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Hawkesbury-Nepean Chapter Newsletter

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Pamela Hempel

Joy Jorgenson

KATHLEEN'S CORNER

At our August AGM there were unfortunately no new candidates for the committee. The previous committee members decided to stay in current positions so that our chapter can continue. We are grateful to all committee members for retaining these positions.

We were also lucky to have one of our own chapter members William Hempel as guest speaker at the AGM where he presented on Jacob Nagle whom he discovered was buried in Ohio. William also discussed the plaque laying ceremony. It was a great story.

Our chapter has been invited to have a stand at the Open Day at the Western Sydney Records Centre at Kingswood in November. This will be further discussed at the next committee meeting and if we attend it will be the first time we have done so and will be a good promotion for the chapter.

We so far have 17 participants attending our outing to Combewood House on 13th September and I am sure it will be an interesting day. We look forward to adding photos in our next newsletter.

We look forward to the Carol Liston presentation on "Widows and Wills" in October.

It is hard to believe how fast the year has gone and we are now planning our Christmas Luncheon which is always a nice day.

Kathleen Forrest

President

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER OUTING



**The Hawkesbury-Nepean
Chapter of the Fellowship
of First Fleeters Presents**

Tour of Combewood House, Penrith

Combewood is an excellent example of a Queen Anne style house. Built in 1890 for Francis Henry Woodriff, on land granted to Captain Daniel Woodriff in 1804, the house is privately owned by 8th generation descendants of the original owner.

**SAVE
THIS
DATE**

WHEN:

Saturday 13th September

WHERE:

This historic Penrith House tour is near the corner of Coreen Avenue and Castlereagh Roads near Thornton.

TIME: 10:30am

COST: \$15

Morning tea included

TO ATTEND:

RSVP to

fffhnc2015@gmail.com



OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING



The Hawkesbury-Nepean
Chapter of the Fellowship
of First Fleeters Presents

Widows and Wills

Speaker Carol
Liston is an Australian
historian and
academic researcher
who specialises in the
history of colonial
New South Wales
from 1788 to 1860.

WHEN:

Saturday 4th October

WHERE:

Tebbutt Room
Hawkesbury Library
George Street, Windsor

TIME: 10:30am for
an 11:00am start

COST: \$5

Morning tea included

TO ATTEND:

RSVP to

fffhnc2015@gmail.com



CHRISTMAS IN JULY 2025

We listened to each others stories about our First Fleeters after a lovely lunch.

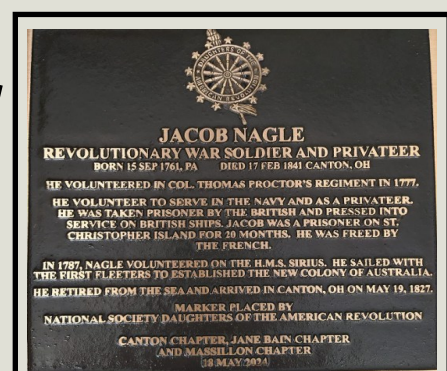


CHAPTER
IN
ACTION

AUGUST CHAPTER MEETING WITH AGM

On Saturday 2nd August, the chapter had its Annual General Meeting and all office positions were declared vacant. Unfortunately there were no new nominations for a position in the committee. Our trusty Committee members again decided to stay on for another year and we are thankful for all their dedication to keep the chapter viable.

Our August speaker was William Hempel who presented on Jacob Nagel whom he extensively researched and found his final resting place. Mr Roderick Best, FFF Public Officer and Former President was able to fly to Ohio, USA and lay a plaque to commemorate this First Fleet Marine. William also attended the ceremony and was able to present great insight into the event.



