



# "Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY  
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**MEETINGS**  
**General Meetings**  
2nd Wednesday of month  
(except January)  
at 7:30 pm in the  
City of Canada Bay  
Museum  
1 Bent Street, Concord  
9743-3034

**Executive Meetings**  
4th Wednesday of month  
at 7:30 pm in the  
Museum  
(all members welcome)

**Walker Estates Committee**  
meets when required.  
Bob Jones, 8765-9347

**Tours Organiser**  
Sandra Elliott  
9797-1040

**Museum Committee**  
meets irregularly at the  
museum  
For details contact  
Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

**Archives & Oral History**  
Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

**Heritage**  
Bob Jones, 8765-9347

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**CITY OF CANADA  
BAY MUSEUM**  
1 Bent Street, Concord

**Watch this space  
for opening date**

**No.154**

**March 2009**

## Walker Chronicles (part 14)

### Awful and Sublime

During the midnight vigils, as access to candlelight and weather conditions permitted, Thomas recorded some of his thoughts. He wrote more letters to those at home in Lower Fort Street, in The Rocks area of Sydney, where most of his relatives resided at that time.

*"The weather still continues fine. In the middle of the day, in the sun, it is very warm . . . unseasonably so, and the mornings and evenings and nights are only pleasantly cool. Whilst I have been writing, a storm has passed over us, with thunder, lightning and rain.*

*"It did not disturb me long, and it is already calm again. The three gents in the tent with me were not even awoken by it, though it was violent while it lasted."*

Thomas wrote more about that thunderstorm the next day.

*"I have observed many trees which had been struck and rent by lightning, but never saw one so shattered as I saw today. It was a large tree entirely shivered in pieces and prostrated upon the ground. Large fragments were scattered over a considerable space and the whole presented a spectacle evincing the great potency of the elemental agent. The thunder storms of this country are often very awful and sublime – sometimes like the simultaneous discharge of a whole broadside of a ship of war – which reverberates from the mountains in a thousand echoes, and before they die away, a new peal commences like the rattling of vast sheets of brass! Good night."*

May 12th 1837. *"Camped within a few miles of the Murray River, which we followed for two miles, and came to Mr Dutton's hut. This creek, which runs down to the Hume, is called the Mullingindra. After we rested and lunched with Mr Durlot, who has charge of the station, Dutton, Durlot and I went over the run to examine it."*

(This Mr Dutton was a brother to Dutton, one of Thomas Walker's travelling companions.)

Thomas exclaimed that Dutton's land was *"both pleasing to the eye, of good charac-*

*ter, well sheltered and warm. Altogether the finest country that I have seen since leaving the Murrumbidgee."*

They came to the area that Major Mitchell had named Violet Creek on his map, a chain of ponds stretching out from a swamp in the distance. The men followed them for miles but were disappointed to find that only three contained any water of a useful depth.

*"Frogs hopped about in most of the shallow pools, croaking as if it were a summer's day. Mac set off to search for ducks but returned later with none."*

In the hills behind a place that Thomas noted as Futter's Ridge, he felt truly delighted and exhilarated, writing in his journal words that would later inspire Banjo Patterson, who would marry one of Thomas' Tenterfield relatives and have access to Thomas' correspondence.

*"The atmosphere is clear as crystal, the sky intensely blue and this sun is shining with utmost brilliance and warmth, whilst a gentle breeze tempers the fervency of his rays."*

Thomas climbed up the side of the ridge that afternoon and sat upon a rock, observing the lush country before him. Tones of grey tinged the tall gums and brush box, reminding him of the hills and glens in the Scotland of his youth. Lost in his reverie, he suddenly realised that *"the shades of evening closed ere I could withdraw from the scene."*

He scrambled back down the hillside in the darkening twilight, arriving in time for supper. Walker observed that the New Holland outback was clearly a land of enigma, being a place of beauty one day and a land of terror the next.

*To be continued*



#### Bulletin Board

**March 11** - Michael Clark, Engineering Heritage Australia, "Building Sydney - its history and heritage".

April 8 - to be advised

## Car Park at Rivendell - Update on our Concerns

*Following our letters of concern to Sydney South West Area Health Service and a meeting by Errol Grace and Mark Durance with key personnel from there we have received a letter advising the various actions that have now been taken.*

*It is pleasing to see that Sydney South West Area Health Service and the Concord Heritage Society can work together for the preservation of these two important and historic estates and that they now see us as an important entity in this endeavour.*

Concord Hospital sought an arborist report, a hydraulic report and heritage consultant report on the scope of the work for the preservation of the stables and morgue building on the Thomas Walker Estate and the preservation of the surrounding trees.

As a result . . .

