



# "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

## The Celts

The Celts were a group of peoples that occupied lands stretching from the British Isles to Gallatia. They had many dealings with other cultures that bordered the lands they occupied, and even though there is no written record of the Celts stemming from their own documents, a fair picture of them can be pieced together from archeological evidence as well as historical accounts from other cultures.

The first historical recorded encounter of a people displaying the cultural traits associated with the Celts comes from northern Italy around 400 BC, when a previously unknown group of barbarians came down from the Alps and displaced the Etruscans from the fertile Po valley, a displacement that helped to push the Etruscans from history's limelight. The next encounter came with the still young Roman Empire, directly to the south of the Po. The Romans in fact had sent three envoys to the besieged Etruscans to study this new force.

Over two thousand years ago, they were a huge civilisation in Europe, the Balkans and Asia Minor.

Although they loved fighting for the sheer joy of honest battle, they never used their combat supremacy to build empires or found dynasties. They were equally happy to fight amongst themselves and their tribes were only linked by language, family honour, and a religion based on a deep respect for nature and its energies.

Physically they were very tall in stature, with rippling muscles under clear white skin. Their hair was blond, but not naturally so. They bleach it, to this day, artificially, washing it in lime and combing it back from their foreheads. They looked like wood-demons, their hair thick and shaggy like a horse's mane.

Some of them were clean shaven, but others, especially those of high rank, shaved their cheeks but left a moustache that covered the whole mouth.

The way they dressed was astonishing: they wore brightly coloured and embroidered shirts, with trousers called *bracae* and cloaks fastened at the shoulder with a brooch - heavy in winter, light in summer. These cloaks were striped or checkered in design, with the separate checks close together and in various

colours. From the descriptions they sounded a lot like a precursor of the Scottish tartan.

Some wore bronze helmets with figures picked out on them, even horns, which made them look even taller. Others covered themselves with breast-armor made out of chains. However, most contented themselves with the weapons nature gave them. They went naked into battle. Weird, discordant horns were sounded, and they shouted in chorus with their deep, harsh voices, while they beat their swords rhythmically against their shields.

Both men and women were warriors and they were one of the few races to give their goddesses equal footing with their gods.

This respect carried over into Celtic society, and as a result Celtic women had rights of property and person giving women status within their society. Children belonged to their mothers and inheritance passed quite sensibly through the female line. Priestesses were honoured and women were warriors as well as mothers and had equal rights with men. This belief did not appear to weaken the society as the old Celts were one of the fiercest, most spiritually advanced races of the Old World.

Both sexes wore heavy bronze, silver or gold armament and ornaments with intricate designs in the metal; often with their animal totem to repel enemies. They were skilled smiths and armourers who worked first with bronze and then in iron. Woodworking, pottery making and weaving were highly developed and for illiterate warriors they showed an unexpected appreciation for music, poetry and philosophy.

Julius Caesar defeated the last Celtic army in France in 57 BC. From that time on the



### Bulletin Board

**Wed. 8th November** - Hazel Bittman,  
Who were the Celts, and where  
are they now.

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

Celtic civilization gradually lost power and dominion over their lands. Over the years the Celts gave up their territories to Romans, Germans, Saxons and Angles.

They withdrew to Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Brittany, which are today the only officially recognized Celtic regions. All these areas have strong Celtic elements to their culture with some of them still speaking Celtic languages whilst others, though not speaking a Celtic language, have strong Celtic cultural roots.

The modern Celts have a varied and rich history and have influenced many of the worlds current great nations with their pioneering spirit and love of adventure helping to found some of the worlds most progressive and greatest nations.

However, the Celtic family has since spread throughout the world, especially the new world. Look at any atlas from early last century and see how much of the land mass is coloured red to show the British Empire and you'll have some idea of where the Celts are living now

## Thing's I've Learned

*That the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.*

*That one person saying to me, "You've made my day!" makes my day.*

*That having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful feelings in the world.*

*That being kind is more important than being right.*

*That you should never say no to a gift from a child.*

*That I can always pray for someone when I don't have the strength to help them in some other way.*

*That no matter how serious your life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act goofy with.*

*That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.*

*That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.*

*That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for*

*That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.*

*That the Lord didn't do it all in one day. What makes me think I can?*

## The Ode - and its Author

What has become known as "The Ode" is the fourth verse of Laurence Binyon's poem, *For the Fallen*. It was written after the horrors and the appalling casualties of the Battle of Mons had, soon after the outbreak of World War I, shocked Britain and the Empire. The poem was first published in *The Times* on September 21, 1914.