ARCHIBOLD BELL JUNIOR (1804-1883)

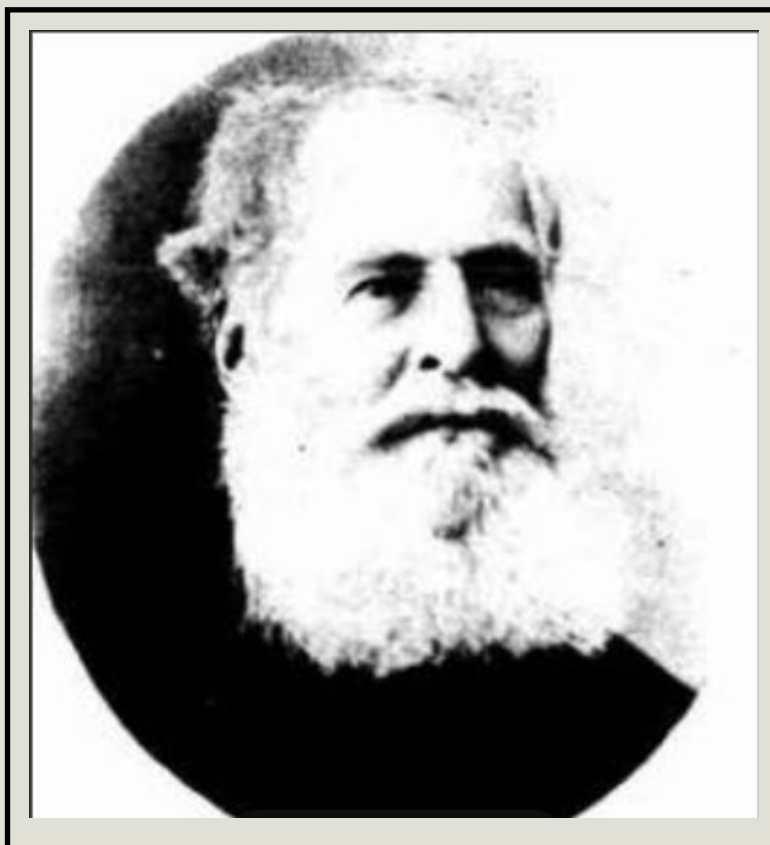
One of 10 children, Archibold J Bell Junior grew up in the Hawkesbury area. His father Archibold Bell and mother Maria Kitching arrived in the colony in 1807 and were granted land at North Richmond and built and went on to develop the property "Belmont". Here little Archibald Jnr and his elder brother William grew up to become good bushmen with William involved in exploring areas of the Hunter River.

In August 1823, Archibold set off following directions of an aboriginal woman from Richmond to Mount Tomah. On this first expedition young Archibold "took four men with him", two of whom were aboriginal men "Cocky" and "Emery" and a couple of pack horses. It took them 2 days to get from Richmond to Mt Tomah-a journey that now takes 45 minutes.

On this first trip he was unable to find a safe descent to the west, but the next month he returned and found a practical way finishing in Hartley Valley. Soon after a road was surveyed by Robert Hoddeland built along this route with convict labour. It avoided the steep Mount York descent and had more resting places for stock. The Township of Bell, Mount Bell and the route itself were named after the explorer. (Bells Line Of Road)

Immediately after this success, Bell left Belmont for the Hunter Valley following the route of John Howe and Benjamin Singleton, whom he found dying of starvation at Patricks Plains. This rescue expedition won him a land grant of 1000 acres near Singleton where he built a two story house named "Corinda". He was one of the first in the area to introduce cattle and the first to bring in horse teams.

Following his father's interest in public affairs, Archibold Jnr was elected to the Legislative Assembly for the Upper Hunter and in 1879 was appointed to the Legislative Council. In 1859 he bought "Pickering" on the Hunter River where he lived until his death in 1883.

