



“Nurungi”

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

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MEETINGS

General Meetings

1st Saturday of month
(except January)
at 2:00 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
This position is vacant

Tours Organiser

Sandra Elliott, 9797-1040
ttoille@optusnet.com.au

Museum Committee

Meets on 2nd Wednesday of
month at 10:00am at museum

Chairperson

Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

Oral History Committee

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CITY OF CANADA BAY MUSEUM

1 Bent Street, Concord

Open Wed & Sat
10am to 4pm

Phone: 9743-3034

No.186

March 2012

Legendary Lover and a Secret Island Romance

Unlikely dalliance . . . the actress Sarah Bernhardt, who had a well-known appetite for younger men, the scientist Adrien Loire and Rodd Island.

She was the most famous actress in the world, a 46-year-old Venus whose arrival in Sydney in 1891 emptied State Parliament and caused wild scenes at Redfern station.

He was the nephew of Louis Pasteur, a 25-year-old scientist who stepped out of his uncle's shadow to come to Sydney and help end the rabbit plague

But the unlikely pair had a passionate romance at an even less likely place: the little hunk of rock known as Rodd Island in Iron Cove.

Although the dalliance between Sarah Bernhardt and Adrien Loire has long been a maritime legend, its veracity has now been confirmed by the Australian historian Stephen Dando-Collins, in his book *Pascal's Gambit*.

It is one of many romances that have unfolded on the island, which became a party spot in the early 20th century.

Loire and Bernhardt met when her dogs were quarantined on Rodd Island, where Loire was living and working. They became friends and visited each other regularly, he to her room at the Australia Hotel and she to his house on the little island.

She was a legendary lover with a well-known appetite for younger men, and counted numerous women and the Prince of Wales among her conquests. But an obstacle to their romance lay under the Frenchman's nose.

"Bernhardt hated facial hair on men," Dando-Collins said. "And Loire had a great big handlebar moustache."

One Sunday before she set off from the island for a spot of fishing, Bernhardt told Loire: "When I come back, if you have shaved off your moustache, I will kiss you." Dando-Collins said it was an offer the young scientist could not refuse. "Sure enough, when Sarah came back



Sarah Bernhardt (portrait 1890s)

the handlebar moustache was gone."

So passionate was their island love affair the actress feigned illness and cancelled the Brisbane leg of her tour. But she was a confirmed bachelorette and eventually returned to France alone.

After Loire departed and his laboratory was dismantled, a dance floor was installed on Rodd Island and the place became a Sydney party spot. Throughout the 1920s, '30s and '40s, people from Rozelle and Balmain hoofed it at the regular Gypsy Tea Dances.

While her Iron Cove romance was short-lived, what endured for Bernhardt was a love of island living. On her return to France she bought a Napoleonic fort on an island off the coast of Brittany, called Belle Isle, where she spent holidays for the next 30 years.

JOSEPHINE TOVEY URBAN AFFAIRS October 3, 2009
www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/people/revealed-legendary-lovers



The Dead Man's Penny

The history of the Dead Man's Penny began in 1916 with the realisation by the British Government that some form of an official token of gratitude should be given to the fallen service men and women's bereaved next of kin. The enormous casualty figures not anticipated at the start of WWI in 1914 prompted this gesture of recognition.

In 1917, the government announced a competition to design a suitable plaque with a prize of £250. There were 800 entries from all over the Empire, the Dominions and even from the troops on the Western Front. Mr. E. Carter Preston of Liverpool, England, the eventual winner.

The selected design was a large disk cast in bronze gunmetal which incorporated an image of Lady Britannia, surrounded by two dolphins (representing Britain's sea power) and a lion (representing Britain) standing over a defeated eagle (symbolising Germany).

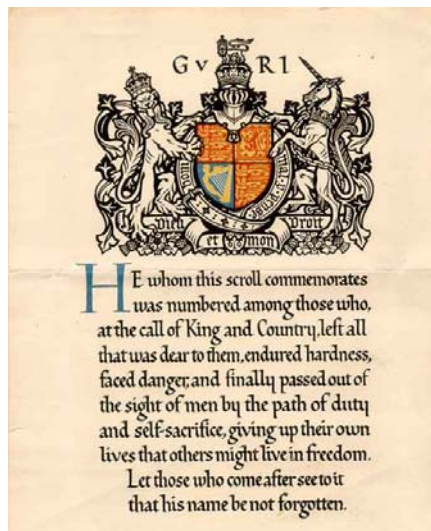


Britannia is holding an oak spray with leaves and acorns. Beneath this was a rectangular tablet where the deceased individual's name was cast into the plaque. No rank was given as it was intended to show

equality in their sacrifice. On the outer edge of the disk the words, "He died for freedom and honour" are inscribed.

