



# "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  
Bob Jones, 8765-9347

#### 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

**No.127**

**December 2006**



## Special Invitation

*to all our members, their families and friends*

*Come along to our Annual Christmas Barbecue*  
*on Wednesday, 13th December, 2006*  
*from 5:30 pm. till you want to leave*

*Rhodes Rotary Park (entrance through Fremont Street)*  
*Cost \$10.00 per head, children free.*

*All food and catering needs supplied BYO liquid refreshments*  
*Come along and enjoy a friendly, social gathering where we can all get to*  
*know one another in a more social atmosphere. Good time guaranteed.*

*For catering purposes, please telephone Lois on 9744-8528*

## Christmas Traditions and Customs

### Christmas Trees

The Christmas tree is thought to have developed from the "Paradise Tree," an evergreen tree decorated with apples and used in a popular play about Adam and Eve held on December 24th in medieval Germany.

Martin Luther is credited with being the first to decorate a tree with lights. As he walked through the woods near his home, he looked up into the night sky and thought about the star that led the wise men to the Holy Child. He then took home a small tree and decorated it with candles to represent the stars he saw that night and told his family about his walk through the woods and recounted to them the story of the Christ Child.

### Hanging Stockings

The custom of hanging stockings by the fireplace began around 300 A. D. Legend tells of three daughters of a poor miller who could not marry because they had no dowry.

St. Nicholas, upon hearing of their plight, passed by their house in the middle of the night and tossed three bags of gold coins down the chimney of the girls' house. The bags landed in stockings which the girls had hung to dry the evening before.

### Santa Claus

St. Nicholas was born in 280 AD, in Patara, a city of Lycia, in Asia Minor. He was the Bishop of Myra and was known for his great generosity and his love for children. He would often give gifts to people at night or while he was disguised so that his identity would remain secret. He died on December 6, 343. Many European countries celebrate this date as St. Nicholas's Day, and gifts are given on that day rather than December 25th.

The legend of St. Nicholas came to America with the Dutch settlers in New York. As America grew, so did the gift-giver's traits with each ethnic group adding more details. St. Nicholas's northern residence, fur-lined suit, and reindeer-pulled sleigh probably came from the Slavic regions; while his red suit, his secret arrival, and his giving to good boys and girls came from Europe. He was given physical attributes first by Clement C. Moore in his poem "The Night Before Christmas." Later, engravings by Thomas Nast in the late 1800's and paintings by Haddon Sundbloom, as advertisements for Coca-Cola in the mid-1900's, allowed the world to see Santa as we know him today. Thus grew the modern day Santa Claus.

## Gift Giving

The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas is attributed to the wise men who gave gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Christ Child. However, the true origin of gift giving at Christmas is this. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

## Christmas Lights

The tradition of placing lights in and around windows and houses began in the Middle Ages. These lights, which began as candles, became a symbol of Christ, the Light of the world. These lights held a two-fold purpose, to guide the Christ Child to Christian homes so that He would leave His blessing on the house and

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## A Soldier's Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas. He lived all alone  
In a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.  
I had come down the chimney, with presents to give,  
And to see just who, in this home did live.  
I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,  
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.  
No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand.  
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands,  
With medals and badges, awards of all kinds.  
A sober thought came through my mind,  
For this house was different, it was dark and dreary.  
I found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.  
The soldier was sleeping, silent, alone,  
Curled up on the floor, in this one bedroom home.  
The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder,  
Not how I pictured an Australian soldier.  
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?  
Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed.  
I realised the families that I saw this night,  
Owed their lives to these soldiers, who were willing to fight.  
Soon round the world, the children would play,  
And grown-ups would celebrate a bright Christmas Day.  
They all enjoyed freedom, each month of the year,  
Because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.  
I couldn't help wonder, how many lay alone,  
On a cold Christmas Eve, in a land far from home.  
The very thought brought a tear to my eye,  
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.  
The soldier awakened, and I heard a rough voice,  
"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice.  
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,  
My life is my god, my country, my corps."  
The soldier rolled over, and drifted to sleep.  
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.  
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still,  
And we both shivered from the cold night chill.  
I didn't want to leave, on that cold dark night,  
This Guardian of Honour, so willing to fight.  
Then the soldier rolled over and, with a voice soft and pure,  
Whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day, all is secure."  
One look at my watch, and I knew he was right,  
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a Good Night."



