



# "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

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#### CONCORD HERITAGE MUSEUM

5 Wellbank Street  
Open 2.00 - 4.00 pm  
on 1st and 3rd  
Wednesdays & Saturdays

**No.141**

**February 2008**

### The Walker Chronicles (continued)

## The Road to Camden

#### *The Journey Begins: Thursday, April 13, 1837*

Thomas Walker and William Dutton left Sydney on Thursday afternoon, April 13 1837, and proceeded to the Ship Inn at Liverpool. Here they obtained lodgings for the night. *'The inn kept by Cummins, formerly in Sydney, seems remarkably clean, quiet and well ordered.'*

Walker and Dutton had arranged to meet with two other gentlemen, Lachlan McAlister and a surveyor named John Brown, at Yass on April 20, when their overland journey to Port Philip would officially begin.

A horse-drawn cart, filled with tents, provisions and clothes, had been despatched a few days previously, the driver, Charles, being given instructions to proceed to Yass. Thomas and his friends would ride on horseback. *'We shall have two or three servants, besides a "Black Fellow" with us, so that our party will be tolerably strong.'*

Thomas made note of the sad state of the road. *'It is in bad repair, particularly the half nearest Sydney. Few or no improvements have been made on the roadsides since we passed through them together some years ago.'*

*The only improvement that I observed in progress is on the Burwood estate which, you are aware, has been lately sold in small allotments. Some of the new proprietors are clearing and erecting buildings.*

*One, a very great improvement, has been made by the erection of the celebrated Lansdown Bridge, over the creek formerly crossed by Bowler's Bridge. The new structure is of stone, a single arch of 120*

*feet span, and is both handsome and substantial. It is, I believe, the first bridge of the kind in the colony, and does credit to the builder and architect as well as to the governor, in whose reign and under whose directions it has been erected.'*

Thomas mentioned that the next day, Friday, would be market day, and that many carts has passed them by, laden with hay but *'very few drays with grain.'*

*'The number of horses now kept in Sydney is indeed very great; more, I should think, than in any other town of its size in the world.'*

He observed that *'the weather has been very pleasant, a clear atmosphere and mild temperature. Indeed, with the sun shining as it did full in our faces, we felt it rather too warm, but now, it being dusk, the temperature is delicious.'*

They left the inn the following morning and journeyed to Camden via Glenfield, Leppington, and Raby. In some places he recorded that the road had not yet been made, but that they traversed *'over the natural surface of the ground. Between this and Camden the road winds round the spurs of a range of hills running north and south, entitled the Razor Back, over which the principal road to Argyle now ascends.'*

*'A few miles beyond Raby the scenery improved, inasmuch as we had the view of a few thousand acres of cleared land, extending to the Cow-pasture river, well cultivated*



#### Bulletin Board

**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.*

and with variegated tints from green to yellow, according as the crops were springing or had been removed by the sickle.'

He described the 25,000 acres of Camden Estate as 'of princely extent and value, much of it very rich and alluvial, having about eighteen miles frontage to the river.' He toured parts of this estate with the Macarthurs. Thomas commented that the family had about five hundred acres under cultivation and mentioned well-built stacks, and horse-powered thrashing and grinding machines at work.

'The mansion, garden and ornamental grounds far surpass anything I had before seen in the colony. They are, at the same time, substantially good and tasteful, and though costly, there is no display of mere wealth. They seem not intended merely to please the eye, or for show, but for use and comfort, and are at the same time elegant.'

'What struck me as most rare in the Camden pleasure-grounds was the green lawn, an ornament almost peculiar to, and which I had not seen in perfection since I left England. It is as perfect at Camden as could be and looked very beautiful.'

At Cutter's Inn on April 15, Thomas strolled around after breakfast, and described the view with the Razor Back hills in the background. 'There is, for this country, a very good garden in front of the cottage, in which there are a great many vines.'

Thomas Walker completed his journal entry for the previous day with notes on passing through 'Bargobrush, a scrubby barren country, thickly timbered with stunted trees. The road is level enough, but much out of repair.'

After leaving Cutter's Inn, Thomas visited Matthew McAlister's property near Mittagong. (Matthew was related to Lachlan, but Thomas did not elaborate further.)

