



# 'Nurungi'

(Remembered)

Official Newsletter of the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society

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**No.234**

**JULY 2016**

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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

Dear Lois. I note that  
you are to have a  
speaker on the subject  
of Len Beadel. May I be  
so bold as to forward

#### 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](mailto:museum@canadabayheritage.asn).

## Peaches (remembering Len Beadel)

In 1956 I was in the middle of the Simpson Desert attached to 1 Troop of 17th Independent Field Squadron Royal Australian Engineers as part of the advance party preparing the site for the intending round of Atomic bomb tests to be held later in the year.

Towers were being erected and bunkers dug to accommodate the bombs and as part of the subsequent examinations to ascertain the forces and extent of damage dosimeters were placed miles from the site and it was necessary for straight lines of sight be established between the explosion site and the position of the gauges.

The bush in the area is, or was, of low lying mulga scrub and scraggy desert type eucalypt and dense roly polly grasses. We, the members of the plant troop ex 17 Construction Squadron, were issued with very old and tired Caterpillar D7 cable operated bull dozers. These machines had been operated and abused in the previous years by the allied works council during the war years and were really past their use by date but in the penny pinching government thinking along with the dated and rotting tents used for our accommodation were thought to be good enough for the then Regular Army and their working companions.

Lenny Beadel, now known as the last of the great Australian explorers was not as well known as he is deservedly today and in fact was not known by reputation to any of us young inexperienced soldiers.

I met Len when he arrived at the 43 mile camp site in his easily recognised land rover vehicle. This vehicle was unusual for the time. Firstly it was hard covered having a custom body built over the roof and the rear section having the normal canvas cover replaced with sheet metal. This in turn was painted in very large black and white squares all over for the reason to make it very obvious to searching airplanes or indeed any search party sent to look for this desert roamer. Over the whole vehicle was a series of steel piping forming a cage and this was said to enable Len to roll the vehicle back on its tyres in case of a roll over in the ever present large sand hills. I now doubt if

this was a possibility but then, like a lot of larger than life stories and legends of Len Beadel, may have been true.

On the ground to support the large weight of the vehicle were large balloon low profile tyres that may well have started life as aircraft tyres and were quite a novelty for the time. The back of the rover was compartmentised into recesses and these were filled with all the necessary working tools for a lone surveyor such as food, water, fuel, theodolite and tripod, rifle, tins and boxes etc. Much like the gypsies caravans of old.

Lanes were required to be formed from the axis of the bomb radiating out to where the instruments had been placed at varied distances. I was fortunate to be able to work with this amazing man.

The manner of constructing the lanes was for Len to proceed on a compass bearing to a high point, normally atop a sand dune and using a common type shaving mirror reflect the sun in my direction and then by recognising some stable point as near as possible to the glare of the flashing mirror I would take the dozer through the scrub pushing aside the low grasses and knocking over and pushing out of the way those trees in the way. Once the line was started poles with yellow flags would be placed on the sand dune and soon a line of these coloured flags would mark the route and enable the dozer to be kept on line by looking back and lining up the flags.

Two problems slowed down what should have been an easy task. First wild dingoes took a liking to the cloth of the flags and would continually walk along behind the freshly turned up earth and without a worry in the world from the roaring diesel engine and clattering tracks nonchalantly tear the cloth from the poles.

### DIARY DATES

August 6 - Ian Small, "The Kurrajongs"

September 3 - Power Point presentation of  
of photographs of City of Canada Bay  
to support our displays of "Neighbours".

Secondly the mulga scrub provided a problem in that it couldn't be allowed to bunch up higher than the blade of the bulldozer as when it was hit it broke into sharp pieces like spears and would have gone straight through the holes in the front of the steel plate radiator guard and into the radiator. If allowed to carry onto the moving tracks it would have done the same type of damage to the operator and this would have really held the bomb tests up.

In summer the desert is hot to the extreme, the metal of the machine is too hot to touch and the same must be said of those unfortunately to be out in the sun. After a few hours of work I thought it was time for a bit of refreshment, it had to be over time for lunch so at the next sand hill I turned off the machine and asked Len what was the plan for lunch. Len appeared nonplussed and indicated that this task was too important to stop just for something to eat and any way there would be a hot meal awaiting us when we returned to the camp, now miles away, in the evening.

The thought of continuing without any sustenance was beyond me, a young 19 year old burning up all those calories and sweating in the heat of day and I made this clear to Len. I needed food.