## School Days Remembered

During the years 1941 to 1947 school was much the same, except everything was in short supply. We had ration tickets for clothes, butter, petrol – lollies and ice cream were unheard of – we had no shoes to wear because they too were in short supply, and our parents couldn't afford to buy them anyway. It was off to school in bare feet! When the school photographs were taken the teacher would try to put all the children who wore shoes in the front row.

We played "footy" in the playground and marbles in the dirt. I think the only times we went away from the school were for Empire Days, inter-school sports days, the yearly swimming carnival at Cabarita Pool, once a year to the Ritz pictures plus Friday afternoon for swimming lessons in the Summer. I think Mortlake School held the inter-school swimming shield for 16 years straight – we had some wonderful swimmers then.

I can remember being taught to swim with a belt around my waist attached to a long pole with the teacher walking along the edge of the pool holding me up with the pole so that I didn't go under water.

When the Army moved into Concord they built their camp at the top end of Concord private golf course with the main entrance opposite Archer Street. They also took over about 15 houses on the north side of Links Avenue where the houses back onto the golf course. These houses were used for accommodation, administration and one was used as a cookhouse. This was our favourite because after school we would sneak along the back fences until we reached the cookhouse, where the cook would give us baked potatoes or bowls of custard. Needless to say, we would go back again and again.

Winter nights my mum would make a big jug of cocoa and send us across with it to the two sentries on duty at the main gate, so they would have something warm to drink.

My dad had to tape all the windows with masking tape in case the windows were shattered by the bombs. Also there were blackout curtains on every window. When we had Air Raid warnings each street had an Air Raid Warden who went along the street to make sure every house had blackout curtains drawn so that no light would shine outside.

We went everywhere on foot because we didn't have push bikes (no tyres) or cars (no petrol or tyres). There was no such thing as school excursions. When we went to Cabarita Pool it was "walk all the way". When we went to our Sports day at Concord Oval, near Burwood Bus Depot, it was "walk all the way".

We also had our gangs at school and nicknames like "Hot Dog", "Storky", "Ding Dong", "Spud". I was "Greenie" as were my three brothers, and to this day I'm still called "Greenie". It was all in fun.

In the primary school the classes were divided, with two rows of girls down one side of the room and two rows of boys down the other side – and if the boys were caught misbehaving the teacher would sit them in the middle of the girls' section, which was very humiliating. After school you would be ribbed by your mates and called a "sheila" – but it was all in fun.

Each class spent at least two hours a week in the front garden of the primary school doing weeding and gardening and I will say those gardens looked lovely, particularly all the roses when they were flowering. I wonder if they still teach the children gardening now?

Bill Green

*An Australian Peacekeeping soldier overseas wrote this. Credit is due to servicemen and women for our being able to celebrate Christmas. Printed in the October 2006 issue of The 1788-1820 Pioneer Gazette.*



## The Telephone Directory

Each year a new telephone directory arrives, as if by magic, on our doorsteps. Regardless of which one it is, most of us probably take it for granted. But that weighty volume has changed a lot over the years. One hundred and twenty six years ago the first telephone directory in Australia was printed. It was a single sheet of paper, and there were only 44 telephone numbers listed on it.

In 1880, only four years after Alexander Graham Bell had first demonstrated a practical telephone, the first Australian telephone exchange opened for business in Melbourne. It had 44 subscribers, and to keep them informed of who they could talk to, the Melbourne Telephone Exchange Company issued each of them that single sheet of paper listing the names and numbers. It was Australia's first telephone directory, and it was followed by similar lists in each capital city as telephone exchanges were established there.

