



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: chs@concordheritage.asn.au

www.concordheritage.asn.au

EDITOR
LOIS MICHEL
9744-8528

PRESIDENT
MARK DURANCE
9743-0583

PUBLIC RELATIONS
TRISH SKEHAN
4369-4172

SECRETARY/TREASURER
LOIS MICHEL
3 Flavelle Street
(P.O. Box 152)
Concord 2137
Phone: 9744-8528
Fax: 9744-7591

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
ttouille@optusnet.com.au

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
* * * *

CITY OF CANADA BAY MUSEUM

1 Bent Street, Concord
Open Wed & Sat
10am to 4pm

No.159

July 2009

Walker Chronicles (part 18)

The Yarrazene Falls to Mount Macedon

May 27th. The falls of the Yarrazene lay in their path. Thomas described that scene as '*a romantic place a little to the south of the road called Cobban*', and saw the spot where flowing rapids cascaded over the rocks. '*When there is a large body of water, the sight, I have no doubt, is a pretty one, though the fall is not over thirty feet or so.*'

Mount Macedon was still sixty miles south, nearer to Port Phillip. Although welcoming the company and safety of travelling with Ebden and his household, the party were anxious to complete their journey, already being weeks overdue.

But the climate proved as unpredictable as the country. The weather turned nasty and Thomas described it as '*the most unpleasant day of the trip so far*'. Bitterly cold winds and chilling rain made changing into dry clothes a real pleasure.

Charles joined Thomas to shelter in his tent, and Thomas made a note not to grumble so much. Reading over his comments about their progress, he realised that most of the journey had been made in very agreeable weather.

May 29th. Mount Macedon. Thomas described the high autumn pastures of gently rolling meadows, and the thinly wooded hills of Stringybark and Black-butt trees. Ebden, after much consideration, had selected a spot on the banks of Wearidy Creek. '*Those who get these lands can count themselves fortunate. The fertile soil would well grow grain*'. Thomas wrote about how he coveted this land that the elderly squatter had just claimed.

Hardier members of the party climbed the near side of Mount Macedon. On the higher plateau, creeks cascaded merrily through the lush green landscape. Thomas marvelled at the view of the waterfalls plunging down the mountainside, then flowing onwards to form the headwaters of Wearidy River.

Crossing the top of Mount Macedon proved to be tougher going than first anticipated, but they finally found a spot where the undergrowth opened to reveal the water of Port Phillip Bay on the horizon to the south-

east. Thomas fancied that he glimpsed the ocean directly to the south, but misjudged the effect of nearness that high altitude created, as the bay was more than twenty miles away.

As they all gazed towards the sea, they agreed that '*no-one would ever forget the journey, nor attempt lightly to do it again*'. Buoyed by the apparent nearness of their final destination, Thomas Walker and Lachlan McAlister hurried down the rocky mountainside to pack their gear and take leave of their travelling companions.

They readied horses and provisions, determined to arrive in Port Phillip before the first of June. Land sales would begin in earnest on that date and large numbers of settlers were already gathering in the township of Port Melbourne.

The two men rode overland for about eight miles, through fertile grassland ripe for the plough. They arrived at the solitary homestead of Mister Mollison, who made them feel most welcome as darkness fell. After supper that night, they settled on the floor in front of the fire. Mollison had not yet completed the house, so they bedded down under cloaks and blankets. Thomas said that he never slept so soundly nor so peacefully.

He noted on various occasions the contrasting aspect of homesteads owned by single men, '*where spartan interiors, devoid of bare necessities, contrasted with the difference that woman and children made to the places, filling them with homely comforts and good cheer*'. They departed early the next morning to attend a sale of allotments at which more than two hundred people would bid on various sites offered. Half-acre blocks fetched between eighteen and ninety-five pounds, depending on their location, the average being about forty pounds a site.



Bulletin Board

July 8 - Malcolm Halliday will talk about Homebush Abattoirs, and other snippets from his father's 1920 photograph album featuring many historic occasions and photos.

Homebush Abattoirs

Early Sydney settlers were mostly dependent on salted beef and pork in barrels arriving in ships from England. Because of the long trip through the tropical heat, the meat was usually putrid on arrival. Small, local slaughterhouses were built as the colony grew, but these depended on the quality of livestock being processed and the skill and cleanliness, or lack thereof, of the owners. The major abattoir for Sydney was sited at Glebe Island, but was soon inadequate to meet growing demands.

