



# 'Nurungi'

(Remembered)

Official Newsletter of the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society

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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.**

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

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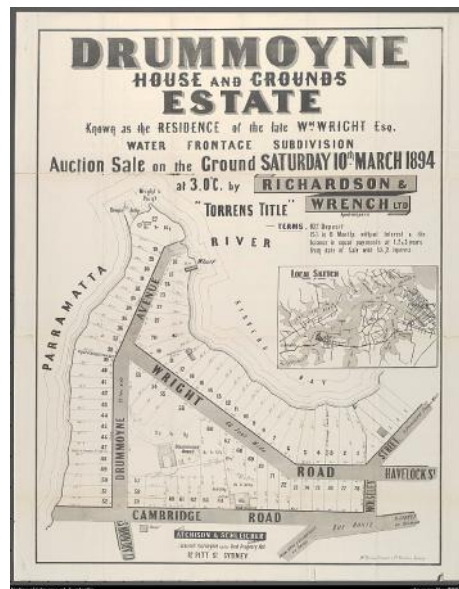
APRIL 2016

## William Wright & Drummoyne House

Like many other suburbs and towns throughout Australia, Drummoyne was named for personal reasons, so called by newly arrived settlers to evoke perhaps, a more familiar and long-distant homeland.

### Enter William Wright (1807-1889).

Wright was a successful merchant and island trader, born in Colchester, Essex, in 1807. As a teenager he had served an apprenticeship at an ironmongery before making the move to Australia with his wife Bethia in 1838 to take over his uncle's trading business in Sydney. The following year Wright organised a trading expedition to New Zealand and by 1843 had established Wright's General Commission and Shipping Agency in Auckland.



*Drummoyne House and grounds estate; subdivision of the residence of the late William Wright 1894. National Library of Australia collection*

In 1853 Wright retired from commercial life. He settled on land he had bought on the Parramatta River where he began building a substantial and beautiful home.

He called the property 'Drummoyne Park' after a family estate in the west of Scotland, with 'drum' meaning 'a ridge' and 'moyne' meaning 'a plain or marshy flat' in Scots Gaelic.

Wright invested the best of everything he could in his house at Drummoyne Park. It is believed that he employed around 70 European artisans in the building of its steps and balustrades, many of whom had also worked on the grand buildings that were evolving in the area of Hunters Hill.

Italian masons were said to be responsible for the wood carvings inside the house, some of which are now in the collection of the Art Gallery of NSW.

However it was not just the house that made Drummoyne Park a striking feature of the area, as Wright's estate was also known for its extensive and beautiful gardens.

In his retirement, Wright declined several offers of a parliamentary seat, however his influence was still felt in major decisions concerning the local area. In 1889 Wright added his signature to a petition to create the Borough of Drummoyne – all but establishing the land he had named several decades earlier.

After the death of William Wright in 1889, the house changed hands several times through many prominent Sydney-siders. In the early 1900s it was occupied by one of Sydney's most famous entrepreneurs, Anthony Hordern, whose wife Elizabeth died at Drummoyne House in 1919.



*Group on the verandah of Drummoyne House, c 1875. State Library of New South Wales collection*

## DIARY DATES

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

June 4 - Carol Overington, "Last Woman Hanged"

In the 1920s the house was occupied by the McDonagh sisters who rose to fame in that decade as female filmmakers.

Their first career-making film was titled 'Those Who Love' and was filmed at several localities around Sydney, including Tamarama Beach and Rotheras House in Bellevue Hill. Playing a central role in the film, however, was the grand facades of Drummoyne House. The film centres on a man who falls from his aristocratic background and in love with the poor but beautiful Lola Quale (played by one of the McDonagh sisters).

'Those Who Love' was a commercial success, launching the careers of the McDonagh sisters and allegedly causing the Governor of N.S.W. to weep at the premiere.

Drummoyne House was demolished in 1971 and today in its place (59 Wrights Road) you'll find units. However Wright, his estate and its occupants all left their mark on Sydney and the developing local community.



The interior of Drummoyne House, seen in a scene from 'Those Who Love', 1926. National Film and Sound Archive collection

**guest speaker** Sat. 4th June at 2:00 pm at the museum

Our Guest Speaker for June is Caroline Overington speaking about Louisa Collins.

In January 1889 Louisa Collins, a 41-year-old mother of ten children, became the first woman hanged in NSW. Both Louisa's husbands died suddenly and the Crown, convinced that Louisa poisoned them with arsenic, put her on trial an extraordinary four times in order to get a conviction, to the horror of many in the legal community. Louisa protested her innocence until the end.

Caroline delved into the archives to re-examine the original forensic reports, court documents, judges' notebooks, witness statements and police and gaol records in an effort to discover the truth.



## THREE SYDNEY SISTERS BREAK INTO FILM WORLD

Three Sydney girls, each gifted with ambition, brains, good looks, and determination, have set themselves the task of producing a moving picture, and, what is more, they look like succeeding. They are Misses Paulette, Phyllis, and Isabella McDonagh, daughters of the late Dr. and Mrs. J. M. McDonagh.

