



"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

**Grand Opening
Saturday,
16th May, 2009**

No.155

April 2009

Walker Chronicles (part 15)

A Land of Terror

25th May 1837.

Thomas Walker and Lachlan McAlister set out to scout the area ahead, while others followed in the dray. They had only progressed about thirteen miles when a devastating vista arrested their progress. Bush fires had recently swept through the countryside, burning every blade of grass and every stand of trees in sight. Desolation lay before them.

They rode up a nearby hill to inspect the lay of the land, finding on each side scorched earth and blackened trees as far as the eye could see.

"*Dry scrubby country with bad soil, and no shelter from the blazing sun. No rain has fallen in days*", Thomas scribbled in his journal - noting that the nearest water was in the chain of ponds many miles back. The bullocks and dray would soon arrive at this point, designated as their meeting site.

Unwilling to abandon the journey, they rode forward in search of precious water and came to a bone-dry creek bed, where they paused to consider their options. McAlister suggested following the water source upstream. One and a half miles later they were relieved to find a sheltered dale that had escaped the worst of the inferno.

Quickly retracing their steps to the meeting point, the weary riders saw the bullock team and the rest of their party off in the distance. They set out to warn about the devastation ahead.

After gulping down a pannikin of water from the barrel tied to the wagon, they guided the group to the little dale. There the stock grazed on what few scattered clumps of green grass remained. As darkness fell, the animals grew restless in the smoky haze.

After supper that evening, Thomas recorded his fears as he waited for his turn at guarding the stock. Any creature straying would soon perish from lack of water, but only enough remained in the barrel to sustain the men for a few more days. None could be spared for the animals.

"I shall not again think of exploring with a bullock cart. They need water every few miles and so many times have been disappointed."

The smell of acrid smoke hung heavy in the air. Thomas stood guard from eleven to one in the morning, and then made his way to his tent, fatigued by the day's events.

The sound of running water woke the party in the early hours. As day dawned, they rode around a bend higher up the creek bed, to find a spring trickling from a hillside crevice. As the animals drank their fill, the water barrel was topped up. Thomas and Mac set out with renewed hearts, to see how much country must be crossed before they would again encounter green pastures.

Several hours later, they came to a wide and winding river that had stopped the bushfire's progress. They traced the steep banks for miles as the waterway meandered through acres of lush land. Much of this could be easily fenced off, Thomas thought. At one turn in the estuary they suddenly heard voices and encountered a team of men on the opposite bank, busily hauling a wooden punt out of the water.

Thomas hailed the chaps and was thrilled to hear their reply. *'We're Ebden's men. The boss is up the paddock'*.

Then Charles Ebden himself sauntered into view, dressed in shabby work clothes and sporting a bushy grey beard. Thomas was shocked at the scruffy vision before him, having recalled the dandy farmer who had



Bulletin Board

April 8 - There will be no guest speaker but we intend to use the time to discuss the Standards Program we are currently undertaking with Museums & Galleries NSW. We need all the input we can get to complete this programme effectively so please make the effort to come along and support us.

once greeted him from a smart tandem in George Street.

Despite his obvious relief, Thomas could only think that Mister Charles appeared the very replica of Robinson Crusoe.

In his wild bush habitat, Ebden welcomed his visitors and pointed to a shallow crossing further along the riverbank. He instructed the men to put the punt back into the water so that Thomas and his team could safely cross the deceptive current

With lighter hearts Thomas and Mac hurried back to inform their party about the good news and later managed to load the dray onto the punt.

After all the animals and men had forded the river in safety they heartily enjoyed supper that night, guests of Mr Ebden.

(to be continued)

Museum Report

The date has been set - come Hell or high water (as the old saying goes) we will be opening on 16th MAY!!

However, there is lots to be done before this - moving various items in and out of the main part of the building - spring cleaning the building - deciding on what artefacts will go on display - researching many of the different items going on display - writing articles for our information boards - and so the list goes on. CAN YOU HELP WITH ANY OF THESE?

At the museum (or with the Secretary) we have a list of jobs that have to be done - or we can send you the list if you like.

Do you have any expertise in marketing, writing grants, a way with words for the information boards?

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

Standards Program 2009 with Museums & Galleries NSW

The main part of this programme is to carry out a complete self-evaluation of where we are and where we want to be in the future. The three sections are: *Managing the Museum; Involving People; and Developing a Significant Collection.*

Within these three sections there are 135 parts that need to be completed. Some are simple. Some are complicated. Some need research.

