



# “Nurungi”

Remembered

Official Newsletter of the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society

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[www.canadabayheritage.asn.au](http://www.canadabayheritage.asn.au)

EDITOR  
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**No.198**

**MARCH 2013**

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## **CITY OF CANADA BAY MUSEUM**

1 Bent Street, Concord

**Open Wed & Sat  
10am to 4pm**

**Guest Speaker**

on 1st Saturday of each  
month at 2:00 pm

Phone: 9743-3034  
during museum hours  
or email

[museum@canadabayheritage.asn.au](mailto:museum@canadabayheritage.asn.au)

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

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## **Sydney to Homebush 1855 - Recollections of C A Henderson**

*In 1868, Thomas Henderson built the first house on the Redmire Estate called 'Seven Oaks Farm' located in the current vicinity of Victoria Street, Strathfield. C A Henderson was the son of Thomas Henderson and he published some memories entitled 'C A Henderson - Sydney to Homebush 1855' in the Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and proceedings Vol. VIII, Supplement 1923. An edited version of this article was featured in July 1979 edition of the Strathfield District Historical Society [SDHS] Newsletter Vol.1 No.6. It is an important recollection of the early days of the Strathfield and Burwood Districts. This version was edited by C S Malcolm and is printed as it appeared in the SDHS Newsletter of July 1979.*

Nearly all of Burwood on the north side of the railway is on the Rowley grant made, I think, about 1807. Whether old Burwood House was built before that date I know not. Mr Kent, the architect, told me that in repairing the old Burwood House a few years ago a stone in the foundation was discovered with the date of 1797.

Major Rowley, who lived here, was shot in fighting a duel at Annandale; his railed grave was visible from the railway line in the Annandale paddocks close to the eastern boundary. There was no church in Burwood except the Roman Catholic, which was also used as a day school. It must have been built before 1855. There was a Church of England day school, in which services were held about fortnightly, the minister having to preach at Ashfield, Enfield and Five Dock, as well as Burwood. St. Luke's Church of England was built about fifty-five years ago, and the writer was at the opening service.

Neich's Bath Arms Hotel was built by Emanuel Neich, an Italian, in 1845. The house is still kept by a Neich. It might be mentioned that the late Emanuel Neich informed the writer that he held the oldest publican's license in New South Wales. From Neich's on the Parramatta-road, corner of Burwood-road, there was only one house along that road to Burwood station for several years after 1856.

From the Burwood station to the Liverpool-road in those days there were about three cottages and they were near the station. Near the junction of the Burwood and Liverpool roads was Seale's Inn, and opposite it on the Burwood-road, an old upstairs house, I think occupied by Mr. Garland. The country between this place and what is now Croydon station did not contain one

house, and on the west side of Burwood-road, south of the railway, it would be hard to find a dwelling till Parramatta or Liverpool were reached, except a few along the Liverpool-road. There was no post-office for some time after 1856. The nearest post-office was opposite the Concord-road on the main road, at a little shop kept by Paddy McGrath. The next building was the lock-up.

The mounted police were located at what was called the Stockade, on what is now St. Luke's Park. It was for many years known as the police paddocks. There were two mounted police. They patrolled the Parramatta-road from Burwood, half way to Parramatta, and also half way to Sydney, at night. They wore swords, which could be heard to clank against their stirrups. One of these troopers, Parker, was a very active man, and good at throwing either man or stone.

From Neich's along the Wharf-road (now Burwood Road) to Hen and Chicken Bay 'the only buildings were the Church of England school and two or three cottages, except at the bay, where there were the residences of the two fishermen, Barkley and Nowlon. West of the Wharf-road was known as Government Bush. It contained no houses until the present site of Mortlake Gasworks was reached, and here were three

## **DIARY DATES**

**MARCH 2nd:** John Fowler, "Dr. Menzies of Seacombe Private Hospital, Drummoyne"

**APRIL 6th:** DVD full length movie - "Codgers" (details back page). Bookings essential.

**MAY 4th:** To be confirmed

**JUNE 1st:** Mark Dunn, "Henri L'Estrange, the Australian Blondin who walked across Middle Harbour"

orchards belonging respectively to McDonald, Moore and Nash. Noticeboards were displayed in these orchards giving warning that 'man-traps and spring-guns were set here'. Bronze-wing pigeons and quail were to be found in the Government Bush in the fifties and sixties. Beyond those mentioned, there were no houses north of the main road, except that behind the old Roman Catholic church there was a cluster of small dwellings, perhaps three or four. It was called 'Fairy Town'. A bell was hung in the fork of a tree at the back of the Roman Catholic church (St Mary's), calling the children to school on week-days, and the people to church on the Sabbath day. The old iron-bark tree has long since disappeared, but the same bell tolls out to this day its message to young and old. The writer has heard this bell for more than sixty years.

Among the residents of the fifties, and later years, were Daniel Alderton, store-keeper, a fine old Christian, one of the best; Mr. Mosely Cohen, near the post-office already mentioned; and nearby Mr. Daly and Mrs. Charlotte Barton and her talented daughter, Miss Louisa Atkinson, a great botanist. The last-named were friends of the writer's family. My father drew up a petition to the Government, asking that Burwood be proclaimed a municipality about fifty-five years ago.