Our guest speaker in July is Mr Malcolm Halliday, whose father, Charles, was an auditor at the Homebush abattoirs. He began work when the Meat Industry and Abattoir Board, MIAB, was located at Glebe Island. A fire left the Glebe facility looking more like the ruins at Pompeii.

Construction on the Homebush site began in 1910, but animals were not slaughtered there until mid 1916.

Jan Jenkins of Strathfield Historical Society stated in her web article that: *Homebush came into full production in August 1917, after which operations ceased at Glebe Island. The Meat Industry and Abattoir Board, which had Metropolitan added in 1919, "was responsible for the maintenance and control of abattoirs, slaughterhouses, livestock saleyards and meat markets within the metropolis and immediate environs, and to ensure that all meat coming from other areas had been slaughtered under proper conditions and passed by rigid inspection services". The Board was also made responsible for supervising country killed meat entering the Homebush meat hall, as well as co-ordinating the supply of meat for Sydney.*



Until 1968 auction stock was sold kilometres from the saleyards. Government officials increased the facility's size by opening a 35-acre saleyard containing separate cattle, sheep, calf and pig yards. Close to both the abattoirs and the 400-acre resting paddocks, over 4,000 head of cattle, 35,000 sheep or lambs, and over 3,500

pigs and calves could be rested at any one time. Aerial photographs give some idea of the scale of the complex.



The photograph of the By-products factory was captioned as 'The perfumery' and leaves little to one's imagination. Production of by-products included hides dried in special sheds. Tallow extracted from offal and fat trimmings was used in the production of soap and margarine, plus many other items. Blood and bone was made into fertiliser. Bone meal became stock feed. Various animal glands were useful in medical or veterinary applications.



Malcolm provided a 1920's photograph album, from which many pictures were converted to overhead projections to help illustrate his talk. I particularly loved the various characters at work - and play - featured therein.

This album also contains glimpses of the visit of HRH, Edward, Prince of Wales, and many pictures of the celebration decorations, holidays in Katoomba and other popular sites plus yachting on the harbour. Some of his photographs of Ross Smith's historic arrival in Australia were copied by the Qantas Historical Aviation Museum. Although an unusual subject matter, don't miss this talk on 8th July, I guarantee you will love it.

Trish Skehan.

Can you remember?

On either the day before our museum opened or on the actual opening day Jeanette or Harry O'Hara brought down some papers and photographs for our archives. If you know anything about these would you please contact the secretary as soon as possible.

One for the Trivia buffs

How many different animals have been into space?

So far, to date, 186 different species (187 if you include humans who have flown in space). It is probably more if you count the various types of bacteria, but that is the official total as supplied by NASA.

In the early days of the space programme, in order to protect human lives, animals made the first voyages out of the Earth's atmosphere. In 1948 a rhesus monkey named Albert became the first primate launched. He didn't make it quite into space as his rocket failed to travel beyond the 100 km Karman line demarcating the beginning of space. Albert suffocated during the flight. Eleven years later, on May 28, 1959, rhesus monkey Able and quirel monkey Miss Baker became the first living beings to successfully return to Earth from a journey into space. Able died four days later from a reaction to the anaesthesia he received during surgery to remove an infected medical electrode. He was preserved and is on display at the National Air and Space Museum. Miss Baker was 27 years old when she died in 1984. She is buried on the grounds of the US Space and Rocket Centre.

More Aviation Antics

Waltzing Matilda. - Geoffrey Wikner 1904-1990.

Born at Grafton in 1904, Geoff was more interested in car engines as a teenager. Moving to Brisbane in 1929 he bought a damaged Farman Sports aircraft. Rebuilt with numerous improvements, this served for joy-rides until accidentally written off.

He designed and built the first aircraft made in Queensland, a single-engine monoplane called the 'Wicko Cabin Sports' which Charles Kingsford-Smith test-flew.

Charles thought it a 'very fine little machine'. More designs followed.

During the war, Wikner's experience proved invaluable when flying 67 different types of aircraft.

In May 1946, he purchased and flew a Handley Page Halifax, named 'Waltzing Matilda' to Australia, carrying his family, three crew and 16 fare-paying passengers. This was the first, and only, Halifax to safely arrive in Australia.

After retiring from flying, he started a caravan park at Port Stephens, but aviation was still in his blood. In his sixties, Wikner designed and built a helicopter, called a 'Wicopter'.

Trish Skehan

Yaralla Seasons

People are always curious about the beautiful old Cedar in the centre of what was Thomas Walker's carriage loop in front of the house, *Yaralla*. It is a Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) and was indeed planted when Thomas was just beginning to lay out his garden in Concord in the mid 1800's.

