



“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
Vacant

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 at Yaralla on the
3rd Saturday of month
at 2:00 pm

Chairperson
Graham Ferguson, 9300-9657
Tours Organiser
Sandra Elliott, 9797-1040
[ttoille@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ttoile@optusnet.com.au)

Museum Committee
Meets on 2nd Wednesday of
month at 9:30 am at museum

Chairperson
Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

Oral History Committee
Betty Fletcher, 9713-1384

* * * *

CITY OF CANADA BAY MUSEUM

1 Bent Street, Concord

Open Wed & Sat
10am to 4pm

No.176

March 2011

Ken Warby - the fastest man on water

Ken Warby was born in 1939 in Newcastle. While still a very young boy he heard about Donald Campbell setting up a series of 200 mph plus World Water Speed Records and was so impressed he announced to his mother he would someday do the same.

As an eight year old he found drawings of Campbell's boat, the *Bluebird*, and made a model to which he glued CO2 cartridges and blew it across a neighbour's pool. "I frightened a lot of frogs down at the park", he says. Thirty years later he claimed ownership of the record and lived to tell the story.

In 1968 Lee Taylor Jr broke Campbell's record, setting a mark of 285 mph. Shortly after Warby drew up his first sketches for what eventually became his world champion jet hydroplane, the *Spirit of Australia*.

For power he went to a military surplus sale and bought two jet engines, which had once powered Lockheed Neptune antisubmarine airplanes. He paid \$100 each for them. His bid may not have been the highest rendered but the surplus dealers were impressed that he wanted them for a boat.

Warby designed the hull of his record-breaking boat, *Spirit of Australia*, himself and built it in his backyard in Concord in the 1970s. He made sporting history when he became the first person in history to design, build and drive his own boat to the world water speed records.

He currently holds the water speed record of 317.60 mph (511.13 kph). This was set in Blowering Dam, part of the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme, near Tumut, NSW. The boat, propelled by the secondhand motor that had been tweaked by RAAF engineers in Wagga, was tried and tested. The water conditions were near perfect: not mirror smooth, but with sufficient chop to give the boat light aeration it required. And Warby was confident of beating the old mark.

He twice broke the world record at the

Blowering Dam. In November, 1977 he set the world water speed record of 288.60 mph (464 kph), breaking the record of Lee Taylor. In October 1978, on a subsequent 317.60 mph run, he became the first and only person to exceed 300 mph (482 kph) on water and live to tell the tale.

Donald Campbell died on his attempt after his hydroplane crashed at over 320 mph on his 1967 record attempt. Warby's record still stands and the 300 mph barrier has never again been exceeded.

It is the most dangerous speed record in the world, and many of those who have tried to break it have died. The quest to be the fastest human being on water has inspired generations of speed fanatics.

Are records meant to be broken? Are they meant to stand forever? Ken is the holder of the World Water Speed Record. It's been his entire life; not just 15 minutes of fame, but an entire lifetime. He's set the bar so high that stealing it away from him may prove to be an impossible task.



Bulletin Board

Wed. 9th March - Bill Little, a long-time employee at Arnotts.

Wed. 6th April - 6:30 for 7:00 - The Parramatta River and its influence on the suburbs along its banks.

Wed. 13th April - 6:00 for 6:30 pm - Brad Manera, "Show and Tell on Wartime Memorabilia. **NOTE change of time.**

By 2003 Warby had designed and built another vessel, which he called *Aussie Spirit*, and with which he planned to increase his own record.

Now he intends to launch a new assault on the record in his home-built boat driven by his son, David, a Newcastle social worker. But two things are needed before they can mount their attempt: Blowering Dam to fill with water and a willing sponsor to provide the funding.

His son David, 35, has said: "Dad hasn't pushed me into this. He has always told me how dangerous it is."

David and his two brothers were not allowed to watch the record attempts at Blowering Dam. "Dad made the family stay at home. But the boat was in our backyard in Concord nearly every afternoon when I came home from school."

In 1983 the Australian National Maritime Museum purchased the "Spirit of Australia" where it hangs on display today.

Down Among the Mangroves

David and I moved into Deakin Street in 1970 and across the road was a tip. What was tipped there would make your hair curl . . . or change colour. Over time it was cleaned up and covered in with land fill.

However, there was a great deal of controversy trying to understand what toxins had been dumped there. Whatever was there, it is well and truly buried, Our concern is that if the 'whatever' is ever exposed then the mangroves will start to die.

With the disturbance in the area, Argentine ants were discovered and this led to a blanket of spraying around the streets. I had never found an Argentine ant but I was forever finding

Redback spiders. Since spraying, to this day I have not found one Redback. (Thank-you ants.)