Binyon was so dissatisfied with the finished work that he screwed up the paper on which it was written and threw it in the direction of the wastepaper basket. Fortunately for us, he missed; and his wife, a writer and poet in her own right, discovered the crumpled paper, smoothed it out and recognised its merit.

That fourth verse, which expressed so eloquently the feelings of all who had lost comrades or loved ones in war, eventually became known to us as "The Ode" and is recited countless times on ANZAC Day every year and wherever and whenever we gather to remember those who laid down their lives:-

*They shall grow not old  
as we that are left grow old,  
Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn\*,  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning  
We will remember them.*

Those words are carved in stone at the entrance to the British Museum and on countless war memorials throughout the commonwealth.

Though 45 years of age and much too old to be conscripted, Binyon volunteered in 1915 and served in the British Army as a stretcher-bearer and nursing orderly.

Laurence Binyon was born in 1869 and educated at St Paul's School, London, and Trinity College, Oxford. From 1893 he was keeper of prints and drawings in the British Museum and was a noted authority on many branches of art, particularly Chinese paintings. He published several volumes of poetry, the first of which, *Lyric Poems*, appeared in 1894. He also wrote several plays. His major work of scholarship was his translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia* (*The Divine Comedy*). He died in 1944.

\*According to some scholars, the word in Binyon's original poem was *contemn*, a now rarely-used word meaning "despise, scorn, disdain, hold cheap or unworthy"; but whether it was the author or those who were unfamiliar with the word who changed it to *condemn* is by no means clear. By common usage, *contemn* has been replaced by *condemn* - "blame, censure, reprove" - the word generally favoured by those who recite the Ode, but not without strong objection from some traditionalists, who continue to insist that *contemn* is the more appropriate word.

(Legacy "Torchlight", Winter 2006)

## I Am A Poppy

*I blew in the wind,  
Surrounded by death,  
And wept for the loved one lost.  
I saw men fall beside me,  
Each one brave as the last -  
Too young to fight,  
Too young to perish,  
Too young to meet this end.  
I will stay and guard the lost for ever,  
And watch over where they fell  
As a reminder in years to come,  
For I am the poppy*

(This poem was written by Emma Hughes, age 12)

## Books for Sale

*Trish Skehan's three books on Yaralla:*

*The Walkers of Yaralla ..... \$22.00*

*Eadith, Concord's Royal Kin ..... \$22.00*

*Where the Blue Wattle Grows ... \$14.50*

**Bill Barlow's books:**

*Voyage of the City of Brisbane . \$15.00*

*Camels of Australia ..... \$15.00*

**Greg Blaxell's book**

*The River, Sydney Cove to*

*Parramatta ..... \$39.95*

*These are available from our Museum or from the secretary by arrangement.*

*If you're stuck for a Christmas present this year, why not consider a book. They are all good reading.*

## Walker Estates Chairman

Derek Williams has submitted his resignation as chairman of this committee owing to pressure of his work.

We would like to thank him for the advice and expertise he has brought to this committee and are sorry that he is unable to carry on in the position. However, he will remain as a member and assist in any way he can in the future.

We now need to fill this vacancy at our November meeting. If you would like to volunteer your services or if you would like to nominate someone (with their permission) please come to the meeting or advise the secretary prior to that date.

# Memories of my Nursing Stay at Yaralla

By Robin Broose (nee Nurse Burrows-Stewart)

Fifty years ago as a half trained nurse I was transferred for a 3 month duty term to the Dame Eadith Walker home, Yaralla. To the best of my recollection I was taken from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital at Newtown by the hospital bus and it was with a keen anticipation I took the journey, feeling I was off for a holiday in the country.

Through the beautiful wrought iron gates and down the long red gravel drive, passing a herd of grazing cows on vivid green fields then on to my first sight of the magnificent home almost hidden by high trees, then round the turning area where the bus pulled up at the impressive stepped entrance and large regal doorway. Like an English mansion seen only at the movies, hard to imagine in heavily populated Sydney. It was like a time capsule – glimpse of another lifetime, long gone.

Ushered into the marble-tiled foyer and past an impressive red cedar staircase then, feeling somewhat overawed, into a lovely large room overlooking the front lawn, from whence I could see a glimpse of the private wharf with its little white domed shelter shed down on Sydney harbour.