'Matthew was kind enough to accompany us as far as Myrtle Creek, distant by the road ten or eleven miles, but taking us by a bridle path across a deep gully, the channel of the Stonequarry Creek, and impracticable for carriages.' They passed through a section of Major Antil's estate where the road 'makes a most extraordinary bend so as to head the creek.'

After deciding not to stop at Crispe's Inn at Myrtle Creek, they farewelled Matthew and rode a further seven miles to Lupton's Inn, arriving at 1pm in time for a dinner of, 'grilled fowl, bacon, potatoes and green peas. The inn is kept by a young person who lost

her husband lately, by his falling from his horse.'

Gray's Inn, Sunday evening April 16. 'We arrived here two hours ago, having been again overtaken by night before getting to the end of our day's journey. We had, however, a beautiful moon and enjoyed our ride in the light it gave, the evening being clear and cool. On getting to the top of the Range this morning, we stopped to observe the prospect, which is very extensive and rather pleasing.'

During their journey they had passed through Kirkham, the vast estate of the late explorer John Oxley, former Surveyor General to the colony, whom Major Thomas Mitchell had succeeded in that office on the death of Oxley in 1828.

---ooOoo---

## Myrtle Creek

Prior to the official naming of Tahmoor in 1916, the area was generally known as 'Myrtle Creek' or 'Bargo' and for a short time 'Cordeaux'. Before colonial settlement, Tahmoor was part of the lands occupied by the Gundungorra people, evidence of their ownership remaining along the various creeks in the locality.

Surveys for settlement were not carried out until 1821, Tahmoor being part of the Cowpastures which until that time, was proclaimed out of bounds to protect the wild cattle, the progeny of the two bulls and four cows which had escaped from the infant colony in 1788.

The first land grants were small, ranging between 30 and 80 acres with the rear boundaries being either Myrtle Creek or the Bargo River, the recipients being mainly ex convicts and their families who endeavoured to survive off their small grants by growing maize, wheat and corn. Within 15 years the majority had sold their land and moved away, their holdings eventually being consolidated into one property which became known locally as the 'Myrtle Creek Estate'.

By 1841, there were 43 people living at Myrtle Creek within the four households of James Crispe, James Connor, Joseph Howard and Josiah Bent. James Crispe's household accounted for 24 residents, 20 of whom were employed on his property, which included the local Inn. The Electoral Roll of 1859-60 shows only nine residents and their families living at Myrtle Creek. This of course could be misleading as to the actual number resident in the area as only landholders were at that time entitled to vote and thus appear on the Electoral Roll. It is also difficult to distinguish some of those who gave their address as 'Bargo' who lived in what we would now consider Tahmoor from those residing in the Bargo area of today.

The railway was extended from Picton to Mittagong in 1867, the line being laid through nearby Thirlmere, some three kilometres away. The effect of the railway was to cause the closure of the then two inns as the number of travellers on the Great South Road decreased.

## Australia Day

Traditionally, the explorer Matthew Flinders is credited with having invented the word 'Australia'. This belief is based on comments made by Flinders in the introduction to his book *A Voyage to Terra Australis* (1814), concerning his use of the name 'Terra Australis' instead of 'New Holland'.

January 26 is officially Australia Day, Formally Anniversary Day, and then Foundation Day, this annual holiday and observance commemorates the landing of Captain Arthur Phillip and the convicts of the first fleet at Sydney Cove (N.S.W.) on 26 of January 1788.

The first official celebration of Anniversary Day, was in Sydney on 26 January 1818, the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of New South Wales as a British Colony. By Governor Macquarie's order there was a salute of thirty guns followed by official celebrations.

*Taken from Australian Folklore by W. Fearn-Wannan Page 19.*

## Australian Flag

The Australian Flag was "born" in 1901 when a schoolboy, Ivor Evans of Melbourne, won a design for Australia's national flag.

The judges said his design had three outstanding qualities, it displayed the Southern Cross, the brightest constellation in the Southern Hemisphere and by the presence of the UNION JACK it illustrated Australia's loyalty to the Empire. Below the UNION JACK is the Star of Federation, with its seven points - one for each of the six States and the Australian Territories.

One point of this Federal Star points exactly to the Cross of St. George, a tribute to England. The Australia Flag has a blue background.

