



"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

Tours Organiser

Sandra Elliott
9797-1040

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.146

July 2008

Walker Chronicles (part 6)

Foreign Luxuries from Sydney.

(C. O'Brien's property, Yass: April 30, 1837)

'After dinner, I left the gentlemen to their cigars and rode over as far as Bald Hill, and ascended to the top of it to get a view of the plains and surrounding country. Dutton and Brown went to the township to enquire whether our lost horses had been found or the newly-bought ones had arrived.

Sheep and wool are the objects chiefly thought of, they procure foreign luxuries from Sydney, but prevent the production of domestic comforts in the way of eating and drinking. There is almost everywhere (at present at least, for I am assured in ordinary seasons it is otherwise) a poverty of milk, butter, cheese, eggs, poultry and vegetables, to say nothing of horse-corn and hay, which are scarce, and of home-brewed beer, which is rarely ever seen, whilst Dunbar's bottled pale ale is generally met with.

I must not omit also that we had the pleasure and advantage of the society of three handsome well-dressed young ladies, with music and singing; a well-selected library, and with the newest and attractive periodicals of the mother country, the latest Sydney newspapers and all this contrasted with a rude, temporary cabin and other anomalous circumstances. Good Night.

Monday evening, May 1: *'Here, I am sorry to say, we still are, and in a worse predicament than ever. You may conceive my vexation and annoyance when I tell you that Flibberty and McAlister's horses are absent and lost. They were last night under an enclosed shed at O'Brien's, feeding on his hay, and by some carelessness of the people they have been allowed to make their escape. I have not the least hope of their being recovered, nor had I any from the moment I heard of their being absent. Flibberty is, I am satisfied, well on his way to Wallerawang.*

'Never were two persons on a journey so completely flooded as we now are. We cannot find horses that we can buy, beg, borrow or steal and how we are to proceed

I know not, but proceed we must, and that tomorrow, even should we have to walk or go in the dray.

We have today bought at the public sale an excellent dray and team of twelve oxen, with chains, bows, yokes, etc for £112, and we shall proceed with it tomorrow to overtake Dutton. We must hope to find horses somewhere.'

Thomas recorded more details of his frustrating day in town. Besides these unexpected expenses, he was concerned about the dry area, and the brown grass that covered the plains around Yass. He worried what would become of the oxen if fresh fodder could not be located. He made an unusual discovery of manna.

'On our way out and home, we stopped more than once to gather manna, which we found in considerable abundance under the white gum trees. I need not remind you that this is a concrete juice, which exudes from some species of the eucalyptus and, dropping from the leaves, is found on the ground in irregularly formed small hard masses, like a shower of various sized sugar plums. We found some pieces nearly as large as a sugared almond, and as white but, generally speaking, they are much smaller. They have a pleasant, sweet taste, and if eaten in quantities are, I believe, slightly laxative.

We found a family of natives busy gathering and eating it, having nothing else for breakfast. Having some comfits (sweet treats) with us, we offered them some and said that they were the manna of our country, but they received them suspiciously and would not eat them till we had set the example.'

Tuesday evening, May 2, 9pm: *'We are now fairly bushing it. I am now writing at the entrance of our tent, by the light of the fire*



Bulletin Board

July 9 - Nik Blaskovic, City of Canada Bay Council, "Concord Foreshore Survey" with many photographs of then and now.

August 13 - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers and Committee

which is blazing in front of us. We have just finished our evening repast, and preparing to go to bed.

'Before daylight this morning we had our team yoked, and after an early breakfast we started with it.



We had not got further than Yass Township when Gary, that old rogue, Mr S. H. O'Brien's man in charge, overtook us, bringing McA's horse, which he said he had "found". I doubt not that the fellows have had our horses "planted". I told him to go and get the other and he would get something for his trouble. He said he would, in such a way as to give me hope of his doing so, but we have since seen nothing of him.

'I have no doubt that the scoundrels have been up to the old trick – hiding the horses in the hope of a reward

being offered – but I fear that Flibberty has given them the slip.'