Presumably, when the directors of the Melbourne Telephone Exchange Company printed up that little list, they gave very little thought to it, it would have cost very little to print a mere 44 copies of a single sheet. But as the telephone became more and more popular and people began to see its great value, the number of subscribers increased dramatically.

By 1887, when the Victorian Government took over the Melbourne Telephone Exchange, it had more than 1000 subscribers. By Federation, in 1901, there were more than 6,000 telephones in Victoria alone. The job of printing up the list of subscribers and distributing it was becoming an important and not a trivial task.

In 1911, the 100,000th telephone connection was made in Australia. At this time the directories issued in capital cities were not in the book form we are familiar with today, but consisted merely of a cover sheet, with the list of subscribers plus information on the working of the telephone attached to the back.

The advertising value of the directory was recognised soon afterwards. Tenders were called in 1916 for the right to supply protective covers carrying advertisements for all books supplied to public telephone booths in Australia, and for the right to issue a list of classified trades in Sydney and Melbourne.

By now producing the no-longer-so-humble lists of subscribers was becoming a major task. The 1926-27

Annual Report of the PMG's Department said: "The growth of the telephone service in Australia is strikingly exemplified by the size and appearance of the directories in the various States . . . the preparation and distributions of directories is now an undertaking of some magnitude . . ."

At that time directories were issued twice yearly.

The first list of subscribers classified under headings of their businesses and professions was included in the April 1926 edition. This was printed on coloured paper to distinguish it from the alphabetical section, and so the Pink Pages were born. The classified list did not necessarily include all of the practitioners of a particular trade or profession, but only those who had paid an advertising contractor for this special listing.

As a result of industrial growth in Sydney and Melbourne, from the May 1935 issue of the directories in those cities, every business and professional subscriber in the Metropolitan area within 24 km of the GPO was allowed a free listing in the Pink Pages.

Over the last 120 odd years the telephone directory has come a long way.

The basic purpose has always been the same, from that first single sheet to today's massive books – to enable telephone subscribers to make the best possible use of that wonderful invention which "annihilates distance".

In 1975 a change was made in the colour of the Classified directory, from pink to yellow, the internationally recognised colour for classified directories. The conversion was also prompted by a world shortage of pink paper and pollution problems associated with its manufacture.

However, over the years the telephone directory has acquired other functions, other values.

The Yellow Pages, for example, has become the nation's number one buying guide to products and services, and a complete and important advertising medium for businesses.

*(Telecom Australia "100 Years of the Telephone Directory", September 1980)*

### The Four Stages of Life

- \* You believe in Santa Claus
- \* You don't believe in Santa Claus
- \* You are Santa Claus
- \* You look like Santa Claus

## Museum Clean Up

The Museum will be closed for the month of January to allow us to do the final clean up of our store room. If you would like to help us we will be at the museum every Wednesday in January from 10:00 a.m.

Part of the cleaning will be to remove all our framed photographs or painting to take a photo of them (so that we will have a record of what is there without having to pull them out each time) and assess their relevance. Many of these are quite large and heavy so some able bodied helpers will be needed.

If you can come on any or all of these days, please let Lorraine (9743-2682) or Lois (9744-8528) know. If you can't come during the week but would like to help on one of the weekends, let us know and we'll make some arrangements.

**Dates are Wednesdays, 3, 10, 17 and 24th January**

### A Thought for Christmas

*Do you know what would have happened if it had been Three Wise Women instead of Three Wise Men?*

*They would have asked directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, brought practical gifts and there would be Peace on Earth.*

## Work at Yaralla

Vince Scerri and Peter Jones are currently planning some maintenance work on Yaralla. This could involve land clearing, labourers, tradesmen, general handyman. If you would like to put your name on this list so we can call on you when needed, please contact Vince on 9736-1003 or Peter on 9743-1909

### Christmas Barbecue

Have you let Lois know you will be coming to our Barbecue? We need to know no later than 6th December so we can organise the catering. Please do it NOW!



## Museum Rosters

During January Lorraine Holmes, Museum Chairman, will be contacting those of you who have been serving on this roster to check that you are still available.

