



"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
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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.156

May 2009

Walker Chronicles (part 16)

A rugged country – Ebden's land

May 26th 1837.

Over supper that night, Charles Ebden explained that he had been in the process of moving all his family and stock from the area known as Omio.

Ebden was relocating nine thousand sheep, thirty horses and nine drays full of furniture because he considered the region too dangerous in the dry spell and was worried about bush-fires like the one that Thomas had described passing through.

Mount Macedon was further south, and Charles had selected a more suitable spot there on which to build a new homestead.

Thomas and his men were invited to travel with them, as many Aboriginal tribes were seen in the surrounding area, and were not regarded as being very friendly. Ebden reluctantly informed them about the terribly mutilated bodies of Gellibrand and Hesse, two missing explorers, whose bodies had been recently located across the river. That bushfire had dispersed a band of dangerous natives, and probably saved Walker and his men from a perilous confrontation.

Ebden was wary of the two Aboriginal men travelling with the group. Baambargan surprised Mr Ebden by agreeing with his statement and said that he also '*feared the tribes in the rugged country through which they still had to pass.*'

This led to a discussion about a tribal elder called Bungarry and his famed ease, even when in the presence of the Governor. Thomas lamented that '*the doom of their and all other uncivilised people is a stain, which not even the necessity of finding a refuge for the teeming increase of our (Britain's) own over-peopled country, could justify.*'

Thomas told Ebden's party about bringing Baambargan all the way from Sydney, mistakenly thinking that all Australian natives spoke the same language. Thomas narrated some of the bush lore he had learned, including how to '*taste a fly's blood*' to know which animals or men were in the vicinity. Baambargan could tell if the fly had feasted on various animals or even white

men by its flavour.'

Walker went on describing how he later met with a friendly group of Aborigines, south of the Hume River, when he first encountered Bretha.

'A fine looking, well-informed and intelligent young man, who offered to guide us to Port Phillip.' Bretha had been of great help, teaching them much about the bush and Aboriginal lore. He also sought a *gin* or wife from one of the tribes in the countryside and amused the men with his attempts at English.

Thomas mentioned what happened when meeting a large party of natives in the act of fording one river. '*A motley group of men, women and children - we were unable to hold communication with them, none of them being able to speak English. Bretha could understand them as little as we do, and it is amusing to hear him address them in his English jargon, under the supposition that they will better understand that.*'

'We were therefore, to them, objects of infinite curiosity. When we had become a little better acquainted, they examined and touched our clothes and skins, with wonder and admiration and asked us to give them many articles they saw in our possession. They were particularly struck with the facility with which we obtained fire, by means of the Lucifer matches, and were both surprised and frightened by some squibs and crackers which we let off. They are particularly cheerful and friendly and apparently without distrust of us.'

Walker's journal had many descriptions about the natives, describing Bretha as '*an impressive bushman, moving silently through the timberland, aware that one broken twig or crackling leaf could undo the*



Bulletin Board

May 13 - Kerima-Gae Topp, President,
Parramatta Branch of the National Trust
- "Australia - the Weird and Wonderful" -
a "show-and-tell" presentation.

hard labour of half a day's work in tracking game. He was skilled with the long spear and woomera, and the force of the curved boomerang as it felled a hapless target or stunned some larger quarry."

One fascinating tale told of the manner in which the Aborigines found honey or *warron*, as it was known in their language. In the heat of a summer's day, the patient Baambargan sat motionless on the banks of a lagoon, waiting for a bee as it came to drink. He put a particular kind of thin grass between his teeth. Having previously retained a mouthful of water in his cheeks, he would blow a mist of drenching dew over the bee, which fell hapless into the water.

Carefully withdrawing it on the point of a stick, he rubbed his fingers in a fine powder like Fuller's earth, and began a very delicate process. A single fibre of a fine down, found under the wing of the eagle-hawk or malion, is dipped into a glutinous juice of a particular herb, carefully preserved. The restless bee had dried a little in the warmth of the sun and began to flex its tiny wings. Another shower of dew fell over the bee, which clung to the stick. The minute operation continued, as a little streamer of down was attached to the insect. This time it was allowed to dry and fly, *'winging his way direct to his hive, scarcely encumbered with the unusual floating tail.'*

Baambargan's keen eyes followed the insect's erratic flight for a moment. The *haloo* was given and a chase ensued, with the men shouting loudly to scare the bee and keep it in sight. The merry chase continued for a considerable distance, while the bee, in a haste to get to the safety of its hive, betrayed the location. The nimble native then scrambled up the tree to rob the hive of its liquid prize. Thomas recorded how he chipped a small foothold with a sharp piece of flint, feeling with his toes for each little niche, as any slip meant death or serious injury.