Thomas wrote of Bowering Hill, a round hill that Major Mitchell used as a trigonometry point, to take sightings and get his bearings. It formed one of the lines of the limits of location, 30 miles south of Yass, beyond which no maps had been surveyed.

'But really, I cannot see to write. Our fire is a splendid one, log piled upon log. It gives a capital heat, but its light is intense red, without much flame, so I really must give up the attempt of writing and go to bed.'

(to be continued)

Line of Site: trigonometrical survey of New South Wales

To the earliest European explorers the rugged country of Australia appeared virtually uninhabitable. Yet settlers made their way around the land.

However, in the 1800s widespread uncertainty over land boundaries prompted the Governor to instigate a trigonometrical survey of New South Wales.

Many trigonometrical stations were erected throughout the State and, by observing the angles and computing the distances between them, surveyors were able to provide, for the first time, a precise framework for the construction of accurate cadastral and topographic maps.

Dolls of the War Years

During the lean years of the 1930s several local doll makers, such as Laurie Cohen ("Hush-a-Bye" Dolls) and Vera Kent, made dolls from imported parts from Germany and Japan. This source of supplies ended with the war and the local doll makers then turned to various innovative materials to produce dolls.

Dolls were made from cloth off-cuts, clay and glue compositions, papier mache, even plaster-of-Paris reinforced with hessian.

Several doll makers also published patterns so that dolls could be made at home to overcome the war restrictions on commercial doll production.

Our Museum holds a set of dolls (made locally), beautifully dressed and still in very good condition. The card attached to the dolls reads:

Dolls made in 1942 for exhibitions to help raise funds for various societies during wartime.

Heads and arms made in two halves with a mixture of newspaper and paste pressed into each half of mould. When dried were joined and then painted with ordinary house paint (cream) and later tinted with oil colours to a flesh tint.

Does anyone remember these exhibitions or have any information about the maker of the dolls, or any other local doll makers?

(Barbara Hancock)

Rivendell from the River

Sandra recently sent me this beautiful photograph of The Thomas Walker Hospital. I replied (tongue-in-cheek) that I thought it was lovely but would be improved if we cut down those two tall trees obstructing the buildings.

Sandra hurriedly replied: *No, no, no, never!! They are classic 'marker trees' of old houses - the Araucarias. These two are A. columnaris (Cook Island Pines) from New Caledonia. Seeds were collected and imported as early as 1797!*

Camden Park Nursery propagated these for sale as early as 1850. This would have been where Thomas bought the ones at Yaralla. The second one in the bamboo at Yaralla has self seeded.

A marker tree was particularly important on a waterfront property. They always lean dramatically to the north. The *A. bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya) was the marker tree of choice for rural properties in the 1800s.

Thank you Sandra for this important glimpse of the past. And I promise not to again threaten to chop them down.



Due to the sudden opportunity for City of Canada Bay Council to move our items into the new building so that they could relocate our demountable building and put the block up for sale, our Garage Sale is temporarily put on the back burner.

However, It is not cancelled so please continue to put aside any unwanted articles ready for when the date is announced.

There will be quite a few costs involved in getting everything ready for our opening so any way we can raise extra money needs to be followed up.

Presently, provided we can get the help needed to organise the displays and sort the many boxes of items, we hope to have our official opening around September 2008.

Made in Australia: A carriage fit for a Queen

Put away our chequebook.

Money can't buy this carriage, built by Jim Frecklington (OAM).

It is the extraordinary creation of a rare bloke – equal parts romantic, artisan, monarchist and visionary – for a particular client on her 80th birthday.

The State Coach Britannia is housed in a shed at North Head.

In the near future Britannia will be arguably the flashiest rig to pull into the Royal Mews at Buckingham Palace since the arrival of George III's Gold State Coach. And, despite its shiny newness, it will have historic credentials to rival them all, carrying 1000 years of history: timber from Admiral Nelson's flagship HMS Victory and from King Henry VIII's Mary Rose, and from Britain's great cathedrals and palaces – Westminster to St Paul's, Hampton Court to Edinburgh Castle.