The Arborist's report indicated that some trees has experienced stress from the asphalt that had been laid around them and that has now been removed from an area around each tree. Additional work was undertaken to cultivate the soil and supply mulch to the surface area. One tree had died back, but the problem was evident prior to work taking place. This will be removed and replaced with an advanced size specimen of the same species. All trees will be monitored on a six monthly basis

A perimeter of hardwood logs on the existing fence line has been laid to prevent vehicular access into the Thomas Walker Estate from the car park and Security has been asked to monitor this.

The Hydraulic Survey found no evidence that the car park works impacted on the stables or morgue building on the estate but this will be monitored to make sure that the water run off causes no problems. Asphalt has been removed adjacent to the buildings and a 1% fall away with a grassed V-drain 1.5 metres wide and 0.15 deep will be installed.

Quotations are currently being obtained for remedial works to the stables and morgue buildings.

The brick wall on the perimeter of the gatehouse roundabout will be repaired.

The entrance to the Concord Centre for Mental Health has now reverted to the gate 3 entrance off Hospital Road.

The NSW Department of Commerce Heritage report regarding the Dame Eadith Walker Estate should have been completed by now. This will include draft plans and a cost estimate to renovate the main building to accommodate "The Bridge" Dementia Unit. The viability of this will be made shortly.

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## Executive & Walker Committee Meetings

Previously these two committees have been meeting on alternate months. It was often found that urgent Executive matters needed to be discussed at the time of the Walker meetings, and vice versa - also, it was generally the same people attending each of the meetings.

Therefore it was decided that, in future, we will hold Executive meetings every month. There will be time and opportunity at each of these meetings for matters pertaining to the Walker Estates to be brought forward.

The Chairperson of the Walker Committee still has the power to call a special meeting of his committee at any time should the need arise. This will work in the same way for our Museum Committee which is now becoming more active in light of our relocation.

This Museum Committee has been meeting regularly and presents reports or requests to the Executive meetings

General members are invited to attend any of the special Walker Estates or Museum meetings that may be called if they are interested and so wish.

Also, members are entitled to attend our Executive meetings at any time. These are held at the museum on the 4th Wednesday of every month (except December) at 7:30 pm.

In fact, we are always looking for keen members to become part of our Executive. Why not come along to a meeting to see what we do, get to know us better, and perhaps put your hand up for election at the next Annual General Meeting.

New blood is always welcome, and needed, to keep the Society moving forward.

If you want to be informed of special committee meetings just send an email to us or give us a call on 9744-8528 - we'd love to hear from you.

## Museum Report

The carpet has now been laid and things are starting to move.

At the moment we are trying to move showcases and objects around to see how we want to lay out the displays. We can always use help with this.

Once the position of the cases is finally decided we then need to organise the displays.

We can always use some extra input on what and how we display objects, or to research the items so we can label them correctly. The more help with this the better.

We are still looking for a few items for our kitchen/laundry display. Old kitchen gadgets that are no longer around, a terrazzo sink top, a 1930's calendar - whatever you can think of that grandma used but its not around now. Keep an eye open for the clean-ups - you never know what might turn up there.

Because we have our lovely new showcases we will be disposing of quite a few of our old ones. Do you know a local group that would like to have one - FREE. They would just have to arrange the pick up.

If you want to become part of this venture, just call or send an email and let us know what time you'd prefer - day, evening, weekends - and we'll put you on the list to be notified of any meetings, working bees, etc.

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## Twilight Jazz at Eryldene, featuring The Moods

on Sunday, 15th March, 5 - 8 pm at Eryldene Historic House and Garden. Bring a rug or folding chair and a picnic basket and enjoy The Moods in the setting sun of a late summer's day.

With a repertoire drawn from traditional jazz, swing and jive classics from the songbooks of Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, The Moods set the mood for young and old.

Coffee, tea and home made cakes will be available at the Garden Cafe on the lawn court.

Eryldene is located at 17 McIntosh Street, Gordon, just a 5-10 minute stroll from Gordon railway station. Free parking available one minute away at the corner of Werona Avenue and McIntosh Street.

Tickets \$22 single or \$50 family (2 adults and 2 children).

Bookings: 9498-2271, or Email [eryldene@optusnet.com.au](mailto:eryldene@optusnet.com.au). Booking form at [www.eryldene.org.au](http://www.eryldene.org.au)

# Working at Arnott's Factory - 1969

Raymond Skehan obtained an electrician's apprenticeship at Arnotts in 1969 when a friend mentioned that they were hiring staff.

During this time, the company automated wide steel conveyor belts that carried biscuit dough through 300ft long, gas-fired ovens. The biscuits then went to cooling sites before female staff scooped them into large biscuit tins.

Five hundred females and many males worked in two shifts. The ovens were fired up about 3 am each Monday morning to ensure they were hot enough when the morning shift arrived.

