



"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.138

November 2007

Children of the Rocks

The Silent History

When the First Fleet arrived in Sydney Cove on 26th January, 1788, it carried a number of children amongst its 1400 or so passengers. What kind of lives did these children lead?

The Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority has undertaken extensive historical research to find out how children lived, worked and played from the early days of settlement to the turn of the twentieth century.

By the Sweat of Their Brows

Convicts had quickly nicknamed the west side of Sydney Cove "The Rocks" – an ideal choice as many of them would soon be engaged in hewing and cutting its sandstone. Children worked too, in a variety of occupations: "Several of the grown boys are apprenticed to Gov't or individuals, and may become useful members of society, as shipwrights, wheelwrights, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc., while the greater part assist their parent in their agricultural or domestic labour, which is the case with the greater part of the grown female children." (*Historical Records of New South Wales, 12th August, 1806.*)

Education of "The Rising Generation"

There was no teacher on board the First Fleet. Education was left to the Reverend Richard Johnson, the colony's first chaplain. The books which Johnson carried with him indicated the kind of education children could expect: "200 Exercises against Lying", "50 Cautions to Swearers" and "100 Exhortations to Chastity"!

These books would help provide the moral foundation for the children who came to be known as "The Rising Generation" – the generation of hope.

Education was a low priority for the early governors. It was mainly left to the clergymen such as the Reverend Samuel Marsden.

Marsden believed placement of abandoned and orphaned children in institutions would ensure control of their education and isolation from what he saw

as a morally corrupt society.

Academy on the Rocks

"Mrs Williams begs leave to acquaint Parents and Friends, that she has very recently opened an Academy in the Rocks at Sydney, for the reception of Children of her own Sex, to whose morals and external deportment the most scrupulous attention will be paid". (*Sydney gazette, August 1806.*)

By the early 1800s a number of private schools had been established to cater for the children of the wealthy, although many preferred to send their sons back to England for their education.

Boys might be taught reading, writing, "vulgar" and decimal arithmetic, mensuration "and book-keeping according to the Italian mode".

Girls (according to Mrs Williams) could expect to learn "plain and fine Needlework, Marking Tambour work, etc.". Orphaned or abandoned female children were more likely to be institutionalised, to protect them from moral danger. Governor King saw it as his duty to remove "deserted female orphans" from "scenes of prostitution and iniquity". It was thought that boys could more readily fend for themselves.

The first Female Orphan School was opened in 1801. It was located on The



Bulletin Board

14th November - Royal Flying Doctor Service (to be confirmed)

12th December - no meeting, but make sure you come to our Christmas barbecue

January - no meeting

February 13 - Gregory Blaxell, speaking about Banjo Paterson, apart from his poetry he led a very exciting and interesting life.

March 12 - Bill Allen speaking about the Sydney Ferries

April 9 - Nick Blascovic from Canada Bay Council; topic to be advised

Please mark the dates in your diary now so you won't forget and please bring along any of your friends who might be interested.

Rocks side of Sydney Cove in George Street; close by was the Tank Stream and King's Wharf.

Poor Child, Ragged School

By the 1860s, child destitution and neglect had become serious problems. Two organisations offered help. The Society for the Relief of Destitute Children proposed removal and isolation of children from their social origins.

The Ragged Schools promoted reform within the child's own environment. They aimed to improve the lot of the lower classes by providing formal education for children who otherwise would not have it.

In 1860 the Sussex Street Ragged School was opened. Within two years some 195 children were enrolled with an average daily attendance of 126. The movement expanded to include The Rocks where a branch school was opened in Harrington Street in 1862. Ragged Schools preferred moral discipline to physical punishment. It was accepted that many students, accustomed to regular beatings at home, would fail to respond when corporal punishment was employed.

Plague Upon Their Houses

By the 1850s, The Rocks was neither new nor rural. The bush was long gone, replaced by an expanding urban landscape. The wealthy moved to more salubrious suburbs, leaving behind those for whom escape was impossible.

Children suffered in overcrowded, dilapidated houses where sanitation was almost non-existent and the threat of disease ever present.

In 1900 The Rocks was struck by bubonic plague. Much of the old Rocks was demolished in an attempt to control the spread of the disease, but not before it claimed some 113 lives.