Where the Strathfield Post-office now stands commenced Wilshire's Redmire grant of about five hundred and seventy acres. It ran along the Redmire-road (now The Boulevard) to Cook's River, Enfield. There were no roads there in those days, nothing but a blazed tree track through the bush, most of the way, to Burwood station. There was no Strathfield station for some years after 1869.

Our first neighbours were Mr. William Wakeford, railway contractor; Mr. C. J. Muddle, Deputy Registrar-General; Mr. Donald Vernon, Secretary for Railways; Mr. John Vernon, afterwards Auditor-General; and Mr. Walter Renny, Mayor of Sydney. Redmire estate was bounded on the west by one of the thickest of scrubs. It was a plant for horses, which were hidden till a reward was offered for their recovery. No doubt illicit distillation was also carried on there, as the writer once found the remains of one sly grog still in the locality.

On the Redmire estate was a leaning tree with native bear tracks upon it. It stood about one hundred yards

from the site of the present Strathfield Council Chambers. There were some large carpet snakes hereabout, one in a swollen condition was taken from a big tree that was felled. The reptile had gorged an opossum.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the blacks were hostile about this neighbourhood, as was shown by Thomas Rose, a grandson of that Thomas Rose who had a grant of land between the Redmire grant and where the railway now is. Rose told the Hendersons that his grandmother was speared by a black-fellow in front of her dwelling. Fortunately the spear struck her stay-busk, which no doubt saved her life. On the southwest corner of the Redmire grant, close to the source of the Cook's River, stands an old church built by the late Father Therry (St Anne's Catholic Church, Strathfield South). This neighbourhood was known as Bark Huts, and is now called Druitt Town (renamed Strathfield South in 1891). Probably this church was built about 1850. Cook's River here is crossed by the Liverpool-road and is then ended by what is called the 'chain of ponds'.

At the entrance to the Police Paddocks (Longbottom Stockade) stood what was called the 'round house' a very old and dilapidated structure, commonly reported to be haunted. It had iron barred window-openings. No doubt convict prisoners were lodged in this building. About the centre of the paddocks ran a deep narrow stream, bordered on each side by tall swamp oaks (casuarina), which gave out a sighing sound when there was a breeze. Behind the paddocks towards the bay was a thick bush of casuarina, a haunt for butcher birds and curlews. The high tides fifty to sixty years ago reached the Parramatta-road along the stream mentioned. It is not so now, and all the swamp oaks have disappeared with the birds that were of great interest to the writer.

*The writer's family, the Hendersons, were the pioneer family of Redmire (later suburb of Strathfield). Thomas Henderson built 'Seven Oaks Farm' c.1868, the first property on the Redmire Estate.*

**PEN N' NOTEBOOK:** These handy little notebooks are easy to carry in purse and pocket, always ready for that quick note, and they only cost \$4 each from our museum.



## A brush with the Police

**GOOD:** A cop from the NZ police was watching for speeders but wasn't getting many. Then he discovered the problem – a 12-year-old boy was standing up the road with a hand painted sign, which read: "Radar Trap Ahead". The officer then found a young accomplice down the road with a sign reading "TIPS" and a bucket full of money. (And we used to just sell lemonade!)

**BETTER:** A motorist was mailed a picture of his car speeding through an automated radar post with a fine of \$160 included. Being cute, he sent the police department a picture of \$160. The police responded with another mailed photo of handcuffs.

**BEST:** A young woman was pulled over for speeding. As a NZ policeman walked to her car window, flipping open his ticket book, she said: "I bet you are going to sell me a ticket to the Policemen's Ball". He replied, "New Zealand policemen don't have balls". There was a moment of silence while she smiled, and he realised what he'd just said. He then closed his book, got back in his patrol car and left. She was laughing too hard to start her car.

## APPRENTICES WANTED

Frequent invitations have been given to parents by reputable tradesmen to give their children the advantage of a profession; but from what motive the backwardness proceeds nobody knows, and yet a single male apprentice is scarcely to be found in Sydney.

It is remarkable at the same time, that every avenue at every period of the day abounds with well-grown boys, indolently squandering the season in which they might be initiated into useful branches of profession, and become profitable instead of remaining burdensome to parents.

*Over 200 years ago George Howe's Sydney Gazette ran this article, dated August 1805. It could be just as true today!*



## Ode to an Apron

The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few, and because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons required less material.

But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the autumn, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

The Government would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron. I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron - except love...



**REMEMBER: WHEN** Grandma used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. **NOW** Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw.



Remember making aprons in Domestic Science classes?