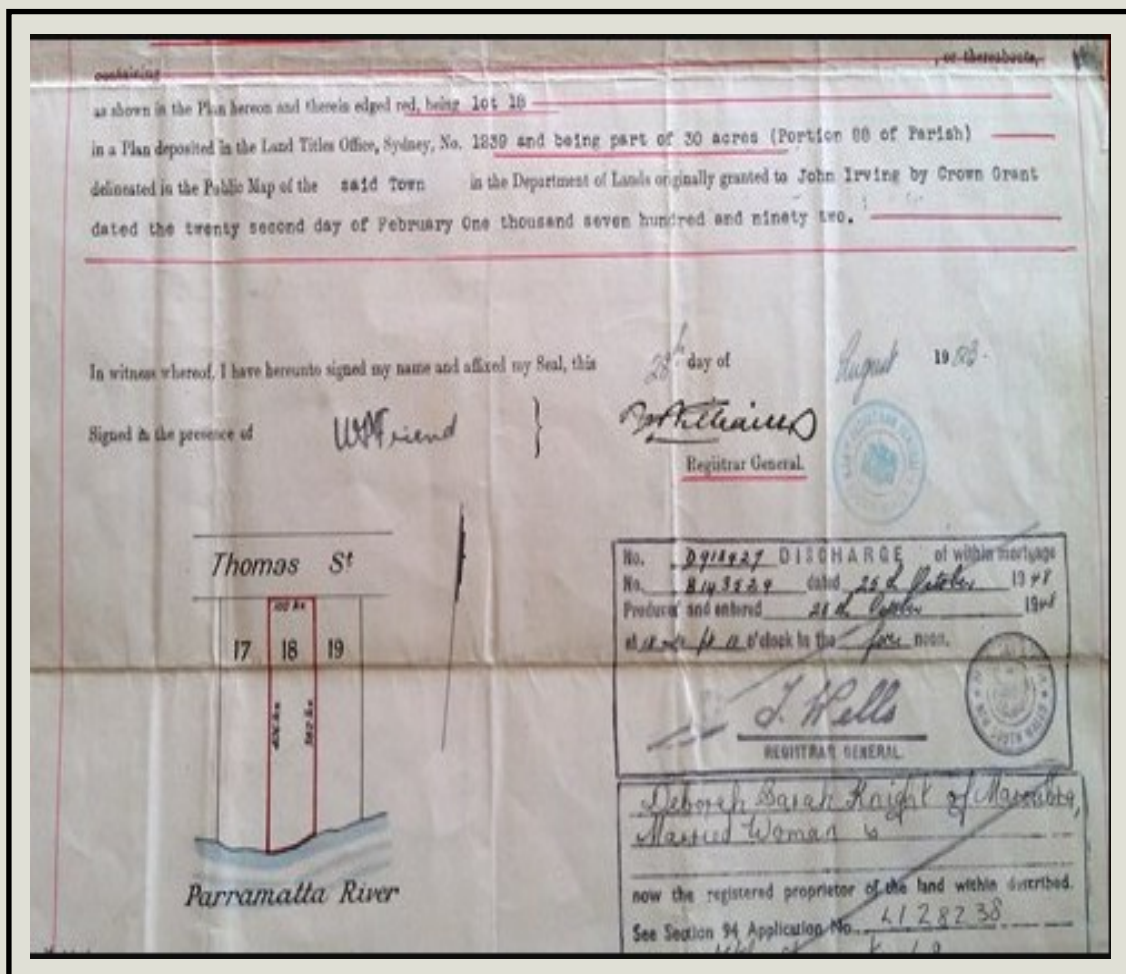


JOHN IRVING— First Emancipated Convict

John Irving was Australia's first emancipated convict who made his home in Parramatta. He was born in 1760 and arrived in Australia with the First Fleet on the convict ship Lady Penrhyn. Convicted of larceny at Lincoln, England in 1784. John was sentenced to transportation for seven years. Apparently, Irving had medical training and the literature indicates that he had been recommended to assist the surgeons on his voyage to Australia. This seems to be supported by the fact that he was employed immediately upon his arrival to assist the hospital surgeon at Port Jackson. On 28th February 1790, Governor Arthur Phillip appointed him Assistant Surgeon on Norfolk Island. The remainder of his sentence was remitted resulting in John Irving being the first convict to be emancipated.

In 1791, Irving was posted to Parramatta where he assisted surgeon Thomas Arndell. On 22nd February 1792 John was granted thirty acres of land on the north side of the Parramatta River. During this time, while assisting Surgeon Arndell, he was involved in the building of the new brick hospital.

In addition to his medical interests, Irving also tried his hand at farming and by October 1792, he had nine acres of maize and two acres ready for more planting.



According to a report in the Parramatta & Hills News, Irving had a troubled time in Parramatta. His life as a farmer was somewhat unsuccessful and the report states that although not a good farmer he had great plans to build a comfortable home on his 30 acre grant and settle down.

Irving apparently had plans to establish his own medical practice but this seems to have been somewhat thwarted by the emerging Rum Corps who controlled access to goods such as food, clothing, and labour through a complex bartering system using rum as payment. According to the newspaper report, Irving, like many honest settlers, could not afford the exorbitant prices set by those in power. And the report goes on to suggest that he could have had access to special prices if he agreed to take up the position of abortionist to cater for the needs of the Rum Corp.