This tree was described in the Horticultural Magazine of 1865 as: "a well grown specimen of *Cedrus deodora* (actually *C.libani*) in the centre of the round."

This tree could be as old as 140 years. It is unfortunate that it is not regarded as it would be if it was growing in Victoria. Here the National Trust has set up The Significant Tree Fund, a scheme funded entirely through donations, to record and protect historically important trees (in excess of 1000) throughout Victoria - or in Britain where tree heritage is recorded in the Tree Register, with a database of over 150,000 notable trees.

The Cedar of Lebanon was introduced to Britain as long ago as 1638. Thomas probably purchased the young tree from Sir William Macarthur at Camden Park, who was cultivating this species as early as 1843.

Fortunately, the old tree is surviving in spite of the droughts of past years, wind damage and recent pruning which has somewhat spoilt its shape over the years.



Cedrus libani in the centre of lawn in front of the entrance to 'Yaralla House'

The Cedar of Lebanon is originally from Asia Minor. It is native to Lebanon, Syria and southern Turkey where, fortunately it is still plentiful.

Cedar of Lebanon was important to many great civilizations.

The trees were used by the ancient Phoenicians for building trade and military ships, as well as houses and temples. These large conifers were used extensively for building in Biblical times, perhaps most notably for King Solomon's Palace. The Egyptians used its resin for mummification, and its sawdust was found in pharaohs'

tombs. Entire forests of cedar disappeared as a result of this use and today what is believed to be an ancient grove of *Cedrus libani* still exists on Mount Lebanon, and is now preserved.

To tell the three species apart, look at the shape of the trees: Atlas cedar branches ascend, deodar branches descend, and cedar of Lebanon branches are level.

Other pines include the overpowering *Roxburgii* and *Cannariensis* found in old colonial gardens and at Yaralla many Chinese mourning cypress.

Many old colonial gardens had plants from Africa, visited by ships en route from England to Sydney. At Yaralla at the end of the round within the carriage loop is a chestnut *Capense* which, although senescing, still produces flowers in November.

In front of the Italian balustrade are several caphrum which can be found in pockets in various parts of Concord.

Thomas had a passion for plants as revealed by his attendance at meetings of the Australasian Horticultural and Agricultural Society from its inaugural meeting in 1857. Thomas would have found himself again in the company of the Nicholls, Isaac and George, who were members. He no doubt preferred the nurserymen such as Thomas Shepherd and Guilfoyle.

Dame Edith Walker never married, which is fortunate for historians as the Estate as we know it would probably no longer exist. However it was recently discovered that she was indeed once engaged.

The announcement of '*the engagement of Miss Edith (sic) Walker, only daughter and heiress of the late Thomas Walker, of Concord, Sydney, and of Tenterfield station (sic) and Mr. W. Desmond Richardson, eldest son of the late Lieutenant Marmaduke Richardson, 23rd Regiment, now of Kew, Melbourne*' was posted in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* (recorded in *The Brisbane Courier*, 16 June, 1896)

To date we have not found reference to the engagement in any other colonial newspaper.

Whatever became of W. Desmond Richardson?

Go pick up an agave also known as a century plant. For the past several months a very large agave in the bamboo grove has been flowering and has now set seed, most of which has dropped to the ground, helped by the wind or birds.



Cedrus libani on the lawn in front of the entrance facade of Osborne House, Isle of Wight. Planted in 1780, it is listed on the Heritage Tree Register

All over the Estate can be found Australian native plants. Many are rain-forest trees from northern Australia such as the *Flindersia* and the *waterhouseia*. There are trees used for fodder in arid parts of Australia such as the *Wilga* and the *Kurrajong*. Unusual natives including *eleocarpus*. A large *Podocarpus elatus* is one of several trees providing 'bush tucker'.

Sandra Elliott

Completion of major building projects at Yaralla

It gives me great pleasure to say that all major work projects on outer buildings in Yaralla have now been completed. The final broom was used on the gardeners' shed last week (May 22)

I will continue to provide the use of my electric and other tools free of charge, as has been the case since completion of the dairy. We have maintenance equipment in our work cupboards but, of course, CHS will need to continue providing us with cutting blades and other materials.

Any further quotes for repairs will be of a smaller nature and, therefore, will not require the assistance of a tradesperson.

It has taken nearly three years, in the capacity of Project Manager, to achieve completion on all major projects at Yaralla – the cattle ramp, the heritage fencing on Colin's property, the dairy, the small stables and, finally, the potting shed.

There will be many ongoing smaller jobs to be maintained but without the need of a Project Manager. Not unless one of our immediate group members asks for advice.