## Faces in the Street

### Tell us your story!

*Let's keep our history alive by telling us your story about growing up in the area. The stories will be placed into our archives to add to our history of the area and possibly published, to share with others.*

### Tell us about . . .

- Starched circular petticoats which stood up by themselves after being ironed.
- Taking the billy can out to meet the milkman in the morning.
- Catching the tram to school. The fare was one penny.
- Wearing hats and gloves when going to the city shopping or to church.
- Wearing a rope petticoat under a full circular skirt.
- Chasing the iceman as he made his deliveries from a horse and cart—ready to grab the chips of ice to suck on to cool us down.
- Standing up when they played "God Save the King/Queen" at the movies.
- Taking a saucepan to the local Chinese restaurant to bring home our dinner.
- Buying a big bag of broken biscuits for 6 pennies.
- Being the class ink monitor.

*This is a project by the  
City of Canada Bay Museum  
for History Week, March 2013*

**If possible please send in photographs to help illustrate your story**

## In Memoriam.

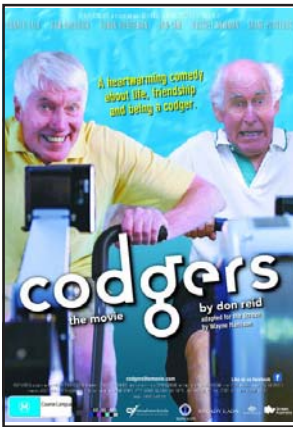
*The club and members were saddened to learn of the death this week of one of the club's most valuable members, SOMEONE ELSE.*

*Someone's passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with the club for a very long time and he did far more than a normal member's share of the work. Whenever there was a job to do, a social function to attend, funds to be raised or a meeting to attend one name was on everyone's lips – let "Someone Else" do it.*

*It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the largest contributors of his time to the Society. Whenever there was a need for volunteers everyone assumed Someone Else would volunteer. Someone else was a wonderful person, sometimes appearing superhuman, but a person can only do so much.*

*Were the truth known, everybody expected too much of Someone Else. Now Someone Else is gone. We wonder what we are going to do? Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow but who is going to do the things Someone Else did?*

*When you are asked to help, remember – WE CAN'T DEPEND ON 'SOMEONE ELSE'.*



"Codgers" follows five everyday Aussie "codgers" who meet at the gym each week to exercise, chew the fat, sling off, sing and have a \$&+#@% good laugh.

Among the jokes and the secrets, the back strain and biceps, they learn that "difference" is more to do with your point of view and that no matter what, "you wouldn't be dead for quids!"

After several years as a sold-out, live theatre tour, this movie-length DVD is available for group screenings.

Cast includes Shane Porteous and Ron Haddrick.

Booking Essential: 9744-8528 or [museum@canadabayheritage.asn.au](mailto:museum@canadabayheritage.asn.au)

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Women's Hospital

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 Hospital at Concord would be suitable for this purpose and in February the Premier of NSW, the Honourable W.J. McKell, confirmed his agreement to the Prime Minister, subject to final arrangements being made with the Trustees of the Hospital. 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 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> Australian Women's Hospital was established in the former TWCH and in April 1943 "forty-nine patients occupied the building which was adjacent to 113 A.G.H. Concord.

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-stocked shelves, a rest room, a store room and a craft room where the patients could learn handicrafts. 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, feltwork 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 organisation 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.

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. There was a staff of forty A.A.M.W.S. and A.A.N.S.

(Ed: Our museum has a significant collection of garments and other craft items made by patients while convalescing there. These were kindly donated by Matron Pegg.

## From the Secretary's Desk

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:** John Morgan, Concord AND Bethany Falzon of West Ryde. We look forward to getting to know you better in the coming months.

**ROYAL FAMILY DISPLAY:** If you loaned us something for this display it can now be collected at the museum. If you can't get to us, please phone and let us know what you own and we'll get it to you.

**STEERING COMMITTEE:** This committee has been working hard to finalise our new Constitution. It will be presented to a General Meeting shortly for final consideration. If you would like a copy please send an email to [heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au](mailto:heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au)

**RAFFLE TICKETS:** A reminder that all money, butts and any unsold tickets must be returned to us **no later than Wednesday, 20th February**. Please deliver to Museum (there is a letterbox at the front we aren't open) or post to P.O. Box 152, Concord, 2137.

There are three wonderful prizes and all money raised helps us to plan for our next display.

**FACES IN THE STREET:** This is a project for History Week 2013 (March) and we need your help. Our last project with these stories was a great success and we received many favourable comments. Please consider submitting your own story and try to encourage others to tell their stories. They can be personal or family, or even about important people who have been connected with the area. The only restriction is it needs to be part of the history of Canada Bay - people, places, events. **We need stories in by 9th March**. Please publicise this as much as you can.

**IT'S A NEW YEAR . . . A NEW SOCIETY -** Why don't you make a New Year's resolution to become more involved with our Society and Museum? You might find it's fun!

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** If you didn't come to the talk on *Catalinas*, you missed a great bit of history. Thanks to our member Patricio. Thanks also to him as he is now helping with carpentry work in our store-room. Make sure you mark the 1st Saturday of the month in your calendar. There are a lot more good speakers to come.

## WANTED!

Volunteers to help distribute our advertising leaflets around their home area.

Can you help? Take as few or as many as you wish. We'll deliver them to you if you wish.

Please phone 9744-8528 if you are able to assist.