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Hawkesbury-Nepean Chapter Newsletter

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KATHLEEN'S CORNER

At our August AGM we listened to Judith Dunn present some of her amazing research on what information can be found in cemeteries. It was very interesting and looked at the differences of the local materials sourced and used in different locations in Australia and around the world for use in headstones and other memorials.

We wish to thank David Moore for acting as returning officer at our AGM. He done a great job. A list of the committee can be seen to the left of this page. We thank all those who accepted their nominations to serve on the committee over the coming year.

As elected President over the coming year and with assistance of other committee members I will fulfil the role as best I can to serve the members.

If you have a story to share please email us so that it can be put into our newsletter. Remember they are gone when we do not remember them anymore, so why not share a story no matter how short to keep the memories alive.

Spring has sprung but before the year's end, we still have a talk to listen to with the St Marys Historical Society, Laurie Turtle will present a story about a hanging in the family and a Guided tour of the Hawkesbury Museum with the curator. It is hard to believe it is only three months until Christmas. The Christmas Luncheon this year will be at Nepean Rowing Club on Thursday 7th December. It is hoped many of our members can attend.

Kathleen Forrest

President

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER OUTING

Date: Saturday 9th September

Venue: St Marys Historical Society
Building 2, 29 Swanston Street, St Marys
(parking at rear of building)

Time: 10:30am

Speaker: TBA

Topic: TBA



OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING

Date: Saturday 14th October

Venue: Tebbutt Room
Hawkesbury Central Library, Windsor

Time: 10:30am

Speaker: Laurie Turtle

Topic: A Hanging in the Family

FAMILY HISTORY STORY

NOVEMBER OUTING

DATE: Saturday 11th November **TIME:** 10:30am

VENUE: Hawkesbury Regional Museum
8 Baker Street, Windsor

TOPIC: Guided Tour With Rebecca McRae



CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

DATE: Thursday 7th December 2023

VENUE: Nepean Rowing Club

TIME: 11:00am



PLEASE RSVP BY: fffhnc2015@gmail.com

BIRD IN THE HAND HOTEL-Pitt Town

Daniel Smallwood built the original Bird in the Hand opposite the current one in 1825. Surveys of Pitt Town in 1841 show the present site as vacant land. Richard Mawson took over as Publican in the 1850's and renamed the inn Maid of Australia. It kept this name until 1896 when it was closed and became a general store. It was restored in 1986 and completed in 1987. The Bird in the Hand opened as a hotel again that same year under its original name.

It was added to the NSW Heritage Register in 1999.



QUOTES FROM THE COLONY

Friday 14th October 1788

Day by day the Governor sat in his office or walked around the infant town. He was constantly harrowed by pitiful complaints and appeals of all classes, but throughout he remains cheerful, hopeful and resourceful.

Judge Advocate Collins

Saturday 15th October 1788

I show favour to no man and will not even avail myself of private resources in this time of famine, but will share alike with the meanest of colonists.

Captain Phillip

Wednesday 19th October 1788

The Governor never loses faith in the people or the future of the colony, which he regards with something akin to the feeling of a father for a child.

Judge Advocate Collins

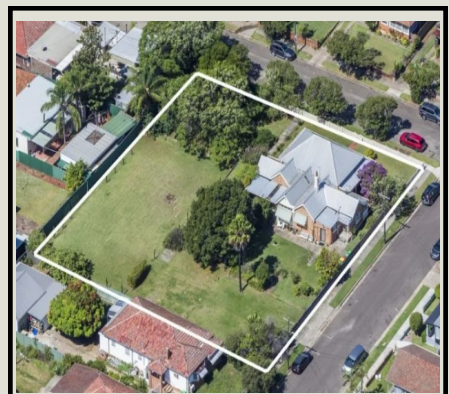
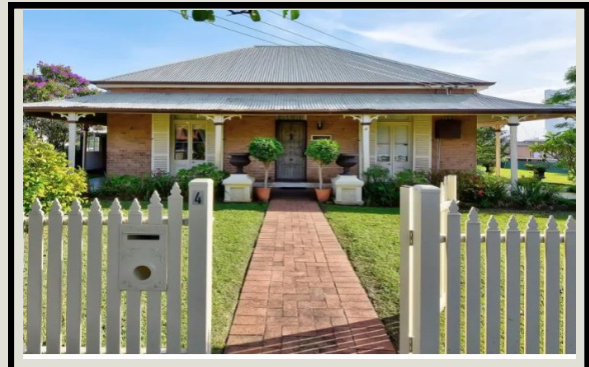
Centenarian Sells 200 year old house in Parramatta