It seems that Irving suffered a breakdown after being unsuccessful in establishing his own medical practice and found solace in alcohol which led to his demise, and eventual death in 1795. He is buried in an unmarked grave in St. John's Cemetery, Parramatta.

There are conflicting reports regarding his romantic life. The Parramatta & Hills News report states that Irving was involved with a local Catholic girl and they planned to marry, however the article claims she wanted to be married by a Catholic priest, and was happy to wait until one arrived in the colony. At the time, many of the local Catholics were happy to be married by the Anglican Reverends, either Samuel Marsden or Richard Johnson. Apparently, his fiancée attempted suicide after his death and left Parramatta 18 months later to marry another man who had been a rural manager for James Ruse. They settled in the Hawkesbury and their first son was baptised John, after his mother's first love, John Irving.

However, alternative reports suggest that John Irving was married to Anne Marsh, who later became a notable boat operator to Rose Hill.

His memory lives on in Parramatta through the naming of Irving Street, North Parramatta and the John Irving Park community garden in Harris Park. Irving's original land grant now houses suburban plots, sections of James Ruse Drive and Victoria Road, and possibly up to or near the border of the historic female orphan school which is in the grounds of the University of Western Sydney.

Reference: Darlene and Neil McGrath



A plaque on the site of Sydney's first hospital, where John Irving, the first convict emancipated in New South Wales served as assistant surgeon.

Robert and Mary Anderson-A Love Story

In October 1788, Robert Anderson joined the 1st Battalion Royal Artillery in Durham as a gunner. He was 18 years of age and was born in East Lothian, Scotland 1770.

At the time of enlistment, he was a baker by trade and was able to read and write. Robert was in the 2nd Battalion commanded by Captain Thomas Patterson and stationed in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In Halifax he met and fell in love with a young woman named Mary Turner who was born in 1783. Robert now 20 and Mary 17, married in Halifax in 1790. They had 6 sons.

On 6 June 1805, Robert in company of Samuel Adams deserted from the army taking uniforms, guns and ammunition. As the regiment was to set sail to Bermuda, it is thought Robert did not want to be separated from Mary who was expecting their 6th child. Mary's house was searched to no avail. After a notice offering 5 guineas was inserted into the Halifax weekly Chronicle, they were found. At the court martial, Robert was found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life.

Robert embarked on the Eagle in 1806 and confined on arrival on the Isle of Wight until transported to New South Wales on the Duke of Portland which arrived in 1807.

Unable to contemplate a lifetime separated from Robert Mary followed him the 5 surviving children and sailed to London. There she obtained passage on the Speke and arrived in Sydney on 15 November 1808. As Mary came free, she would have been able to have her husband assigned to her as a servant and follow his trade as a baker. The story handed down through generations tells that Robert baked the first loaf of "white" bread in Sydney. In June 1810, Governor Macquarie granted a ticket of Leave to Robert and his conditional pardon was granted in February 1812. In Sydney 2 more sons were born to Robert and Mary, both of whom were baptised at St Phillips, Sydney.

Sadly, on 14 January 1816 their love story ended when Robert, aged 46, died just one week after the death of his 10 year old son Edward. Mary who had travelled thousands of miles to stay with him was finally alone.

She carried on in Kent Street as a baker but by 1818, was in poor circumstances as she applied to have her 7 year old son Thomas admitted to the Orphan School. He remained there until he was apprenticed as a carpenter in 1823. Mary never married again, and survived until 22 February 1859 when she died at 86 years old at the home of her son Thomas.



Reference: Coral Haeusler

THE WINDSOR GAS LAMP FESTIVAL

During the long weekend from 3-6 October, Windsor will come alive with the enchanting glow of its restored gas lamps, marking the largest network of these lamps in Australia. There are 25 of the original 26 lamp posts still standing and it is a testament to Windsor's rich heritage and enduring spirit.

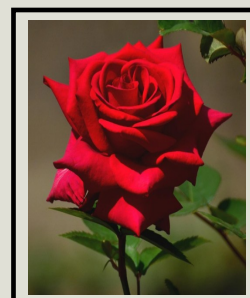
The Windsor Gas Lamp Festival is a celebrations of this heritage, offering visitors a chance to step back in time and experience the charm of yesteryear.