Thomas mentioned *'exceptional eyesight, and ability to discern the minutest scratch of an opossum on the bark of a tree or the displacement of a fibre of grass in tracing their game when the ground is covered with herbage.'*

(to be continued)

Due to recent budget cuts and the cost of electricity, gas and oil, as well as current market conditions and the continued decline of the world economy, The Light at the End of the Tunnel has been turned off.

We apologize for the inconvenience.

Parramatta Road - the early days

Realising the infertility of the rugged harbourside area of Port Jackson and frustrated by the difficulties which the convicts continually encountered in cutting down hardwood trees and in trying to remove sandstone outcrops with inadequate tools, Governor Phillip lost little time in seeking open land more suitable for cultivation.

During a journey upstream by boat in April 1788, he found better land near the headwaters of the Parramatta River (approx. 14 miles west), chose the site for a town and named it Rose Hill.

A small farming settlement was begun at Rose Hill on 2nd November 1788 and in June 1789 Phillip decided to lay out a town of "generous proportions", proposing a main road a mile long and great breadth. Phillip proposed that this street (the present George Street, Parramatta) should provide a 200 feet wide link between his residence and the wharf from which the river access was available to the settlement and ships at Sydney Cove.

At first communication between Sydney and Rose Hill (which in June 1791 became known by the Aboriginal word Parramatta which means "head of the river" or "place where eels lie down") was by boat along the Parramatta River.

Overland journeys were more frequent after a track was cut through the thick bush some time between 1789 and 1791. Use of this track, except on official business, was frowned upon rather than welcomed by the authorities.

Judge-Advocate Collins noted in January 1792 that *"The easy communication between Sydney and Parramatta had been found to be a very great evil from the time the path was first made; but since the numbers had been so much augmented at Parramatta, it became absolutely necessary to put a stop to the intercourse. The distance was about sixteen miles; and unless information was previously given, a person would visit Sydney and return without being missed; and as stolen property was transferred from one place to another by means of this quick conveyance, orders were given calculated to cut off unlicensed intercourse."*¹

The movement of settlement west is indicated by records which show that towards the end of 1792 Parramatta had a population of 1,970 compared with 1,170 at Sydney. However, Sydney soon regained pre-eminence as its port facilities developed and as the

Hawkesbury River district usurped from Parramatta much of its role as supplier of primary products

It was at this point that ill health compelled Phillip to resign his governorship and return to England in December 1792. Consequently his plans were frequently ignored.

The frequent complaints about the condition of the colony's roads, especially after wet weather, suggest that neither the workers nor their overseers and supervising officers had yet mastered the art of road construction and maintenance (particularly the need for adequate drainage). Government funds for roadworks were limited and skilled men, as well as good tools, were few. Restricted by such basic deficiencies, roadmaking was inevitably reduced to simple patchwork methods. Typical of the attempts to improve the principal routes is the directive from Governor William Bligh (of Bounty fame) in July 1806.

"In consequence of the Bad State of the Roads leading from Sydney to Parramatta, and the danger of Horses being lamed in the deep ruts near Sydney, it is hereby directed that all Public and Private Carts and Waggons passing that Road (not otherwise loaded) do take a Load of Brick-bats from the Brick-fields, and drop them in the Places appointed by the Overseer of the Roads, provided it does not lie out of the way of the place to which the Cart or Waggon is going.

This order is to be enforced by John King, Overseer of the Brickmaker; who is to report those that do not choose to obey this necessary Regulation for amending that part of the Road, and preserving their own Horses".²

Despite all the mishaps and complaints it would appear that not all travelers had tales of woe, and to balance the picture Francois Peron, a French naturalist who made the journey to Parramatta in 1802 writes of his "enjoyable experience".

His impressions are a classic description of the convenience which even such primitive roads brought to the growing colony and of the appreciation of natural beauty which they engendered in the minds of many travelers.

