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Hawkesbury-Nepean Chapter Newsletter

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KATHLEEN'S CORNER

It is hard to believe Christmas is nearly here again. Time seems to go faster every year.

The Chapter has had a good year with speakers including Steve Ford in February who presented on Land Records. April saw Ron Moore discussing the Kokoda Track. The June meeting was cancelled due to the risk of floods. At our AGM, John Lanser presented on a vintage radio station and in October we had Chris Reynolds present on his book "What a Capital Idea".

In between meetings the chapter had an outing in March to the Old Tannery in Windsor, which was a hidden gem that many people did not know existed.

We visited Tizzana's Winery in May for the second year in a row where we had a Ploughman's lunch and wine tasting. Christmas in July at Kurrajong was well attended.

The committee wishes to take this opportunity to wish all members of our chapter and members of all other chapters a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We hope to see our members back in February for Mark Bundy who will present on the history of Rookwood Cemetery.

Kathleen Forrest

President



UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY CHAPTER MEETING

Date: 8th February 2025

Venue: Tebbutt Room, Windsor Library

Speaker: Mark Bundy

Topic: History of Rookwood Cemetery

Time: 11:00am



MARCH OUTING TO BE CONFIRMED

Date: March 2025

Venue: Tour of Belmont House, North Richmond

Time: To be confirmed



UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL CHAPTER MEETING

Date: 12TH April 2025

Venue: Tebbutt Room, Windsor Library

Speaker: Rebecca McCrae

Topic: History Of The Old Windsor Bridge

Time: 11:00am



MAY 2025- A SPECIAL CELEBRATION

10th Anniversary of FFFHNC

More details to follow



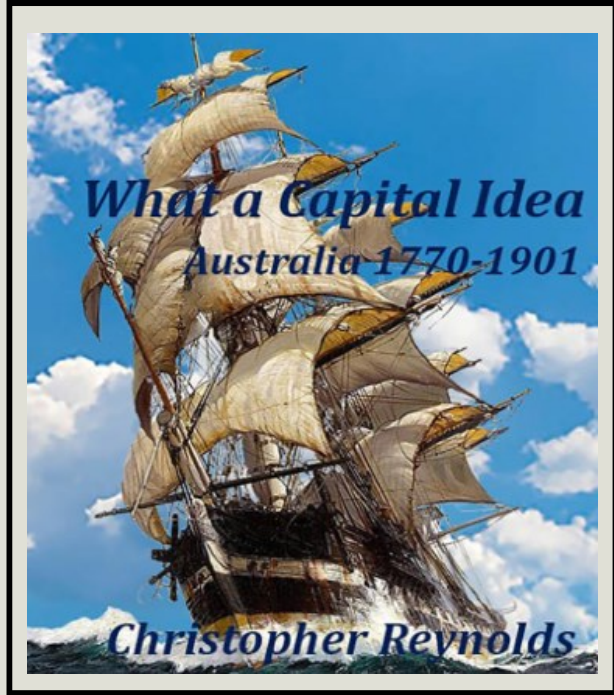
CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON – DECEMBER 2024

Members attended a Christmas Luncheon at Nepean Rowers Club in December



OCTOBER 2024

Dr Chris Reynolds presented on his book "What a Capital Idea".



**CHAPTER
IN
ACTION**



MULTICULTURALISM ON THE FIRST FLEET

Two small groups of convicts who arrived on the First Fleet differed from the majority. Their existence shows that Australia had established itself as a multicultural society from the time of European settlement.

Jewish Convicts

Jewish convicts were identifiable when they gave evidence as they swore on the Old Testament. Never again did the population have such a high percentage of Jews, as in those first few years when the convicts came mainly from London. However as there were less than ten Jewish men amongst the convicts on the First Fleet, they could not constitute a congregation and hence were unable to contract legal marriages under Talmudic Law. In many cases they were already married when they were convicted in England, so were unable to marry again in Australia.

The lack of sufficient numbers proved a problem for the creation of a congregation for many years, and the first official Jewish marriage did not occur until 1832. Of the first 250 Jewish convicts who arrived before 1820, only 45 married in Australia, and all of those were married in the established Anglican church, so as to be married in the eyes of the law. The first marriage where both the partners were Jewish was conducted by Reverend Samuel Marsden in front of an Anglican altar in July 1826.

Intermarriage with non-Jews meant that any children were not regarded as legitimate, which further compounded the problem of developing a congregation. Another problem that the early Jews in Australia faced was the question of language and origins. The older English community in England dating from the 17th century identified with their Spanish and Portuguese ancestors, and kept all their records in the Spanish derived language, Ladino, rather than English.

