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Hawkesbury-Nepean Chapter Newsletter

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P A M E L A ' S C O R N E R

Winter has just begun but up until now we have been experiencing beautiful weather and I hope you have thoroughly enjoyed it!

The highlight of the weather was experienced by 26 friends, including myself and other members of our chapter when we sailed on the Nepean Belle on Thursday 20th May. Leaving Regentville, we then headed up the Nepean River in the direction of Warragamba.

Since the weather was beautiful, some of us went outside and took photos which I hope you enjoy looking at.

The Nepean Belle then did a "u turn" and headed toward Penrith in the direction of the Nepean Rowing Club. During that time, it was a great experience to see the different architecture, including the old bridges- road and rail along with the new bridges-pedestrian and M4. The luncheon served on board was delicious and other guests agreed.

I would thoroughly recommend this cruise to everyone.

William and Judith O'Donohue recently met to discuss the idea of proposed walks, visits and outings for the future. The ideas they came up with are very interesting and at the same time diverse, as not everyone enjoys the same thing! This is only the ground work and we will tell you more later.

Since we have our meetings on alternate months, the new "venture" could be planned for a Saturday in an alternative month to our meeting. I hope I have not confused you but I would really appreciate your thoughts and feedback.

Pamela Hempel
Acting President

CHAPTER MEETINGS

JUNE CHAPTER MEETING 2021

Guest Speaker: Geoff Stuart

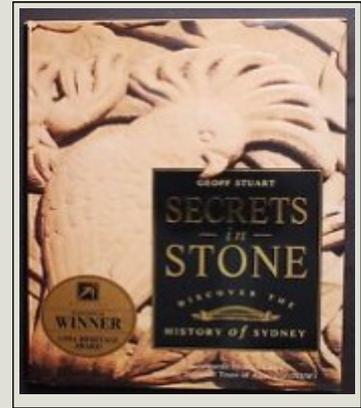
Topic: Secrets in Stone

Date: Saturday 19th June 2021

Venue: Tebbutt Room, Hawkesbury Regional Library

300 George Street, Windsor

Time: 11:00am



AUGUST CHAPTER MEETING & AGM 2021

Guest Speaker: John Lanser

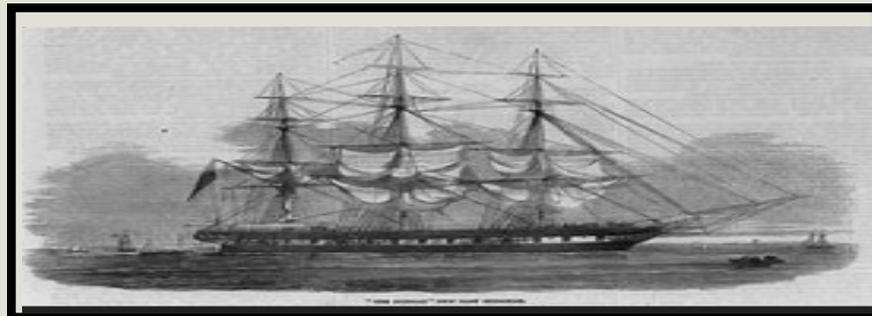
Topic: The Dunbar

Date: Saturday 21st August 2021

Venue: Tebbutt Room, Hawkesbury Regional Library

300 George Street, Windsor

Time: 11:00am



Chapter News

After recent discussions between William Hempel and Judith O'Donohue, it is currently proposed that some walks or visits be arranged for the alternate months ahead when we don't have meetings. Together they came up with some proposals for the next 18 months running to the end of 2022.

As July 2021 is not far off for planning and getting one organised, we would like an indication of interest. We are asking that all those who may be interested to email William Hempel with a Saturday or weekday preference. We thought the first one in September might be a combined tour and visit of the Hydro-Majestic at Medlow Bath and afterwards a stop at the Blue Mountains NP Museum near the Carrington Hotel at Katoomba. We could have lunch in Katoomba.

Please email your interest in attending to:

ffhnc2015@gmail.com



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For contributions to the Newsletter please email to

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Website: www.ffhnc.com

The Currency Lad and Lass

Currency lads and lasses were the first generations of children born in Australia of European descent after the arrival of the First Fleet. In those early years, the term “currency” referred to money other than pound sterling which was the only legal tender at the time. Due to a shortage of sterling, “other currency” circulated freely but was not always accepted and carried an implication of illegality or inferior quality. By analogy, native born colonial children came to be known as “currency” in contrast to the British-born “sterling”. The first known reference in print to native born being called currency was in the Sydney Gazette on 13 September 1822, in a letter signed by Lydia Languish calling for more social events to be organised for “currency lasses”.



Quotes from the Colony

Tuesday 28th June 1788

I have given orders for a cellar to be built on the west side of the cove for the storage of the spirits on board the FYSHBURN as I hope to send her away by the middle of August.

Captain Phillip

Thursday 7th July 1788

I today set down rules for new convicts whose sentence is for a term of 14 years or more. One, a yearly fine to be paid for the lands granted. Two, after the fifth year, the fine to be paid in grain and in proportion to the crop. This I should hope will be the only tax on the crops.