No problem, at least to Len, he opened the rear of the Land Rover rummaged around for a short time and victoriously took out a can of sliced peaches and a tomahawk. Two swift whacks with the tool and "there you are" warm peaches a la carte for lunch.

From then on each time I had the honour to work with the last of Australia's great explorers I made sure that I visited the mess tent and acquired a cut lunch that rested in the dozer tool box until needed.

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*(Ed: Following the article in our last newsletter I received the following letter with the attached article. We never know how far our little newsletter travels, or who reads it, but we are most grateful to Ken for this wonderful personal insight into a great man.*

Dear Lois.

*I note that you are to have a speaker on the subject of Len Beadel. May I be so bold as to forward to you my experience with this great man? I was a Canada Bay boy from Regatta Rd. Sunny Side where I was so fortunate to reside and play alongside and in the Bay.*

*Fond Regards, Ken Meredith)*

## Resting Weary Limbs at Walker's Home

### A Day With the Happy Patients at Yaralla

#### Noble Work of Great Founder

(by E.J. Martin)

"This Hospital for Convalescents was founded by the late Thomas Walker of Yaralla, in the hope that many sufferers would be restored to health within it."

This inscription, which may be regarded also as an epitaph, runs in gold letters round the walls of the magnificent hall at the institution which is used as a church on Sunday, and for socials, whereat nurses, household staff and patients have a dance and concert at least once a fortnight at Walker's famous Home at Parramatta River.

The establishment is conducted on a smooth running system. There is the discipline of usage without any seeming authority or hard restrictions.

Patients, with very rare exceptions, recognise the golden principle of "playing the game".

One of them remarked very truly: "If ever a man deserved a place in Heaven, it is Thomas Walker". It is also the only institution of its kind about which there have been no complaints – it defies criticism.

World-famous is the Walker Hospital. Men and women of all ages, positions and condition of life have been nursed back to health by nourishing food, fresh air, peaceful surroundings and unsurpassably gentle treatment by a trained and genial staff of nurses, so as to be fit to re-engage in the struggle for life.

Thousands of young and middle-aged men, after treatment in our overcrowded hospitals, having no homes in Australia, are fit for discharge from the public hospitals but physically are unable to go to work and financially unable to sustain themselves during the period of waiting for employment.

This is where the Walker Hospital comes in as the bridge over which the stricken-down people may cross to a haven of rest and physical rejuvenation

#### The Home

On a commanding site, facing Ryde, on the Parramatta River, the Walker Convalescent Hospital presents the appearance of a nobleman's mansion in a great park. Beautiful lawns, shrubberies, fine trees and choice flowers, tapering down to the water's edge, where, at the landing-wharf, a two-storied lodge with a small tower

heightens the effect of an approach to a castle.

On Tuesdays and Fridays the outgoing patients depart in charge of a nurse, in the forenoon, and in the afternoon, at 1:45, the same nurse escorts the new patients to the hospital, which defrays the fares both ways.

It may be here observed that the Walker institution is entirely self-contained and independent of outside contributions. There are no paying or partially paying patients. There are no inquiries as to a person's ability to pay, although the accommodation and fare provided are equal, if not superior, to many private hospitals.

It assumes that the patient requires a rest which he or she cannot afford to pay for elsewhere, and the generous founder made provisions for a fund to meet all requirements in perpetuity.

#### Waited on Hand and Foot

On arrival, there are kindly nurses to welcome and help the feeble up the slope, and everybody is relieved of all impedimenta in the way of luggage or parcels. There is a gent with a truck to do all the carrying. So the party arrive at the beautifully furnished vestibule and administrative offices, where the matron allots them to their quarters – the men to the right wing and the women to the left, each wing covering the dining and recreation rooms.

The same line of demarcation includes the grounds – women must keep to the left and the men are in the right, for once in their lives. Only on visiting days (Wednesdays and Saturdays) are patients of both sexes and their friends have the free run of the grounds.

The patients are put on light diet until examined by Dr. Littlejohn the next morning, when he decides the fare they are to receive.

#### Accommodation

The wards are lofty, well-ventilated – windows half open is the general rule – and contain from two to four beds.

There are no dormitories; on the contrary, there are single-bedded rooms for special cases and each bed has a completely-enveloping mosquito-curtain – the buzzing insects being the only nuisance on the premises.

The cleanliness of the institution is

conducted with battleship thoroughness.

Only patients capable of doing so are expected to perform light duty in addition to making their own beds.