A simple one is: *"There is a "wind-up clause" outlining procedures should the museum be "wound up" or dissolved."*

Each part offers 5 boxes to be ticked: *No, planned, Implemented, Reviewed, Need Help.* We tick whichever applies to that statement and then have to describe: *who/how/when;* then show *evidence.* This one is relatively simple as we already have such a clause in our constitution.

A more difficult one is: *"The museum's policies and procedures show an awareness of the laws and regulations that apply to its collection, site, management and programs."*

Again we have to tick one of the 5 boxes and describe *what/how/when* and then show *evidence.*

As a help M&G does supply all the reference sites needed where we can obtain this information. However, we must put it all into words that will apply to our Museum.

We need help from as many of our members as possible - one or two people only would not be able to do the job.

What we need are people to can undertake the research of just a few of these sections and come back to a group meeting with what they have found and then, working as a group, we can put it all together.

Can you give us some time? As well as individual research, there will be several meetings between now and the 29th May when the final report has to be sent to Museums & Galleries NSW.

We can organise meetings for day, evening or weekends, whichever works out the best for all concerned. Please let the Secretary know if you can help.

April General Meeting: On this occasion we will not have a guest speaker, instead we will be using the time to get started on this project and let you see just what needs to be done.

This project is extremely important and will be very beneficial, please help.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Although the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened in 1932, it was envisaged as early as 1791 when Dr Erasmus Darwin, Charles' grandfather, wrote the following prophetic words in a poem titled 'Visit of Hope to Sydney Cove'.

*There, the Proud Arch,
Colossus-like bestride
Yon glittering stream
and bound the chafing tide.*

From the 1880's there were proposals for a tunnel or bridge to cross the harbour. Many styles of construction were considered, but the cantilever design was selected after several rounds of tendering.

An engineer, J J C Bradfield, assisted the Advisory board in analysing various tenders, and began his association with the project. Early designs included an arch bridge without end pylons, initially rejected as *"too huge, an eyesore and objectionable"*.

The bridge campaign gained momentum after WWI, as population expansion saw development on the northern shores. Bradfield travelled overseas in 1923 to inspect major bridge works, and make final design recommendations. Both America and Britain proposed arch bridges, much cheaper to build than the cantilever type.

A shortage of money saw the Government reject all earlier tenders. When Bradfield visited the Hell's Gate Bridge over the East River in New York, he finally found the inspiration and design he sought. Sketches of the proposed bridge were completed on his voyage home, and would be selected as the winning tender,

through Sir Ralph Freeman, consulting engineer to British firm Dorman Long.

In March 1924, the Minister of Works signed a contract with Dorman Long for supply of high-strength silicon steel. BHP in Newcastle would contract for the remaining carbon steel requirements. Eight years later our famous world-icon bridge was opened.

With 39,000 tons of steel, Sydney Harbour Bridge is the longest steel arch in the world, but not the longest span, which goes to the 1931 Bayonne Bridge over the Hudson River - 60 cm longer, but opened after ours.

In February Professor Don Fraser from the Institute of Engineers, Australia, gave us a wonderful talk about the bridge from conception to final opening ceremony.

With a selection of overheads showing work on the structure, we were taken through the years, seeing the giant pylon cables embedded in the sandstone base along the shoreline. Steel sections, atop enormous cranes, swung into place and were riveted together as the ends finally met in the middle and work on the suspension deck began.

Ninety-six steam engines were lined up along the rail tracks to prove the bridge's capability to carry such weight. Roadways were formed along both shores to finally carry traffic and pedestrians across the Harbour.

Don Fraser leads informative walks across the bridge. Tickets can be obtained from Milsons Point Station.

Trish Skehan

Australia Today 1916

*They came from the lower levels
Deep down in the Brilliant mine;
From the wastes where the whirlwind revels,
Whirling the leaves of pine.*

*On the western plains, where the Darling flows,
And the dust storms wheel and shift,
The teamster loosened his yokes and bows,
And turned his team adrift.*

*On the western stations, far and wide,
There's many an empty pen,
For the "ringers" have cast the machines aside
And answered the call for men.*

*On the lucerne flats where the stream runs slow,
And the Hunter finds the sea,
The women are driving the mowers now,
With the children at their knee.*

*For the men have gone, as a man must go,
At the call of the rolling drums;
For the men have sworn that the Turks shall know
When the old battalion comes.*