Captain Phillip

Tuesday 2nd August 1788

Patrick Gray was charged with stealing one and a half pounds of pork. The prisoner acknowledged the theft and was found guilty. He was sentenced to receive 500 lashes, to repay one and a half pounds of pork and to work for six months in heavy irons, at such a place as there may be the heaviest labour.

Judge Advocate Collins

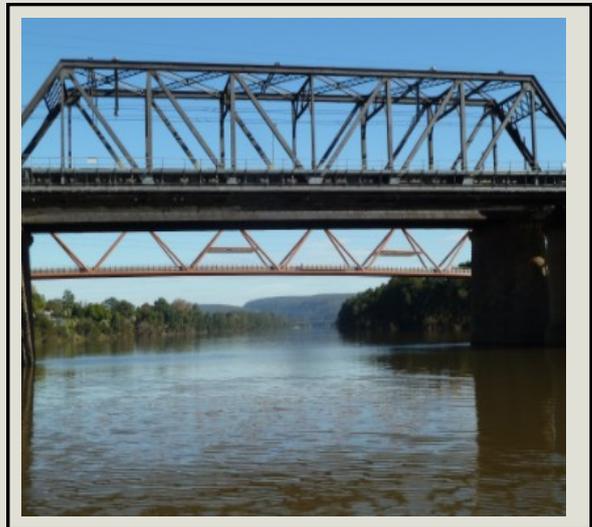
A DAY ABOARD THE NEPEAN BELLE

On Thursday 20th May 2021, the FFF Hawkesbury Nepean Chapter celebrated a double event on a cruise aboard the Nepean Belle on the Nepean River at Penrith. Of course, the main reason was the sailing of the First Fleet from Portsmouth on 13th May 1787. We also noted that on the 20th May of that year, the HMS Hyaena left the fleet off the Scilly Islands with dispatches, the last contact with England.

We also celebrated our 6th Anniversary as a Chapter (9th May 2015) and had 26 in attendance. Our first President, Sharon Lamb was in attendance along with other foundation officers and committee members, namely, Pamela Hempel, William Hempel and Heather Threlfall. We had a beautiful day with a lovely luncheon provided by the Nepean Belle staff and a few special recognitions on the day by William Hempel, a trivia quiz by David Moore and a poem by Suzanne Shaw. An entertaining and lovely fellowship was enjoyed by all on a beautiful sunny afternoon aboard the Belle.



A DAY ABOARD THE NEPEAN BELLE-more photos



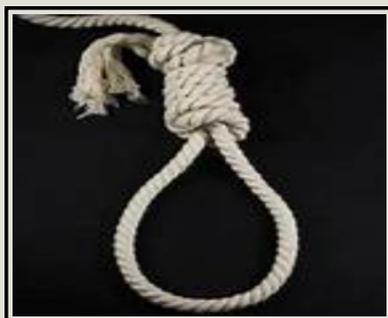
Joseph Samuels– The Man Who Survived Three Hangings

Joseph Samuels was born in England in 1780. At the tender age of 15, Joseph was arrested for robbery and transported to Australia in 1801. Samuel escaped the colony with a group of thieves who proceeded to rob a house where a wealthy woman resided. Whilst stealing a bag of gold and silver coins from the woman's desk, a policeman arrived and someone in the group shot him dead. When Samuel was found with stolen coins in his pocket after being captured, he was arrested and identified by the woman as one of the culprits who had robbed her. After a rough interrogation, Samuels eventually confessed to the robbery but denied being the one who shot the police officer. Most men in the group were acquitted. One Isacc Simmonds refused to confess any crime at all.

Joseph Samuels was convicted and sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead. At the age of 23 years, on 26th September 1803, Samuels and another criminal were brought before the crowd who had come to witness the hanging. Public executions were popular at the time and pulled a crowd to witness the act. Samuels' friend Isaac was brought along to the event by police to witness the event with the hope it would frighten him into confessing. The nooses were placed around the necks of Joseph Samuels and the other man. Both men were offered time to pray with a priest. Samuels then gave a public statement proclaiming that he had committed the robbery, but that the real murderer stood before them and he then pointed to Isaac. Due to the fact that he had just been praying with a priest and was about to die, the audience seemed to believe him, and even attempted to seize Simmonds. As the other man was hanged, the noose around Samuels neck inexplicably broke, causing him to drop to the ground, spraining his ankle. Another rope was quickly brought in and placed around Samuels' neck. The noose this time unravelled and as the rope extended, Samuels boots were able to touch the ground.