Today it is a lovely reserve with sporting fields and native trees, I have spent many wonderful times gathering branches for the animals in care.

Prior to the seawall being built, when there was a heavy storm hundreds of dead fish would be washed up under the mangroves, with the seawall it has stopped. (I never knew why all the fish died; it has been said it was due to the quantity of fresh water mixing into salt water!)

When the tide is out there is a wide expanse of mud flat bringing in the water birds looking for a feed. We are at the beginning of the Foreshore Walk, which is a peaceful and enjoyable walk.

Lorraine Holmes



I was recently diagnosed with AAADD (Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.

This is how it manifests.

I decide to water my flower pots in the front garden. As I go to turn on the hose I look over at my car and decide it needs washing.

I go to get the car keys from the port and notice the mail on the porch table.

I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car. I put my car keys on the table, put the junk mail in the bin under the table - and notice that the bin is full.

So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the garbage first. But then I think, I can run down to the post office when I take out the rubbish. I may as well pay the bills first.

I take my cheque book off the table and see that there is only one cheque left. My other cheque book is in the computer desk, so I go inside the house to my desk where I find the can of Coke I'd been drinking.

I'm going to look for my other cheque book, but first I need to push the Coke aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. The Coke is getting warm so I decide to put it in the fridge to keep it cold.

As I head towards the kitchen with the Coke a vase of flowers on the window ledge catches my eye - they need water. I put the Coke on the window ledge and discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning.

I decide I better put them back on my computer desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I put the glasses back down on the window ledge, fill a container with water and suddenly spot the TV remote. I must have left it on the kitchen table.

I realise that tonight when I go to watch TV I'll be looking for the remote, but won't remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the living room where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers. I pour some water in the flowers but some spills on the floor. So I set the remote back on the table, get a towel and wipe up the spill. Then I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day . . .

The flower tubs aren't watered; the car isn't washed; the bills aren't paid; there is a warm can of Coke sitting on the window ledge; the flowers in the vase don't have enough water; there is still only one cheque in my cheque book; I can't find the remote; I can't find my glasses; I have absolutely NO idea what I did with the car keys.

Then, when I try to work out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all damn day, and I'm really tired.

I realise this is a serious problem and I'll try to get help for it, but first I'll check my mail.



These are just two of the stories from our successful display of Faces in the Street.

They are stories by and about everyday people, some who have a claim to fame and others who have just passed us by as we've walked the streets of the City of Canada Bay.

Each month we will bring you another story in the hope to encourage you to become a part of our Faces in the Street collection.



Please tell us your story.

Combined Meeting with Drummoyne & Districts Historical Society

The members of the Drummoyne & Districts Historical Society have invited us to attend their next meeting on Thursday, 3rd March at 5:30 pm in the Local Studies Room at Five Dock Library.

At their last meeting they resolved to approach our Society to discuss the possibility of amalgamation and change of name.

The meeting on 3rd March will be to discuss this proposal.

If you intend to come to the meeting please let the Secretary know as soon as possible. Also, to save taking many cars, perhaps we could meet at the museum about 5:00 pm and car pool to the meeting.

The Quarantine Station

From the beginning of colonisation in Australia contagious disease posed a deadly threat to the isolated community. With the arrival of each ship in Sydney Harbour carrying goods and settlers from the far flung corners of the globe came the dreaded prospect of epidemics ravaging the colony.

With smallpox, cholera, Spanish influenza, bubonic plague and other contagious diseases regularly sweeping the world it became essential to the colony that a quarantine facility be established to act as a barrier between it and the outside world.

The combination of maritime convenience and geographic isolation made the North Head region of Sydney the ideal location and, in 1832, the Quarantine Act was passed and the Quarantine Station officially established. It was to protect Australia for 150 years.

Originally established as little more than a rough camp at Spring Cove, the Quarantine Station rapidly expanded with the influx of sick and healthy convicts, settlers, sailors and colonials until the greater expanse of North Head was closed off and forbidden to outsiders.

When a ship arrived in the harbour the captain was required to submit a bill of health to the Station Superintendent and, if any passengers or crew had a contagious disease, the ship and all aboard (sick or healthy) would be quarantined until the illness had passed.

At peak periods there could be as many as eight ships moored off Quarantine Beach and the Station could run out of accommodation, with residents being forced to camp on surrounding hills in generally miserable conditions.

The healthy were sometimes called upon to clear surrounding bushland and construct hospital and residential buildings which they did eagerly to break the monotony of being isolated for months on end with little to do.