*Taken from the New International Illustrated Encyclopaedia Volume 3 P.171 b.*

### One Day at a Time

One day at a time – this is enough,

Do not look back and grieve over the past, for it is gone;

And do not be troubled about the future, for it has not yet come.

Live in the present

And make it so beautiful

That it will be worth remembering

Ida Scott Taylor

# “Once a Jolly Swagman”

If you asked almost any non-Australian what is Australia's national song the chances are that they would reply, “Waltzing Matilda”. This ballad with its haunting tune and homely words is known wherever Australians are found – and that covers practically the whole world.

Many versions are given of the origin of the term “Waltzing Matilda”; there are also many accounts of the inspiration for the words and the source of the tune. The most authentic story concerning the term seems to come from East Gippsland, Victoria. This is handed down as folk tales among the settlers in the district of tall timbers.

Matilda is said to have been the first woman swaggie to be seen in Victoria. She and her husband, Joe, were very well known and respected throughout East Gippsland; their surname was unknown and the wife was always called Mrs. Swaggie Joe. Matilda and Joe were entirely happy in their carefree life, wandering the old bush tracks winter and summer, Joe with his bluey on his back, Matilda with a smaller swag on hers.

Matilda often told how her father reacted when Joe asked him for his daughter's hand.

“What! My daughter marry a common swaggie. A man who can't offer her even a shack to live in! Do you think I'd let you go a-waltzing Matilda all over the countryside?”

Despite this opposition the girl married Joe and set off with him on a lifetime of wandering through the spacious countryside.

Eventually the day came when they grew infirm, their youthful strength and vigour sapped by the years. They were offered a home by a kindly couple living at Bruthen, but they refused, saying that they could never live indoors like other folks, and they would go on until they came to the end of the track.

Then one sad day Matilda was taken ill in the morning and died at midday. Swaggie Joe dug her grave at the foot of an old gum tree and sat with his arms about her until it grew dark. Then he buried her.

Next morning as he prepared to fasten on his bluey he muttered, “Oh well, Bluey, you'll have to be Matilda to me now, and we'll waltz along together 'til the end.”

Swaggie Joe's name for his bluey was soon adopted by other sundowners. “Waltzing the blue” was already their idiom for tramping with their swag, so it was not long before it evolved into “Waltzing Matilda”. It is said that Joe developed the habit of talking to his swag when alone in the bush. He was sometimes seen with it propped against a

tree while he talked to it, addressing it as Matilda.

**A.B. (Banjo) Paterson:** The verses we now have come to know as “Waltzing Matilda” were written by the Australian Poet A.B. (Banjo) Paterson in 1896, when he was staying at the home of his fiancée, Miss Sarah Riley, at Winton, Queensland. One day they visited Mr. Robert McPherson, the owner of Dagworth Station. McPherson and his sister, Christina, were driving Paterson and Miss Riley home when, in a paddock, they saw an old swagman trying to catch a sheep for his tuckerbox. McPherson stopped the buggy, exclaiming “He's after a jumbuck!” And, jumping down, he chased the swaggie away. (Jumbuck is the name used by Aborigines for a sheep.)

This incident caught Paterson's imagination and he softly spoke the first lines of “Waltzing Matilda”.

Miss McPherson was intrigued with the words and told the poet that some time previously she had heard a brass band playing a tune that she thought would suit them. When they reached Miss Riley's home Paterson and Miss McPherson sat down at the harmonium and adapted the tune to the words. The tune is an old Rochester (Kent) marching air of the Marlborough Wars. In 1903 Marie Cowan set the music in its present arrangement.

