



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: chs@concordheritage.asn.au

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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
ttoille@optusnet.com.au

Museum Committee

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

Oral History Committee

Betty Fletcher, 9713-1384
Julia Stewart, 8765-9067

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CITY OF CANADA BAY MUSEUM

1 Bent Street, Concord

Open Wed & Sat
10am to 4pm



To all our members, particularly the newer ones . . .

You're invited to our

End-of-Year Christmas Function and Celebration of our new Museum

on

Wednesday, 9th December from 6:30 p.m.

at the

City of Canada Bay Museum

1 Bent Street, Concord

*Newer members are particularly invited to come and
get to know other members in a more social atmosphere.*

Family and friends are also welcome.

Please bring your own liquid refreshments and glasses.

All food will be supplied.

*If you haven't visited the museum yet, this would be a good
opportunity to visit and enjoy a social evening.*

R.S.V.P. 2nd December, 2009

to Lois on 9744-8528 or
chs@concordheritage.asn.au

CATERING: *Members are asked to please bring a small plate of refreshments if possible. To make sure we have a varied selection of finger food suitable for a main meal, could you please contact Errol Grace on 0412-405-257 or ejg49@yahoo.com.au to let him know what you would prefer to bring.*



A letter written by a nurse at Dame Eadith Walker Hospital (Yaralla) on 19th August, 1954, to a young friend.

Dear Jacki,

I was delighted to receive the beautiful piece of crochet work you sent me. I think it worth a hundred cups of tea and treasure it greatly.

I suppose your mother has her plaster off by now. I suppose she will be at home and walking about soon – I certainly hope so.

It is rather strange at Yaralla, because we don't have any operations, and we have a lot of polio cases. I am beginning to like the work, and I really love the place itself. Everywhere you look you cannot see further than the extent of the spacious grounds, except towards Concord Repatriation Hospital. Dame Eadith Walker's old home is the hospital, and the nurses and sisters live in delightful little cottages scattered about the grounds, where the maids probably lived.

Our dining room is gorgeous, with a huge fireplace and panelled walls. The floor is polished, and we eat at a beautiful square polished wood table, with carved legs and the Sisters at another. There are about eleven nurses here, excluding the night nurses. There are pretty chandeliers around the dining room walls.

One part of the house is called the Indian Room. The legend, which I have heard is true, is that Dame Eadith Walker loved an Indian Rajah and was not allowed to marry him. She had this room, it's really two rooms, built in India and brought out and placed in the grounds. It too is really fascinating, with all the walls, the ceiling, etc., carved beautifully from Indian hardwoods. There is an immense and

lovely picture of a peacock in all its glowing colours set in one wall.

Yaralla is on the riverside and there are gum trees, among others, everywhere. It is like a home away from home to me, as I live in the bush on a lake. We have a swimming pool and tennis courts (dating from Dame Eadith's day), and one of the old outhouses (I suppose that's what it was) has been converted into squash courts.

I hope you will take up nursing as I think you will love it and will make a good nurse. You need a steady hand and a strong stomach. I have already seen things which would make any ordinary person sick, such as a little girl vomiting blood, but don't let this put you off, as there are wonderful moments to compensate for this. I really do love it, and I feel sure that it is God's calling for me, and that "Jesus will carry me through" to completion of the course, if what I believe is true, that it is God's desire to consecrate my life to Him in this way.

I do want you to keep writing to me. What class are you in at school? And how are you?

Best wishes for your mother's speedy recovery.

Love from
Ann Glasson

In 1954 Jacki Napier's mother was in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital for a back operation. As a young child Jacki visited her mum every afternoon and when Nurse Ann Glasson was on duty she used to sneak Jacki a "cuppa"

from the patients' tea trolley. When Nurse Glasson left to do her 3-months duty at Dame Eadith Walker Hospital Jacki gave her a crocheted doily she had made as a thank you gift. Above is the letter of thanks she received. She has now kindly donated this to our museum for our archives.

Jacki's letter to us goes on: *Later in the 1950's our Red Cross Group at Burwood Girls' High School visited some of the polio children at DEW.*

As a trainee nurse at Concord Repatriation Hospital in the 1960s it was always lovely to look over the nearby grounds of DEW and see the cattle and horses grazing in the fields.

A group of people from the Concord West and Concord Baptist Churches went to the hospital in the 1970s to sing hymns in the foyer on one Sunday each month, when some of the patients would lean over the upstairs railing and listen, even though we were not permitted to visit them.

My last contact with DEW was in the 1970s when working at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as Assistant to the Budget Accountant, when I monitored the finances for the hospital.

So, over many years, a few contacts with Dame Eadith Walker Hospital have brought back happy memories for me.

I do hope you enjoy the enclosed letter, which I have treasured all these years, with the lovely descriptions of the home as a young trainee nurse found it.

Ed: Thank you Jacki for this wonderful gift. Like you, we will treasure this addition to our archives.

Basic Textile Workshop presented by Karen Cote

our museum's Consulting Conservationalist

demonstrating how to handle, clean, store and display heirloom clothing.