Home-made, Hand-made

There is little to tell us how the children of the first European Settlement spent their time when they weren't working. In the Rocks there were few open spaces; children played in the narrow back lanes.

Billycarts (or "four bobbers") made with cast off pram wheels – even carts without wheels – provided amusement. Other pastimes were marbles and hopscotch; there was the occa-

sional hand-me-down doll and iron hoops – probably from derelict wooden barrels.

In most photographs there are no toys. Instead we are confronted with images of shoeless children, smiling timidly at the stranger with the camera.

(This article was prepared by Alvina Hill, Education Officer, Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, for publication in "Heritage Conservation News", Vol5, No.4, 1990 and reprinted with permission.)

NOTE: If you want to learn more of the history and architecture of The Rocks why not visit The Rocks Discovery Museum, Kendall Lane. It is open 7 days a week from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and entry is free.



Smith's Dairy, Flavelle Street, Concord

George Smith (born 1861) and his wife "Annie" Philadelphia (nee Turner, born 1863) lived in a house built by George in Flavelle Street, Concord. They married in Sydney in 1882 and by the early 1890s had five children living and two boys who had died. Seven children in ten years.

George Smith owned a large Dairy at Concord named "Autrim" but needed somewhere with good pasture to breed and graze his cows that had dried up. He purchase a 1000 acre

property named Varro Ville at Minto, which had good grazing pastures, and his four sons, Percy, Austin, Arthur and Reginald, went into partnership under the name of Smith Bros. Ltd. when they came of age.

Pure Jersey milk, as it came from the cow, was sold in glass bottles with a gold cardboard top for babies and children. Jersey cows were noted for their rich cream milk and the Ayrshire cows for quantity.

The Smiths transported cattle by truck to and from Concord and Varro Ville. They were the first to use trucks for this purpose. The 1925 model Dodge truck could carry six cows with calves.

George made a special two-wheeled dray, pulled by one horse, to take his prize bulls to the Sydney and neighbouring shows. He built the dray low to the ground at the back so the bull was easy to load.


Weights were hung on the

bulls' horns for months to make them even for the show. Two of the prize bulls were "Problem of the Valley", imported from Tasmania, and "Royal Blue" from Scotland.

Tom Perry always drove the dray and bulls to the shows. He worked in the cattle yards for the Smiths and also sold manure to the locals at five shillings (50 cents) a load. When he put the price up to ten shillings the people complained but George said "If you can get it cheaper elsewhere, do so!"



Smith Bros. Ltd.
Flavelle St., Concord
Phone UJ 4340
CHILD STUDY DAIRYMAN
Delivers CHILD STUDY
FRESH RAW MILK direct from the Cows in
Burwood, Ashfield, Croydon, Five Dock, Concord,
Cabarita, Mortlake, North Strathfield, Strathfield, Rhodes,
Flemington, Enfield.



A Group of youngsters at Smith Bros Dairy

Dame Eadith Walker's Death

Eadith Walker spent the last years of her life in increasing isolation. She established herself in the Astor, an apartment block in Macquarie Street, Sydney, and later at the Savoy, where she lived in relative seclusion, visiting her estate at Yaralla only rarely.

She died on 8th October, 1937 at the age of seventy-six. Her body was cremated and her ashes interred at St. John's, Ashfield in the Walker family grave beside her father, mother and Aunt Joanna. A service was held at Yaralla which, according to the Sydney Morning Herald . . .

" . . . was more in keeping with her mind and wishes, for she disliked publicity of any sort. Here, in the hall, were her personal friends, her household staff and employees of the estate".

The service was conducted by the rector of the Holy Trinity Church, Concord West.

A young Concord resident recalled the day her mother took her along the Yaralla driveway to see the funeral cortege pass by. *"It was a sunny day and we took umbrellas to keep the sun off us. The drive from the house was lined with people."* She de-

scribed the hearse, the black plumes on the horses' heads bobbing in the breeze, and the clip-clop of their hooves.

A relative remembered attending . . .

"a special memorial service held in the hall and dining room. There were no chairs, everyone stood due to the large crowd. After the service was concluded her coffin was taken to the waiting carriage. Black horses, bedecked with black ribbons and plumes, pulled the funeral coach. It was a very dignified event, befitting her life".

Because of the long journey to Rookwood, where the cremation ceremony took place, the coffin was transferred to a 1934 Vauxhall hearse waiting at the gates of the estate..



The hearse going down The Drive

Dame Eadith's Bequests

A total of £18,900 had been bequeathed to charities.

As well, "Shuna" at Leura had been given to the Junior Red Cross and the Women's College of the University of Sydney received a fine collection of books from the Walker library.

A third part of the residuary estate was willed to the New South Wales branch of the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA).

The list of legacies indicates the scope of Dame Eadith Walker's charitable interest. The University of Sydney received £5,000, and the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, the RSPCA and the Home for Incurables at Ryde each gained £2,000.

St. Luke's Hospital and the New South Wales branch of the RSSAILA

both received a legacy of £1,000.

Smaller bequests were made to a variety of charities and hospitals: St. Paul's College; Western Suburbs Hospital and Ambulance Service; Holy Trinity Church, Concord West; Royal Hospital for Women; Church of England Home of Peace; Ashfield Infants Home; Sydney Hospital; Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institute; Haviland Homes for Children; St. Luke's, Concord; Rosebank Eventide Home, Glebe; Central District Ambulance; Boy Scouts Association; Rawson Institute for Seamen; Royal Naval House; Boys' Brigade; and the Church of England Boys' and Girls' Homes at Carlingford.

The range of beneficiaries was indeed wide.

Some Signs we've spotted . . .

IN A TOILET: Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.

IN A LAUNDROMAT: Automatic washing machines. Please, remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

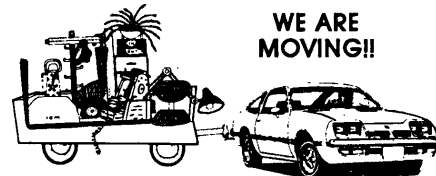
IN AN OFFICE: After tea break, staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board.

IN A HEALTH FOOD SHOP WINDOW: Closed due to illness.

Our Museum has a Future

A committee, consisting of Errol Grace, Lois Michel, Lorraine Holmes and Lola Sharp, has been set up to liaise with Council representatives to make sure our move goes smoothly.

At the end of this month we will have our first meeting with the Council representatives to discuss what needs to be done to make our move to the Bent Street Library as easy as possible.



Because the actual move will be quite a massive task we will be closing the museum in the next few weeks. Then, the real work will commence.

Everything will need to be packed, transported and then considered as to whether it should be stored away properly or put on display for the grand opening, which will probably not take place until about mid 2008 to allow us time to arrange the displays and get ourselves organised.

One pressing need for the moment will be cardboard cartons and packing material to protect our artefacts. If you have any clean material to help with this please let us know.

There is also a good possibility we may be able to get quite a lot of our packing needs through a "Freecycle" website. This particular group operates within the Sydney central, Inner West and Eastern Suburbs areas.

We would need volunteers who could drive out to pick up these cartons, etc. from various locations. Would you be able to help with this if we start making an appeal through them?

(Note: Why not check out this site for yourself - http://groups.yahoo.com/group/freecycle_sydneycentral/)

We will also need help to handle the actual packing up and labelling of cartons ready for transport to our new home.

If you can help with either of these, please contact Lorraine on 9743-2682 or Lois on 9744-8528 to let us know the days and times you could be available.

We will need the help of all our able bodies members who can spare some time as this will be a mammoth effort.

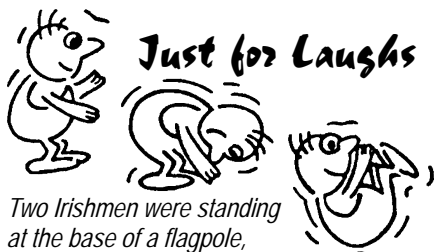
Please, can you help?

Bill wants to see your ferry pictures

Bill Allen, who will be our guest speaker next March, has been collecting picture of Sydney ferries since 1950. He has asked for our help.

"I am interested in filling some gaps in my collection and would be interested to hear from anyone with old family photograph albums which may contain photographs of Sydney or Manly ferries or harbour and river scenes", Bill said. "Photographs taken during the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s are of particular interest. Please note, I do not wish to keep your original photos, only permission to gain a copy."

If you, or your friends or neighbours, have any you would allow him to copy please contact the secretary on 9744-8528.



Two Irishmen were standing at the base of a flagpole, looking up. A lady walks by and asked what they were doing.