Mr. Frecklington hopes that Britannia, one of only two new coaches to join the palace garage in the past 100 years (the other being the bicentennial gift of the Australia State Coach, also built by him), will soon be the carriage of choice for Her Majesty.

Stories of conquest and might and the divine right of Kings are etched on its panels in the powerful language of heraldry.

Irish-born botanic artist Paula Church, who spent 18 months researching and painting the fine detail on Britannia, explains the symbolism. The lion of England is there, magnificently opposing Scotland's unicorn, which is chained and looks at the ground in submission.

The leopards that decorated the standard of Richard the Lionheart occupy one compartment; others house



the flowers of Britain; England's Tudor rose, the Irish shamrock, the Welsh leek and the Scottish thistle.

St George, on a handsome white horse, slays the dragon below a

cloud of ermine and a rendering of a helmet facing forward. "Only a king has it facing that way. A knight, in heraldry, always has it side on", she explains.

Paula Church is one of about 50 specialist craftspeople who have contributed to the coach – from glassblowers in Edinburgh to the man in Newcastle, NSW, who forged the springs. Mr. Frecklington has done maybe half the work himself, as well as the design – steaming and bending the timber, assembling the undercarriage, welding the steel.

He compares the creation of a coach for the Queen to the jewelled eggs made by Faberge for the Russian Tsars, or the art created in honour of the pharaohs. "These are treasures of the world." Why not make new ones?

As a young man Mr. Frecklington, raised on a farm in NSW, went to England and found a job with the royal household, caring for the Queen's horses and carriages, driving coaches on ceremonial runs to collect ambassadors. In 1977 he brought coaches and other royal memorabilia to Australia for the Queen's silver jubilee celebrations.



(Note: A couple of our members recently visited the site of this magnificent object and wanted to share the experience with you.)

A very big "THANK YOU" to everyone who helped will all the sorting out and packing up of our museum. Over 300 boxes of various items had to be packed and catalogued so we would know exactly what was in them ready for unpacking on the new site. This work, from the beginning of January to end of June, took a total of 770 hours (or nearly 100 days) of actual work, including our planning time with Linda. Many people were involved so I won't mention by name - you know who you were. However, two need to be singled out - Lorraine Holmes and Betty Roertson - who never missed a day and spent up to 7 hours a day on many occasions - arriving first and leaving last.



Update on the Graythwaite Estate

In our February/March 2006 newsletter we published an article about this estate - which was in a similar situation as our Yaralla estate.

The property was entrusted to the State Government in 1915 for use as a convalescent home for the wounded ANZACS. It was currently being used as a nursing home but NSW Health wanted to sell the site for development.

A report in the June 2008 VetAffairs newsletter states:

The Budget includes funding of \$20.2 million to retain historic Graythwaite Estate in North Sydney for Veterans, and for the provision of aged care services through the NSW RSL.

The Government, in conjunction with the NSW RSL, has agreed to approach the NSW Supreme Court with a proposal for the future of the Graythwaite Estate. Both parties are confident that the proposal will satisfy the court and Graythwaite estate can be retained for the benefit of the veteran community.



Now to test your knowledge of the Prime Ministers of Australia . . .

1. Alfred Deakin served in how many separate terms as PM?
2. Which PM attended Canterbury Boys' High School?
3. Who was the first Australian PM to die in office?
4. The first joint sitting of the two houses of parliament was held during which Prime Ministership?
5. Who was the PM at the outbreak of World War I?
6. Which PM, a devout Catholic, refused to live in the Lodge, preferring instead a more humble residence?

(Answers on back page)

(Ed. Thank you to member John Harding for this contribution. He has supplied several sets of questions. Please let us know if you like the idea and we'll keep the questions coming.)

Museum Update

It's now officially our new home - but we need to clean and tidy the home before we invite visitors.