Vince Scerri

WANTED!

Do you know of any older residents moving away, or deceased estates being cleared out? We urgently need old, long forgotten kitchen gadgets to complete our "Kitchen" display and to use as "show-and-tell" items for visitors.

Do you remember the old pump action Mortein fly sprayer, the ice crusher you fixed to the wall and looked like a rocket, the soap swisher for washing up, the old tin grater, or anything else that belonged in the "good old days" kitchen? Maybe you even have something way at the back of your cupboard or out in the garage.

We want anything that will bring back memories for our older visitors, or intrigue the younger visitors.

Old packets and tins of long forgotten products would also be welcome.

Become a scavenger. Keep your eyes open all the time. If you pass a garage sale or jumble sale pop in and see what might be on offer.

Our Museum

Our City of Canada Bay Museum is now well established - we are just waiting for the signage on the building to complete it.

Big plans are in hand for various events to bring more people into the museum.

One of these involves fitting out the meeting/function area so that we can hold Art Exhibitions. We have already had a couple of enquiries and this could be a good money spinner for us with not a great deal of effort.

However, the cost to fit out the room in a suitable manner would not be cheap so we are in need of some fund-raising ideas.

Have you attending a successful function recently? Let us know about it. Have you any ideas or suggestions? Let us know about it. Send us a note or come along to our meetings and tell us about it.

We need money, but we also need to have events where more of our members could become involved and get together in a social atmosphere. These could be a good way to introduce our newer members in a less formal atmosphere, and also bring non-members along to get to know more about us.

GET INVOLVED!

Yaralla Open Day Sunday, October 25, 2009

We now have permission to hold another Open Day. Because the house has been closed for so long we are seeking permission to go in during the week before to dust and generally tidy up. If you can give an hour or so of your time to help with this it would be appreciated. Contact me so we can choose a suitable day.

Note to all our guides - it's been a long break so make sure you have all your papers, photos, etc. together and let me know you'll be available.

To our newer members: If you'd like to become a tour guide I can let you have copies of all the relevant documentation you will need so you can look them over prior to the date and then, on the open day, you can come and do a tour, or tours, with a regular guide to get the feel of it.

Sandra Elliott
ttoille@optusnet.com.au

Adam's Rib

Adam was walking around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely. God asked Adam what was wrong. Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to, so God decided he would give him a companion and it would be a woman.

God told Adam that the woman would cook for him, wash his clothes, and always agree with every decision he made. She would bear his children and never ask him to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She would not nag him and would always be the first to admit she was wrong during a disagreement. She would never have a headache, and would freely give him love and compassion whenever needed.

Adam asked God what a woman like this would cost him.

God told him, "An arm and a leg."

Adam replied, "what can I get for just a rib?"

The rest is history.....

Lost in Translation!!

Tired of cleaning yourself? Let me do it.

Dog for sale: eats anything and is fond of children.

Lost: small apricot poodle. Reward. Neutered. Like one of the family.

For sale: an antique desk suitable for lady with thick legs and large drawers.

From the Secretary's Desk

Membership Renewals: Have you sent in your membership renewal yet? And what about the questionnaire? We need to hear from more people who are willing to become part of our Museum group to help on the days we are open, as well as other facets of our work which may interest you.

Publicity Needed: Please tell all your friends and neighbours (even those who aren't your friends, we don't mind) about the museum and invite them to come and visit.

We need more publicity to bring people to what is now a very professionally presented facility.

If you remember the old one - now come along to the new museum and be very pleasantly surprised.

AGM & Elections: August is fast approaching and this is the most important meeting of the year. It is where you will be brought up to date with everything that has been happening with the Society, the Walker Estates and the Museum over the past twelve months.

But, more importantly, it is the Election of Officers and Committee Members for the following year. We are always in need of new blood and new ideas. In other words, we need YOU!!!

Please make every effort to come along and seriously consider putting your hand up to become part of our Executive Committee. You can nominate yourself or, if you're too shy, just whisper in the ear of another member to let them know you're willing to stand.

Thank You: Special thanks to all who have been continuing working at the museum. The store room is now much tidier and we can move around in it so now we will need to start sorting through our objects and archives to get them better sorted and stored.

Reminder to Officers and Chairpersons: We need your Annual Reports to members in by our August meeting, with a copy emailed to the Editor please.

For Your Diary

Sun. July 5 - Rivendell Open Day

Wed. July 8 - General Meeting

Wed. July 22 - Executive Meeting

Wed. Aug 12 - AGM & Elections