Paddy: We're supposed to find the height of this flagpole, but we don't have a ladder.

The lady took a spanner from her purse, loosened a few bolts and laid the flagpole down. She pulled a tape measure from her pocket, took a few measurements and announced that it was eighteen feet and six inches. She then walked off.

Mick: Now, to be sure, isn't that just like a blonde! We need the height and she gives us the length of the pole.

A man and his wife were sitting in their living room and he suddenly said to her: "Just so you know, I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that should ever happen I want you to pull the plug." His wife got up, unplugged the television and threw out all his beer.

For You? Diary

Wed. 24th October - Executive Meeting

Wed. 14th November - General Meeting

Wed. 28th November - Walker Estates

Wed. 12th December - Christmas Barbecue

Wed. 9th January - NO general meeting

Wed. 23rd January - Executive Meeting



Long-time member Owen Nannelli, passed away this month. Owen was a member of the Concord Historical Society and retained his membership when we changed to the Concord Heritage Society.

Also Ethel "Stalkey" Lane, mother of our newest member Ray Lane, passed away recently.

Our sincere condolences are extended to both families.

Our Museum There's lots to be done

There's a lot more to conducting a museum beyond opening up for visitors.

With our move to the new premises we will have the opportunity to rotate displays, set up special displays highlighting our past - whether it be anniversaries, industries, businesses, schools, and so on.

This will help to keep our museum forever fresh and inviting to visitors to keep coming.

As part of the work we need to consider all our artefacts to decide what is important and/or relevant to our area.

To this end we have received a grant of \$1200 to have Linda Raymond, a museum consultant and interpretation specialist, come to train our members in "Significance Assessment".

This training will take place on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th November. It will be a full 2-day training course and we would like as many of our members as possible to come along and take part.

Tentatively we will be meeting at the museum at about 9:00 am on the Thursday and then move to the Senior Citizens' Centre for the training.

This training is just the beginning in educating members to be able to run our museum more efficiently.

Why not come and join us for the two days - the more we have the better it will be for the future of our Museum. Just give Lois a ring so she can keep you advised of details.

From the Secretary's Desk

Keys to Museum and Yaralla: I am trying to update my key records as there seems to be some keys out there which I don't have listed. If you have keys to any of our buildings would you please let me know.

Tours Organiser: A special thank you to Sandra Elliott, who has volunteered to take on this task. Sandra is a very willing worker and I'm sure you will give her all your support.

A Register of Pioneer Families, Vol.1. The 1788-1820 Pioneer Association has given us a couple of copies of this book. If you would like one - no charge - please contact me.

Volunteers Meeting and Barbecue: We were a little disappointed with the attendance but those who were able to come put forwards many ideas to improve our days and also enjoyed the barbecue and socialising. Many thanks to Mark Durance who undertook the duty of cook - a most delicious lunch.

Christmas Barbecue: Don't forget to let us know if you will be coming to our end-of-year Christmas Barbecue on 12th December. We will need to know by 28th November for catering. Family and friends are also welcome.

Concord Street Fair: Lorraine again organised for our museum to be open for the day and we had a steady stream of visitors during the day. Although we did not charge for the day we received almost \$100 in donations. Many thanks to Lorraine and her happy band of helpers. Thanks also to all those who walked the streets delivering or handing out flyers.

Significance Assessment Training for the Museum: Please let me know as soon as possible if you will be available. This is very important work that needs to be done. After your training it is work you can undertake as and when you have some time to spare.

Museum - packing of our artefacts: Don't forget - we need clean cartons and any packing material (bubble wrap, foam peanuts, newspapers) which you might have. We also need some volunteers to be able to drive around to pick up anything we can obtain through the Freecycle web site.

Yaralla Open Day: We have applied to hold our next one on Sunday, 13th April. Please put the date in your diary now.

Council Community Grants: We received \$1000 in this years round and have now purchased 3 gazebos for use at Yaralla as well as a Digital Projector which can be used for guest speakers and in many other ways. Our sincere thanks to Council for their support

New Member: Welcome to Ian Madden who hails from New Zealand. Our first overseas member. Sorry we can't meet you in person at our meetings but we hope you enjoy getting to know us through our regular newsletter. Ian is a descendant of the Masefield clan, hence his interest.