Chocolate-coated biscuits were diverted to dipping trays. The boys often took the already dipped biscuits, placed them back on the conveyors and, at morning tea time, enjoyed *"the thickest Chocolate Montes you ever saw."*

The Smalls brand chocolate coating usually arrived in tankers, but sometimes they received large cartons of bulk chocolate. The workers were allowed to eat any broken sections. Often they were very clumsy when handling this stock.

Adora cream wafers were produced in large 1ft x 2 ft slabs that went into wire cutting machines, to reduce the wafer's length and width. Sometimes the wires snapped and larger slices came out. Ray recalls having to take these machines apart to replace and tension the new wires.

In 1971, surveyors began plans for the M4 motorway foundations that would begin near Arnotts' site, and then pass through the nearby Flemington markets. The old sale yards were measured and marked out, ready for work to begin.

However, a violent storm followed by days of downpour saw tons of topsoil washed away into the surrounding drains. Many will remember when Parramatta Road was cut by floodwaters where the road dips under the Arnott's railway bridge.

The topsoil had completely blocked the drains. Ray estimated that the Homebush factory grounds were now about a metre lower than they previously had been. Unaware of this, workman began excavating the M4 footings according to original plans.

*"They accidentally cut through telecommunications cables which ran from the electricity substation at Homebush to the main Electricity Commission substation at Epping. The computer there, receiving information that no load was being used in Sydney, then commenced to shut down generators within the State."*

This event plunged most of the Sydney metropolitan area into darkness, and also stopped the factory's electronic conveyor belts. But the gas-fired ovens burned on.

Due to the dough's sugar content, the biscuits smouldered as thick smoke billowed from the long ovens, and staff fled the building.

Ray saw Mr Arnott leaning over the overhead walkway, staring at the panic below and shaking his head in disbelief as 13 ovens continued to belch black smoke.

The bakers had to locate hundreds of oven switches and turn off each gas jet. Sirens wailed as emergency services arrived. It took days for production to resume.

Arnotts employed their own maintenance crew of plumbers, welders, sheet-metal workers, carpenters, bricklayers and sign-writers. That's why the trucks looked so good, two men were employed to maintain them. The slightest scratch was swiftly repaired.

Ray recalled working on the new neon signs high above the factory. Safety was paramount. He remembers one worker being sacked for drinking lemon essence, which had high alcohol content.

The company had a bowling club on site, their own Credit Union, an onsite canteen, change rooms and laundry. A large tin washer kept the famous tins clean.

Then they decided to use German automatic plastic moulding machines to pack the biscuits. Ray installed some of them. *"One would not work, so I put my hand inside to feel what was wrong with the wires. Suddenly, something connected as the machine sucked my wrist deep inside, electrocuting muscles in my upper arm. It took several minutes to free me and I sat on a nearby bench shaking badly."*

*"The foreman rushed over and asked why they had stopped work. I told him what happened and insisted I was OK, ready to go back to my duties."*

*"That's what the last bloke said,"* he muttered.

*"I asked what he meant."*

*"Another chap had a similar thing happen to him. He was in shock, but went back to work. He dropped dead minutes later. Better go and see Sister in the clinic."*

Ray stayed for an hour, but the nurse assured him he would be fine, and he went back to work.

One of Ray's relatives also worked at the factory. She was killed on her way to work when attempting to step across from one carriage to another to see a friend. She slipped under the wheels of a passing train. Many staff, including Mr Arnott, attended her funeral.

Due to progress, there were huge changes during this time. The factory diversified into potato chips and plastic packaging replaced the familiar SAO tins.

A large supply of unwanted containers were crushed and covered with soil in a small gully near where ALDI now stands. The council tried to grow trees there for a park but there was too much iron in the soil.

Ray left Arnotts employment several years later to pursue a career in the Police Force.

Trish Skehan.

**Concord Community Hostel Ladies Auxiliary** invites you to their 50th Annual Luncheon on Wednesday, 11th March at 12:30 pm sharp in the Concord Function Centre. Special guest speaker Trish Skehan. Entertainment by the McDonald College, North Strathfield. Cost \$27 per person. Admission by ticket only. RSVP: 28th February to 9476-1411

**Concord Garden Club, in conjunction with City of Canada Bay Council** invites you to their 55th Autumn Flower, Vegetable and Floral Art Show, incorporating the NSW & ACT Dahlia State Championships, on Saturday, 4th April (10 to 4) and Sunday, 5th April (11 to 3) at Concord Community Centre, Gipps Street. Admission: Gold Coin. Parking available, Plant and White Elephant stalls and light refreshments

**Don't forget the  
Museum Standards  
Committee meeting at  
the museum  
on Friday, 6th March,  
commencing at 9:00 am**

# 2009 Standards Program

for sustainable community museums, organised by  
Museums & Galleries NSW

Last December Lorraine Holmes and Lois Michel were invited to attend an introductory meeting outlining the above program and the benefits it offered to groups like ours. They were greatly impressed and, after discussion with the Museum Committee, decided that this program was just what we needed to set up our newly invigorated museum.

