



"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.188

May 2012

The Parramatta River Story

Part 2 of a series on the historic Parramatta River
by long-time resident of Drummoyne, A S Mendel

River Pointed the Way to Settlers Seeking Homes

Continuing our visual cycle from SCEGS we observe Goat Island, midway between Darling Street Wharf and Ball's Head.

Goat Island was once suggested as an alternative site for the Harbour Bridge, indicating a three-way link between the City, Balmain and the North Shore.

Ball's Head, just beyond Blue's Point, where Billy Blue ran his first ferry, is a high natural eminence rising abruptly from very deep water.

This headland, together with Bradley's Head, gives some impression of how the harbour shores appeared to Phillip's first footprinters.

Westward beyond Berry's Bay, Ball's Head looks over Gore Bay and Greenwich Point to Woolwich, where Woolwich Point bisects the stream and the Lane Cove River flows in from the north-west.

Greenwich and Woolwich both take their names from similarly paced districts on the Thames in the County of London.

Today, the expansion of population over Middle Harbour, Lane Cove, Cook's River, Georges River and Port Hacking has been fantastic, but after the first settlements had overflowed into Ultimo, Pyrmont, the Glebe, Surry Hills and Paddington, the further expansion was westward and, in an area serviced by few roads, the Parramatta River pointed the way.

The Balmain area, with its deep water frontages, was a natural for shipping and together with the admirably positioned Cockatoo Island was destined to become not only a ship-docking site, but one with a great shipbuilding potential.

The advent of steam was to be considerably helped by the Balmain colliery, the deepest in Australia. Today the threat of seepage has caused the mine to be abandoned.

Cockatoo or Banks Island, as it was first called, was a penal settlement as early as 1800. It remained so for half a century.

In fact, Frank Ward (Thunderbolt) escaped

from here in 1840, swimming to Hunters Hill. He was later to become notorious in the New England district as one of our milder-mannered bushrangers.

Gold led to Influx

In 1851, following the great gold discoveries in the colony, the influx of new settlers sparked off the beginnings of secondary industry, one being the docking and building of ships.

The first dock at Cockatoo was built in the same year, and six years later the first ship, *HMS Herald*, was docked.

In 1900 the premises were enlarged, and in 1908 the first workshops were constructed.

During the First World War, the destroyers *Warrego*, *Huon*, *Torrens* and *Swan* were launched, to be followed by the cruisers *Brisbane* and *Adelaide*. Not bad for a first effort!

With the termination of the war, merchant ships began to come off the slips.

Two 6000-tonners were followed by two 12,000-ton refrigerator ships - the *Fordsdale* and *Ferndale*.

The Second World War saw the destroyers *Arunta*, *Warramunga*, *Bataan* and *Tobruk* built in rapid succession.

Recent years found the *Empress of Australia* making her first Hobart run, and presently a 15,000-ton warship will join the Australian Navy.

DIARY DATES

MAY 5: 2:00 pm - Brad Manera, "Australia Under Attack"

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"

Annandale and Leichhardt, lying between Parramatta Road and the river, were early settlements. Their public buildings like those in Camperdown were mostly of 1880 vintage, but the Johnstone Street area exhibits two well-known features.

Continuing up the river, the old residential area of Hunters Hill leads up to Tarban Creek.

Old homes like St Malo have been demolished to make way for the expressway, but St Joseph's College, built in 1879, crowns the high land, and not far away across the Hunters Hill peninsula, the fortress-like St Ignatius College, built one year later, presents the third of the four greater public schools on the Parramatta-Lane Cove system.

At present the beautiful and utilitarian new Gladesville Bridge spans the river with slender Roman simplicity - an old idea in vousoirs and keystone, presented in modern pre-stressed concrete block, giving us the longest single-span concrete arch in the world.

The old bridge has been demolished now, but just around the bend is more history.

Peculiarly shaped bay

Governor King, probing westward, came upon a peculiarly shaped bay with five even indentations, somewhat like the fore-shortened fingers of a wicket-keeper's glove. He was

prompted to name it Five Dock Bay.

In the same year - 1806 - the ubiquitous Dr John Harris established his home in Drummoyne (named after a place on the river Clyde, Scotland).