"A large road leads from Sydney Town to Parramatta; it is not paved, but is well made, and kept in good condition. It is almost every where wide enough for three carriage to pass abreast, and bridges have been thrown over such parts of it as are interrupted by the

waters; so that the traveler meets with no obstacle on his journey. Having been opened through vast forests, that were never before assaulted by the axe, this grand road appears at a distance, like an immense avenue of foliage and verdure. A charming freshness, and an agreeable shade always prevail in this continuous bower, the silence of which is interrupted only by the singing and chirping of the richly plumed parrots, and other birds which inhabit it"³

Lt.Col. Lachlan Macquarie took office as Governor of the colony on 1st January 1810. He immediately embarked on an extensive programme to raise community standards. He placed considerable emphasis on roadworks and was the first Governor to bring some planning to their construction and some regulation to their use.

One of his first moves was to place the financing of major roads on a firmer footing by the establishment of the turnpike system, a common practice in England since the early 18th century and meant simply charging tolls on persons, animals and vehicles using particular routes.

"It having been represented to His Excellency the governor, that the Settlers at the Hawkesbury and Parramatta suffered considerable difficulties from the want of sufficient roads to convey their various produce to Market at Sydney, and that they are anxious that Toll Bars should be erected at convenient distances between these places in order to raise the fund for the putting said roads into

good repair, and for their being regularly kept in good Order.: This is therefore to give Notice that His Excellency is disposed to approve of the erecting Toll Bars, and to establish certain rates thereon, for this beneficial object . . ." ⁴

On 10th May 1810 John Harrex of Parramatta signed a contract to make "a public Turnpike Road from Cheer's Corner in the Town of Sydney to the Toll Bridge at Hawkesbury", approximately 40 miles long, by the end of the year and thereafter to keep the road and all bridges in good repair until early 1818. The payment was to be £2,500.

In December 1810 the toll charges were announced for the section as far as Parramatta. ⁵ These rates were reaffirmed in March 1811 prior to the opening of the road on 10th April 1811. The charges included 2d for horned cattle, 3d for horses, 10d for twenty sheep or hogs, and twelve pence for different combinations of various vehicles and the number of horses or bullocks drawing them (ranging from 4d for "every cart drawn by a single horse or bullock" to 3s.0d for a "four-wheeled carriage drawn by four horses"). ⁶

There were also lengthy warnings of the consequences of evasion, fraud or refusal to pay the appropriate toll.

By 1816 milestones had been laid along the Parramatta Road. Even then, these unobtrusive monuments were not safe from local vandals, whose irresponsible behavior in altering the Roman numerals became so

serious as to warrant the following public notice.

"Several of the Mile Stones . . . having been of late wantonly and mischievously defaced and injured, it is hereby publicly notified that any Person who shall hereafter break, deface or injure any of the Mile Stones on the said Road will be prosecuted according to Law, and on Conviction severely and exemplarily punished."⁷

There is an obelisk in Macquarie Place which was erected in 1818 "to Record that all the Public Roads Leading to the Interior of the colony are Measured from it". Francis Greenway, ex-convict architect of many fine remaining buildings in and around Sydney, designed this column which was cut and erected by Edward Cureton for £85. ⁸

(Endnotes)

- 1 Collins, D. *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* (London 1809)
- 2 SG 6 July 1806
- 3 Peron, F. "Description of Sydney Town, etc." in *The Monthly Magazine* 1 Sept 1809
- 4 SG 9 Oct 1803
- 5 SG 22 Dec 1870
- 6 SG 30 Mar 1811
- 7 SG 26 Oct 1816 (A reward of £5 was offered to persons giving information leading to the conviction of offenders.)
- 8 Macquarie, L *Diary* 19 Sept 1816

The Roadmakers: A History of Main Roads in New South Wales. Produced and Published by Department of Main Roads, New South Wales.

An Obituary printed in the London Times

Interesting and sadly rather true.

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: Knowing when to come in out of the rain; Why the early bird gets the worm; Life isn't always fair; and maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for

kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when

you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers; I Know My Rights; I Want It Now; Someone Else Is To Blame; I'm A Victim

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone.

If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

Museum Committee

We are now beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel - but there is still quite a way to go and only 4 weeks to finalise it.

If you would like to come along and help the committee will be there every Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 am until at least 2:30 pm (probably even later). If you can spare some time just come along.

Museum Rosters: Once the museum is officially opened we will then be opening every Saturday and Wednesday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. On these days we need at least two people on duty at all times. We desperately need your help. Please contact the Secretary to let her know your availability so we can draw up a roster,

Roster duty is not onerous - it's mainly a case of "meet and greet" our visitors to make them feel welcome and try to answer any questions or make a note to pass them on to someone for an answer.