By 1876 the Station had become an efficient contemporary hospital complex with hospital wards, stores and administration buildings along with accommodation and other facilities for healthy residents. These reflected their accommodation on the vessels they had arrived on. Accommodation started with first class and descended to third, as did the standard of amenities and services made available to patients and residents.

The atmosphere of the Station was generally sombre, as most of those quarantined had been forced to en-

sure long voyages from the other side of the world on disease-ridden ships.



The typhus-ridden *Lady Mc Naughton* arrived in Sydney Harbour in 1837 after losing fifty-four passengers en route. However, the Quarantine Station proved no sanctuary with thirteen more perishing there in what were described as 'truly appalling conditions with a sense of misery, wretchedness and disease present everywhere.' Captain Stokes of the *Beagle* wrote that he was able to identify the Quarantine Station by the number of tombstones whitening the side of the hill.

Bleak and depressing as the Quarantine Station was, homeless men would brave the perils of the surrounding bushland to enter the Station, as once they violated its restricted grounds they were not permitted to leave until medically proven uncontaminated by the illnesses plaguing those quarantined. In the meantime they were provided with food and accommodation in exchange for digging graves and carting the dead off for burial.

With the advent of modern medicine and aviation the Quarantine Station went into decline and was reduced geographically to its present sixty-nine acres. At the turn of the century it was used to isolate residents of the Rocks after an outbreak of bubonic plague and, following World War I, soldiers returning from the battlefields of France were quarantined there in fear of an influenza outbreak.

The last vessel to be quarantined there was the Japanese freighter *Sakai Maru*, in 1973, whose sailors followed the tradition of chiselling their ship's name and national flag into the Station's stone ridges. Since the 1830s sailors, monumental masons and others quarantined, whiled away the months waiting to be released by carving two thousand engravings into the sandstone throughout the Station, especially on the cliffs of Old Man's

Hat near North Head.

The Station was last used as emergency accommodation for people fleeing the devastation of Cyclone Tracy and for Vietnamese orphans in the 1970s, and was handed over to the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1984 by the State and Federal Governments for inclusion in the Sydney Harbour National Park.

Commanding spectacular views of Sydney Harbour and Manly, its rolling green hills, timbered ridges and deserted beach possess a timeless quality akin to that of a ghost town. It still remains a city in itself, boasting its own post office, power supply, water reservoir, hospital, morgue and paved streets lined with various types and styles of housing and industrial buildings. The methodical manner in which the surviving sixty-odd buildings were erected and positioned over the preceding 120 years makes the place feel more like an army barracks than a quarantine station where 572 men, women and children lived and suffered from horrendous diseases before being consigned to one of its three now overgrown or demolished cemeteries.

The future of the Quarantine Station is uncertain. Various property developers have tried to acquire it for subdivision and redevelopment while the New South Wales State Government is currently considering developing the site for executive accommodation.

The Quarantine Station is a time capsule and wandering through its unique, unspoiled grounds and buildings transports the visitor back in time, as the place abounds with colonial and aboriginal relics to be found nowhere else in Australia. The National Parks and Wildlife Service conducts regular tours of the Station which take in its many historically significant sites.

This article, written by John Godt, was printed in the RAHS publication, HISTORY, in August 1996 and is reprinted with permission.



Looking north towards the Asiatic wards (right) which overlooked the first cemetery (1837-1853). The headstones were broken up and used to make the foundations of the buildings which now surround it.

You're Invited . . .

Concord Community Hostel Ladies' Auxiliary - 52nd Annual Luncheon on Wednesday, 9th March at 12:30 pm sharp. Come and be entertained by the students from the McDonald College, North Strathfield.

Venue: Concord Function Centre.
Cost: \$30 per person.
RSVP 1st March - 9476-1411 or 1418-454-854. Admission by ticket only

Eastwood Patchwork Quilters - 2011 Quilt Exhibition on Friday 11 to Sunday 13 March - Friday 10:00 - 4:30; Saturday 9:00 until 9:00; Sunday 9:00 until 5:00.

Venue: Historic Brush Farm, Lawson Street, Eastwood.

Stunning quilts - cafe - craft stall - quilt shops. Raffle quilt supporting Achieve Australia.

No admission charge.

Sydney Tramway Museum - Sydney Vintage Tramway Festival 2011 on 26-27th February. Marking 50 years since the closure of Sydney's tramways.

Ride veteran Sydney trams from the 1890s to 1950s; antique buses operating between Sutherland and Loftus; Vintage and Veteran cars and fire engines on display; Classic miniature railway running in the picnic area; marvel at the unique prison tram.

With the support of Sydney's Powerhouse Museum - O Class tram 805 on display for the first time in 50 years.