By the 1780's London had become the destination for large numbers of penniless Jewish refugees from eastern Europe. The influx of Ashkenazim caused considerable consternation to the older established Sephardic community of England, who did not wish to be saddled with the responsibility for caring for so many refugees. Contemporary records of English Jews make no reference to the transportation of Jewish convicts, despite the fact that it must have been a cause of shame for them.

This problem of origin surfaced when the first community was officially formed in 1832, and decisions had to be made about the official language to be used. The community decided to use Ashkenazim forms with modifications appropriate to their circumstances, and also accepted as members children of Jews married prior to the formation of the congregation.

These issues indicate the ways in which the new community in Australia had to develop variations of a wide range of English practices to suit local circumstances. These variations were in matters of law, land ownership patterns, agricultural methods, and social structure.

Esther Abrahams

When she was arrested Esther Abrahams was sixteen or seventeen years old and pregnant. She gave birth to her daughter on 18 March 1787, while in Newgate prison awaiting transportation. She travelled to Australia with her daughter, and whilst on the journey she formed a liaison with Lieutenant George Johnston, then aged 23.

Over the years Johnston became a leading player in the events of the colony. Transferring from the marines to the NSW Corps, he led the suppression of the revolt at Castle Hill in 1804, and led the rebellion against Governor Bligh in 1808, following which he declared himself Lieutenant Governor. As a result of the ensuing Court Martial in England he was cashiered, and he returned to NSW in May 1813.

Over those years they had three sons (born in 1790, 1792, 1800) and four daughters (born in 1801, 1803, 1804, 1806), and Esther eventually married Johnston on 12 November 1814.

During Johnston's extensive absences in England and no doubt during his active political phases, Esther supervised their extensive property, Annandale. Until he married her, Esther used the name Mrs Esther Julien in all transactions and musters. The origins and significance of the name Julien is unknown, however it may be significant that her daughter also used the name.

Johnston died in January 1823, leaving the care of Annandale to Esther. For some reason she decided to mortgage the property while she returned to England, but her children challenged this decision in court. The community avidly consumed the details that emerged in the case. The doctor called for the children's application described Esther as being "of eccentric habits, hasty in temper, and with an abrupt mode of expressing herself". He went on to say that he found it difficult to "distinguish between excitement caused by drinking, and that which is the effect of insanity".

Esther produced a witness who testified to the fact that she was the victim of violence from her son, and that "she had accumulated her property by hard struggling, that it was not the red jacket [George Johnston] who got the money". He went on to say that if "she takes a glass, so do we all, the higher classes as well as the lower". The jury found that Esther was not of sound mind and placed the estate in the hands of trustees, to the chagrin of her son. When she died in 1846 she was interred with her husband.

George Nicholls, Esther's grandson by the daughter she had given birth to in prison, went on to become Auditor General of NSW in 1856. A successful solicitor from the 1830s, in 1841 he appointed as his secretary the same man who was also the Honorary Secretary to the Sydney Synagogue. As a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1848, Nicholls also arranged for the Jewish community to be treated the same as Christian congregations for the receipt of Government assistance for ministers' stipends.

Convicts of black African descent

At the time the First Fleet sailed, slavery was still not outlawed in England, although the movement towards abolition was beginning to gain ground. Many former slaves of African descent who lived in London had been freed on the death of their owner, or for some other reason. Others of African descent had travelled to England from the West Indies or direct from Africa, perhaps as sailors.

Some of the convicts were said to have come from the West Indies or were described ambiguously, but no specific evidence exists to confirm their colour. There were definitely 11 convicts of African descent, and another five who may also have been in this category.



Reference: University of Wollongong

BOTANY BAY

Botany Bay is a song that can be traced back to the musical burlesque, *Little Jack Sheppard*, staged at the Gaiety Theatre in London, England, in 1885 and in Melbourne, Australia, in 1886. The show was written by Henry Pottinger Stephens and William Yardley, with music composed and arranged by Wilhelm Meyer Lutz. The show's programme credits "Botany Bay" as "Old Air arr. Lutz". Sheet music from Allan & Co. in Australia credits Florian Pascal, the pseudonym of Joseph Williams Jr. (1847–1923), a music publisher and composer who published the show's music. Pascal composed other numbers in the score but received no credit for "Botany Bay" in the programme.