All the area westward, including Chiswick (a Thames town in Middlesex county) and Abbotsford, along the eastern shores of Hen and Chicken Bay to Parramatta Road, then to Iron Cove Creek was named Five Dock Farm.

The undulating to hilly areas of Dundas, Carlingford, Baulkham Hills and Ryde grew most of Sydney's immediate food crops and the whole approach passed through Parramatta.

There were no bridges until 1881, so it was decided to construct a short-cut road to cross the river earlier by vehicular ferry and continue on up the northern side.

In 1827, Survey-General Major Mitchell, of exploratory fame, chose the route which bisected Five Dock Farm and crossed the river at Abbotsford, the narrowest section, to Looking Glass Point slightly upstream.

The road was, and still is, called The Great North Road. Abbotsford itself perpetuated the birthplace of Sir Walter Scott on the banks of the Tweed, County of Roxbrough, Scotland. It was here at Abbotsford in the 1920s that the 175 ft high pylons carried the overhead northern cables across to the corresponding pylon on Bedlam Point.

Notable Families

The coming of the Great North Road ushered in the semi-rural gentry. Some notable families were in residence here for some time.

Sir Edmund Barton once lived on the Russell-Lea estate. In turn Sir Arthur Renwick and the Grace Family lived where the Nestle's factory stood, the office being a relic of the old home.

Brisbane Rodd, MP, was domiciled at Barnstaple Manor, his lands extending over the whole of the Rodd Point peninsula.

Another MP, Dr. Hawthorn, built his long low colonial home near Harris Road and A G Friend held a 99 year lease on the land adjoining Kings Bay.

The convent portion of Domremy College was once the home of the Cashman family, the nine acres of land forming the site for the present college development.

The Church of England, the Methodist church and the Public School, established in 1861, still remain in perfect preservation.

A little downstream from Abbotsford is Henley, named after Henley-on-Thames, Oxford county. There is a monument offshore named Searle's monument, but we will talk of him later.

(This series of 6 articles was printed in the "Advertiser", November/December, 1971.)

"There's a War On! World War II at Home"

This was officially launched on Saturday, 14th April by the Mayor. With over 50 people in attendance it was a great success and many compliments received.

Our special Guest Speaker, Steven Carruthers, spoke about the "Midget Submarine Attacks on Sydney". He had even travelled to Japan in an endeavour to write a complete account of the incidents in his latest book, a copy of which he kindly donated to our library.

This was followed by a delicious afternoon tea and a chance to view the display.



There's still time to see the Exhibition!

If you were unable to come to the launch, don't worry. There's still time.

It will be on every Wednesday and Saturday (10:00 to 4:00) until 16th June.

Make a note of the date - Saturday, 5th May, at 2:00 pm, when there will be another special guest

speaker, Brad Manera from the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park, who will speak about "Australia Under Attack".

Please spread the word about this special exhibition to anyone you know.

A lot of hard work has gone into arranging the display and there is a lot of information on how the war affected those who served the country on the home front and the hardships endured during that time.



St David's Uniting Church, Haberfield

The church will be celebrating more than 140 years of history on 28th April as part of Heritage Week.

The beautiful sandstone, gothic-style church was built by the Ramsay family, who owned "Ramsay's Bush", later to become Haberfield.

The Church, Manse, hall and graveyard were constructed in the 1860s.

The Hall was the first building erected and was established as a school by Sarah Ramsay, who is buried in the graveyard behind the Church. The building was also used for religious celebrations until the opening of the Church in 1869.

The St David's Church precinct was designated as National Heritage in 2003.

The Church's beautiful leadlight windows, organ and more will be available at the Open Day via an exhibition and guided tours (departing 10 am and 2 pm). There is also the opportunity to meet descendants of the Ramsay family, and the Ramsay Family Vault within the graveyard will be open for viewing.

There will be a Book Fair and home made refreshments - scones, cakes, tea and coffee - available for purchase on the day.

Donations welcome, with all proceeds going towards the ongoing maintenance of this wonderful piece of Haberfield history.

Volunteers Needed

The Walker Estates Committee urgently needs more guides to assist with Group Tours. These will be our only means of raising money for work on the Estate for the time being.

We don't know how long it will be before we are again able to hold Open Days at either Yaralla or Rivendell so we need to encourage smaller groups to visit. However, to do this we need more guides who would be available on either weekdays or weekends. We also need helpers for the Devonshire Teas.

