



'Nurungi'

(Remembered)

Official Newsletter of the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society

email: heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au

www.canadabayheritage.asn.au

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GENERAL MEETINGS

1st Saturday of month
(except January)

at **12:30 pm** in the
City of Canada Bay
Museum

1 Bent Street, Concord
9743-3034

followed by

our **Guest Speaker**
at **2:00 pm sharp**.

Museum Committee

Meets on 3rd Wednesday of month
at 10:00 am at museum
(everyone welcome)

Chairperson

Lorraine Holmes,
9743-2682

Walker Estates Committee

Meets as required

Chairperson

(vacant)

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

Louisa Anne Meredith

Conclusion of "Notes and Sketches of New South Wales"

(continued from December 2015 issue)

Spiders

Louisa was a curious observer of the trap-door spiders, but not so keen on what she calls "tarantulas".

The tarantula is not quite so great a favourite with me, as I have strong suspicions of its bite being venomous.

At first I understood them to be harmless, although servants held them in great abhorrence, and, unless too frightened to approach, always kill them when discovered.

Certainly the appearance of a full-sized tarantula is by no means prepossessing. An oval body nearly an inch long, and a proportionally large head and shoulders, are surrounded by eight bent-up legs, two or three inches long, covered, as are also the head and body, with thick, fine, brown, hair-like fur.

When disturbed they scramble along at a rapid rate, and are very frequent residents behind pictures or furniture against the wall, often causing terrific screams from one's housemaid, which are somewhat alarming, until, on inquiry, the dreadful words "A Triantelope, Ma'am!", are gasped out, and the tragedy ends in the death, or, as I usually arrange it, the careful expulsion of the intruder.

Several persons of education and intelligence have assured me of their dangerous nature, but I have never yet witnessed an instance of it, and they are such patient and industrious flycatchers that so long as they confine their perambulations to the ceiling, and the upper portion of the walls of a room, I never disturb them.

The Sleepy Guana

Many large kinds of guanas inhabit New South Wales; some, which have been described to me, must be enormous reptiles. I have only seen two species, the most common being generally called the sleepy lizard, and it is also found in Van Diemen's Land.

It is about a foot or fourteen inches in length, the body dark coloured, fat, and bloated looking; the tail short and thick; the head

broad, with a snaky expression, and a long blue tongue.

Contrary to the habits of most lizards, which are remarkable for their extreme activity and timid alertness on the approach of a footstep, or the slightest noise, the sleepy guana is often seen lying in the midst of the road, and frequently the crushed body of one bears disastrous evidence of the fatal consequences of indolence.

Sometimes we have turned aside to avoid driving over them, or have bestowed a light lash of the whip in passing, which only caused them to crawl slowly away, as if our friendly hint were a most officious and impertinent proceeding, and they had rather a preference for being trodden or rolled to death.

They are most undeniably ugly creatures, although without the hideous pouch-cheeks of the West Indian guanas; but we always considered them quite harmless, until a little incident occurred since our residence in Van Diemen's Land led us to suspect them of being at least capable of mischief.

One day, last summer, we found one lying in our path, during a bush-ramble; and without any intention to hurt or annoy the animal, but merely to intimate that its place of repose was an unsafe one, Mr Meredith touched it gently with the barrel of his gun, when, instead of retreating as might be expected, it turned fiercely around, and snapped repeatedly at the gun, just as a savage dog would do, and bit so sharply and strongly as to cut into the solid iron with

DIARY DATES

Mar. 5: Andrew Tink, "Australia 1901-2001, a narrative history"

2nd April: Alasdair McGregor, "Francis Greenway"

7th May: Jan Worthington, "Laurence Hynes Halloran - Scholarly Scoundrel"

4th June - Carol Overington, "Last Woman Hanged"

its teeth, as deeply as a hard stroke of a diamond cuts into glass.

Had a hand or foot been in the place of the gun, a fearful wound must have been inflicted. Still, as they appear only to act on the defensive, I see no reason for wantonly destroying them, although I would not advise any one to incur their bite.

Snakes

With the snake tribe in New South Wales, I am happy to say my acquaintance is very limited, for I fully partake in the horror usually and very reasonably entertained of them.

Our servants had frequently raised an alarm about a "large black snake" which lived in an unoccupied hut near the house, but it always vanished before a gun could be brought, and we rather discredited the story until on one occasion the alarm being, I suppose, more quietly given, Mr Meredith succeeded in shooting it through the head, to the extreme satisfaction of the whole household.

It was not a large snake, not being more than four feet long, of a purplish black colour, and down each side was a streak of dim red.

The extreme tenacity of life in these reptiles, or more probably the long continuance of muscular power and motion, even after the head has been wholly severed from the body, has given rise to the common idea that at whatever time of day a snake may be killed, it cannot die until sunset.