*Farewell to olde England forever
Farewell to my olde pals as well
Farewell to the well known Old Bailey
Where I once used to look such a swell.*

Chorus:

*Singing Too-ral Li-ooral li-ad-dity
Singing too-ral li-ooral li-ay
Singing too-ral li-ooral li-ad-dity
And we're bound for Botany Bay*

*There's the captain as is our commander
There's the bosun and all the ship's crew
There's the 1st and 2nd class passengers
Knows what we poor convicts go through.
Singing Too-ral Li-ooral li-ad-dity...*

*T'aint leaving olde England we cares about
T'aint 'cause we mis-spells what we knows
But because all we light-fingered gentry
Hops around with a log on our toes.
Singing Too-ral Li-ooral li-ad-dity...*

*Oh had I the wings of a turtle dove
I'd soar on my pinions so high
Slap bang to the arms of my Polly love
And in her sweet presence I'd die.
Singing Too-ral Li-ooral li-ad-dity...*

*Now all my young Dukies and Duchesses
Take a warning from what I'd to say
Mind all is your own that you toucheses
Or you'll find us in Botany Bay
Singing Too-ral Li-ooral li-ad-dity...*

Musical notation for the first line of the song "Botany Bay". The notation is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major, and consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The lyrics "Farewell to Old England for-ev-er, — Farewell to my" are written below the treble staff.

RUTH BOWYER



Ruth Bowyer (c. 1761 – 5 June 1788), also known as Ruth Baldwin, was an English convict sent to Australia aboard a ship of the First Fleet. Convicted in 1786 for the theft of five spoons from a Surrey hotel, she was sentenced to seven years transportation but died two years later and was buried beside the shore of Sydney Cove.

Prior to her arrest, Bowyer had been living with her aunt in Egham in Surrey. In May 1786 she started work as a kitchen maid at the Bush Hotel at Staines but was dismissed on 24 June. Later that day the publican, Joseph White, noticed that three monogrammed table spoons and two silver dessert spoons were missing from the hotel.

Bowyer was arrested on 7 October on suspicion of stealing the spoons. She spent three weeks in Newgate Prison and was brought to trial at the Old Bailey on 25 October before a twelve-member jury and Justice William Rose of London.

According to evidence at her trial, Bowyer had on 7 October approached James Coombes, an ironmonger in Windsor, asking to buy a gold ring in exchange for silver spoons. She had told Coombes that her name was Bowyer, and gave her address as the Six Bells Hotel in the town. Coombes doubted the spoons were hers to sell, and returned them to her after examining their monograms. Later he recognised the monograms as those from the Bush Hotel, and wrote to innkeeper White to advise him of the attempted sale.

A colleague of White's, publican Richard Martin, gave evidence that he, White and a local magistrate had then travelled to Egham to confront Bowyer in her home. Bowyer and her aunt were arrested and taken to Martin's hotel, the Castle. Bowyer had denied taking the spoons or attempting to sell them to Coombes, but was contradicted by Coombes himself who arrived to identify her.

Local constable James Fish also gave evidence, indicating he had attended the Castle Hotel at midnight on 7 October, and the following morning he and Bowyer had travelled to Windsor where she pointed out the spoons hidden in a hedge but claimed that another woman had put them there. The spoons were shown to White, who identified them as those stolen from him the preceding June. Bowyer's only testimony was to tell the court, "I am not guilty of the crime; I have no witnesses." She was found guilty of feloniously stealing five spoons with a combined worth of 30 shillings, and was sentenced to seven years penal transportation.

Bowyer was returned to Newgate Prison where she remained for the next six months. On 30 April 1787 she and 36 other women were brought to Portsmouth and embarked aboard the convict transport *Prince of Wales*. Ten other female convicts were also brought from prison hulks on the Thames, bringing to 47 the total number of convicts aboard the ship.

Prince of Wales sailed from Portsmouth on 13 May 1787 as part of the First Fleet to Australia. Due to an administrative oversight, no female clothing had been brought aboard and Bowyer and her fellow convicts remained in their increasingly ragged prison apparel until 6 August, when the ship reached Rio de Janeiro and was resupplied. Near Rio, humid conditions and heavy rains generated a "plague of bugs" below decks with more than a hundred insects found in one small sleeping area alone. There were also reports of rats, fleas and lice, and an outbreak of scurvy in late December. The Fleet reached Botany Bay on 18 January 1788, and relocated to Sydney Cove eight days later. On disembarkation around 200 of the male convicts from the Fleet were set to work clearing the foreshore and constructing huts. Female convicts including Bowyer were left to their own devices, subsisting on a limited ration of salted meat, rancid butter and shellfish. Conditions were harsh and Bowyer was one of 94 convicts who fell seriously ill within the first six months of arrival. She died on 5 June 1788, less than two years into her sentence, and was buried along the shoreline of the Cove.

SNIPPET OF THE OLD BAILEY

The Central Criminal Court of England and Wales, commonly referred to as the Old Bailey after the street on which it stands, is a criminal court building in central London, one of several that house the Crown Court of England and Wales. The street outside follows the route of the ancient wall around the City of London, which was part of the fortification's bailey, hence the metonymic name.