This workshop will be held at the Museum on

Saturday, 28th November from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Cost will be \$20 per person, which includes morning and afternoon tea (bring a packed lunch if you wish).

Bookings are essential - phone 9744-8528 or email chs@concordheritage.asn.au. Places are limited.

Please feel free to bring one of your own precious items to discuss with Karen.

This workshop is open to any interested person, just make sure you book.



Museums & Galleries NSW Standards Program 2009

We have now completed this year-long program in which we carried out a self review of our museum and all that is entailed in running such a facility. We were much lacking in several parts of this, particularly in documentation of the various jobs that need to be carried out such as accessioning donations, cataloguing items so that information can be readily accessed; using objects in the collection to tell a story (not just being on display); producing professional banners to tell full stories of our history and heritage; encouraging and keeping volunteers; . . . and so the list goes on.

With the help of this program and the two reviewers who took us through it – Dr. Morgan Sant from the Lady Denman Heritage Complex and Sarah-Jane Rennie from Museums & Galleries (NSW) - those of us who took part in the various workshops and meetings have gained the necessary knowledge to guide our Museum Committee into undertaking the work necessary to make sure our facility continues to grow as an important attraction for both the residents of City of Canada Bay and for visitors from further afield.

The final report from our reviewers stated: *The City of Canada Bay Museum is run by a very strong and enthusiastic group of volunteers with the potential to create an outstanding local history museum. The Council has supported the group through the provision of a Museum Advisor for a year as they moved into new council-owned premises. Sarah Rawlings, Cultural Development Coordinator, City of Canada Bay, provides further support for the group.*

Since the start of the program the museum has: Involved a large group of its members/committee in the review process; Attracted some new volunteers to the museum; Identified projects that it wants to implement (digital recorder for oral histories and a hanging system for art shows).

The museum's strength is having good museum space and storage as well as good Council support.

It's weaknesses are lack of signage; marketing (getting known in the community); small budget.

However there are a lot of opportunities: newly acquired volunteers with important skills; working in a large community following amalgamation; responding to the evolving school history curriculum; links with local organizations such as the library.

It is essential that the Museum capitalises on these opportunities. The team that brought the museum through the difficulties of the last few years has done a wonderful job and our advice would be that it can harness the energy, skill and enthusiasm of its newer members by delegating areas for them to develop.

The Museum Committee is grateful to Museums & Galleries (NSW) for inviting us to take part in this program and for all their staff for their ongoing assistance. We are also grateful to City of Canada Bay Council for providing us with two Museum Advisors to assist us in the early stages of packing up and moving and for the assistance of Sarah Rawlings from Council. We also want to acknowledge the great help received from Canbay staff who helped with the heavy work of moving all our boxes and heavy equipment on several occasions as well as members of the Rotary Club of Concord who also helped move heavy items on a couple of occasions.

It is now up to us to continue with the good work.

We would like to call on all our members who can spare some time to keep up the momentum. Are you interested in research (internet or other methods), general office work, a flair for displays, writing skills to prepare internal signage, marketing, public relations work or any other skills you can offer?

We need more members on our committee – we need your input into the decisions we will need to make as we go forward. Don't say "I don't know anything", "I can't do anything" – you can! You just think you can't!

Put your hand up now. Contact Lorraine Holmes or Lois Michel now!

My Life in Concord.

I was born in 1927 at Sister Jurd's midwifery hospital, 'Gunya', in Majors Bay Road, Concord, and have lived in Concord ever since.

My grandfather, Samuel Ashton, a bricklayer from England, constructed and operated the first N.S.W. salt water concreted baths in 1886 at 16-18 Bennett Street, Mortlake. He and his wife Mary lived in a split-level home on the same site. The front steps and part of their home is still standing. When I was a child, my mother told me that males and females were segregated at "Ashton's Baths" and, under no circumstances, were allowed to swim together.

Grandfather and Grandmother had two children born in England and seven born in Concord, Australia. My mother Lena Smith (nee Ashton) was born in 1890 and lived in Concord all her life. At Mortlake School Centenary celebrations in 1987 she was presented with a book as the oldest ex-pupil. She died in 1993 aged 103.

My grandparents owned the waterfront land from 2 to 18 Bennett Street, and all of their children lived and reared families in the Mortlake area.

When Ashton's Baths were eventually closed to the public, only our relatives were allowed to swim there, and we had some great times. My father, Fred Smith, won many medals for swimming, and taught me to swim. However, much to my chagrin, I never beat him in a race, even when he was 70 years old. After my grandparents passed away, two of my uncles, Fred & Les Ashton, had a workshop adjacent to the Baths and were engaged in repair work for the Australian Gas Light Company, which was the main source of employment in the Concord area.

I had many cousins, who were about my age, and we had a wonderful time together. We walked to Mortlake School, which didn't take long because we took shortcuts through so many empty blocks of land. There were no school buses then! In Primary School, a white line was painted down the middle of the playground, because girls and boys were not allowed to play together, and there were no mixed classes. I was Dux of the school in 1938.