A Parramatta home owner recently sold her home at 4 Rosehill Street. Amazingly, it was the first time the home had been on the market in 133 years. The home was owned by Parramatta centenarian Dorothy who is 103 years old. Dorothy has long ago memories of climbing in the old macadamia tree and of having countless cups of tea on the veranda. She also knows about the “secret cellar”. The house known as “Sherbrooke” is one of the oldest homes in Sydney.

The home was built in 1816 (more than 200 years ago), a year after Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo. The home is built on a segment of land originally granted to James Meehan by Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

The 3 bedroom home which sits on 2229sqm of land recently sold in 2023 for \$3,960,000 and has huge potential for redevelopment. (sadly)

Sherbrooke was built 23 years after the oldest homestead in Sydney at Elizabeth Farm, and the same year as Cadman’s Cottage in The Rocks.



Reference: Daily Telegraph 11 April 2023

HISTORIC FERNHILL ESTATE-submitted by William Hempel

There is a long term plan to transform Fernhill Estate in Mulgoa into a magnificent public park over the next 5 years. This beautiful estate is located on Darug Country. Purchased by the NSW Government in 2018, Fernhill Estate is an important place in the history and landscape of Mulgoa Valley and greater Sydney but has been locked up as a private estate for most of it's life. Steeped in history, celebrated Fernhill Estate is located on one of the area's first land grants. It was issued in 1810 by Governor Macquarie to Colonial Magistrate William Cox, whose family had a major influence in Western Sydney.

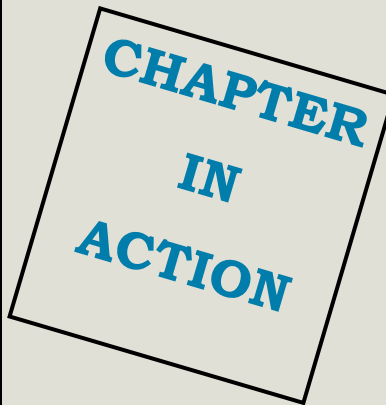
Funding worth \$65 million has been allocated to upgrade the 423 hectare estate in readiness for opening to the public. The upgrades will include walking, cycling paths and picnic areas, a boardwalk around the Northern Dam and access for kayaks and nature based playgrounds. Safe access and better amenities are a priority to allow people to positively experience the location. There is a beautiful hay shed there that could hopefully be used as a café. Fernhill Estate includes Fernhill House, a grand sandstone historic house and one of Australia's finest examples of Colonial era Greek Revival architecture.

Reference: *Emily Feszcsuk-The Weekender*



JULY OUTING TO TIZZANA WINERY

Twelve chapter members enjoyed an informative talk on the very interesting history of the winery with Jonathan followed by a beautiful Ploughman's lunch outside in the sunshine. A nice day was had by all.



ESTHER ABRAHAMS– ‘convict first lady’

The life of Esther Abrahams may read like fiction, but these events did, in fact, take place, and are part of the historical record. Today, Esther's story helps to shed new light on life in early colonial Australia. Aged 15, Esther was convicted of stealing lace and, in 1787, she was transported to NSW with her infant daughter on the *Lady Penrhyn*, part of The First Fleet (a ship which was derisively coined one of the ‘floating brothels’ to travel to the Australian colony). On board she met Lieutenant George Johnston, and the couple went on to have seven children. One of the fascinating stories which swirls around Esther's life in NSW is that she ran a private kosher kitchen from the farm in Annandale, though no material evidence remains about this part of her life. Over time, Esther Abrahams and George Johnston did become substantially wealthy - they owned over 5,000 acres of land, including a farm in the area now occupied by the inner city suburb of Annandale.