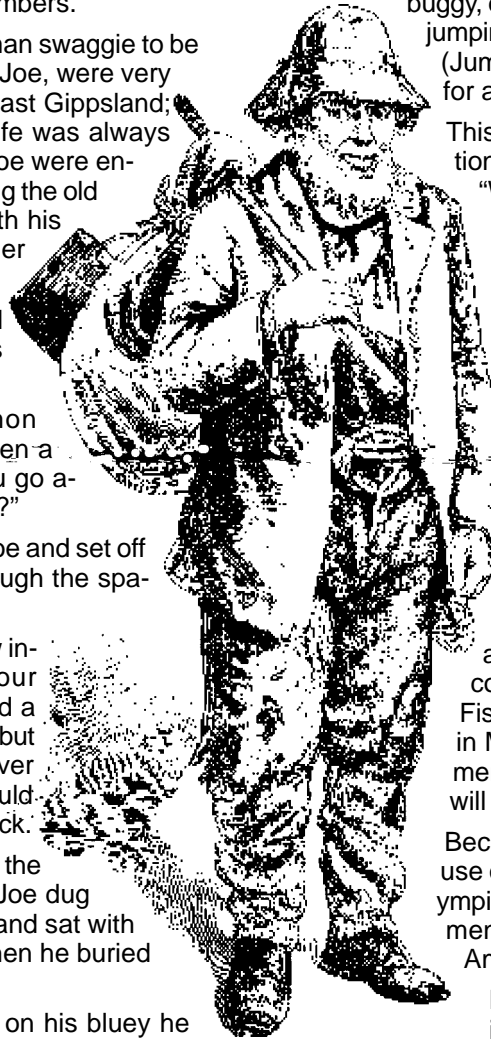
**Ed Note:** Many Australians don't realise that “Waltzing Matilda” is actually copyright in U.S.A. It is claimed by Carl Fischer New York Inc. the U.S., copyright in Marie Cowan's 1903 Sydney arrangement, falsely registered as a composition, will expire in 2011.”

Because of the Carl Fischer copyright, the use of the Australian tune in the Atlanta Olympics Closing Ceremony resulted in a payment by the Australian organisers to an American company.

**Ergo . . .** If we decide to make “Waltzing Matilda” the *real* national anthem, we will have to either negotiate the copyright back from an American company, or pay royalties on such occasions that our national anthem is played in the United States.

Australians who discover this for the first time tend to say things like “C'mon, you're 'avin' me on? Waddya think this is, bushweek?”

*(Reprinted, with permission, from the “Heron Flyer”, newsletter of Heron Airlines Australia)*



## It's all in a Point of View

Though my typewriter is an old model, it works quite well except for one of the keys. Thirty-four keys that operate, but just one key not working makes the difference. (One out of forty-three keys is little enough, but it surely impacts progress.)

Sometimes it seems to me that our society is not too unlike my typewriter in that not all of the people are working properly.

One may say, “Well, I'm only one person, I can't make or break my Society.” But for a Society to be effective it requires the active participation of every member. So, the next time you think your attendance at the meeting, or your participation in our other activities is not needed, remember my old typewriter and say to yourself: “I'm a key person in our Heritage Society and need to work much!”

# Concord's Telephone Exchanges

Until the start of WWII the district of Concord was served by two telephone exchanges. The eastern side plus Central Concord, Mortlake and Cabarita were served by the Burwood Exchange (UJ/74) on the dial, and the western side, North Strathfield, Concord West and Rhodes by the Homebush Exchange (UM/76).

In the late thirties S.T.C. (Standard Telephones and Cables) England brought out a new type of Automatic Exchange switching equipment called 2000 type. They sold this around the world and sent their own staff to install it. South Africa, India and Australia was the path of the engineers and technicians who installed the first equipment at Concord Exchange (to become UF/73).

In Sydney the first 2000 type exchanges were Mascot, North Sydney and Redfern (this, of course, was replacement of existing gear). The North Sydney, and more so Redfern, cutovers were considered unsatisfactory, mainly because S.T.C. had not appreciated the high calling rate in these areas and didn't, at first, install more switches suited for a business area. This was a bonus for the next exchange to be built – Concord. Because of the Redfern bad report S.T.C. London sent to Australia a top engineer (John Prickett) with instructions that Concord was to be a 'model' exchange with a trouble-free cutover.

The technician, with this start, had a flying start. Built on a corner with a golf links on two sides, and in an otherwise quiet street, the dust problems were negligible. The majority of exchanges before had been built beside or over post offices, which are mainly in the busiest streets of a suburb.

By the way, the address was 37 (I think) Yaralla Street altho' it is the first building in the street. This came about thus: Yaralla till 1938 consisted of two streets, Yaralla Street East went from Majors Bay Road to Rickard Street and West from Nullawarra Avenue to Queen Street, with the golf links dividing them. For the 150 celebrations the Duke of Gloucester was the royal rep. and the Yaralla Street East was renamed Gloucester Street. To save postal chaos the street numbers remained the same.