The extraordinary activity with which the tail-end of the creature will leap and jump about, whilst the head is swiftly travelling in another direction, is terrible to see; it seems as if every joint had a vitality of its own, entirely independent of brains, or spinal cords, or any other imagined seat of life.

One of our men servants told a story of a large black snake which lived in his hut a long time, and used to lie on his bed at night, until he took unto himself a wife, who, very naturally, demurred at the presence of so suspicious a bed-fellow, and induced him to kill it.

Nature

The Norfolk Island pine, of which we had three magnificent specimens close to the house, is certainly the most noble and stately tree of all the pine family that I have ever seen, beautiful as are they all.

Mr Meredith climbed very nearly to the summit of our tallest pine, and said he had never seen anything more beautiful than the downward

view into and over the mass of diverging branches spread forth beneath him.

He brought me down one cone, with its spray, if so I may call the armful of thick green shoots that surrounded it, and I was gazing at it for half the day after; it was so different from anything I had seen before, so new, and so grandly beautiful.

Close under the towering pines grew a common English pear tree; a crooked, wide spreading, leafy, farmhouse-garden sort of pear-tree, that won my especial love, from the good old-fashioned pictures of gable-ended houses and neat garden-orchards it brought into my mind, and the glory and delight of its spring-time blossoms was an earnest and most child-like joy to me.

Surely, never was a pear-tree so watched and gazed on, both morning, evening, and moonlight!—for Sydney moonlights are like tropical ones, so clear, so silver-bright, that I could see to read small print as well as by day—and the old pear tree shone out in them like a beautiful vision of home, telling store of pleasant stories in each fluttering leaf that fell from its thousands of flowers.

Many very pretty native flowers and shrubs adorned our "bush", or rather forest, and the graceful native indigo crept up many bushes and fences, sometimes totally hiding them with its elegant draperies.

Often, when we have sauntered in the garden and veranda late in the evening, especially on a dark moonless night, I have listened for a long time to the wild tones and voices that rose from the forest and the marsh, whilst the wind, gently sweeping through the string-like foliage of the casuarina, made a soft flowing music in unison with them all.

From the marsh arose the multitudinous, incessant gurgling, croaking chorus of the lesser frogs, with at intervals the deep sonorous clop, clop of a great one.

The long clear treble note of the shy curlew often came from many points at once, now near, now distant—calling and answering each other.

The least pleasing part of our natural concert was taken by the troops of dingoes. Their indescribably wild and dismal yelling and howling seemed like the cries that evil and tortured spirits might utter in their dire agony, and often drove me within; for though not usually a "nervous" person, they made me feel positively uncomfortable, and conjured up all the fearful

stories of ravenous wolves in howling wildernesses, and packs of jackals, and all the natural-history-book horrors that I used to shudder over when a child.

Some of the vineyards and orange-groves near us were extensive and very beautiful. The large orange-trees, gay with their golden fruit and exquisitely fragrant bridal-blossoms were quite a delight to me to see.

Departure

In October 1840, the Merediths completed their stay at the Homebush estate. Louisa ends her notes as she passes again through Sydney, none too happily for the detestable mosquitoes (with their horrible allies) besieged us in swarms, cruelly tormenting my poor child, whose chubby face and fair fat arms were covered with their mountainous bites, despite of all my care and contrivances.

We embarked in a lumbering Colonial built vessel named the Sir George Arthur (since wrecked off Bermuda), and once more passing the beautiful coves and bays of Port Jackson, sailed forth through its mighty gates on our way to a new home in Tasmania.

Australian Pathways: Spring 1998

guest
speaker

Saturday, 5th March
1:30 for 2:00 pm sharp.

Andrew Tink

"Australia 1901-2001"

Andrew Tink tells the story of Australia in the 20th Century from Federation to the Sydney 2000 Olympics. A century marked by the trauma of war and the despair of the depression, balanced by extraordinary achievements in sport, science and the arts. A country underpinned by a political system that worked most of the time and the emergence of a mainly harmonious society.

Australians at the start of the century could hardly have imagined the prosperity enjoyed by their diverse countrymen and women one hundred years later.

The story is driven by people, whether they be prime ministers, soldiers, shopkeepers, singers, footballers or farmers: a mix of men and women, Australian-born, immigrants and Aborigines.

Timeline of 20th century Australia

1901 - Federation

In 1901, the colonies voted 'yes' to federate into Australia. Some of the upper classes saw Federation as a means of creating uniform immigration laws that could keep 'undesirable' people out of Australia. Most of the union movement saw Federation as a way to keep out the Chinese and Pacific Islanders that were being used to weaken unions.