A scroll made of slightly darkened parchment, headed by the Royal Coat of Arms, accompanied the plaque with a carefully chosen passage written in old English script:

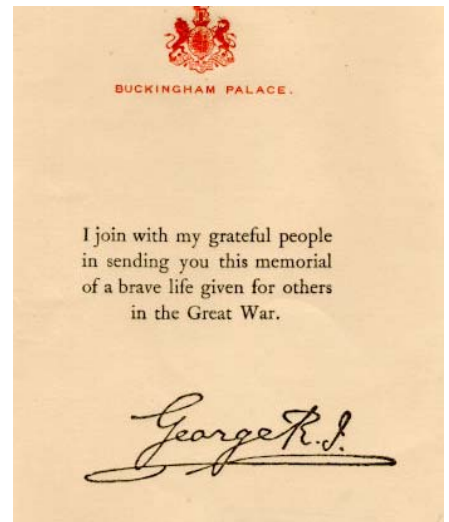
"He whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced anger, and generally passed out of sight of men by the path of duty and sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others may live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten."



Beneath this passage, written in the same style, was the name, and rank and service details of the deceased.

To accompany the scroll, a personal message from King George V:

"I join with my grateful people in sending you this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War. George R.I."



The plaques were packaged in stiff cardboard wrapping, folded like an envelope and sent to the next of kin.

Production of the plaques and scrolls, which was supposed to be financed by German reparation money, began in 1919 with approximately 1,150,000 issued. They commemorated those who fell between 4 August 1914 and 10 January 1920. Unfortunately, the production and delivery of the plaques was not a complete success and the scheme ended before all the families or next of kin of the deceased received the official recognition they should have.

There are some relatives who returned the pennies to the Australian Government in protest as they felt it was insulting and it did not replace their loved one's life.

Nothing, of course, can replace a life lost but those "Dead Man's Pennies" that are in private or public collections, museums and national archives are a constant reminder of the ultimate price paid by the men and women of the armed services during the Great War of 1914-1918.

(This is just one of the many objects in our museum)



Produce "CONCORD Farmers Market", which will be held in the Cintra Park (car park), just off Crane Street, Concord.

It will be held on the first SUNDAY of every month, except January 2013.

Grand opening Sunday, 4th March from 9:00am to 1:00 pm.

Please go along to support Rotary as they support us - and get yourself some garden fresh produce at the same time.

Please spread the word to friends and neighbours.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*Best wishes to
Beryl Law
for her
90th birthday
this month*

For Your Diary

General Meetings are held on the 1st Saturday of each month at 2:00 pm in the Museum.

Following are the speakers for the next few months.

MARCH 3: Martha Jabour has been preparing a draft submission for Council, "A Cultural Study Developing Public Art and Design for the Foreshores of the Parramatta River" She will be talking on this subject and we will also be showing a Power Point presentation by Nic Blascovic (Council) showing the City of Canada Bay shoreline along the Parramatta River, taken in 1970 pre development.

APRIL 14 (note change of date due to Easter): Steven Carruthers, author of "Midget Submarine Attack on Sydney". This will be part of our "War at Home" display.

MAY 5: Brad Manera from the ANZAC War Memorial, "Australia Under Attack". (This is also part of our display)

JUNE 2: John Fisk or Murray Goldberg from the Sandakan Association, "Sandakan POW Camp".

JULY 7: Beryl Mason, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, "The History of the Botanic Gardens"

AUGUST 4: John Oakes, Railcorp NSW, "Mortuary Stations"

Please note these dates and speakers in your diaries now so you won't miss any of the talks.

There's a War On! WWII at Home.

We are still seeking to borrow items to support this travelling exhibition. So far the response has not been as good as expected.

It is now time when we must start planning the display, so please speak to friends and neighbours, seeking their help to make this display about our local history as well as the general history.

We need to know what will be coming in by 1st April so that we can plan the layout.

The display will be in our museum for two months - from 16th April to 17th June and will be complemented by two very interesting speakers (see April and May speakers above).

Please help to make this the outstanding success it deserves to be.

Sharing the Memories

This is our contribution to Seniors Week. It is a joint project with the City of Canada Bay Library Services.

The invitation is open to all residents of City of Canada Bay - old residents who can remember - younger residents who would like to learn more of our history and heritage, even children. Newer residents to the area are also invited to come and chat and learn.

We have planned for four sessions to give people an opportunity to attend.

Come along and enjoy morning or afternoon tea at either the City of Canada Bay Museum or Drummoyne Community Centre and "Share the Memories" of our area.

Stories, anecdotes and recollections may be recorded (with your permission) and added to our Oral History Collections.

These oral histories are important as they give us a better insight into the personal history of the area by providing a picture of the past in people's own words.

Everyone has a story, or stories to tell, so join us at any of the following times to share your memories of living in the City of Canada Bay area.

Morning and afternoon teas will be served at all events.

Museum, 1 Bent Street, Concord.

Date: Wednesday 21 and Saturday 24 March. Come early to look around the museum and help the memories flood back!

Times: 10:30 am and 2:00 pm each day

Cost: Free (donations appreciated)

Bookings: Secretary on 9744-8528

Drummoyne Community Centre, 10 Cometrowe Street, Drummoyne

Date: Friday, 13 April

Time: 10:30 am

Cost: Free (donations appreciated)

Bookings: Secretary on 9744-8528 or DCC on 9719-8102



***Everyone welcome:
Women, Men, Children;
long-time residents, new-
comers. Everyone!***



This will be a great opportunity to gather more oral histories or items for our "Faces in the Street", and even bits for our "War at Home" display, so please talk to everyone you know and invite them to come along, or bring them along, to one of the sessions.