Paulette is the scenario writer, Phyllis is the business manager, with leanings towards writing, and Isabella is the leading lady. The name of the picture is "Those Who Love."

These three courageous girls have not



Miss Paulette McDonagh (left), Miss Phyllis McDonagh (right), and Miss Isabella McDonagh.

gone into the matter in a moment of movie madness, but after due consideration. They have secured excellent technical talent and bright actors and actresses, and, on what can be seen of the work up to the present, their chances of a success are bright.

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Great organization and preparation was necessary before the first scene could be "shot," and now that the actual filming is in progress, there is no hindrance in the path of the producers. The story

The McDonagh Sisters, filmmakers and residents of Drummoyne House.

Sunday Times, June 1926



## Useless Information

Warner Communications paid \$28 million for the copyright to the song Happy Birthday.

Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.

A comet's tail always points away from the sun.

The military salute is a motion that evolved from medieval times, when knights in armour raised their visors to reveal their identity.

If you get into the bottom of a well or a tall chimney and look up, you can see stars, even in the middle of the day.

## Walker Land at Putney

In 1937, well-known local resident Dame Eadith Campbell Walker of Yaralla died.

In February 1940, her executors, the Perpetual Trustee Company, in order to finalise her affairs, decided to sell land she had owned on the northern bank of the Parramatta River in the vicinity of Kissing Point. This land had been purchased by the Walker Trust to preserve the bush views available from the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, located across the river almost opposite Kissing Point.

When Eadith Walker opened the hospital in 1893, she gave an illuminated address where she indicated that the land opposite the new hospital afforded patients a wonderful bushland view that would be conducive to their convalescence.

At that time, there were two gentlemen's residences close by the river and visible from the Convalescent Hospital. They were Cleves (built c1849) at Kissing Point and Lunnhilda/Dudhope (built c1886) at Putney Point. However, it was mainly bushland, especially around the waterfront.

The land was used from 1918 by Kidman and Mayoh as a shipbuilding site. They had leased the land from the owners of the Cleves Estate. And we know that the *Burnsider* remained unfinished on the slipway until 1923 when she was burnt where she stood.

It is hard to know precisely when Eadith Walker bought the land – it is possible that it was some time after 1923. There was a covenant placed on that land presumably so that it could never again be used as an industrial site or even used as waterfront residential property.

The auction for the advertised 'Walker Estate' (not to be confused with Phillip Walker's Putney Estate) was held on Saturday 17 February 1940. Because of the war, it does not appear to have been a prime time to sell or purchase real estate. However, the possibility of owning a waterfront blocks of land at Kissing Point must have been an attractive business proposition, because two large real estate agencies were involved in selling the 26 blocks on offer, of which 24 were absolute waterfronts.

The site map was prepared and the auction advertised. On that map, there was a small roadway shown. It was to occupy the area of one of the blocks of land and was named Yaralla Road. It remains there today seemingly without function, but in 1940, it was designed to relate the estate to Walker's Yaralla Estate across the river.

Suddenly, and indicated in handwriting on the poster, the blocks were withdrawn from sale prior to auction. The question arises, why? In their enthusiasm for the sale, the vendors must have overlooked the covenant that existed on the title deeds and/or the beneficiaries must have seen no valid reason to remove the covenant.

Whatever the reasons, the land remained bushland until it was bought by Ryde Council for use as public parkland



## Remembrance of things past ...AND WHY IT MATTERS

What is the point in preserving the history of Canada Bay and why should it matter? Who cares about what happened here ages ago? Surely, it's irrelevant to our busy lives today.

But the truth of the matter is that we cannot escape history which is something our Society and its volunteers are not only concerned with but are passionate about.

For the Society, history is not a 'dead' subject, but a way of connecting things through time, encouraging us to take a meaningful look at those connections. In other words, understanding history is not simply helpful but essential and this is the

uniting purpose of our Society which was formed in 1969 and which sees the importance in *preserving the past for the future*.

One of our aims is to kindle an interest in the rich heritage - historically and culturally – of the City of Canada Bay LGA. And, in the not too distant future, there will be a whole new area of interest to research - the suburbs of Burwood and Strathfield.

Ultimately we are concerned with establishing an inclusive social history museum for the people of this great area, who come from many countries around the world, and to draw attention to the area's many hidden treasures.

## 1906 - Kiwi Boot Polish

In early 1900s William Ramsay had developed an unusually fine boot polish to which he gave the name "KIWI". The choice of the name KIWI as a trademark was a tribute to his wife, who was a native of New Zealand, home of the KIWI bird and New Zealand's national emblem.



During Ramsay's visit to New Zealand he had noticed the quaint, wingless birds with their crisp, glossy plumage. The kiwi bird design looked good on the small round tin, and the name was easy to see and attractive to look at.

While a number of older leather preserving products existed, Kiwi's invention made it the first shoe polish to resemble the modern varieties, aimed primarily at inducing shine. He began making the boot polish in a small factory in Melbourne in 1904 and launched the product in 1906. Ramsay loaded boxes of the polish on his horse and cart and sold it to farmers to protect their boots.

