



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: chs@concordheritage.asn.au

www.concordheritage.asn.au

EDITOR

PRESIDENT
TRISH HARRINGTON
9764-3296

PUBLIC RELATIONS
TRISH SKEHAN
9743-4172

SECRETARY/TREASURER
LOIS MICHEL
3 Flavelle Street
(P.O. Box 152)
Concord 2137
Phone: 9744-8528
Fax: 9744-7591

*

MEETINGS

General Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month
at 7:30 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre

Executive Meetings

4th Wednesday of month
at 7:45 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre

Walker Estates Committee

1st Thursday each month
(please contact to confirm)
Concord Bowling Club
Clermont Ave, North Strathfield
Graham Packett, 9743-3007

Other Committees

As arranged
Watch the newsletter

Museum

Fred Stansfield, 9743-1866

Archives/Local History

Kate Skillman, 9706-7479

Heritage

Bill Barlow, 9743-3662

Oral/Family History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

*

**CONCORD
HERITAGE MUSEUM**
5 Wellbank Street

Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Wednesday & Saturday

No. 90

September 2003

Annual Reports for 2002-2003

Another successful year has come and gone. There has been very little activity in the Heritage Committee this year and we have not had an Archives/Local History Committee, but we are pleased to present the other reports for your information on what has been accomplished during the past year.

President's Report

It is with pleasure that I present the 2002/2003 president's report for Concord Heritage Society.

The last year has seen our society undertake several exciting projects.

The first of these was the completion of a renovated display space for our photographic display – the Yaralla Museum in the stable complex. We are grateful to all those who gave of their time and expertise to ensure that our photos are displayed to their full advantage.

The second is the restoration of the "Four Winds Fountain". Following a bequest of \$50,000 from Liane Poulton, the society is overseeing the restoration of this fountain on the Yaralla Estate. Vice-President Graham Packett and other members of the Walker Estates Committee, after liaising with the executor, searched out remnants of the fountain, ascertained the feasibility of the project, and followed this up by obtaining quotes for its restoration. After making the commitment to complete the project the committee has overseen the work, which has included finding an appropriate company to undertake the specialised work. The restoration has involved making casts of existing pieces, sculpting sections that have been lost and preparing moulds for the finished fountain. When the fountain is ready for placement, the Society will landscape the area. The moulds will be kept in our restored farm shed.

Our sincere thanks to Graham, who has spent many, many hours on this project.

The third project is the restoration of the historic squash court (the first in Australia) on the Yaralla Estate. Again, we are indebted to Graham Packett for his extensive time and effort in ensuring that this project is a viable one.

Stage one is due for completion in 2003 and entails the following: replacing defective timber to the roof interior; removing wire mesh

from windows and replacing with glass, as originally fitted; replacing defective or missing timber from around the eaves and gables; scraping back all exterior paintwork and re-painting to original specifications; replacing broken or missing tiles and replacing guttering and downpipes.

Stage 2 will be undertaken as funds become available and will entail: scraping down all interior paintwork and patching defects; re-painting to original specifications; replacing electrical wiring and fittings; checking the plumbing and replacing if necessary and repairing the concrete floor.

The Society meets twice a month for ten months of the year at the Concord Senior Citizens Centre in Wellbank Street. One meeting is our general meeting (held in the auditorium), and the other is our committee meeting (held in the smaller games room). We welcomed the renovations made to the Centre by the City of Canada Bay Council, in which the games room has been refurbished and made into a computer room, whilst a smaller room for meetings has been made available.

Our newsletter in its new look, an A3 folded broadsheet, has again kept us informed of our Society's events, as well as being a vehicle for us to explore our heritage through the written word and pictures. Thanks to Editor Lois Michel who, in addition to being our secretary and treasurer, also ensures that the newsletter is interesting as well as informative. Sincere thanks Lois for all the hard work and dedication above and beyond what we could reason-



Bulletin Board

**September 10 - Jan Bell from the
Nurses' Museum at Concord
Hospital**

**October 8 - Kevin Hatton "The Red
Cross Theatre at Concord Hospi-
tal & the Stars who played there"**

ably expect from one person.

Trish Skehan's new book on Edith Walker and her royal connections was launched in March and has been very well received. Trish, in her role as Publicity Officer, again ensured that we have had the opportunity to listen to a wide range of interesting speakers.

We have heard about the architect Horbury Hunt from Peter Reynolds and the fascination of what's hidden inside stones with Colin Platt from Western Suburbs Lapidary Club. We were amazed at the incredible work required to complete an illuminated address, and were privileged to be able to view some excellent examples of this magnificent craft. Noel Crusz spoke to us of "Hollywood in the 50's", and we were thankful to Trish when she was able to arrange, at very short notice, an interesting substitute speaker – Tom Wards, an international clairvoyant and business consultant. Postcards were seen in a new light, when Patricio Parague shared both his passion and his collection of postcards from both Sydney and around the world. We also heard again from Noel Crusz about the "Titanic", and its mysteries.