Please don't use the excuse, or let others use the excuse that ". . . they don't have anything to talk about". It's amazing just how many stories are revealed as people just sit around a table chatting - and that's all these will be. Sitting around a table, enjoying a delicious morning/afternoon tea, and chatting with one another. It will be quite an informal event.

If you would like to bring photograph albums, newspaper clippings, or anything else to start conversations, please feel free to do so.

Just to get things started, here are a few suggestions to get you thinking - I'm sure you can think of many more.

- When I was 10*
- Growing up in the area*
- How things have changed*
- Cracker Night was fun*
- When the Queen came to Concord*
- How did you amuse yourselves*
- School years*
- Working in the area*
- Transport*
- Learning to drive*
- Going to dances*
- What do you remember about the war years*
- Rationing and Coupons*
- Blackouts, etc., etc., etc.*

WANTED! We need help catering for the four sessions at our "Sharing the Memories" event at the museum. We would like to put on a very nice spread of home made cakes, slices, biscuits. etc. Can you help? If so, please contact the secretary.

We also need members to come along and mingle with the people to listen to the stories and get the conversations moving. Can you help on any of the days?

Do you know?



Can anyone remember this gun next to the Honour Pavilion in Queen Elizabeth Park. It was there in 1933? Does anyone know when and why it was removed.

YOU'RE Invited

Concord Community Hostel, Ladies Auxiliary invite you to their 53rd Annual Luncheon . . .

Date: 14th March at 12:30 sharp

Venue: Concord Function Centre

Cost: \$35 per person

Entertainment: Students from the McDonald College, North Strathfield.

R.S.V.P. 7th March - 9476-1411 or Mobile 0418-454-854

Admission by ticket only.

Concord Garden Club's 58th Autumn Flower, Vegetable and Floral Art Show

Date: Sat 31 March, 10:30 - 4:00

Sun 1 April, 11 - 3:00

Venue: Concord Community Centre, 1A Gipps Street

Cost: \$3.00, children free

Official Opening: Sat at 12:30

Display Plans for 2012

April through May - The War at Home, World War II - we need support material

June - Royalty - QEII 60th Anniversary of ascending the throne - we need support material. Souvenirs, photographs, stories, anything to do with royalty not just QEII.

August - Concord Council Anniversary. Any suggestions of what we can do?

September - History Week - to be decided

December through January - The True History of Nursery Rhymes.

Do you have any suggestions on what we can do to support any of these projects? This is your museum and we need your help in sourcing objects to complement the proposed events. We need our members to become more involved.

Victa's 60th Birthday

Briggs and Stratton, present owners of Victa, will be holding a special celebration on Saturday, 25th February in Goddard Park from 9:00 to 3:00.

There will be lots of entertainment for the children as well as a large display of Victa mowers, including an original 'peach can' model.

We have been invited to set up a display there to advertise our museum and our mowers.

If you can spare a little time on the day to help man the stall, please let me know so we can arrange a roster.

Also, Rotary will have their famous barbecue there and have advised that the net profit from their day will be donated to our museum to help cover

the cost of our sound system.

So, please lend your support.



From the Secretary's Desk

WELCOME to our newest member, Janette Mitchell. We hope you will be able to come to our meetings and take part in our events. We are looking forward to getting to know you better.

SENIORS' WEEK: My apologies for the error in last month's Nurungi - the dates for this event are Wednesday 21 and Saturday 24. (more details elsewhere)

CONGRATULATIONS to Harry Kimble on the publication of his book - A Pictorial History of West Rugby. It's a wonderful book with lots of pictures from the past. It's in both hard and soft cover and can be purchased from the museum.

THE SEARCH FOR BENNELONG'S GRAVE: If you missed this talk by Dr. Peter Mitchell, you missed a most interesting and informative talk. Using everything from old maps to satellites they have pinpointed what they feel is the actual spot where Bennelong was buried.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Elsewhere we have listed our speakers for the next few months. These are all great speakers with very interesting topics, so please mark the dates in your diaries now so you won't miss out.

CHANGE OF NAME: We have officially reserved the name "City of Canada Bay Heritage Society" and will now be making application to finally change our name.

NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2012: Our War at Home display is part of this event. We have some books from National Trust listing all the events around NSW. If you would like one, just pop in to the museum. They're free.

WELCOME BACK to our President, Mark Durance - looking quite fit and well. Good to have you back with us.

A VERY BIG THANK YOU to member Betty Fletcher and to non-member Peter Bourke who turned up for the last working bee and managed to clear all the boxes and bits and pieces out of the store room ready for the new shelving to be erected. Well done! And many thanks.

WORKING BEES: There are still jobs to be done, but we need people to do the jobs. If you can help can you please contact me and let me know what day(s)/times are most suitable for you and I'll try to organise the next one so more people can come.