I had a very happy childhood. We lived on the waterfront at 6 Bennett Street, Mortlake, looking across the Parramatta River to "Yaralla", where Dame Eadith Walker lived. My cousins and I would row a boat to "Yaralla", where a large swing was adjacent to



Our thoughts and prayers go out to
Jeanette O'Hara, a long-time supporter of our
Society and Museum,
in the recent loss of her husband **Harry**

the waterfront, and would have a swing before rowing back. We were not supposed to be there, but kept watch in case someone caught us trespassing. In my early childhood, I remember almost everything we needed was delivered to our home free of charge. Our butcher used to deliver the meat with a horse and cart. The horse knew every stop. We had no car, telephone, nor television, but we had an active physical life. We played hopscotch, skipped, walked and talked a lot. We caught tadpoles after rain in puddles near the waterfront, and almost all children had silkworms.

Every Saturday afternoon, we walked to the movies at the Ritz Theatre, Majors Bay Road, Concord, where a man played the organ on stage before the movie started. I was given sixpence for my fare in, and one penny to spend, which paid for an ice cream. I was fortunate, because many children had no money to buy ice creams at interval, whereas my father was a foreman at Mortlake Gas Works, which was considered a good job. He did shift work and if I walked to the Gas Works' gate after he finished his day shift, he would give me a penny.

We attended St. Mary's Concord North church; the minister's name was Mr. Lofts. After I was confirmed I taught the young children at Sunday school.

After Primary School, I attended Fort Street Girls' High School, on Bradfield Highway, very close to the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which hadn't been built very long. I caught the tram from Tennyson Road, Mortlake, to Burwood Station, then the train from Burwood to Wynyard, which was quite daunting for a 12 year old travelling on her own. I made some good friends at "Fort Street". There was a tennis court in the school grounds, and since we had a tennis court at our home, I entered in most of the competitions, with mixed results.

During the Second World War years, the school supplied us with khaki wool to knit sox for the soldiers. I became so proficient I used to knit them while at the movies.

During my teen years, many more homes were built in Concord. We had picnics in the parks, and attended dances, which were held monthly at St. Mary's church hall. It was there that I met my husband to be, Jim Alford. We led a fairly simple, but most enjoyable life.

I trained as a stenographer and worked in Sydney until Jim and I were married in 1948. I then applied and was accepted for a position with BALM Paints. We built a home in Dorking Road Cabarita, where we still live.

I left BALM in 1955 to have a family. In those days, once you became pregnant you stopped working. We had three daughters, all of whom went to Mortlake Public School. When my youngest daughter started school, I went back to the workforce part-time with G.E. Crane & Sons, Concord. They moved their office to Sydney, so once more I applied locally and worked at Containers Ltd., Cabarita for five years, before retiring from the workforce.

I am still active in the community, and am now an intrepid tutor at the Computer Pals for Seniors class in the Senior Citizen's Centre, Concord. I am involved also with Greenlees Park Women's Bowling Club. We are fortunate to reside in Canada Bay; we have Concord Hospital nearby, we have great amenities, magnificent parks, and of course the Parramatta River, all of which are available to be enjoyed.

Shirley Alford

Ed: Thank you Shirley for this peep into the past. We throw out a challenge to other members to either offer to talk to us on tape for our Oral History projects or put pen to paper and tell us of their time growing up in City of Canada Bay.

From the Secretary's Desk

Welcome to our new members - Marcelle Girgis of Rhodes and Samala Mascord & Ivan Cappello of Concord West. We look forward to getting to know you better in the coming months.

Raffle: Our member Terry Robinson has kindly donated one of his lovely sketches to raffle in conjunction with a Council function at Five Dock on 26th November, where it will be drawn. The tickets are \$1.00 each. If you would like to purchase a ticket please contact Lorraine Holmes on 9743-2682

Documentation: Coming out of the Standards Programme is the realisation that we now have a lot of Policies and Procedures documents to be prepared. These need to be available for volunteers and others coming after us to know and understand how the museum should be run so that it will continue to flourish long after many of us have moved on. Early in the new year we will be calling for volunteers to help us start on these and the more volunteers we have the better the documents will be. Please think about it over the holidays.

November General Meeting - if you missed this meeting you missed a wonderful opportunity to see Concord as it used to be. There was a slide show of many of our old photographs of the area and it was great fun trying to work out where they were taken and seeing how things had changed. We will probably put it on again some time in the future, so watch out for it.

Events at the Museum: The Museum Committee is currently planning various events as a means of bringing visitors to our museum. Currently we are planning a Textile Workshop before Christmas. For the new year some events discussed have been a Posties Party (like Tupperware only with clothing), Fire Safety in the Home and Art Exhibition. Do you have any suggestions of what you would like to see take place? These functions will be open to the general public as well as our members and will be a means of raising funds for the museum.

Museum Committee: There is much to be done and many decisions to be made and we would like to increase our numbers. This is not an elected committee - it is open to anyone who would like to join us just let me or Lorraine know and we'll put you on the mailing list. If you're not sure - why not come along to a meeting and see and hear what we do.

Managing a museum, with its many and varied facets, can be very interesting - in fact, it can even become addictive. No experience necessary, just an interest in old things.