If you are a member who has not come to a general meeting for a while, please rethink your 2nd Wednesdays in the month. Our guests are diverse and interesting, usually very passionate and knowledgeable.

As I have said in past years, the successful work of our society is dependent on the goodwill, hard work and vision of our members. Some of our members have a higher profile than others, but we are very conscious of those workers, who regularly turn up to look after the museum, take groups around the museum, work on tour days, checking tickets, making tea, buttering scones, washing up, cleaning up long before our guests arrive, and work long after they have departed.

Our "Fred" - Fred Stansfield - was recognised for his contribution to the community, by his receipt of the Premier's Seniors Week Award.

Earlier this year, we took on the project of cleaning out the museum storeroom - a job of mammoth proportions, which also was a very dusty and musty affair. Hard workers toiled to sort through our collection, sorting the gold from the dross thus creating a huge pile of rubbish, which was disposed of thoughtfully.

Other projects have included "Clean Up Australia" at Yaralla on March 2nd, and this year we have begun a new

project of conducting weekday and weekend mini tours for small groups. These have been very successful.

Thanks to our hosts, the Graces, the Packetts and the Wrights, we had a great social occasion and raised \$780.00 at our Progressive Dinner.

Thank you Lorna and Alan Wright, Margot and Graham Packett, Terry Robinson, Beryl and Michael Douglas. Margaret and Errol Grace, Betty Robertson, Diana Mitchell, Laraine Pendreigh, Jeanette O'Hara, Mary Allison, Mary Anderson, Meg Bean, John Harding, Bob and Jennifer Jones, Carole Twist, Glenn and Tina Casey, Francis Davis, Margaret Donnelly, Jill Hodder, June Kelsey, Peter Jones, Lorraine and Vita Holmes, Kate Skillman, Graham Ferguson, Vince and Mary Scerri, Jean Hartley, Celia Vaughan and Betty Willison. All have helped in some way during the year. If I have missed any, I apologise. You are all greatly appreciated.

Other committee members and sub committee chairs play their part in ensuring that our affairs are conducted in a professional manner, Vice-President Graham Packett; Chair of the Walker Estates - Errol Grace; Heritage - Bill Barlow, Oral History – Lola Sharp, and Fred and Frank Stansfield – who look after the museum.

We look forward to our "sell out" Rivendell Open day on Sunday 24th August and our next Yaralla Open Day on Sunday 12th October. We also look forward to seeing you at our Christmas Function.

Thank you all very much.

Trish Harrington

Museum Committee

Attendance at the Museum on Wednesdays and Saturdays is still very irregular - sometimes up to 9 people and other times none at all.

However, on several occasions we have had groups from other associations and also from Mortlake Primary School. All have enjoyed their visits.

We closed the museum for the month of January to clean out the store room and reorganise the items stored there. This turned out to be a major job with closing time having to be extended for a further month. It did give us a chance to dispose of a lot of rubbish and unwanted items and the store room is now much tidier and it is easier to locate items stored there.

We intend to close the museum again in January 2004 to allow us to com-

plete the job - it is mainly photographs and paintings which need to be catalogued and stored properly.

We would like to thank all those who gave time to help in what was a very large and dirty job - but a job well done.

We would also like to thank all the members who volunteer for museum roster. It would be good to have some more people on the roster for Wednesdays as there are only 5 people which means duty once a month. We have 10 on the Saturday roster and this gives a 10-week break between rosters.

If anyone would like to volunteer we would be happy to have them, it's only for a couple of hours each time.

Fred Stansfield

Walker Estates Committee

2002/2003 has been a year of mixed outcomes for our committee.

Our Committee has met on a regular basis, but mainly to deal with our Open Days at Yaralla and recently Rivendell.

We have had very successful Open Days at Yaralla, interest in the Estate is not waning and after each open day there is still a very substantial waiting list of people for future open days. This has meant that we have had to do little advertising

A lot of hard work goes into these days and thankfully we have a very dedicated, but very small, group of workers. More volunteers are needed for such days so please do not be afraid to come forward and put your name in the hat to help out – it is a very rewarding experience.

The restoration of the squash courts is in progress and will be in several stages, as more money is raised for this very worthwhile project. We are hoping to get exclusive use of this building to hold fund raising events, such as art shows etc and together with the stables will give us another facility to keep under our wing and control.