If you would like to help please contact our Tours Organiser, Sandra Elliott on 9797-1040 or email ttaille@optusnet.com.au and let her know what day(s) of the week you would be available.

We will supply all the training material you will need.

Miles Franklin

Miles Franklin was born 'Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin' in 1879 and she died in 1954 at Drummoyne.

Her name is revered today for her writing and her principles, and is commemorated in the prize she endowed – *The Miles Franklin Award* – which is very possibly the most important literary award in the country.

She may be best known for the novel *My Brilliant Career*, the story of her early life, which was published in 1901 with the support of Henry Lawson. This book was made into a film in 1979 starring Judy Davis and Sam Neill and won several international awards.

Young Stella was born at Talbingo and grew up in the Brindabella Valley near Canberra. Her family were members of the squattocracy, so expectations were that she would make a suitable marriage and further the family ambitions that way.

They can not have foreseen that she would embrace feminist ideals – indeed it is hard to imagine how in that remote time and place she picked them up at all – but she did, rejecting the genteel view her parents had of her future. *My Brilliant Career* was written while she was still a teenager.

After its publication, Franklin tried a career in nursing and then as a housemaid in Sydney and Melbourne. While doing this she contributed pieces to *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (one pseudonym was 'the old bachelor') and during this period she wrote *My Career Goes Bung*, in which the heroine Sybylla encounters the Sydney literary set. The book, with its advanced ideas, did

not become available to the public until 1946.

In 1906, Franklin moved to the US and worked for Alice Henry, another Australian, at the *National Women's Trade Union League* in Chicago, and co-edited the league's magazine, *Life and Labor*. Her years in the US are reflected in *On Dearborn Street*.

In 1915, she travelled to England and worked at a hospital in the Serbian campaigns of 1917–18. She wrote *Bring the Monkey* in 1933, a spoof on the English country house mystery novel.

Miles Franklin returned home in 1932, following the death of her father. In the 30s she wrote historical novels of the Australian bush, most of

which were published under the pseudonym 'Brent of Bin Bin'.

In 1937 Franklin rejected an Order of the British Empire as a mark of her feminist and egalitarian ideals. ('Stick your OBE', she is reputed to have said, but this may be apocryphal.)

She was committed to the development of a uniquely Australian form of literature, and she supported writers, literary journals, and writers' organisations, mainly to this end. She has had a long-lasting impact on Australian literary life through her endowment of the *Miles Franklin Award*, whose first winner was Patrick White with *Voss* in 1957. Ironically, he too was a member of the squattocracy, kicking over the traces.



Our Friend the Pig

Can pigs look up in the sky? No, it is physically impossible. Pigs lack the specialized neck muscles humans have to tilt and point their head upwards. Beyond this technicality, humans and pigs could be considered DNA BFFs.

Pig hide is used as a temporary skin substitute for burn victims. Pig heart valves are transplanted into human chests as an alternative for mechanical ones. Thousands of diabetics' lives have been saved via insulin derived from pigs. Experiments have even shown positive results for Alzheimer's patients who have been injected with pig stem cells. In America on March 1st they celebrated National Pig Day. Pass around the pig-shaped cupcakes, and set your ringtone on "oink," because on that date we honor the messy, lovable and useful pig.

Quote: "Always remember, a cat looks down on man, a dog looks up to man, but a pig will look man right in the eye and see his equal." — Winston Churchill

YOU'RE Invited

Photographic Exhibition Night: "Growing up in Canada Bay"

- * View Council's extensive range of historic photographs of the area, including local streets, houses, buildings and families.
- * Bring your own photographs along to share with others and add to the library collection (Council will scan and return your photographs on the night).
- * Share stories about growing up in Canada Bay.
- * Hear from our guest speaker, Gregory Blaxell, the author of A Pictorial History of Canada Bay.

Date: Wednesday, 16th May

Time: From 5:30 pm

Venue: Concord Library

RSVP: Strategic Planning Team,
9911-6410

Open Day and Book Fair at St David's Uniting Church, Haberfield

They will be celebrating more than 140 years of history as part of Heritage Week.

Date: Saturday, 28th April

Time: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Venue: 51 Dalhousie Street

Guided Tours: 10:00 and 2:00

Information: 9798-3059 or
stdavids.org.au

Rookwood Cemetery Open Day

There will be a parade, bus tours, heritage tours, food, bric-a-brac, plants, grave digging demonstrations and heaps of entertainment. The Frazer Mausoleum and St Michael's Chapel will be open, along with the offices for free family research.

Date: Sunday 23rd September, 9:00
am to 3:00 pm.

If you would like to volunteer to assist the Friends of Rookwood please contact Robyn.

Information: Robyn Hawes,
9889-3899 or
friends_of_rookwood@hotmail.com

Anagrams to Ponder

A Decimal Point- rearrange the letters to get - *I'm a dot in place*

The Earthquakes - *that queer shakes*

Eleven plus two - *twelve plus one*

Home front: wartime Sydney 1939-45

This is a new exhibition at the Museum of Sydney which explores how the Second World War transformed civilian life in Sydney. It brings together a fascinating array of paintings, photographs, posters, film footage, costume and personal memorabilia of the era.

Unprepared for another world war, Australians initially referred to the conflict as "the phoney war". However, it wasn't long before Sydneysiders witnessed dramatic change to their city and the surrounding suburbs. Propaganda posters were posted around the streets and tank traps and barbed wire replaced bronzed bodies on Sydney beaches.

Anxious Sydneysiders painted the windows of their houses black, stocked gas masks and constructed shelters in their own backyards. Some citizens became air raid wardens for their local area. Armed with metal hats, whistles and rattles - on display at the exhibition - wardens ensured that civilians were kept up to date on what to do in the event of an air raid.

When victory finally came it was met with elation, relief and sadness. While many Sydneysiders flocked to Martin Place to share in the jubilation, others grieved privately for loved ones who would not be returning home - almost 40,000 Australians died in the conflict.

Home Front tells the story of the resilience of Sydney's civilians during the Second World War and highlights the events that shaped, challenged and transformed the lives of generations of Australians.

Date: The exhibition runs until 9th September, 2012.

Venue: Museum of Sydney, Cnr. Phillip & Bridge Streets, Sydney

Hours: 9:30 am to 5:00 pm daily
Entry is free with Museum entry.

Telephone: 9251-5988

(Ed. This exhibition complements our own "War at Home" Exhibition. Make sure to see both.)

They Said It . . .

When it comes to a long and happy marriage, Henry Ford said it best.

When he and his wife were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary a reporter asked them: "To what do you attribute your 50 years of successful married life?"

"The formula", said Ford, "is the same formula I have always used in making cars - just stick to one model."

From the Secretary's Desk

THE WAR AT HOME DISPLAY: Our sincere thanks to all who helped to put our part of this display together, whether it be researching, designing posters, framing photographs, etc. and then, after the special banners and objects arrived by Museums & Galleries, put everything together. I won't mention names in case I miss someone but I must make special mention of two - our honorary member Kate Williams and member Harry Kimble, who worked tirelessly to set out the wartime displays so effectively.

WORKING BEES: Attendance at these has been disappointing with only one or two turning up. There is still much to do sorting out the store-room and repacking items. If you can help at any time please let me know and tell me what day/time you would prefer to work, so that we can start organising.

MUSEUM SIGNAGE: Our attractive Museum sign, which was designed and organised by our own member Terry Robinson, has now made it much easier for visitors to find us. You just can't miss it when entering Bent Street.

BOOKS MISSING: Two of our books on the French Canadian Exiles seem to have gone astray. If you have borrowed them can you please let me know ASAP.

ROYAL FAMILY DISPLAY: This is planned for June for Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee. Do you have any photographs, stories, memorabilia, souvenirs, etc. you would be prepared to lend us? Ask you friends and neighbours, too. It doesn't have to be QEII, any member of the Royal Family, past or present, would be welcome to be part of the display.

ORAL HISTORIES: We have several people willing to be interviewed for our Oral History Collection but we need volunteers willing to record these. If you would like to become an active in this phase of our work, please let me know.

THE PARRAMATTA RIVER STORY: I hope you are enjoying this "trip down memory lane". We learn such a lot from this type of article - whether it be reminding us of things we've forgotten or telling us something we didn't know. What do you remember about the area that is now changed or gone forever? Write us your story, please.