*Column of companies by the right,
Steady in strong array,
With the sun on the bayonets gleaming bright,
The battalion marched away.*

*They battled, the old battalion,
Through the toil of the training camps,
Sweated and strove at lectures,
By the light of the stinking lamps.*

*Marching, shooting, and drilling;
Steady and slow and stern;
Awkward and strange, but willing
All of their job to learn.*

*Learning to use the rifle;
Learning to use the spade;
Deeming fatigue a trifle
During each long parade.*

*Till at last they welded
Into a concrete whole,
And there grew in the old battalion
A kind of battalion's soul.*

*Brotherhood never was like it;
Friendship is not the word;
But deep in that body of marching men
The soul of a nation stirred.*

*And like one man with a single thought
Cheery and confident;
Ready for all that the future brought,
The old battalion went.*

*Column of companies by the right,
Steady in strong array,
With the sun on the bayonets gleaming bright,
The battalion marched away.*

*How shall we tell of the landing
By the hills where the foe were spread,
And the track of the old battalion
Was marked by the Turkish dead?*

*With the dash that discipline teaches,
Though the hail of the shrapnel flew,
And the forts were raking the beaches,
And the toll of the dead men grew.*

*They fixed their grip on the gaunt hillside
With a pluck that has won them fame;
And the home-folks know that the dead men died
For the pride of Australia's name.*

*Column of companies by the right,
To the beat of the rolling drums;
With honours gained in a stirring fight
The old battalion comes!*

A B (Banjo)Paterson

Colonial Families

There were 36 children in the colony that began its life at Sydney Cove on January 26, 1788. Of that number, 17 were children of convict women, seven of them having been born during the voyage of nearly eight and a half months. Nineteen of the children belonged to families of the marine corps that was sent out, under the command of Major Robert Ross, to guard the settlement,

For most of the children who came out in the First Fleet, the business of growing up in Phillip's Sydney began when they came ashore from the ships on February 6, 1788. They had been issued with fresh clothes and were then rowed ashore to a scene of bustle and confusion with tents half-erected, drains half-dug, stores half-housed, and pigs, goats and sheep wandering about.

The plan for a temporary settlement of tents was much longer than anticipated because of the unsuitability of the gum trees for building and the absence of lime for mortar.

Watching from the deck of the "Lady Penrhyn", Surgeon Bowes Smyth could see that a number of tents had not been erected and many of the convicts were drenched to the skin as a violet electrical storm hit the new settlement during the night of February 6. Wind and rain swept the cove and lightning crashed down. At midnight a large tree was split from top to bottom, killing five sheep and a pig tethered nearby. Even the marines and sailors were afraid, so the feelings of the children of the camp can be imagined.

All the 211 officers and men, 548 male convicts and 188 convict women with their 17 children, were told by Governor Phillip in no uncertain terms that if they did not work they would not eat, and that the theft of food or livestock would be punished by hanging. Three weeks later the Governor proved that he meant what he said, when James Barrett was executed for stealing.

Perhaps the chief problem about growing up in the first settlement was the fact that there were really no families. No aunts, uncles, grandparents, no visits to neighbours who might have been friends for generations.

Not one of the marine officers was accompanied by a wife. Ralph Clark, in his journal, made a great thing every Sunday morning of kissing the portrait of his distant wife, Alicia, and condemning the behaviour of the convict women who took lovers from amongst the sailors, marines and male convicts. Yet on Norfolk Island, Clarke himself lived with a convict woman named Mary Branham, and they had a daughter named Alicia. No information has come to light about their movements when Clarke returned with the marines to England.

Only one of the civil officers was accompanied by a wife. He was the Reverend Richard Johnson, chaplain to the colony till his departure in October 1800. Johnson had married Mary Burton before the fleet sailed. Their first child was an adopted Aboriginal girl called Abaroo, who was brought into the settlement when her family was stricken down by smallpox. The Johnsons eventually had two children of their own. They stood out among the officer class as one of the few examples of a normal family.

Lieutenant. P.G. King, who was sent off in February 1788 to found a settlement at Norfolk Island, lived with a convict woman, Ann Inelt, and had two sons by her, namely Norfolk and Sydney. It is to his credit that he brought them up with his own family and they both became officers in the Royal Navy.

Lieutenant George Johnston met Esther Abrahams on board the "Lady Penrhyn" and lived with her until her death in 1823. Under pressure from Governor Macquarie, Johnston and Esther were married at St. John's, Parramatta, in November 1814, by which time there were four daughters and three sons.