A small group attended the "Introduction to Standards" briefing session last weekend and are even more enthused.

Along with 16 other similar groups we will be taking part in this year-long program.

It is a unique opportunity to carry out self-examination, to acknowledge achievements made and develop plans for the future direction of our museum and its operation.

We will receive focused information and support from M&G NSW staff and the Standards Review Committee and it's an ideal opportunity to develop links with people who can provide the advice and support we will be needing.

M&G NSW will conduct workshops and visit participating museums to offer advice. This will be followed up with an on-site review, which is a chance to talk with museum professionals such as Historic Houses Trust and Australian Museum.

But the program also demands a lot of input from us. This is not a simple

one-night-wonder taking up just a couple of hours. It involves taking a good hard look at ourselves and what we want to do with and for our museum.

It looks, in depth, at what we have done or intend to do about the many facets of running a museum, from training volunteers, museum management, record keeping, marketing and so on.

This is not just a job for one or two people, it needs to involve as many people as possible to get as much input and as many ideas as possible

This is going to be a most interesting and very rewarding exercise to make sure that we can meet the minimum Standards for Museums. It can only improve the presentation of our facility to the public when it opens, and make it a more welcoming place to visit.

The program involves only one more external meeting with M&G in August and the final Celebration event in November.

But, in between, it will involve many meetings of our Standards Committee members to complete our self-assessments in Best Museum Practices.

We will be meeting at the museum on Friday next, 6th March at 9:00 am. Please come along so we can fill you in on all the details and supply any paperwork you might need.

We need as many as possible to take part in this programme, so please come along on Friday.

time styles. Cost: \$5.00 (includes dance lesson). Concord Senior Citizens' Centre.

**Intergenerational Fashion Exhibition Launch - Saturday, 28th March, 10 am - 4:00 pm.** The fashion exhibition "What would your mother say" is the culmination of a project by young women to gather and celebrate the diverse stories of local senior woman. The exhibition explores the development of young women's culture across generation and cultural backgrounds through a topic that spans generations - fashion. Cost: Free. Concord Library.

For more details contact Council on 9911-6555 or visit [www.canadabay.nsw.gov.au](http://www.canadabay.nsw.gov.au)

## For Your Diary

Wed. Mar. 11 - General Meeting

Wed. Mar. 25 - Executive

Wed. Apr. 8 - General Meeting

## From the Secretary's Desk

**Change of Name:** This was discussed fully at our last general meeting and it was decided that we should continue to use the name Concord Heritage Society.

However, to try to involve the people from the former Drummoyne municipality we would place more emphasis on the name City of Canada Bay Museum to promote the fact that we needed to include more input from the other half of our community

**Standards Program 2009 Committee** will be meeting at the museum on Friday, 6th March at 9:00 pm. Please come along - we need your help.

If you would like to take part in this programme but are not available on week days, we can easily arrange evening or weekend times - we just need to know what you want

**Interviewers for Oral Histories:** We have had several people approach us offering to be taped for our records - and hopefully many more once the museum opens. Would you like to become an interviewer? We have training manuals to help and members who can guide you as well.

**Museum Needs:** We are still looking for a terrazzo kitchen sink/draining board; gas copper; old fashioned wire soap holder, 1930's wall calendar (have you looked behind the door of the shed?), Arnotts tins (or other memorabilia). Look around the house, ask your friends and neighbours, keep an eye on the Council cleanups, please.

## Age is a Quality of Mind

*If you left your dreams behind,  
If hope is lost. If you no longer  
look ahead,  
If your ambitious fires are dead –  
Then you are old.  
But if from life you take the best  
And if in life you keep the jest,  
If love you hold –  
No matter how the years go by,  
No matter how the birthdays fly,  
You are not old!*

Author unknown

## You're Invited!

City of Canada Bay Council invites you to attend the following activities in Seniors' Week:

**Seniors' Expo - Tuesday, 17th March, 10 am - 2:00 pm** at Concord Library. Enjoy morning tea and a range of activities, including healthy cooking advice and demonstrations, gentle exercise techniques, wellbeing services and keep active in the community with a host of hobby and special interest groups. Cost: Free.

**Seniors' Harbour Cruise - Wednesday, 18th March, 11 am - 3:00 pm.** Enjoy a scenic cruise on Sydney harbour while enjoying a delicious lunch. Cost: \$25 per person - bookings essential - for Canada Bay residents only.

**Seniors' Week Dance - Friday, 20th March, 6:30 - 9:00 pm.** Dress up and come along and dance to your favourite tunes in ballroom, new vogue and old