The crowd, having witnessed the event after knowing the ropes had been properly inspected, now called for Samuels to be released. In fact they shouted for it! Many in the crowd believed it was "divine intervention" that had saved Samuels. Nonetheless for a third time, a noose was placed around Samuels' neck. The rope was again thoroughly inspected beforehand. As had twice before, he was lifted back onto the horse-drawn cart. The horse was hit and pulled the cart away for the third time. Incredibly, the rope broke again. This time the crowd was fairly uncontrollable and demanded the release of Samuels. A marshal then ordered the execution to be delayed until the Governor could be found. When the Governor examined the three ropes for tampering, he found none and agreed with the crowd that three broken nooses were a sign from God that Samuels was an innocent man. Joseph Samuels was released and the town doctor treated him for a sprained ankle. Divine intervention or not, Joseph Samuels remains the only known person to survive three consecutive attempts at hanging. Samuels immediately returned to his criminal ways and was caught and sentenced to prison again. After three years, he escaped in 1806 and stole an open boat with eight other convicts, none of which were ever heard from again. It is generally assumed that they drowned.

As an end note: Isaac Simmonds was convicted and hung for the murder of the policeman. Simmonds did not have the luck of Samuels unfortunately. Nor was there a divine intervention for him. He did hang from his noose until dead.



Submitted by Judith O'Donohue

A Glimpse of Andrew Thompson -submitted by Judith O'Donohue

Andrew Thompson (1773-1810) was baptized in Scotland in 1773. He attended school and later worked in his father's business until he and a friend were involved in a theft totalling 10 pounds of cloth from a local shop. Pleading guilty in 1790, Thompson was sentenced to fourteen years transportation and arrived in Sydney on the "Pitt" in February 1792. After a year in stores Thompson joined the police force in 1793 and served with distinction. In 1796 he was appointed to Green Hills (now Windsor) by Governor John Hunter. Here he would remain for the rest of his life. In 1798 having been pardoned, Thompson built a home looking over the river on an acre leased from Government. Swiftly rising to position of chief constable, he would continue in this position until 1808, during which time he distinguished himself by investigating offences that would involve the capture of runaway convicts and he rescued people during disastrous floods. In 1799, Hunter appointed Thompson as grain assessor and the settlers then elected him as trustee of common lands in the district. During his working life, Thompson accumulated land by purchase as well as by grant. Thompson accumulated over 918 acres in total and rented his farms to tenants. Meanwhile at his home on the banks of the river, Thompson opened a general store and later an inn with the guidance of an English agent. This became the commercial centre for the Hawkesbury region and Thompson opened the first toll bridge in 1802 on the South Creek. Convict labour was supplied by Governor King who also allowed him a lease on the tolls until 1820. King also allowed Thompson to establish a brewery on the South Creek in 1806 due to his work during the floods. Thompson had control of a barge that ferried people and stock across the river and he also established a tannery.

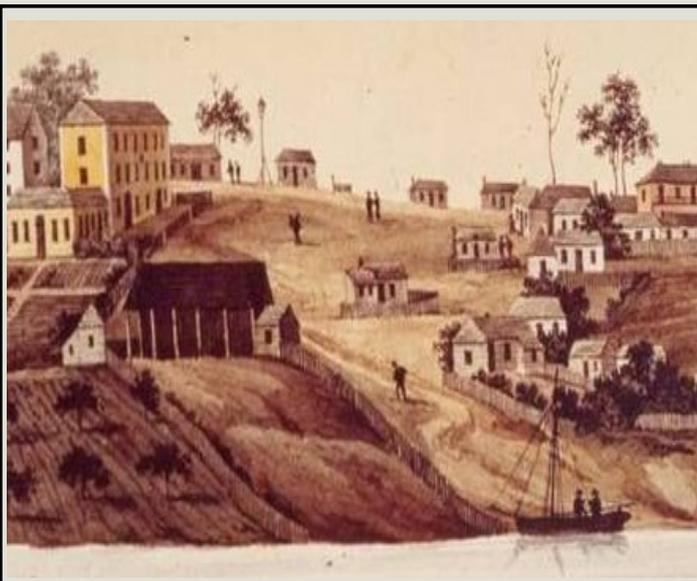
Over the same period to 1808, Thompson had four ships built: *Nancy*, *Hope*, *Hawkesbury* and *Governor Bligh*. These ships transported grain, fruit and vegetables to Sydney and transported convicts to the Hunter River and returned with cargo of cedar and coal; they made sealing voyages to Bass Strait and New Zealand and traded with Tahiti for pork.

When Governor Bligh arrived in 1806 Thompson was the largest grain grower and the wealthiest settler in the colony. When Macquarie arrived in 1810, he appointed Thompson to magistrate at Green Hills. He was the first emancipist to be appointed to such a position. Thompson's health declined rapidly and when he died at his home on 22 October 1810, he was still a bachelor and was only 37 years old. It was written at the time that Thompson was a "worthy and highly esteemed friend" of Macquarie.

A quarter of his estate was left to Macquarie, estimated to be worth about 5000 pounds. The executor selected a site for Thompson's grave and the burial took place according to the rites of the Church of England. Thompson is buried at St Matthews Cemetery Windsor.

The life and work done by Thompson in New South Wales and the administration of his estate portray aspects of life in early Australian history. His swift rise to wealth illustrates the government attitude towards emancipists from the beginning.

Thompson Square originated in 1795 when it was the centre of the village at Green Hills. It was in 1811 that Governor Macquarie formally named the public space after Andrew Thompson.



Reference: J. V. Byrnes, 'Thompson, Andrew (1773-1810)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1967,