Cost: Adults \$15, Children \$8, concession \$10, Family \$46 (2A, 2C - additional child free). Includes unlimited tram and bus rides.

April Displays at the Museum

As well as "**The River of Life**" display for Heritage Week we will also have a display of **Wartime Memorabilia**.

Do you have anything you would like to lend us for this display? Do you know of anyone else who could be willing to help with the displays? If you can help please get in touch with us as soon as possible and let us know what you have so we can start planning the actual displays.

Anything to do with any of the wars in which Australians were involved would be greatly appreciated. We would also be interested in anything to do with the war at home, including civilian participation.

Change of Name for Society

At our last general meeting the secretary gave notice that at the March general meeting she would move the following motion:

"That we change the name of our Society to the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society."

The main reason for this is because when dealing with statutory authorities and other businesses, and discussing the City of Canada Bay Museum, it is sometimes confusing having to use both names.

Hopefully it will also be beneficial to show that our society now encompasses the whole area and we are not perceived as only having an interest in Concord.

At the same time we will also discuss whether we should consider changing our meetings to a Saturday afternoon in the hope of bringing more visitors to them. It's always disappointing to only have a few people present to listen to our wonderful guest speakers.

If you will not be able to come to our meeting we would still like to have your opinion on both of these matters. You can email, telephone or write a letter telling us your opinion, for or against, and your reason.

Things you probably didn't want to know!

The phrase "rule of thumb" is derived from an old English law which stated that you couldn't beat your wife with anything wider than your thumb.

In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak.

All items will be safely displayed in closed showcases.

Also, in conjunction with the Wartime display, Brad Manera from the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park will be at the museum on Wednesday, 13th April - 6:00 for 6:30 pm. We will be inviting members and visitors to bring along any souvenirs they may have for a "Show and Tell" type evening.

Please spread the word about both these events in April as wide as you can.

With two great speakers - Greg Blaxell on 6th and Brad Manera on 13th - we want to make sure the meeting room is packed.

From the Secretary's Desk

Faces in the Street: We still need more personal stories or information about well known people who have been connected with our area. Each month there will be a revolving display of our stories at the museum, so why not pop in and see what we mean. Perhaps it will encourage you to contribute your own story or seek other people - relatives, friends or neighbours - to let us have their stories.

Council Cleanup, Monday, 14th March: We have a lot of unwanted bits and pieces here at the museum and this will be a good opportunity to dispose of them at no cost to us. If you can spare some time on Saturday 12 to help us move the articles out onto the footpath it would be much appreciated.

Working Bees at the Museum: There is quite a lot of work still to be done to get the storeroom cleaned up ready for when Karen Coote comes to carry out a Significance Assessment of our collection so we would like to ask people if they can spare an hour or two on any Wednesday or Saturday to get things started. Please phone me if you are coming and approximately what time.

Elsewhere with this newsletter is a list of jobs that need doing at the museum - some in connection with the storeroom, others more of a clerical nature inside the museum. Again, if you can help just give me a call and let me know which jobs you would like to do.

Thank you . . . to those members who responded to my plea for help in last month's "Nurungi". Your help was greatly appreciated and it all helps to whittle the list down bit by bit.

Wildlife Calendars: We still have a couple of these left for \$10 each - and you will be helping a good cause.

A Pictorial History of Canada Bay. This book shows a wonderful collection of old photographs of the area and the text is written by well-known historian, Greg Blaxell. They are available at the Museum for the low cost of \$24.95. A wonderful read and a delightful gift for someone.

Do you ever call Telstra's Directory Assistance number 1234? Do you know it costs 40c plus 4c a second? **Make a note of the number 1223 - this call is FREE.**

Museum Update

Your Museum Committee is hard at work with a lot of "irons in the fire", so to speak. We have a full programme of events for the next few months as well as quite a lot of work to be done in and around the museum. If you can help with any of this we would very much like to hear from you. It's not just the physical work that is needed but also the mental work in planning and executing the programmes. If you're not sure if this is what you want, why not pop in to the museum for a chat.

Coming Events at our Museum

MARCH - Seniors Week: We will be showcasing more of our "Faces in the Street" project, as well as presenting our slide show of old photographs.

We have had so many favourable comments on our "Faces in the Street" that we propose to keep this as an ongoing event and, eventually, put them together into book form for the enjoyment of many others.

Regarding our photographic slide show - many of these photos still need to be identified and this is where we need your help. They are a wonderful insight in the area from days long gone but we need to know who and where. We would also welcome more photographs to add to our collection.