Very few patients average more than an hour's toil a day – a very paltry equivalent for three square meals and three intermediate refreshers of milk or tea or cocoa and bread and butter.

There is an abundance of milk and vegetables produced on the estate and the solid house and garden work is carried on by paid staff.

The patients even get their laundry-work done for nothing – except, of course, starched collars and shirts.

### **The Children's Cottage**

Supplementary to the great hospital for adults, erected in 1891, six years after the founder had gone to give an account of the stewardship of his wealth, there was erected in 1894 the Joanna Walker memorial – a children's cottage hospital. This lady was a sister of Thomas Walker and, as a beneficiary under his will, she was doubtless inspired by his example to dedicate an ideal cottage hospital for children.

It is a perfect gem for little sufferers, upwards of four years, and eloquent testimony as to its splendid humane service is to be found in the happy faces of the children and their nursing guardians.

In the centre of the cottage is a tiny courtyard with a fountain in the centre.

At the entrance there is a parlour with Lilliputian chairs, tables, doll-houses and toys.

Even the carpets, cushions and table covers are fashioned in designs to please the childish eye.

### **Need for a Gymnasium**

As a health-promoting and useful adjunct to the hospital, the establishment of a gymnasium with a section on approved surgical lines is worthy of consideration.

The writer saw, at Weymouth, England, a gymnasium of this kind, which was of considerable utility in exercising the limbs of wounded soldiers and, as a fair number of surgical cases go to Walker's, the value of such exercise would be undeniable.

The ordinary gymnasium appliances would also be of great benefit to the medical cases who simply want building up and need some inducement to engage portion of the time to physical exercises instead of lying down, reading, or aimlessly lounging about

the grounds.

The cost of construction would be comparatively small, and the expense of maintenance should be almost nil.

As far as actual recreation is concerned the billiard-room, with piano and games, together with a fine library, are ample for time-killing purposes, but regular exercise is a natural corollary of convalescent treatment, and saves men and women, especially those who have to live by manual labour, from getting soft and thereby suffering unduly when recommencing work.

### **The Staff**

Matron G.F. Moberly has a splendid war record of four years. She left in 1915 and was in charge of London hospitals and did hospital-ship duty. The lady also had important duties in India, and returned to Australia in charge of the hospital-ship Castalia.

She was presented with the Royal Red Cross (1<sup>st</sup> Class) by General Birdwood. Miss Moberly is now on leave in China and her place is being worthily filled by Sister Spring, supported by an excellent staff of nurses.

Mr. Alfred Bryant of Yaralla Chambers, Pitt Street, is, and has been for years, secretary of the hospital.

### **The Founder and his Daughter**

Thomas Walker, the founder, was originally a Melbourne merchant, and made huge investments in property in New South Wales, including Yaralla, on a portion of which the hospital stands.

He had cherished for a considerable time before his death the erection of the hospital which will immortalise his name.

Miss Eadith Walker, the only child of the founder, dislikes publicity and, in a sense of delicacy, the writer has to refrain from dealing with her important administrative work for the hospital.

Most of her benefactions are absolutely unknown to the general public. It is sufficient to say that she has lived up to the noble example of her benevolent father.

*(Ed: This article was printed in the "Truth" newspaper on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1924. It was discovered on the Trove internet site - <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>)*

## **Community Message**

If you reside in your own home, are aged 65 years and over, or have a disability and do not have access to someone who can help you to change the battery in your smoke alarm, call your local Fire and Rescue NSW Fire Station and ask for assistance.

## **The Kurrajongs**

In January 1916 a group of 114 men left the New South Wales country town of Inverell to fight in World War I. The group was named "The Kurrajongs", taking the name of the hardy evergreen Australian tree.

The Kurrajongs march (which was actually a train journey!) was one of a number of "snowball" recruitment marches fashioned on the famous Coe recruiting march of 1915. The aim of these marches was to attract volunteers, starting with a nucleus of men and growing as the group travelled through the towns along their route.

After visiting the neighbouring towns of Warialda and Moree, the Kurrajongs, now 150 men strong, detrained at the Army Depot camp in Narrabri. Most of the men subsequently enlisted in the 33rd Battalion AIF being raised at Armidale NSW at the time.

This is the subject of our next talk at the museum on Saturday, 6th August at 2:00 p.m.