Its success in Australia expanded overseas when it was adopted by both the British and the American Armies in WWI.



(Ed: This is just one of the many interesting stories in our "Inventions" display. Come and see the rest.)

## Rhodes Multimedia History Project

Council recently engaged Peta Khan to collect oral histories from the Rhodes community, including the stories of some older residents as well as more recently arrived members of the community. Together the videos provide a wonderful snapshot of the vibrant community at Rhodes.

These videos can be viewed on the City of Canada Bay youtube channel at

<https://canadabayconnections.wordpress.com/2015/10/29/rhodes-multimedia-history-project>

## 1978 - Cochlear Implant

bionic ear for profoundly deaf people

Some great ideas need enormous commitment and cooperation to bring them to fruition. Graeme Clark's father was a deaf man in a hearing family and society. He was a pharmacist and often had to ask his customers to 'speak up' about their medical problems - which embarrassed him and them.

In 1967 Graeme embarked on a long journey towards fulfilling his dream of helping deaf people 'hear' the spoken word again. For ten years his research into electrical stimulation of the auditory nerve via an implant into the cochlea (a structure in the inner ear shaped like a snail shell) struggled along on animal experiments and university grant funding.

In 1974 a telethon on Channel 10 in Melbourne generated enough funds to take his work to the prototype stage.

The ultimate question however was: could speech be coded with multi-channel stimulation so that it could be understood by a deaf person? This

could only be discovered by operating on a deaf person.

The first multi-channel cochlear implant operation was done at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital in 1978 by Clark and Dr Brian Pyman. The first person to receive the implant was Rod Saunders who had lost his hearing aged 46. The 'bionic ear' worked - Rod could perceive sound again.

This demonstration encouraged the Australian government to finance commercialisation of the 'bionic ear'. The financing of the cochlear implant's manufacture and marketing became a remarkably successful joint venture.



The three-way partnership was between researchers at the University of Melbourne, the federal government and a medical equipment exporter called Nucleus. This partnership led to the formation of a string of Cochlear enterprises in the US, Japan and Switzerland including Cochlear Pty Ltd in Australia.

(Ed: Another clever Australian's gift to the world. Come and see more at the museum.)

## Sydney's Green Oasis

When Governor Phillip landed at Sydney Cove in 1788, one of his first acts was to establish a farm to grow the plants and seeds he had collected on the way out from England when he stopped at Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town for provisions.

The land he chose was immediately east of the settlement, running down to a bay which he called Farm Cove. Unfortunately the soil was poor and the farm failed.

In the following years the area had several occupants, among them the Scottish Martyr Joseph Gerald, who died in a cottage there in March 1796. However, it always remained government property and occasionally imported flowers, shrubs and trees were planted there. By Governor Bligh's time it had been laid out in walks, garden beds and clumps of trees and was known as "The Shrubbery".

Governor Macquarie's first notable addition to the garden was a carriageway around its foreshore, leading to a spot favoured by his wife and known as Mrs. Macquarie's Chair.

This was completed in June 1816 and became a popular weekend promenade for Sydney's gentry.

In the same year the area was formally dedicated as botanic gardens and the colonial botanist, Charles Frazier, who had been with the Surveyor General John Oxley on his exploration of the Lachlan River, was appointed as its first superintendent. Frazier was dissatisfied with the quality of the soil. In 1821 Macquarie agreed to change the site to Double Bay, and a list of public works which he drew up in 1822 shows that the new area of about 15 acres had already been fenced and cleared.

Today the botanic gardens remain as much Sydney's pride as her harbor bridge and opera house. An oasis of green in an ever-rising but never encroaching forest of concrete and glass.

(Heron Flyer, 11/1/16 - with permission)



## From the Secretary's Desk



### AUSTRALIAN INVENTIONS & DISCOVERIES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD:

Have you visited our museum to see this display? You would be amazed at how many talented Australians have helped to better the world in which we live. It closes at the end of June, so don't miss it.

**DISCOVER DRUMMOYNE:** Our newest display, in conjunction with Heritage Week, is Discover Drummoyne. The suburb has a great history - buildings, people, industry, sport - and we have tried to bring you just some of the more interesting items.

**MONTHLY SPEAKERS:** Each first Saturday of the month at 2:00 pm we have an interesting guest speaker. Their topics cover a wide range of subjects of interest to both men and women. These are very popular and usually draw a crowd of at least 30 each time. If you haven't been attending you've missed out on a lot of history.

Check the front page for coming speakers.

**MUSEUM COMMITTEE:** Your committee goes to a great deal of effort to present these various displays - but if no one comes to see them it leaves us disappointed. Please visit, and tell your friends and neighbours, to show us your support.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** To help your committee continue its work we need helpers. There is a variety of work, some of which needs to be undertaken at the museum, but other, such as research, etc. can be undertaken in your own time in your own home.

**YARALLA & RIVENDELL OPEN DAYS:** Is there anyone out there who would like to take over as organiser of these open days. It's not hard and only three times a year. It's mainly seeing that all our equipment, etc. is there and the various job are allocated. Hands up! Anyone!