Five convict couples were married by Rev. Richard Johnson on Sunday, February 10, 1788. They were the first weddings to be celebrated in this country.

(Reprinted from *The Arms Chronicle*, January 1988, with permission)

Douglas Vale - Historic Homestead and Vineyard

Looking for 'something different' on a recent trip to Port Macquarie, we found a brief reference in a tourism brochure to the historic Douglas Vale Homestead. (see <http://www.douglasvalevineyard.com.au>, or Google 'Douglas Vale')

Located two kilometres from the centre of town on the Oxley Highway, Douglas Vale turned out to be a gem.

Visitors enter the property through a most impressive bamboo grove of about the same age as the planting at Yaralla.

The homestead consists of a fairly modest weatherboard house originally constructed in the 1860's - the oldest surviving timber dwelling in the region - plus outbuildings, and a small vineyard.

This property remained in the ownership of one family from 1859 to 1993, and has many old and interesting family artefacts. The last inhabitant was involved in oyster farming, labouring, and grave digging until well into his 80's and the oyster boat, tools and effects from these activities are carefully preserved.

This is a museum built on firm rules about "significance" and everything displayed is strictly relevant to the theme.

The original vineyard, larger than today, produced 52 vintages until 1918. Peak output, in 1877, was 3,200 gallons. The present vineyard carries several varieties, including Isabella grapes propagated from original plantings on the site in 1862.

In 2007 the Douglas Vale Conservation Group produced the first vintage from the vineyard in almost 90 years. It uses the profits from wine sales to fund its work.

Friendly Conservation Group members conduct guided tours (on set days) of the homestead - lovely old hardwood - and grounds, and wine tastings, and explain the significance of the various family treasures.

The Group's web site includes details of opening days, history, a photo gallery, and location map. Well recommended!

Ray Lane

For Your Diary

Wed. Apr. 8 - General Meeting

Wed. April 22 - Executive Meeting

Wed. May 13 - General Meeting

Out of the Mouths of Babes

Nudity: I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evenings when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat: "Mum, that lady isn't wearing a seat belt!"

Opinions: On the first day of school a first-grader handed his teacher a note from his mother. The note read: "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents".

Tomato Sauce: A woman was trying hard to get the tomato sauce out of the bottle. During her struggle the phone rang so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer it. "Mummy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle."

More Nudity: A little boy got lost at the YWCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked: "What's the matter? Haven't you ever seen a little boy before?"

Police #1: While taking a routine vandalism report at a primary school I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked: "Are you a cop?" "Yes", I answered, and continued writing the report. "My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?" "Yes, that's right", I told her. "Well, then", she said as she extended her foot towards me, "would you please tie my shoe lace?"

Police #2: It was the end of the day when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment my canine partner, Jake, was barking and I saw a little boy staring in at me. "Is that a dog you got back there?", he asked. "It sure is", I replied. Puzzled, the boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van. Finally, he said "What did he do?"

Elderly: While working for an organisation that delivers meals to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

Lorraine Holmes (from an email received)

From the Secretary's Desk

April General Meeting: There will be no guest speaker on this night, we will be using the time to tell you more about the Standards Program our Society is taking part in. It is a programme, designed by experts, which assists in bring any museum up to at least minimum standards and we, along with another 17 museums, will be taking part. At this stage, when we are about to launch a completely new museum, we desperately need this help.

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 through the process 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 shed door?), or any 1930s vintage kitchen and laundry items, including boxes and packets (eg Reckitts Blue Bags) Look around the house, ask your friends and neighbours, keep an eye on the Council clean-ups, please.

Thank you to those members who have been sending articles. We will get around to them all eventually. But, don't stop sending - all are welcome

Correction:

In reference to the excellent article "Working at Arnott's Factory" in the March "Nurungi" . . .

I worked at the Electricity Commission Workshops on the corner of Underwood and Pomeroy Streets, Homebush and well remember the smell of hot biscuits when the wind was blowing in the right direction.

A couple of points need to be corrected. The cables mentioned that were cut would have been pilot or signal wires that accompany every major transmission line and monitor their operations. These cables would have run from Strathfield Substation, which is beside the junction of the main southern railway and western lines.

The information contained in those cables went to the State Control Room at Pennant Hills Road and Felton Street, Carlingford.

Lloyd Woolnough