My first remembrance of Concord Xch was calling in whilst the equipment was being installed in 1940-41 as a trainee, working outside from Homebush. I then was fortunate enough to complete the last six

months of my training working inside the 'model exchange'. To appreciate this one would have to consider that the older exchanges had been built before WWI and had 'just grown' with the dust problems enormous, making a spotless working area really something special.

However Tojo and his mates created the first problem. The fall of Singapore and then the downward progress of the Japanese, the subs in Sydney Harbour, etc., meant that telephone exchanges had to be protected. The risk to Concord exchange was considered to be heightened by the proximity of the gas works at Mortlake. They built a 14 foot high, 2 foot thick baffle wall around the exchange, then strengthened the ceiling with what appeared to be 6 inch x 1 inch Oregon planks propped up by huge Oregon timber, I reckon 6 inches by 6 inches, and then put many thousands of sandbags in the ceiling. Although this gave some sense of security from stray 'near misses' our clean, dust-free exchange nearly reverted to the standard of the older places.

The first subscribers were numbers UF1000 to UF2399. Next came 2400 to 2799.

When I returned in 1947 the first new installation was 2800 to 2899 and then a big cutover with then 3000 numbers coming in plus the elimination of letters off the dial and we now had the 73 exchange.

---ooOoo---

This article came from Jenni Miller who wrote: *My father John (Jack) Meade worked at the Concord Exchange during the 40s and 50s. He wrote the attached after his retirement when he commenced writing short pieces in his journal of his earlier memories. Unfortunately, all his writing is in pencil and sadly, perhaps due to his over fondness for a drink, their legibility to reproduce as a direct copy is not easy.*

*This particular piece on the Concord Exchange I have transcribed exactly in the words he had written. I believe, were it not for his health problems, my father would have written more about his long working history with PMG/Telecom/Telstra. He had immense pride in his work with the same organisation for 49 years. The only faltering was around 1942 when his only brother was killed in Malaya. We found after dad's death rejection from all three services (Army, Navy, Air Force) which he had tried to enlist in. They would not have him due to the essential service nature of his job.*

*My parents lived in Arthur Street, Concord from 1944 to 1995.*

## From the Secretary's Desk

**Reel-to-Reel Recorder:** Does anyone out there have one of these machines we can borrow for a short while? In cleaning up my office recently I have come across several reels, most unmarked.

However, one of them is labelled as being an interview with Frances Ashton (Ashton's baths). I'd like to check the contents of all the reels to see if there is anything else relevant.

**Executive Meeting:** Just in case you haven't updated your diaries for this year, the next Executive Meeting is on Wednesday, 23rd January at 7:30 pm in the Senior Citizens' Centre.

There are quite a few important matters for discussion and we'd like a full attendance if possible.

**Management Plan for our new Museum:** To those who took the sample documents regarding preparation of such a plan - have you had a chance to look these over and make notes of anything you think should be included? This is needed by Council as soon as possible. We will probably have a brain-storming for ideas at the February meeting so hope there'll be a good attendance there.

**Reminder for our Museum Volunteers -**

**Friday, 25th Jan** - meet at museum at 10:00 am to finalise cataloguing.

**Thursday 31st Jan and Sat 1st Feb** - Linda Raymond will be back with us for the training sessions.

Note these dates in your diaries now.

**Seniors Week 2008 Writing Competition:** If you are over 60 years of age and residing in the City of Canada Bay area you are eligible to enter. The theme is "**Pleasures of Each Age**" - poetry or prose of no more than 100 words (typed, double space preferred). Leaflets and entry forms from the secretary or Council. Closing date: 4:00 pm on 14th March.

## For Your Diary

**Wed. 9th January** - NO general meeting

**Frid & Sat, 10th and 11th January:** Meeting with Linda Raymond at the Museum at 9:00 am for 9:30 start

**Sat. 12th January** - Working Bee at Museum - commencing 10:00 am - **AND THEN ON AN ONGOING BASIS FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS**

**Wed. 23rd January** - Executive Meeting