By the time you receive this newsletter the work will already have begun. On Sunday we had a working bee to clean out the compactus units which we are very lucky to have had Council leave for us. They will be wonderful for storage of unused items until they are needed for displays.



A special thank to all our members who turned up to help us with the packing over the past few months - it was a mighty job but, as they say, "many hands make light work". However, it was "panic stations" when Council called us last Tuesday to say that they would have men and trucks there on Wednesday morning to start moving everything.



The Council workers were a wonderful group of men who worked extremely hard over the next three days to get everything, including our many showcases, into the Bent Street building. We are very grateful for their magnificent efforts.



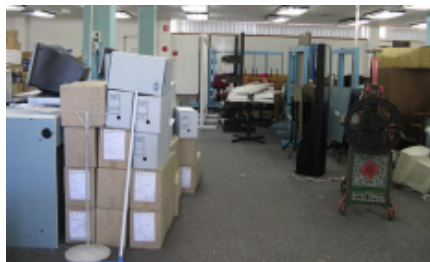
They didn't have a shovel so had to use the sewing machine

With the exception of a few cupboards and shelves, which will be moved on Monday, everything is stacked up in its new home.

While all this was going on Council had organised the cleaning of the carpet and painting the walls inside the main building. They are also enclosing the area in the garage section behind the building which will become our storeroom and work room.

Now the next phase of our work begins!

Most of the furniture left by the library for our use will need to be cleaned, as well as several of our cupboards, and shelves and some will possibly need a coat of paint.



At this time the immediate need is to start unpacking, selecting items for initial display, and then storing correctly the items not needed straight away. As well we need to set up the office and organise the area which will, in the very near future, become our regular meeting room.



We are also appealing to all members who can spare a little time - week days or weekends, even evenings if necessary - to help prepare our new home for what will be a new and vibrant part of our Society, with regularly changing displays - OUR NEW MUSEUM!

We also hope to encourage other organisations within our district to showcase their part in the City of Canada Bay in future displays.

Our initial displays will cover: The River and its influence in the early history; the War Years; the beginning of the Concord Municipality. If you have any ideas that could be incorporated into these themes, or any objects to support them, we'd love to hear from you.

Please, won't you help us to make our museum something the whole area will be proud of?

From the Secretary's Desk

Guest Speaker - Wednesday, 9th July - will be Nic Blaskovic from City of Canada Bay Council who has been conducting the Concord Foreshore Survey. He will be telling us of the importance of the River and its industries. This will be most interesting and we urge you to come along, and bring friends and neighbours if you wish, to make him feel welcome.

Museum re-location: If you can spare any time to help with unpacking and organising displays, please contact us. There is much to be done and we need all the help we can get if we want to open in September.

Also, please give some thought to volunteering to help with manning the museum when it opens. We have tentatively advised Council that we will be open every Wednesday and Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and we would like to have two volunteers on duty at all times.

This will not be hard work, mostly involved sitting at the desk, so please give this some serious thought.

Rivendell Open Day: Have you been in touch with Sandra to let her know if you will be available to help on the day? Her phone number is 9797-1040 or mobile 0412-350-288. You can also reach her by email to ttoille@optusnet.com.au. She's waiting to hear from you.

Election of Officers and Committee: Don't forget that the election is coming up fast. It's just over 4 weeks away. No committee can remain stagnant and still do a good job. It constantly needs new blood to bring fresh ideas to the table. Please don't say "I've got nothing to offer - I don't know enough". Many before you have said this but when the time came and they put their hands up, their contributions have been of great benefit to the society and its members - and they have found it has brought them much joy.

Answer to Prime Ministers' quiz on page 3. 1. Three; 2. John Howard; 3. Joseph (Joe) Lyons; 4. Edward Gough Whitlam; 5. Joseph Cook; 6. James Henry Scullin.



For Your Diary

Wed. 9th July - General Meeting

Wed. 23rd July - Executive Meeting

Sun. 27th July - Rivendell Open Day

Wed. 13th August - Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers