



# "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](mailto: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.190**

**JULY 2012**

## The Parramatta River Story

Part 4 of a series on the historic Parramatta River  
by a long-time resident, A S Mendel

### **Abounding in wild life in 1940**

Industry and reclamation have altered the geographical face of these reaches, but less than 30 years ago there was still ample wild life in the area.

Prolonged rains could flood the depressions and these shallow lakes would attract the bird life whose environments suited these conditions.

As a boy I have counted at least a dozen species nesting in these backwaters with others resident on a temporary basis.

There were white-fronted chats by the hundred in the pig-weed.

In the long reedy grasses along the margins of the fresh water you could always find the nest of the reed warbler clinging to the stems whilst the alarmed Barley bird rose from nearby displaying his incredibly blue eggs splashed with rich chestnut.

Where pebbles and shell fragments lay grouped just above high-water mark the camouflaged eggs of the Red-capped dotrel defied immediate detection.

The mournful cries of the shy little grass birds and Tawny grass birds led one to their compact small nests in the stunted mangrove branches, whilst in the more secluded recesses, the dusky moor-hens raised their large broods.

High in the outer foliage silvereyes, brown honey-eaters and the ubiquitous pee-wees built their homes, whilst on rare occasions the white-faced herons presided over their sky-blue eggs in flat stick nests, always on a horizontal limb.

The wag-tail, an artist in home-building, completed the dozen.

In the Spring, too, you would hear the staccato cry of the indigenous Spur-winged plovers, or watch the early arrival of the migrating waders, tired after their long flights from the Siberian tundras.

On the river again, our ferry has passed beyond Cabarita Point.

Abreast of the long tongue of Mortlake Point,

a prominent stretch of land protrudes from the northern bank.

This is Kissing Point, a romantic name of no definite origin, but one occurring repeatedly throughout our short history.

In the July issue of the "First-Fleeters" journal, mention has been made of the first brewing industry located on this site.

The road from here to Parramatta still retained the name of Kissing Point Road.

At one time it was suggested that Major Mitchell's short-cut road should make the crossing here, but the swampy foreshores of Hen and Chicken Bay's western reaches ruled out this route, the high ground of the Great North road being preferred.

However, a punt service still operated at this point and remains the sole ferry crossing on the river.

Together with Parramatta, the areas west and north of Kissing Point were amongst the earliest farming ventures and there is no better evidence of this than the homes of prayer erected by these isolated communities.

### **1826 church well-preserved**

St Anne's Church of England, with its unique clock belfry-tower, and built in 1826, still stands in a good state of preservation at Ryde, but the first services in the area were actually conducted at a more primitive church at Kissing Point about the year 1790 (St Andrew's Cathedral records).

The Catholic community, of course, was not allowed to practice openly until some years after the colony was settled.

## DIARY DATES

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

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

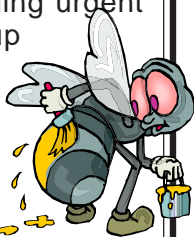
Even so, the vintage church of St Charles, Ryde, records the early date of 1857. The first settlements in the Ryde district were of predominantly soldier settlers and the whole area was once Allied Field of Mars or Mars Field, apparently derived from Mars, the God of War.

In this pioneering district of Ryde the earliest of the fruit producers were domiciled. Two firsts are interesting.

The Rev. Johnson was the first man to raise citrus trees in this new found land and everyone knows the Granny Smith apple was developed here for the first time

## Working Bees

It is now becoming urgent that we clean up the store room and sort through our collection so that we know exactly what we have and where it is stored so it can easily be retrieved for future displays.



There is also some minor carpentry work required.

And, if you can't manage the heavy work we have boxes of paperwork that need to be sorted.

We will be scheduling one for **Saturday, 14th July commencing at 10:00 am.**

If you can't manage the whole day, then please come and spend what time you can manage.

We will supply lunch and morning and afternoon tea.

Please let us know if you are coming so that we can organise the catering.

## Things you didn't want to know!

The cruise liner, Queen Elizabeth II, moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel that it burns.

Every time you lick a stamp, you're consuming 1/10 of a calorie.

Winston Churchill was born in a ladies' room during a dance.

## Bringing Home Australia's Birth Certificate

The Hon. Greg Hunt, MP (Federal Member for Flinders, Shadow Minister for Heritage)

*Most people would agree that a birth certificate is an important document. It confirms your existence, describing who you are and by what name you will be known to the world. Australia has just such a document: the very first map of the continent with its name written prominently across the middle.*

It was drawn in 1804 by navigator Matthew Flinders after his historic circumnavigation of what had until then largely been referred to as Terra Australis.

This was the first time any European had circled the continent, the first time an accurate map of the entire "great south land" had been drawn and the first reference on any such map to the name Australia.

The story of Flinders' amazing voyage around Australia has all the elements of a swashbuckling adventure: shipwreck, extreme hardship, survival against the odds, even imprisonment by colonial rival France.

He was taken prisoner on the island of Mauritius while on his way back to England. It was during this six-year incarceration that Flinders drew the very first map of Australia. He titled the map "Australia or Terra Australis".

Upon returning to England in 1810, the Admiralty ordered Flinders to produce a new map with the order reversed to "Terra Australis or Australia". It was this map that was published in 1814, the day before Flinders' death.

(In 1817 Governor Macquarie, learning of Flinders' preference for the name "Australia", adopted the name Australians have come to cherish.

Since Flinders' time the map has been kept under lock and key by the British Admiralty.

The Matthew Flinders map is an important piece of our national heritage. It is Australia's birth certificate and it should be here in Australia, on public display, for all Australians to see.

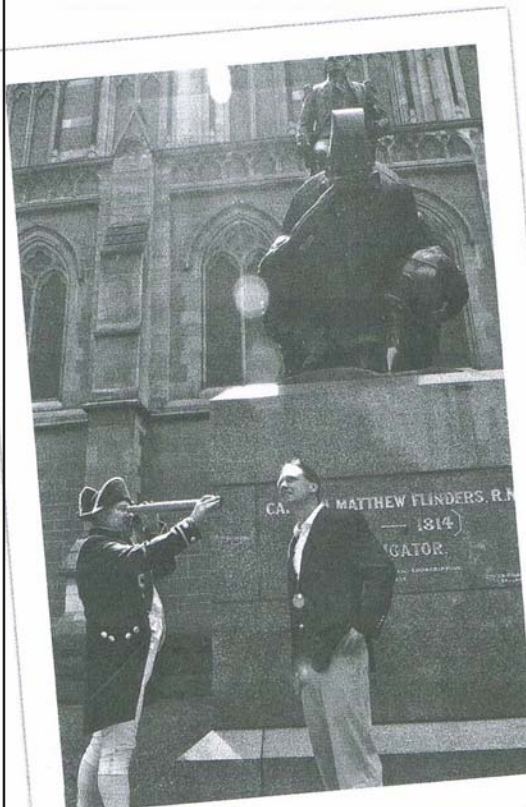
That is why I have launched a campaign to persuade the British to hand the map to Australia. Keeping the map in England probably made sense during the early, turbulent years of Australia's formation. But we're now a mature, independent nation with a standard of living and quality of life that's the envy of the world.

We can be trusted to look after it. To keep the map locked away in some dusty British archive is a terrible waste of an extraordinary historical document. I urge all those who believe we should have this vital piece of our heritage here in Australia to join my campaign to reclaim Australia's birth certificate.

It would be a wonderful gesture on the part of the British if the map were gifted to Australia to mark the bicentenary of Flinders' death in 2014.

**For more information, and to sign an online petition** to the British Government, please visit my website at [www.greghunt.com.au](http://www.greghunt.com.au)

This article was published in the National Trust's Trust News Australia in May 2012, and has been printed with permission.



*The Hon Greg Hunt MP at the Matthew Flinders statue in central Melbourne during the launch of the campaign to bring the map of Australia downunder. Office of the Member for Flinders.*

## 3rd Women's Hospital, Yaralla, (Concord) NSW

On the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1942 a decision was made to provide a hospital specifically for servicewomen. The new hospital plan was part of a larger plan that was nearing completion, which included hospitals and convalescent homes for women in the service.

Following this decision, in January 1943 it was proposed that the Thomas Walker Convalescent Home at Concord would be suitable for this purpose and on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1943 the Premier of New South Wales, the Honourable W.J. McKell, confirmed his agreement to the Prime Minister, subject to final arrangements being made with the Trustees of the Home. The Prime Minister, in his reply to the Premier, said that the hospital would provide urgently needed accommodation for servicewomen in the Sydney area and that final arrangements were being made with the Trustees.

The Minister for the Army, Mr. Forde, said in February 1943 that the incidence of sickness amongst servicewomen was comparatively low but rapid expansion of women's services necessitated the provision for their own hospital accommodation.

In March 1943 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Women's Hospital was established in the former Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital and in April 1943 "forty-nine patients occupied the building which was adjacent to 113 A.G.H. Concord. Amongst these patients was A.A.M.W.A. Private Leta Wroth.

The hospital was unable to accommodate surgical cases at this time and they were taken to 113 A.G.H. However, an expansion programme was in progress and it was hoped that the hospital would be able to cope with 100 extra patients when the building was completed.

Some of the women in the hospital were suffering from malaria, contracted in New Guinea, and other illnesses suffered as a result of overseas service.

The Red Cross recreation centre was opened in December 1943 and was the gift of Captain C.P. Johnson. It was a long white building, situated under the trees in the grounds of the hospital and was furnished in bright colours. The building contained a library – with well-



*Red Cross representative and a patient in the Craft Room, inspecting a slipper*

stocked shelves, a rest room, a store room and a craft room where the patients could learn handcrafts. It was also equipped with a piano, a radio, an Esse Stove for heating and games tables.

The Craft Centre used materials supplied by the Red Cross, along with the teachers who guided the patients. Bed patients were able to use hand looms to make scarves, table mats and towels from cotton or wool. There were quite a variety of skills and crafts to learn and the servicewomen there coped with knitting, glove-making, felt-work and leatherwork. For the sewers amongst them there were aprons, jackets and tablecloths to be made and they also produced rope sandals as well as curtains from hessian and unbleached calico.

The beds in the hospital were covered with attractive bedspreads and

they were equipped with headphones for wireless reception. The patients who were not confined to their beds were able to use the garden lounges and chairs scattered about the grounds. Servicewomen were issued with pyjamas and hand-knitted bed-jackets.

When Lady Gowrie (the wife of the Governor-General) opened the hospital

she said she hoped it would be one of many to be established throughout Australia, because she felt the needs of servicewomen should be given some sort of priority, having seen them at work during her travels in many remote and inaccessible places in the Commonwealth.

Captain Johnson's wife also remarked that somehow people tended to think of A.A.M.W.A. and nursing sisters and other servicewomen as being able to carry on regardless – like impersonal machines, because they were an integral part of hospital personnel or a military organization which never breaks down, whereas they were often liable to become sick or incapacitated as the result of accidents, and were therefore entitled to every consideration.

Major-General Plant (G.O.C. Lines of Communication Area) inspected the Red Cross Centre and the Hospital on behalf of the Army.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Women's Hospital remained operative until 1946.

Commanding Officer:

Major A.R.H. Duggan

Matron: Matron G.N. Pegg

Medical Officers:

Captain H. Bray (Female M.O.)

Captain M. Brown, A.A.M.W.A.

Staff: Forty A.A.M.W.S. and A.A.N.S.



*Ed: The above is an extract from a book by Betty Mountbatten, "From Blue to Khaki: The enlisted voluntary aids and others who became members of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service and served from 1941-1951".*

## Royal Family Display

(to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee)

from

Queen Victoria to Queen Elizabeth



the only two Monarchs in the history of the UK to celebrate their Diamond Jubilee

### Read about . . .

- \* Attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh at Clontarf
- \* Diary of a Royal Bridesmaid (Queen Victoria)
- \* Bountiful Banquets fit for a King or a Queen
- \* Extracts from Queen Victoria's Diary
- \* and much, much more.

### See pictures of . . .

- \* Royal Weddings
- \* Royal Visits
- \* Coronations
- \* Family Photograph Album

as well as Memorabilia, Objects and Souvenirs.

Stories to tell and photographs to see  
Browse Books and Magazines  
Watch the slide show of photographs

A special thank you to all those who contributed their precious objects to make this display a great success.

Please let other know about this display and invite them to come along and see it. We are happy to open on days other than the regular one for any group that would like to visit.

Your committee put a lot of effort into this and they want people to come and see it.

### Can you help??

We have had an enquiry from someone trying to find out about a business that used to be in Concord - Robinson Consolidated Industries. They were makers of a Thermal Nap Setting Irons for smoothing billiard tables.



## Found in our Archives

(This appears to be the last page of a story by a former member, Ernie Younger)

. . . . a big well then. Mr. Eggins was headmaster in my day. We went to play cricket in front on gravel road and sometimes Zoellers, the carriers, used to cut across the corner with loads of coke.

Coming back again to Mortlake there was a big stone hall called the Pig and Whistle. Two houses on one side, two semi-detached (still there).

The Pig and Whistle was pulled down to widen the road, which now runs right through from Tennyson Road to the Punt. The road didn't come to Edwin Street till they pulled down a couple of houses and shifted another.

The road goes straight through now.

Where Concord Golf Links are today, used to be a big bush. Many a barrow load of wood I brought home for the fire.

A man named Merritt used to look after it. Boundary rider, I think you'd call him. I think they used to put police horses in there to spell them.

From here towards Mortlake were two or three wells. Kids used to play in them. Further over was a quarry where they used to set sandstone bricks. I remember once in our school days, one of my mates, Teddy Chambers, dived in and hit his head on a protruding tramline and split it open.

Walker's Bush is today's golf links. I did some caddyding there.

I remember there was a dam where Denison Street meets Mortlake Street. Some lady, I can't think of her name, was drowned there. At the top end of Phillip Street, where the speed boat races start now, used to be called Connel's Point.

Around Cabarita Gardens, where there was a pleasure ground, I remember as kids we used to go to the gardens on the opposite side of the road and chase the turkeys. He used to raise them and kill them for various functions that were held there.

In the old days Bill Soloman had a barber's shop down towards Mortlake Wharf. He also had billiard tables. Later these tables were taken away and we used to hold dances there.

After the war I was secretary of a Cheerio Club. We had picnics in summer and dances in the winter.

In later years Bill Solomon shifted to the top of Edwin Street and had his salon up there.

Phil Solomon, contracted to dig out the foundations for the tunnels, also foundations for new houses that were built in the gas works, as well as the big holder. They took out all the rock for that No.3 Holder.

That was the Solomon Family.

*Ed: Maybe the rest will turn up some day! How about sharing YOUR memories with us.*

## From the Secretary's Desk

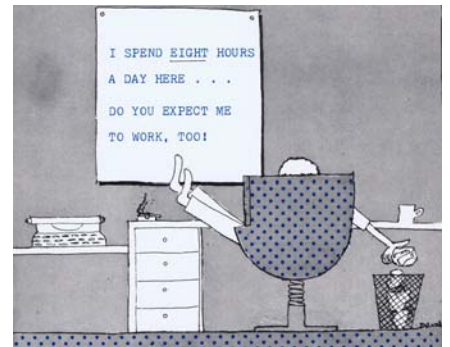
**SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENTS:** To any members who is doing any of these for our work with Karen, please complete it/them as soon as possible so we can finalise this work.

**FUTURE DISPLAYS:** We still need suggestions for future displays - what would you like us to showcase. Please let us know - don't leave it all to the committee - this is your museum too.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** Do you know anyone who would like to be a guest speaker at one of our meetings - someone to talk about our local history, businesses/industries, people? We need your help.

**WE ARE A SOCIETY** - it is up to all of us to help where we can: physical work at the museum; helping with tours of Yaralla; writing or finding interesting articles for Nurungi; seeking out guest speakers; working on the various committees; catering for our guest speaker events or special events; clerical/computer work . . .

But, even more important, we need you to support our speakers and displays by coming along and by spreading the word.



### A wise man once said . . .

*Chop your own wood and it will warm you twice. - Henry Ford*

*A generation which ignores history has no past and no future. - Robert Heinlein*

*Any fool can make history, but it takes a genius to write it. - Oscar Wilde*

*The world is a book and those who do not travel read only a page. - St Augustine*

*There are no atheists in the foxholes. William Thomas Cummings, sermon 1942*

*Imagination is more important than knowledge. - Albert Einstein*

*History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it. - Winston Churchill*