1911-14 - Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition

Mawson's expedition to Antarctica ranks as the greatest polar expedition story ever told. While it achieved its scientific goal with detailed observations in magnetism, geology, biology and meteorology, it was Mawson's individual story of survival that ensured its immortality throughout history. It was a story of one man refusing to give up when all hope seemed lost, and a support team leaving the door ajar when all chance seemed gone.

April 25 1915 - Gallipoli

Gallipoli was a World War I battle against Turkey that claimed the lives of 7,600 Australians before it was evacuated. It was also the first battle where the term 'Diggers' was used to identify Australian servicemen. (Diggers was a term that had applied to miners on the goldfields.) Gallipoli isn't remembered out of a desire to celebrate war. Instead, it is a commemoration of those who died serving Australia in battle, be it warranted or not.

Curiously, whereas Gallipoli has been used to build bridges of friendship with the Turkish enemy, it has been a source of bad blood with the English allies. This is probably because England had used Australians as cannon fodder. Furthermore, the English government billed the Australian government for every penny it spent on Australian troops. Essentially, Australia had to pay for the honour of its citizens dying for England.

The honour of dying for England proved quite a burden during the 1930s depression, which was made that much worse as a result of English banks draining the Australian economy with demands for debt repayment. Many of these debts were incurred by supporting the English in World War I.

1916/17 - Referendums on conscription

In 1916, the Government held a referendum to give itself the power to

conscript Australians and send them to war. Vocal opposition came from the labour movement and working class football clubs who despite supporting the war, objected to the principle of conscription

Australia voted NO. In 1917, the Government again held a referendum on conscription but censored any advertisements that promoted the no case. Australia voted NO again.

1930s - Depression - Don Bradman & Phar Lap

During the depression, people of the world looked for heroes to build their self-esteem. The heroes came in the form of two freaks of nature, Don Bradman and Phar Lap. In cricket, a good international batsman will average around 40-50. The greatest batsmen of an era will average 50-60. Don Bradman averaged 99.96. In no other international sport has one athlete been so far above all others.

Phar Lap was a racehorse of poor bloodlines and whose face was covered in warts. He was unplaced in 8 out of his first 9 races but eventually won 37 of his 51 starts. His record is remarkable considering that after each victory, he was saddled with more and more weight to bring him back to the field. After his death, it was discovered that his heart weighed 14 pounds, compared to the average 9 of other race horses of the same era.

Australia gains 42 per cent of Antarctica

Douglas Mawson returned to Antarctica in 1929 and 1931, as leader of the first and second British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expeditions (BANZARE). Like the Australasian Antarctic Expedition before it, BANZARE was a great scientific success. It also proved to be very good for Australia. Mawson claimed for Britain all the land of East Antarctica between longitude 40 deg. E and 160 deg. In total, 42 per cent of the continent. In 1935, Britain transferred that claim to Australia.

1933 - Western Australia votes to secede

In April 1933, 68 per cent of West Australians voted in favour of seceding from the Commonwealth of Australia. Before they could officially become a new country; however, they needed permission from the British Parliament. Meanwhile, Australia's Federal Parliament was arguing that Britain should not interfere in Austral-

ian politics. The end result was that Britain never made a decision and Western Australia remained part of the Commonwealth.

1942 - The fall of Singapore

In 1942, England capitulated to the Japanese and subsequently redirected war resources from the Pacific to Europe. Left to fight the Japanese with the Americans, the fall of Singapore marked a shifting of Australia's allegiance from England to the United States.

1945 - Immigration

The years following World War II marked Australia's second mass wave of immigration. Due to the Japanese bombing of Darwin in World War II, and the Japanese invasion of Papua New Guinea (then part of Australia), the Australian Government became convinced that Australia needed population growth to adequately defend the country from another invasion. Because the English were reluctant to migrate, the Government targeted refugees from Spain, Greece, Poland, Yugoslavia and Italy. To facilitate their arrival, the Australian government created massive infrastructure projects, such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric scheme. At the time, the scheme was considered to be an engineering marvel of the world.

1952-1963 - Britain tests nuclear weapons in Australia

In many respects, England has never seen Australia as anything more than a dump. Initially, Australia was a dump for its lower classes. Such was the lack of affection for the lower classes, in World War II Winston Churchill decided the Japanese were free to have Australia if they wanted. After the war, England decided that Australia might have some use as a site to test nuclear weapons. For the next ten years, outback Australia was subjected to weapons testing.

These explosions mean that Australia, along with Japan, is one of only two industrialised countries to have had nuclear bombs dropped on it by a foreign power.

1962-1972 - Vietnam War

Australia became involved in the Vietnam War to give moral support to the United States in their quest to 'defend the free world'. The war was never popular in Australia. Australians are renowned for being apolitical hence a war fought over political ideologies ran contrary to the Australian grain.