Ian Small's book, *The Kurrajongs*, is not a knock-'em-down, drag-'em-out war story. It follows 10 "ordinary" men on their journey through country New South Wales, into camp at Armidale and through initial training. You sail with the 10 as they cross the oceans to England, camp at Lark Hill near Stonehenge and visit London. In November 1916 you cross the English Channel and arrive in northern France just in time to encounter the coldest winter in 40 years. Join the men in the trenches and in their great battles . . . Messines, Passchendaele, Hangard, Villers-Bretonneux. What happens on "The Black Day"? How many of the 10 return to Australia at war's end, and what awaits them? How has the war changed those who came home?

Ian's story of *The Kurrajongs* unfolds in the modern day through the memories of a very old man as he sits with his granddaughter and great-grandson reflecting upon a long, adventure-filled life. Two stories are intertwined through his book . . . a "modern" story and the old man's life story.

*The Kurrajongs* is historically accurate and faithfully follows the journey of *The Kurrajongs* and the exploits of the 33rd Battalion AIF. The characters, however, are fictitious.

**Ian Small**  
**The Kurrajongs**  
**City of Canada Bay Museum**  
**Saturday, 6th August**  
**at 1:30 for 2:00 pm sharp**

# Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 3rd September, 2016  
at 12 noon at the Museum

This is an important event where all members receive reports from the President and Committees on activities of the past 12 months.

An opportunity for members to express their views and make comments on the running of our society, have a say and air thoughts on how to make it work better.

Also, during this meeting, members will be electing a new Executive Committee to lead us for the next 12 months.

The current Executive Committee strongly urges all members to attend this AGM.

## Better than a Flu Shot!

Miss Beatrice, the church organist, was in her eighties and had never been married. She was admired for her sweetness and kindness to all. One afternoon the minister came to call on her and she showed him into her quaint sitting room. She invited him to have a seat while she prepared tea.

As he sat facing her old Hammond organ, the young minister noticed a cute glass bowl sitting on top of it. The bowl was filled with water, and in the water floated, of all things, a condom!

When she returned with tea and scones they began to chat. The minister tried to stifle his curiosity about the bowl of water and its strange floater, but soon it got the better of him and he could no longer resist.

'Miss Beatrice', he said, pointing to the bowl - 'I wonder if you would tell me about this?'

'Oh, yes,' she replied, 'Isn't it wonderful? I was walking through the park a few months ago and I found this little package on the ground. The directions said to place it on the organ, keep it wet and that it would prevent the spread of disease. Do you know I haven't had the flu all winter.'



## Some Thoughts for the Month:

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.

## Computers Must be Male

They have a lot of data but are still clueless.

A better model is always just around the corner.

They look nice and shiny until you bring them home.

It is always necessary to have a backup.

They'll do whatever you say if you push the right buttons.

The best part of having either one is the games you can play.

In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.

The lights are on but nobody's home.

**The value of membership in our Society is active participation - so, make use of your entitlement.**

*The help and ideas from all members is highly important to the life and future of the City of Canada Bay Heritage Society and its Museum.*

## From the Secretary's Desk



**RIVENDELL OPEN DAY - Sunday, 31st July** - This is a resounding success - we're completely booked out and have had to add extra tours to cope. If you can spare a little time to come along and help, especially with the Devonshire teas, that would be great.

**OUR NEXT DISPLAY - Neighbours.** We will be introducing you to our neighbouring suburbs within the City of Canada Bay. A chance to learn a little more about this area we live in.

As part of the display - a part of History Week - on 3rd September we will be showing a PowerPoint presentation with lots of old photos from both our collection and the Local Studies section of the libraries.

Please help by publicising this wherever you can.

**YARALLA SPRING FAIR - organised by the Yaralla Advisory Committee - Sunday, 11th September.** Last year's event was a huge success with hundreds of locals stopping by for food, music, dancing, health information and mini-tours of the estate. Come along - and bring your dog - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

We will have a stall there and will be conducting the mini-tours as an introduction to our upcoming Yaralla Open Day.

**HISTORY OF PUTNEY:** One of our members, John Byrnes, is writing a history of Putney and would like to hear from anyone who can help him. Please contact secretary for email address if you are interested.

John is also anxious to find out if anyone is currently researching any history of the areas along the Parramatta River. He would like to hold small discussion group meetings at Kissing Point (alongside the ferry wharf) if anyone is interested.

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:** Notices will be going out shortly. To those members who pay by direct deposit, please make sure you either note your name or the account number **including the two letters** on the payment so we can credit the payment to you.