I wasn't given any time to waste on scenery as there was Matron, seated at a large desk, and she, of course, was all to business. I was given what I supposed was the standard pep talk, which mainly consisted of what was expected of my behaviour whilst under her care and where I was not permitted to go in the home, mainly because some areas were in need of repair. Also I was strictly forbidden to go near the Rajah's quarters (which I had never heard of before). Naturally, this only incited my curiosity and from then on I waited eagerly for a chance to adventure a bit.

Handed over to a nurse I was directed on to my new living quarters, a small cottage quite a walk from the home and next to the hospital dairy. My room was quite nice with a perfect view of the grazing cattle.

All meals were served in the magnificent dining room on the ground floor to the right of the foyer. Wood paneling lined the lower half of the high walls whilst a huge fireplace with the family motto carved below the mantelpiece, added a regal splendour to the room.

I seem to recall a glassed in small courtyard with a statue standing in a fountain visible from the dining room.

It was quite charming and was lit by natural light from a glass area in the upstairs ceiling.

The kitchen was across the corridor from the dining room and had a big bay window separated by wood posts and cross rails from the driveway. The cook, a very friendly woman, kept food scraps and every evening numerous Kookaburras landed on these rails and eagerly awaited their free tucker, giving their raucous chuckle in loud satisfaction before flying off to bed down for the night.

Many of the patients were housed on the upper floor where an adequate kitchenette room near the top of the big staircase was used by the staff to prepare meals trays, teas, etc.

The home was run basically on general hospital rules but with patients who were in recovery stages following accidents, surgery, amputations or other matters whereby the main aim was to get them back to a semblance of normalcy so they could get on with their life. On the whole they were quite cheerful and co-operative patients who enjoyed their recovery. I recall a time a bus was hired to take patients to the movies to see *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, which, though a difficult exercise to get wheelchairs and crutches organised, was great fun for all. Naturally this was before TV, but only by one year.

The nurses were a jolly lot and because of the isolation we had a good chance to get to know each other. On the ground floor, way at the back of the home, there was a room, like a cellar, where mattresses were stored. This was the nurses' hideaway where, if work was slow, we could steal away to have a quick cigarette and a bit of a gossip. This was also where we decided to renovate the swimming pool!

The pool must have been very popular with the social scene in Dame Eadith's time, with a good seawater filtration system. A grand changing and lolling area was at one end of the quite large pool (at a guess about 25 meters long), the whole surrounded by fencing. However, at the time we were there the pool, after years of neglect, had tree branches and leaf droppings fouling the stagnant water. As the weather had become very hot we decided we needed to cool down and if we used some big rolls of hospital gauze and long poles we might be able to clean out the worst of the debris,

well enough for a swim. With a major concerted (clandestine) effort we dragged the gauze through the water and achieved our goal. Swim we did. However, I must admit I had this awful feeling there were lots of pesky eels also swimming around in there, so it was a quick cool down and then out for me. Still, I don't think Matron ever found out!!

There was a big squash court building near the pool but, unfortunately, we were never able to get a door key. The Rajah's quarters were another defeat. It looked so lovely from outside with its oriental roof and lots of stained glass windows. Someone told me it was very lushly furnished with huge cushions of many bright exotic colours but I was only able to see the corridor, which was also ornamented with stained glass, from the main house to the door to his quarters.

The upstairs verandahs of the main home were also taboo and considered very dangerous. They were wooden and I think time had ruined the decking. A shame they were unusable as I am sure it would have been very pleasant for the patients to be able to sit out there with the spectacular view of grounds and the harbour.

I did have a tour through the milking shed, which was next to my cottage. The gentleman in charge was only too happy to give me the grand tour. I was really impressed by the modern equipment and sterilising methods used. All milk and butter supplied to RPAH was from this dairy. I was lucky to be at Yaralla in early spring as I saw several cows giving birth to calves, a great thrill for a city girl! The new calves gave us endless fascination with their wobbly legs and frolicking energy.

It was a real privilege for me to be selected to work at Yaralla for those months. They didn't need a big staff, so only a few trainees were given the chance to nurse there. The whole property was so gracious and the gardens and huge trees, with lovely walkways, remain strongly etched in my memory all these 50 years later.

*(Ed note: The Rajah's quarters mentioned here was the Indian Room, which contained the relics Dame Eadith brought back from an overseas visit. We are trying to obtain the various sections which were auctioned off in the 70s so that we can try to restore it somewhere on site. We would also like to thank Robin for sharing these memories with us as they have given us additional information about the estate.)*

## Phar Lap

Phar Lap was born 80 years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1926 in New Zealand.

Decades after his death he remains Australia's most famous racehorse; an ungainly chestnut gelding whose great stamina helped him win 37 of his 51 races between 1929 and 1932.