The restoration of the Four Winds Fountain is close to completion and should be back in place by the end of the year. The foundry is doing a fabulous job in the restoration work and I was fortunate enough to make a site visit earlier in the year to see the work in progress and also to see the intricate and involved work that they are doing. It is only hoped that it will be now left intact and not subject to any further vandalism – but with some appropriate plantings (extremely

thorny carpet roses, as an example) around the base it should deter vandals.

Unfortunately work commitments have limited the time that I would like to spend on the Yaralla committee so I will relinquish my role as chairman of that committee and put it into the very capable hands of Graham who has done an excellent job in liaising with the CSAHS, the foundry and the builder involved with the squash courts.

Errol Grace

Oral History

A slack year so far as oral histories are concerned although the two I undertook were most rewarding.

Hazel King, daughter of the head gardener (Albert Edward Hill) on the Yaralla Estate, reminisced about her very early years there and by all accounts she and her siblings enjoyed an idyllic childhood at Yaralla until 1939.

Local identity Jeanette O'Hara, known to most of our long term Concord residents and referred to as 'Mother Theresa' by ex-Concord staff, explained her transition from the P & C Association of St. Ambrose School to becoming a Councillor on Concord Council in the early 1990's, a position she held until the amalgamation.

Both ladies had interesting memories of two different stages of life in the Concord area which will add to our understanding of local history generally and that of Concord specifically.

However, I have not been totally lazy and inept. Many, many happy hours have been devoted to cutting and pasting. No, not computer jargon, real scissors and sticky tape! I have devoured hundreds of local papers covering periods from 1960's to 1980's and have been delighted at the trivia I have acquired.

As a young bride in 1967, I had a housekeeping allowance of \$15.00 per week. My daughters have accused me of gross exaggeration over the years - no-one could live on that amount! Well, guess what, it is all in print! As are many other interesting facets of those years - wages, cars, electrical items, real estate, groceries, grog, etc. Perhaps one day we will score a grant to photocopy these items and archive them properly for local research.

I was fortunate to be allowed to access all the old files of Concord Council from 1945 to 1964 and this has opened another window (I'm into

computer jargon again!) on our local area. Hundreds of photos and slides, especially of our foreshores in their industrial or mangrove states prior to the new developments, have also been gathered whilst clearing out Concord Council Chambers.

As well many photos and slides, of various streets, parks, houses and even some local identities, have been collected. I am hopeful that we might plan some fundraising social occasion to gather and put names to the areas, streets, etc.

I have a few local identities in my sights for future interviews including Alan and Lorna Wright, who will now feel obliged to ring me and set a firm date! As well, Fred and Frank have some interesting yarns of themselves which should not be lost and Bill Barlow's adventures, which seem to cover just about everything(!) should not be lost.

If you feel you have something to contribute, please telephone me on 8753 0659 and my trusty recorder and I will be on your doorstep.

Lola Sharp

Publicity/Public Relations.

Thank you to all members who attended the meetings during the past year. Our guest speakers presented talks on a wide topic range, as detailed in the President's report.

We have more surprises lined up for the next twelve months. So please invite friends and neighbours along. Hear about the Starlight Foundation, history of the old Red Cross theatre at Concord Repat, or life as a cartoonist by Joffe, to mention a few.

Thanks to our Rotary friends, we now have a long list of willing speakers.

Word of the wonders of Yaralla estate is spreading. The launch of my second book in March 2003, about Eadith Walker's royal connections, was a great success. Thank you to all members who helped with that event. The print run has sold well, about 60% sold within 5 months.

I receive many requests to speak to interested groups about the Walker family. Once they have heard that talk I often get return bookings for Sir Ross Smith or the French Canadian Exiles. We have such a wealth of history in our wonderful archives on Concord and the surrounding areas.

Trish Skehan

Secretary/Treasurer

As you can see from the enclosed statements of income and expenditure we have had quite a successful year.

Concord Heritage Society Account.

We received two grants from City of Canada Bay Council, one to purchase the tables and chairs which we use for our Yaralla Open Days (2002) and one for the purchase of a combination TV/Video unit to be used at Yaralla, by Trish when giving talks to other groups and for our use for any interesting subject for meetings.

We have managed to add a few new members to our books, mainly thanks to our Open Days, which keeps new blood coming into the ranks.

Souvenirs also give us a respectable income, mainly due to Trish's books and the Tour Guide books we sell for Yaralla and Rivendell.

On the expenditure side one of the large items is for our Public Risk and Voluntary Workers Insurance, but thanks to the Royal Australian Historical Society, who have managed to negotiate on behalf on all the Societies, these rates are a lot lower than many have to pay.

While the photocopier expenses seem large, we are now able to print most of our stationery, newsletter and various publications, so it is well worthwhile. It also enables us to copy all the old newspaper clippings for our archives.

We finished the year with a profit of \$1,718.12 (thanks to some donations from the Yaralla Committee to cover their printing costs).