APRIL - Heritage Week: We are planning a display titled "The River of Life", which tells the story of how the Parramatta River brought life to the suburbs of Concord and Drummoyne. In conjunction with this we will have a special evening . . .

Wednesday, 6th April, 6:30 for 7:00 pm - When Gregory Blaxell, well-known historian and author of *The River, Sydney Cove to Parramatta* - will talk about the Parramatta River and its heritage and history. Cost: \$10 adults, \$7 concession. Light refreshments. Bookings essential.

APRIL - The Wars, at home and away. We are appealing to members, and others, to allow us to borrow their memorabilia (diaries, photographs, souvenirs, posters, anything else you may have) to complement our own objects for this. We particularly want to include the personal stories that go with these objects. In conjunction with this we will have a special evening . . .

Wednesday, 13th April, 6:00 for 6:30 pm. Members of the public, as well as our own members, are asked to bring along some of their precious memorabilia for a "Show and Tell" of such objects. Brad Manera from the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park will be present to discuss your items and offer any advice as well as talk about the ANZAC Memorial. Light supper will be served. FREE. Bookings appreciated. (Please note: this is our usual meeting night and an earlier meeting time.)

MAY: Sunday, 15th May at 2:00 pm - an afternoon tea event at the Museum to celebrate our 2nd Birthday and honour our wonderful Volunteers. Volunteers, please come along to receive your well deserved recognition. Everyone else, please come along to help show your appreciation of all our fantastic volunteers - both Museum and Walker Estates.

JUNE: A display in conjunction with the Queens Birthday weekend. Details still to be organised.

AUGUST: Any suggestions? It is the anniversary of the former Concord Municipality.

SEPTEMBER: History Week. The theme is "Eating History". Put your thinking caps on and help us come up with ideas for this display.

Museum Committee

This committee needs more members to lighten the burden on the few. We normally meet once a month to review items that have been offered to us prior to their official acceptance. As well we plan future displays and arrange for people to undertake any work needed to finally mount the exhibit.

It's not hard work and the more and varied input we have the better the final presentation.

We have been meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 9:30 am but have been considering moving it to a Saturday afternoon if this would suit more people. Would you be prepared to join the committee if we changed the day?

Can you help?

If you can help with any of the jobs listed on the right, please let us know which ones and when.

As most of these are a one-person-at-a-time-job it can be done on any Wednesday or Saturday we are open if this is more convenient for you.

Working Bee: For cleaning up the storeroom area we will have our first working bee on **Saturday, 26th February from 1:30 pm**. Please advise the secretary if you can come.

Jobs to be done at the Museum

Council Cleanup, Monday, 14th March: Garage sale leftovers to be packed up ready to put out over the prior weekend

Other unwanted items to be put aside ready to put out.

Carpentry/handyman(woman) work:

Build a stand to go into our shelving so that we can store our paintings/photographs upright.

Construct a box so that we can store A3 folders upright

Install some shelves into our bookcase so that A3 paper and other larger items can be stored separately and flat for easier access.

Plan some type of cover over the light systems in our cabinets to prevent insect entry.

General Work in Storeroom

Tidy up the storeroom area to provide working space for various jobs to be done.

Attach mini-photos to paintings/photographs so that they can be easily recognised when needed for display.

Clerical and general work in the Museum

Acquisitioning (filling out forms) for items that have been offered to the museum.

Sort archive paperwork in our filing cabinets into groups and types for easy reference. Larger files will need to be placed in archive boxes and catalogued.

Check contents of archive boxes to make sure all material is present and catalogued correctly.

* Transfer Oral History Tapes onto our computer

* Scan negatives and photographs onto our computer.

Clean the museum, including inside cabinets.

Contact people who have supplied stories for our "Faces in the Street" to obtain a signed consent to publish their story.

* *No computer knowledge required, it's just a matter of pushing buttons.*

If you can help with any of the work you can enter details on this sheet and get it to us at the museum if that is easier for you.

I can help with the storeroom:

Working Bee on 26th February

Carpentry work - which project?

Tidying up Storeroom - when?

.....
.....

Placing unwanted material on footpath for Council Cleanup

Attaching mini-photos to our painting/photograph collection

I can help with clerical work in museum

When

Cataloguing items which have been donated

Sorting archive material in our filing cabinets

Checking contents of archive boxes

Transferring Oral History Tapes to computer

Scanning negatives to computer

Scanning photographs to computer

General cleaning in the museum (we will arrange a working bee for this)

Contacting contributors to our "Faces in the Street" project

I would like to become a member of the Museum Committee

Would you prefer Wednesday mornings or Saturday afternoons

I would like to help with some of the events listed

.....
.....
.....

Name

Address

Email

Telephone Mobile