The highlight will be the Saturday evening ceremony, with a grand parade through the historic streets led by a full bag pipe band and people in period costume to transport visitors back in time.



REST IN PEACE

FFFHNC was saddened to hear of the recent passing of member Heidi Garmonsway. Condolences were sent to her mother Pauline who is well known to chapter members.

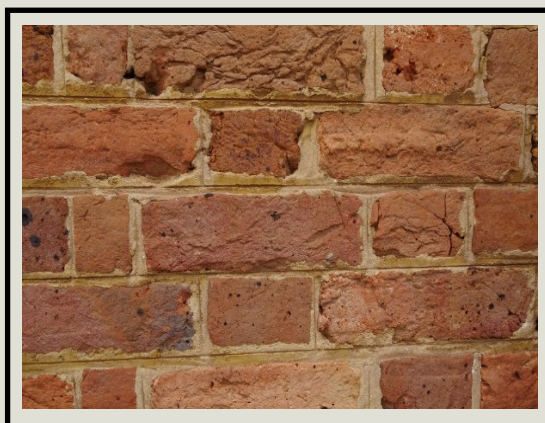


FIRST BRICKLAYER-James Bloodsworth

James Bloodsworth (d.1804), master bricklayer and builder, was living at Kingston-on-Thames, England, in 1785 when sentenced to seven years transportation. In 1788 he was taken to Australia in the First Fleet in the *Charlotte* and was immediately appointed master bricklayer in the settlement at Sydney Cove. Since there were no architects in the fleet he was largely responsible for the design and the erection of Australia's first buildings, although the army and navy officers in the settlement had some knowledge of architecture.

Besides designing many private houses, Bloodsworth can be credited with the first Government House, which lasted from 1788 to 1845, and in 1790 the storehouse at King's Wharf on the shore of Sydney Cove. Governor Arthur Phillip praised 'the pains he had taken to teach others the business of a bricklayer', and his conduct was exemplary at a time when most convicts were noted for indolence or rebelliousness. Bloodsworth worked under difficulties; although there were competent bricklayers among the convicts, they had no proper mortar to bind the bricks together. For the walls of Government House some lime mortar was obtained by burning shells, but elsewhere mud-mortar had to be used. This was far from satisfactory, but by adapting his construction methods to these crude conditions he produced serviceable buildings, which also were by no means unseemly, because he was working within the long-established rules of Georgian architecture.

Bloodsworth was pardoned in 1790 and on 1 September 1791 was appointed superintendent over all the brickmakers and bricklayers. Next year he was offered rehabilitation to England, but he refused. In 1803 when offered a choice of employment at Port Phillip or the Derwent he again refused, preferring to remain in Sydney. In 1802 he had become a sergeant in the Sydney Loyal Association, a great mark of respect to a former convict. At that time he was farming his grant of fifty acres (20 ha) at Petersham; later he increased his holdings to 245 acres (99 ha). By Sarah Bellamy, who came in the *Lady Penrhyn*, he had seven children. Although he had the asset of his farm and his government salary of £50, he was insolvent when he died from pneumonia on 21 March 1804 at his house in what was later called O'Connell Street, Sydney. Because of the high regard the settlers had for him, Governor Philip Gidley King ordered that he be given the nearest the young colony could provide to a state funeral. The Sydney Loyal Association escorted the cortège with muffled drums, and the body was laid in the town cemetery with military honours. He was survived by two sons and two daughters.



Citation details

Morton Herman, 'Bloodsworth, James (1759–1804)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bloodsworth-james-1798/text2039>, published first in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 26 August 2025.

The Way We Were



QUOTES FROM THE COLONY

Friday 23rd September 1788

The good behaviour and industry of two convicts, both at Norfolk Island have induced me to request to the under-secretary that their families may be sent of them from England as they do not wish to leave after the time for which they have been transported expires.

Governor Phillip

Monday 26th September 1788

The children's allowance is I think too little and I have been obliged in several instances recently to order children half the men's allowance or two thirds as the women are allowed.

Judge Advocate Collins

Saturday 8th October 1788

It will be the settlers with the assistance of the convicts that will put this country in a situation for supporting its inhabitants.

Governor Phillip

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