Phar Lap was purchased for the bargain price of 160 guineas by trainer Harry Telford and American owner Dale Davis in 1927. He was purchased, sight unseen, because of his thoroughbred bloodlines.

Back in Sydney Telford thought the purchase price was great news. That was until he clapped eyes on the 'bargain' being crated from ship to shore in Sydney Harbour. The big, gangly beast looked anything but a champion. Warts covered its face and there was an awkwardness to it that did not inspire confidence.

Real problems came when Davis saw his purchase. He was furious and wanted nothing to do with it. Telford and Davis struck a deal: if Telford covered the cost of training the horse he could keep two-thirds of the winnings – if there were any.

Telford was certain the horse's breeding would make him a champion. He had the horse gelded so it might concentrate on one thing only – running fast.

The horse repaid them by winning over 66,000 pounds in purse money during his career.

Phar Lap was the favourite in the prestigious Melbourne Cup race three times, winning in 1930 and becoming a national hero in the process.

After proving himself the best in Australia, Phar Lap was invited to the Agua Caliente Handicap, a race to be held in Mexico and offering a \$50,000 purse (big money in those times).

The opportunity to go on to race in America where new challenges awaited and the purses were much larger than most of the Australian ones was too much to resist, so off they went to a new adventure on a new continent.

Phar Lap travelled by ship across the Pacific ocean, arriving in rainy San Francisco and then had a 400 mile trip in a horse van to Tijuana where the weather was very hot. All this for a horse that had been facing winter back in his homeland.

Phar Lap had to carry 129 pounds, more than most of the other horse in the race, against some of the best



horses in America that had come down to Mexico for a chance at the \$50,000 purse, plus he was racing on dirt for the first time, not the nice, cushioned grass he had always raced on. On arrival he was starting to grow his winter coat, his body preparing for an Australian winter not a Mexican spring. Then he suffered a painful injury to his heel, which usually means time off. Because of the hoof injury, Phar Lap had to wear heavy bar shoes for the first time in his life.

A lot to overcome! But the Australian Big Red was ready; Phar Lap broke slowly, slowly gained ground as he got his stride, and then circled the field from last place in his usual style to win easily by two lengths in the record time of 2.02 4/5, cutting 1/5 second from the previous track record.

He was a celebrity, all the newspapers rejoiced at his win, calling him the "Super Horse", the "Australian Wonder Horse" and more. He was taken north to prepare for his American racing career. Alas, it was not to be.

Before he had another race, in Menlo Park, California, he became ill and despite all that could be done for him he died on April 5, 1932, only five years old. It has long been suspected that there was a plot to have him killed in America, but no information has ever turned up, and the actual cause of death remains a mystery to this day.

Phar Lap will always be remembered as one of the giants of racing, whatever name he is known by.

### For Your Diary

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.

This marks the end of our year. The next Executive meeting will be in January and the next general meeting will be in February.

## From the Secretary's Desk

**Newspaper cuttings:** To members who have any of our old newspapers they are going through for our archives, could you please let me know how you are going.

We've almost finished the copying of these and now just have to get them filed. Thanks to Beryl Law and Yvonne Williamson who have been helping with this work recently.

**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.

**Concord Street Fair on 15th October:** Thanks to Lorraine Holmes, The Wildlife Rescue Society, and the merry band of helpers, the stall outside the museum proved to be an outstanding success. The chance to get up close to the wildlife certainly brought the children around and they, in turn, brought their parents to visit the museum.

All in all, there was a steady stream of visitors all day and although we didn't charge any entry fees, we ended up with \$115 in donations and sale of unwanted books from our library.

**Yaralla Open Day - 29th October.** If you haven't contacted me to let me know you will be helping on the day, please do so as soon as possible so we can draw up the rosters.

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

**Christmas Party.** I have been looking after general catering for this in the past but would now like to hand over the responsibility to someone else. Any volunteers out there?

**Computer..** Thanks to the Council we now have a computer set up at the Museum. Are there any members who would be able to volunteer some time to help with any work that needs to be done?

**Museum Clean up:** The Museum will be closed during January to give us a chance to finish cleaning out the store room. If you are able to assist with any of this work would you please let me know and we will arrange a suitable date. It will probably take several days to get the job done.

**Museum Rosters:** We will be drawing up a new roster for 2007 - if you would like to add your name to our list of helpers we'd love to hear from you. The Museum is only open on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays and Saturdays of each month and you would probably only be called on every couple of months.