small shop so William purchased the entire building and set up a larger, second shop.

One of his biggest sellers at this time was Ships Biscuits. These were essential food for the hundreds of ships that called at Newcastle. They were thick, dry, plain biscuits packed in large, sealed tins to ensure they would stay fresh for long periods at sea.

In 1875 William built his first factory in Melville Street, Newcastle - William Arnott's Steam Biscuit Factory - and fitted it out with the best bakehouse machinery available. Three years after it opened, Arnott's was employing fifty people and around 1.5 tonnes of biscuits were produced daily.

William, who always insisted on the best quality and freshest ingredient, purchased two hundred cows to ensure a constant and reliable supply of fresh milk, a vital ingredient for making his baked products.

In 1880 he decided it was time to expand to Sydney. His biscuits were a hit and became widely distributed in

the colony's capital city. Production at the Melvell Street plant increased significantly and by the end of the decade more than 300 people were employed.

Arnott's launched one of its most famous biscuits in 1882, Milk Arrowroot. In 1888 Arnotts registered its famous parrot as a logo. William thought the parrot suited the company and the image has since become synonymous with the brand, appearing on everything from biscuits to trucks. During the 1900s Arnotts began investing heavily in advertising to promote the benefits of the products, using their famous biscuit tins and the parrot logo.

In 1901 William Arnott died, aged 74. His five sons, who were all very knowledgeable about the business, oversaw the rapidly growing company. Growth was so great that the existing factory had become obsolete and a new factory was desperately needed.

In January 1906 a six and a half acre lot was purchased at a site west of Sydney now known as North Strathfield, and the new state-of-the-art factory opened. When it first opened, critics called the factory the Arnott's Folly, as many people believed it was too remote from the city to attract workers. However, it was obvious from the beginning that demand would require further substantial extensions and eventually the factory expanded to cover the entire site.

This was also the year two of Arnotts icons - SAO and Iced Vo-Vo - were launched. These biscuits were two of the first to have their names registered as a trademark.

In 1942 the old parent factory in Newcastle, from whose roots the entire Arnott's network had grown, finally shut down.

Several years ago Arnott's built a high tech biscuit making facility at Huntingwood, at the foot of the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Today, Arnott's employs thousands of people and supplies biscuits to more than 40 countries around the world.

Millions of Australians have grown up on Arnott's and, for them, Arnott's is more than a food company, it's a piece of Australia's history.

### SAO Biscuits

Despite popular belief, founder William Arnott was not a member of the Salvation Army. He had five sons, one of whom, Arthur Arnott, left his father's

employ to become a Salvation Army Officer. He worked at Territory Headquarters and wrote some wonderful songs.

Following William's death his five sons inherited the business. They introduced the SAO biscuit in 1906 and it is understood it was named in honour of their brother Arthur, the Salvation Army Officer.

### The Parrot Emblem

Legend has it that William Arnott's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Leslie Arnott, first drew the bird, taking as her model a Mexican parrot given to William by a captain of the Newcastle coal fleet. Mrs. Arnott produced a coloured sketch of the bird perched on a T-shaped bar and eating a biscuit.

Someone seeing the bird on the perch made the remark: "*On his T is the best Poll I see*". These words, of course, also express the phrase "*Honesty is the Best Policy*", which certainly tied in with William Arnott's business philosophy.

### Arnott's decorated tins.

Until the 1950s Arnotts biscuits were sold in 14 pound decorative tins and the grocer would weigh out, into brown paper bags, the required amount of biscuits for each customer. Smaller decorative tins were also made for special biscuit assortments.



For more than a hundred years, Arnott's has produced a limited edition range of brightly decorated tins for Christmas gifts or for special occasions, such as Father's Day. These special edition biscuit tins have been popular collectible items since they were first produced.

### Milk Arrowroot Biscuits

When launched in 1882, these biscuits were considered a good source of nutritious starch, so were marketed as an ideal food to help babies grow big and strong. An inspired advertising campaign was launched called "Living Pictures". As part of this campaign parents were encouraged to send photographs of their plump, healthy children, who had been fed Arnotts biscuits.

The healthiest babies were selected to appear in advertisements that ran in a

Sydney daily newspaper. These children were given a few shillings and a tin of Milk Arrowroot biscuits as a prize. The campaign ran for more than 80 years, during which time tens of thousands of parents submitted photographs.