In 1808, as commanding officer of the New South Wales Corps, George Johnston was part of the group which toppled Governor William Bligh (best known as the trigger for the notorious mutiny on the ship, *The Bounty*). In the wake of Bligh being deposed, George became the Lieutenant-Governor of the colony for six months, making Esther his so-called ‘*First Lady*’, a term used now by some for a position that she's unlikely to have embraced at the time. George Johnston was then sent to Britain to be court-martialled, while Esther stayed behind in Sydney to run their estate, helped by her eldest son. George returned to Sydney, and although stripped of his office, he continued to accumulate land. Finally, in 1814, after twenty-six years together, George Johnston and Esther Abrahams were married..

After George Johnston's death in 1823, Esther began to drink heavily. In 1829, after a trial, she was declared ‘of unsound mind’, and ‘incapable of managing her affairs’. She spent the final years of her life in the home of her third son, David, who had built a substantial property called *The Homestead* at Georges Hall, in southern Sydney. That building is still standing today, and provides the last extant connection to Esther Abrahams.

ESTHER ABRAHAMS PODCAST ALERT

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/earshot/podcasts/esther-abrahams---convict-27first-lady27/6031166?fbclid=IwAR3cfocdpsP7SCsj0tNexPciwAyNbGL3E-01K4iHefDkUhRE0JA0txwbhZs>

Copy and paste the below web address into your browser. It is well worth the listen.



Photos Courtesy of State Library

A SNIPPET OF HISTORIC GREEN HILLS BURIAL GROUND

Green Hills Burial Ground is situated at South Creek, near Bridge Street Windsor. Although there are no known graves, the remains of many convicts who died in the 1800's are believed to still be there alongside early settlers and many local aboriginal people.

It is believed to be the resting place of a Bexley the highway man, a bushranger who was hung on Pitt Town Road around 1884 and also Phillip Cunningham the Irish prisoner who led the rebels at the Vinegar Hill uprising in Castle Hill on March 5, 1804. First Fleeter Edward Whitton was buried there in 1802 and also his wife Anne in 1806.

Both aboriginal and descendants of early settlers would like to see the site opened to the public as it once was so that people can pay their respects.

The area was the earliest colonial burial ground in the Hawkesbury district and was used for burials from around 1806 to 1810. After that time, Governor Macquarie gave orders for a new cemetery to be situated where St Matthew's Church of England now sits. The Green Hills site continued to be used for convict burials from 1810 with the last convict buried there in 1834.

-submitted by Judith O'Donohue



The Way We Were



Photos: Courtesy of NSW State Library

William Tunks Catch Up

**TUNKS
PICNIC**

St Leonards Park
North Sydney
26 September
11.00am

Marine
William
Tunks
1788

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For contributions to the Newsletter please email to

ffhnc2015@gmail.com

Website: www.ffhnc.com

Facebook Groups of First Fleeters

The following is a list of facebook groups with associated First Fleeters:

Thomas Acres (Charlotte) <https://www.facebook.com/The-Thomas-Acres-Society-86153949292/>

James Bradley (Scarborough) <https://www.facebook.com/James-Bradley-Scarborough-First-Fleet-276242415865782/>

James Bryan Cullen (Scarborough) https://www.facebook.com/groups/1620067851648014/?ref=br_rs

William Dring (Alexander) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/annforbes/>

Matthew Everingham (Scarborough) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/41333215476/>

Ann Forbes (Prince of Wales) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/annforbes/>

Robert Forrester (Scarborough) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1246147782153734/>

Olivia Gascoigne (Lady Penrhyn) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/338701069645619/>

Peter Hibbs (Sirius) <https://www.facebook.com/HibbsPardoeNorfolkHawkesbury/>

Susannah Homes (Friendship) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/147216999281064/?ref=gysj>

Henry Kable (Friendship) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/147216999281064/?ref=gysj>

Nathaniel Lucas (Scarborough) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/338701069645619/>

Frederick Meredith (Scarborough) https://www.facebook.com/groups/58060176063/?ref=br_rs

Mary Parker (Lady Penrhyn) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/22996643331/>

Elizabeth Pulley (Friendship) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/132751936769420/>

William Roberts (Scarborough) https://www.facebook.com/groups/707267932753203/?ref=br_rs

Anthony Rope (Alexander) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/132751936769420/>

John Small (Charlotte) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/22996643331/>

Joseph Wright (Scarborough) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/207188643072167>

Note: Some groups may have special rules or criteria for joining. Copy and paste link into browser.