Museum Committee: To date we have been carrying out the work with just a small group of 10 to 12 people but our museum is now a very big, and very important part of our society, and we would like to increase the committee numbers considerably.

Please don't say "*I can't do anything because I don't know anything about the museum*". This is how many of the current committee members felt six months ago but, by taking part in the move and the planning, they now have a very good working knowledge and are keen to go on learning.

Standards Program 2009: Part of this "learning curve" comes through our participation in this, which is a program designed to teach us all facets of museum management so we can bring our establishment up to, at least, minimum museum standards.

The current section we are working on is a Self Assessment of our museum - looking at how we managed the museum in the past and showing us other ways in which we can improve our management.

Can you spare some time? We know you are all very busy people - aren't we all - but surely you can spare a few hours here and there to become a part of this new and exciting endeavour.

Trish Skehan, in her own inimitable manner, has supplied us with a series of short stories on some famous, and not so famous Australian Pilots. They tell a brief history of some aspects of flight. We will be bringing these to you on a regular basis and hope you enjoy reading these little known snippets.

Aviation Antics

Arthur Affleck 1903-1966.

Born in Brighton, Victoria, Arthur entered the RAAF in 1923. He joined Qantas in 1927, flying the Gulf Country route. He piloted Dr Kenyon Welch when the first Flying Doctor base was established at Cloncurry. In 1932 he headed for Papua New Guinea, after a brief but unsuccessful stint at tobacco farming.

Returning to Perth, he became an Air Safety Inspector, for what became the Department of Civil Aviation.

In 1942, as Japanese forces rapidly advanced through Papua New Guinea, Arthur organised the evacuation of Australian women and children. After the war, he became Superintendent of Air Navigation in Sydney. In 1959, he accepted a promotion as Region Director of Aviation in the PNG region.

Harold Affleck 1902-1982.

Born in 1902, Arthur's cousin, Harold Affleck, started his aviation career as a rigger, working on the amphibious Wackett Widgeon. He trained with the RAAF as an aircraft engineer.

Harold was Kingsford Smith's flight engineer on many Southern Cross barnstorming tours in Australia and NZ. He loved flying, but not the airsickness that ensued. *'I flew in it almost every day from 1932 to 1935 and I was sick every time. Flying low, it got all the turbulence.'*

Flying with Ulm.

Rupert (Bob) Boulton grew up in Drummoyne, and joined the RAAF as a fitter. He learned to fly with the NSW Aero Club. One of the first pilot engineer apprentices trained by ANA, Charles Ulm employed Bolton for his *'Faith in Australia'* aeroplane.

Bob became the Engine Assembly and Test Superintendent at the CAC factory at Lidcombe, and was awarded the MBE in 1976 for his pioneering flights with Ulm and services to aviation.

From the Secretary's Desk

Museum Opening: This has now been confirmed as Saturday, 16th May. Full details still to be arranged but if you would like to be advised please send an email with "Museum Opening" in the subject line and we'll send all details to you. If you aren't on the internet but would be attending the opening just give me a call on 9744-8528 and I'll get details to you.

At this stage we are considering being open for both the Saturday and the Sunday to allow people to choose which day they would prefer to attend.

Help Wanted for Opening Weekend: Can you spare some time to help man the museum on the two days (16/17th May) from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm? Please phone the Secretary so a roster can be prepared.

Correction to our Correction last issue: The Strathfield Substation is beside the junction of the main northern railway and western lines.

Standards Committee 2009: For those working on this project, please get your research results in to the secretary by 16th May so that we can put the whole lot together to go over the items for finalisation. There are still a couple of sections that need to be researched if anyone would like to put their hand up to take some on board.

The whole section has to be completed and in to Museums & Galleries NSW by 29th May.

Yaralla Open Day: We have still not heard from Sydney South West Area Health Service as to when we will be able to hold the next Open Day at Yaralla.

Rivendell Open Day: We have tentatively applied to hold this on Sunday, 5th July but still have to receive confirmation. To our guides - please mark the date, tentatively on your calendar to keep it free and study up your Guide Books. We'll let you know and soon as we know.

For Your Diary

Wed. May 13 - General Meeting

Sat. May 16 - Opening of the City of Canada Bay Museum

Wed. May 20 - Standards Committee Meeting

Wed. May 27 - Executive Meeting

"If you don't like something change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it." — Mary Engelbreit