## Advertising on the move.

The secret of success is easy and it has been proved by Arnott's – if you are going to do something, do it well. And Arnott's, since their earliest days, certainly made their transport vehicles a fleet of excellent mobile advertisements. Each vehicle is specially painted for an extreme, hard-wearing, high gloss. Then each vehicle is always clean.

See an Arnott's truck even on an out-back road, and you'll see the best travelling advertising in Australia.



## A Special Thank You to . . .

Vince Scerri for organising the repair and oil finishing on the old timber shed at Yaralla, adjacent to the squash court.

Thank you also to the willing band of helpers who assisted him in this work - Michael Douglas, John Walmsley, Ron Schmid and his friend John

What a difference it has made . . . and we now have the opportunity to use it for additional storage. Just check out the before and after photographs.



## Naomi Hart's letter

*"Imagine living about 130 years ago on the beautiful Yaralla estate. You would always be able to go for a swim in the huge pool, or play on the tennis courts – or even just walk through the Lavender Walk, then go down to the Sunken Garden. It would be wonderful to see the children's parties that Dame Eadith Walker held."*

It was with these words that I opened a speech in this same venue almost a decade ago. On that day, a large group had congregated with a common purpose – to protest against developments that would jeopardise an area that makes Concord and its surrounding suburbs so distinctive: the Yaralla estate.

Today, this crowd is also gathered out of a love for Yaralla: its history, its beauty and its uniqueness.

Trish and Jill have written a book in which the characters get to live the dream that I had at age ten: of going back in time to experience Yaralla as one of Dame Eadith's contemporaries would have. At that age I said, *"When I visit Yaralla, I feel like I am stepping into the past, stepping back in time."* Still today, I am captivated by Yaralla's stirring history, to which this book is a testament.

For me, however, Yaralla is more than just a time capsule – it does more than just preserve the past. It also molds lives now – a century and a half after the Walkers graced its grounds.

When I was ten, I felt that Yaralla gave you a *"sort of soft feeling as you stroll through the Lavender Walk, play in the grottos and the Sunken Garden."* I loved the stables, the open paddocks, the horses and wildlife, and *"listening to the wind rattling the bamboo."* These are treasured memories from my childhood, and experiences that still send tingles up my spine whenever I'm at Yaralla.

For the sake of history, for the sake of sheer beauty, and for the generations of families who share memories there, I believed when I was ten, and I believe now, that it is so important that we preserve this estate.

I'd like to commend Trish, Jill and their team for the marvellous book, which will, no doubt, become part of our historical memory of Yaralla. Thank you also, to Trish and Jill, for both including me in their novel, and allowing my voice to be heard at this launch, though I can't attend in person. I hope that you enjoy reading this book as much as I have, and that, as a community, we continue to both appreciate, and fight to preserve, Yaralla.

Naomi Hart

## From the Secretary's Desk

**Photocopying:** Volunteers are needed to finish off the photocopying of the last of our newspaper cuttings, and then to file them in their appropriate context.

Can you spare a little time, now and again, to see this important work through to the end?

We've almost finished the job and it will be nice to have these sorted for ready reference when enquiries come to us.

**Walker & Yaralla newspaper cutting:**

We have quite a lot of these which need to be collated into somewhat of a date order and then catalogued for ready reference. This work can be done either in your own home or down at the museum. Any offers? They should make interesting reading for you as well.

**Brick gutters along the driveway at Yar-**

**alla.** Have you noticed these on your visit? A vote of thanks to Bob Jones, who has undertaken the task of cleaning all the mud and rubbish out of them so that they can once again be seen and admired.

**Concord Street Fair on 15th October:**

We are not taking up a stall in the street for this but we will be combining with Sydney Wildlife Rescue to set up an information stall outside our museum. We will also be opening the museum, free of charge, for the day. If you can help on the day could you please contact Lorraine Holmes on 9743-2682

**Yaralla Open Day - 29th October.**

If you will be free to help us on this day will you please call me as soon as possible. If you have already called, could you please call again to remind me as I seem to have mislaid the list.

We will also be cleaning up the area and making preparation on the Saturday prior from 10:00 am and we could use your help then as well. Just let me know

## For Your Diary

Wed. 27th September - Walker Estates Committee Meeting

Wed. 11th October - General Meeting

Wed. 25th October, Executive Committee Meeting

Sun. 29th October - Open Day at Yaralla

Wed. 8th November - General Meeting

Wed. 22nd November - Walker Estates Committee Meeting

Wed. 13th December - Christmas Barbecue