Faced with few volunteers to the cause, the Government introduced conscription, which subsequently sparked anti-government protests; further decreasing the popularity of both the war and politicians.

Despite the unpopularity of the war, Australians seem to identify with the anguish of the Diggers who fought in Vietnam. Testament of this identification is the immortalisation of the Diggers anguish by Red Gum and Cold Chisel with the songs 'I was only 19' and 'Khe Sanh'; two of the most enduring and recognisable songs in Australian music history.

1967 - Referendum on Aboriginal citizenship

Since 1788, when Arthur Phillip incorrectly applied the doctrine of terra nullus (unclaimed land), there has been confusion from non-aboriginal Australians in regards to how they should treat Aboriginal Australians. By applying the doctrine of terra nullus, Arthur Phillip put Aborigines into an undefined category of people who were neither residents nor migrants of the colony.

The ambiguous status of Aborigines continued when the six colonies voted to federate into one nation. Federation aimed to keep non-whites out of Australia as well as protect the bargaining power of labourers. Such aims were not applicable to Aborigines as they were already in Australia and most of them weren't competing for jobs as they continued their traditional life living off the land. Once more, Aborigines were placed into an undefined category.

As a result of this confusion, in 1901 the Commonwealth was not given any rights to make laws for Aboriginal people. This power was reserved for the States who were deemed to have more specialised knowledge for the task.

In 1967, Australia had a referendum

to decide whether Aborigines should be counted in the federal census, and whether the federal government should be given power to make laws for them. Almost 90 per cent of Australia voted YES.

It is a myth that it was the first time that Aborigines were allowed to vote in a federal election. Under section 41 of the constitution, any person who held a State vote also held a Federal vote. When Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia framed their constitutions in the 1850s they gave voting rights to all male subjects over 21. Unlike the federal constitution, the State constitutions were not framed with race in mind thus Aborigines were included. Aborigines were formally given the federal vote in 1962 under the rein of the Menzies government.

The Aborigines themselves have also been confused in regards to what role they believe they should play in non-aboriginal society. In the colonial era, some were friendly, others were not. In recent times, some have lobbied for inclusion and others for the kind of separatist homeland that indigenous South Africans had during the apartheid era.

1999 - Republican referendum

In 1999, the approaching millennium and Sydney Olympics created a wave of popularity for Australia to become a republic. Polls showed that around 90 percent of Australians supported a republic and around 80 percent wanted the president to be popularly elected by the people. Although the majority of the people were in favour of a directly elected president, Australia's politicians were in favour of the president being appointed by two thirds majority of parliament and it was such a model that was put to the people. Australia voted NO.

<http://www.convictcreations.com/history/timeline.html>

Wonderful Memories

When I was young the walls of the Gas Works ran all the way from the Punt and all the way to Cabarita Park.

Our entertainments were the mangroves, travelling across on the punt to Putney, walking to Cabarita Pool.

We'd fossick through the treasures of the tip at the end of Majors Bay Road and float an old horsehair mattress across the bay - or the end of a large wooden cable spool.

There was another abandoned tidal pool north of the end of Bertram Street, where I lived, and a warehouse with big bales of wool that we used to access on weekends and bounce around on them.

Mortlake has a thousand wonderful memories for me.

(Posted on our web site by Edward Golab)

Seniors Festival

Saturday, 9th April at 2 pm

To celebrate this event we will be presenting a PowerPoint **Virtual Tour** of Yaralla, giving the history of the Nichols and Walker families and a tour of the estate and the house.

This will be followed by afternoon tea. The event is free and everyone is welcome.

Please come along if you can and if you can bring a small plate of food to help with the catering it would be appreciated.

General Meetings

A reminder to all members, particularly those who indicated in their Membership Update Forms that they would like to attend our general meetings.

These are held on the 1st Saturday of each month at 12:00 noon and usually run no longer than an hour.

The meeting is followed by our Guest Speaker at 1:30 for 2:00 pm sharp start, then followed by afternoon tea.

We do hope you will be able to attend.

If you would like a copy of the meeting minutes emailed to you after each meeting, please let me know.

**Concord Community Hostel
Ladies' Auxiliary
57th Annual Luncheon
Wed. 9th March, 2016, 12:30 pm
Concord Function Centre
Cost: \$35.00 per person
Admission by ticket only
Phone 9743-0613**

Don't worry, if Plan A fails, there are 25 more letters in the alphabet.

Who says nothing is impossible? I've been doing nothing for years.

I'm old enough to know better, but young enough to do it anyway.

Never take life seriously. Nobody gets out alive anyway.

Smile today, tomorrow could be worse.

Membership Update Forms

Thank you to all those members who have already completed and returned their forms.

Things have changed over the years and some of the information we had was incorrect.

To those who have yet to complete the form we ask you to please do so and return to us as soon as possible.