However, we could do with some more volunteers, particularly for the Wednesday rosters. This only takes two hours (2:00 to 4:00 pm) on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays and will probably only involve you about once every 2 to 3 months. We could also use volunteers for the Saturdays if you have the time. This would probably only involve you about twice a year.

Telephone Lorraine on 9743-2682 or Lois on 9744-8528.

**You're Invited** to the  
Concord Garden Club's  
Christmas Party  
on Friday, 8th December  
at 2:00 p.m.  
at the  
Concord Community  
Centre, Gipps Street,  
Concord

## Some Christmas Quotes

There has been only one Christmas  
- the rest are anniversaries.  
~W.J. Cameron

Christmas waves a magic wand over  
this world, and behold, everything  
is softer and more beautiful.  
~Norman Vincent Peale

## Are you looking for somewhere to go over the holidays?

### On the Run: Daring Convict Escapes

Venue: Galleries, Mitchell Wing

When: 6 November 2006 to  
25 February 2007

Time: 9 am to 5 pm weekdays  
11 am to 5 pm weekends

Cost: Free

In the early nineteenth century Australia was a strange new land at the edge of the known world. This geographical isolation was a major reason for selecting the colony as a British penal settlement. The formidable barriers of distance, impenetrable bush and wide oceans made escape a daunting proposition - yet hundreds of convicts made the attempt.

Through manuscripts, rare printed books, artworks and relics, this exhibition reveals the varying fortunes of a number of escaped convicts and explores prisoner rebellions and mutinies in the colony.

## A Special Thank You

At this time we'd like to thank all our members and their friends who have volunteered over the year to help with Open Days, Museum, helping the secretary and in many other ways.

We couldn't operate without your help. We know that your time is valuable and we appreciate you giving us this time.

We don't always remember to say thank you at the time but rest assured you are truly appreciated.

We look forward to your continued help in the new year.

## From the Secretary's Desk

**Newspaper cuttings:** I'm sure there is one member out there who still has some old newspapers - it's you, could you please contact me.

**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. We're still looking for a volunteer, is it you?

**Museum Clean up:** If you can help on any or all of the days, please let us know now.

**Museum Rosters:** The new roster will be drawn up in January for the whole year so if you can help we need to hear from you as soon as possible.

**Walker Estates Committee:** Last meeting we accepted Derek Williams' resignation due to work pressures but the indefatigable Bob Jones has now taken over the helm and will, no doubt, do just as good a job. Welcome, Bob.

**Open Day Banners:** We are currently looking for some sites where banners advertising our Open Days can be displayed. The area would need to have fairly heavy passing traffic and have an area where the banner could be fixed to a fence or something similar. Do you know of anywhere? Let us have your suggestions

**New Members:** This month we'd like to welcome two new members - Mark Farlow and Mark Durance. We look forward to seeing you at our Christmas party and our meetings in the new year

**Yaralla Open Day:** Our next Open Day at Yaralla will be on Sunday, 29th April. Please mark it in your diary now!

**Guest Speakers:** Trish has already lined up some interesting speakers for the new year. Greg Blaxell will be coming in February to talk on "The Life of Gregory Blaxland" and "Brush Farm"; Gareth Debney, Council's Bush Care Co-ordination will be at our March meeting; and Bruce Dale, at our April meeting, will tell us about "The Man Who Died Twice" (you'll just have to come along to find out!).

If you know of anyone who would like to speak at one of our meetings, or if you have heard someone you think would be of interest, please contact Trish on 0414-434-172. Sourcing speakers is not an easy job and she'd appreciate any help you can offer.

**Nurungi Articles:** Thanks to those members who have sent articles or suggestions. Like guest speakers, it's not always easy to find interesting or topical articles. If you would like to contribute or offer suggestions for topics I'd like to hear from you.

**Merry  
Christmas**

From all of us to you and yours . . .

May your Christmas be a Happy One,  
and may the New Year bring you Contentment and Prosperity in overflowing measure