Yaralla Committee Account

As you can see the income from our Open Days is quite substantial. Although the days are extremely labour intensive, those who help out all say how much they enjoy the day.

As well as our Open Days we now conduct grounds tours, week days or weekends, of Yaralla for various interested groups and these are proving very successful.

This money is used to pay for any restoration/repair work we carry out on the Yaralla Estate.

On the expenditure side you will see than general running costs are quite low

We ended the year with a profit of \$25,620.97. However, most of this - and probably more - is earmarked for our restoration work on the Squash Court at Yaralla.

Well done to all who have helped with our success over the year.

Lois Michel

YARALLA OPEN DAY - 12th OCTOBER: If you can help on this day please set the secretary know as soon as possible

Sister Ellen Savage

Sister Ellen Savage served on the hospital ship *Centaur*, sunk off the Queensland coast in 1943 with the loss of 268 lives. Ellen, the sole surviving nurse, was awarded the George Medal for her heroism. Although unable to swim, she clung to wreckage, floating from group to group, to administer first aid. Ellen recalled being up on top deck and still dressed when the bombing started. She dived fully clothed into the water.

Most of her colleagues had retired for the evening and were trapped below decks. Ellen's courage was honoured when she appeared on a stamp commemorating 100 years of nursing.



*Stained Glass Memorial Window
at Concord R.G. Hospital*

Visit to Camden Area

We've set **Saturday, 15th November, 2003** as the date to visit their very modern and attractive museum (to see if we can steal some of their ideas) and to look around the historic area.

If you are interested in joining us, please let the secretary know as soon as possible so that we will have an idea of what transport will be needed.

Depending on cost and the number of people wanting to take the trip we will look at hiring a bus or driving down in private cars.

But we need to know numbers soon.

Sister Vivien Bullwinkel

Sister Bullwinkel was on the *Vyner Brooke*, which was bombed by the Japanese in 1942.

The ship, en route to Australia, carried women, children and nursing staff evacuated from Singapore because of the invasion. This small craft, designed to carry about 14 people, was greatly overloaded with approximately 300 souls.

Torpedoed off Banka Island, the survivors swam ashore, only to be rounded up by Japanese soldiers.

One group was marched back into the surf and machine-gunned.

The only survivor was Sister Bullwinkel, who feigned death and floated ashore. She was eventually recaptured and remained a prisoner of war in Sumatra until her release in 1945.

She lived to see the new millennium, passing away in 2000.



Sister Bullwinkel (left) and Jan Bell

Your Committee for 2003-2004

President	Trish Harrington
Vice-President	Errol Grace
Secretary/Treasurer	Lois Michel
Assistant Secretary	
Public Relation Officer	Trish Skehan
Editor of Newsletter	
Museum Committee	Fred Stansfield
Archives/Local History	Kate Skillman
Walker Estates Comm.	Graham Packett
Heritage Committee	Bill Barlow
Family/Oral History Com.	Lola Sharp
Floor Members	Frank Stansfield
.....	Michael Douglas
.....	Beryl Douglas
.....	Graham Ferguson
.....	Jill Hodder
.....	Peter Jones
.....	Jann Ogden
.....	Glenn Casey

Kate Skillman volunteered to help as Assistant Secretary but it is possible we may have another volunteer for that job.

Our thanks to those who did not choose to stand again and we congratulate those who have just been elected.

We would also remind all members to note that the 4th Wednesday of each month is the Executive Meeting.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to all those who have been helping with cuttings from our old newspapers, photocopying them and then filing them in our Archives for future reference. Jobs well done and much appreciated.

Dates for your Diary . . .

- ☛ **Wed. 27th August** - Executive Meeting
- ☛ **Thurs. 4th September** - Walker Estates/Yaralla Committee
- ☛ **Wed, 10th September** - Jan Bell from the Nurses' Museum at Concord Hospital will be talking about the museum and bringing along photographs, etc.
- ☛ **Wed. 24th September** - Executive Meeting
- ☛ **Thurs. 2nd October** - Walker Estates/Yaralla Committee
- ☛ **Wed. 8th October** - Kevin Hatton, "The Red Cross Theatre at Concord Hospital and the Stars who appeared there"
- ☛ **Wed. 12th October** - Open Day at Yaralla
- ☛ **Wed. 22nd October** - Executive Meeting
- ☛ **Thurs. 6th November** - Walker Estates/Yaralla Committee
- ☛ **Wed. 12th November** - Well known cartoonist, Joffe
- ☛ **Sat. 15th November** - Visit to Camden area and their Museum
- ☛ **Wed. 26th November** - Executive Meeting
- ☛ **Wed. 10th December** - CHRISTMAS BARBECUE PARTY

This takes us up to the end of the current year. Please mark these dates on your calendar now so you won't forget.