The court has been housed in a succession of buildings on the street since the sixteenth century, when it was attached to the medieval Newgate Prison. The current main building block was completed in 1902, designed by Edward William Mountford; its monumental architecture is recognised and protected as a Grade II listed building. An extension, the South Block, was constructed in 1972, over the former site of Newgate Prison which had been demolished in 1904.

The court originated as the sessions house of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of the City of London and of Middlesex. In addition to sessions court, the Old Bailey also held trials, similar to the travelling Courts of Assize held in other parts of England and Wales. The original medieval court is first mentioned in 1585; it was next to the older Newgate Prison, and seems to have grown out of the endowment to improve the gaol and rooms for the sheriffs, made possible by a gift from 15th-century Lord Mayor Richard Whittington. It was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666 and rebuilt in 1674, with the court open to the weather to prevent the spread of disease.

The building was re-fronted in 1734, so as to enclose the court and reduce the influence of spectators. This led to outbreaks of typhus, notably in 1750 when 60 people died, including the Lord Mayor and two judges. It was rebuilt again in 1774 and a second courtroom was added in 1824. Over 100,000 criminal trials were carried out at the Old Bailey between 1674 and 1834. In 1834, it was renamed from the Assize Court for London to the Central Criminal Court.

The court was envisaged as that where only criminals accused of crimes committed in the City and Middlesex were tried. However, in 1856, there was public revulsion at complaints sent to police against doctor William Palmer that he was a poisoner and murderer. This led to fears that he could not receive a fair trial in his native Staffordshire. The Central Criminal Court Act 1856 was passed to enable his trial, and others with a public profile, to be held at the Old Bailey. In London cant it was called *The Gate*, an abbreviation of Newgate.

The Old Bailey adjoined Newgate Prison until the jail's 1902 closure. Hangings were a public spectacle in the street outside until May 1868. The condemned would be led along Dead Man's Walk between the buildings, and many were buried in the walk itself. Large, rowdy crowds sometimes gathered and pelted the condemned with rotten fruit and vegetables and stones. Some sources claim that, after 28 people were crushed to death when a pie-seller's stall overturned, a tunnel was made between the prison and St Sepulchre's church opposite the crossroads, to allow the chaplain to minister to the condemned without having to force his way through crowds; but there are no known primary sources or photographic evidence that indicate that it actually existed.

The present building dates from 1902 and was officially opened by King Edward VII on 27 February 1907. It was designed by E. W. Mountford and co-occupies the site of the demolished prison. Above the main entrance inscribed the admonition: "Defend the Children of the Poor & Punish the Wrongdoer".

On the dome above the court stands the court's symbolic gilt bronze statue of Lady Justice by sculptor F. W. Pomeroy (made 1905–1906). She holds a sword in her right hand and the scales of justice in her left. The statue is popularly supposed to show blind Justice, but the figure is not blindfolded. The courthouse brochures explain that this is because Lady Justice was originally not blindfolded, and because her "maidenly form" is supposed to guarantee her impartiality which renders the blindfold redundant.

During the Blitz of the Second World War, the Old Bailey was bombed and severely damaged, but reconstruction work restored most of it in the early 1950s. In 1952, the restored interior of the Grand or Great Hall of the Central Criminal Court was once again open. This hall (underneath the dome) is decorated with paintings commemorating the Blitz, as well as quasi-historical scenes of St Paul's Cathedral with nobles outside. Running around the entire hall are a series of axioms, some of biblical reference. They read:

"The law of the wise is a fountain of life"
 "The welfare of the people is supreme"
 "Right lives by law and law subsists by power"
 "Poise the cause in justice's equal scales"
 "Moses gave unto the people the laws of God"
 "London shall have all its ancient rights"

Between 1968 and 1972, a new South Block, designed by the architects Donald McMorran and George Whitby, was built to accommodate more modern courts.

In 1973, the Belfast Brigade of the Provisional IRA exploded a car bomb in the street outside, killing one and injuring 200 people. A shard of glass is preserved as a reminder, embedded in the wall at the top of the main stairs.

The hall (and its floor) was decorated with many busts and statues, chiefly of British monarchs, but also of legal figures, and those who achieved renown by campaigning for improvement in prison conditions from 1700 to 1900. This part of the building also housed the stenographers' offices until the stenographers were replaced by technology in March 2012. On 7 February 2024, around 1,500 people were forced to evacuate the building following a fire and reports of five separate explosions at the rear of the Central Criminal Court. Defendants on remand were returned to prison and juries were sent home.

Until 2017, the court manager was known by the title of the *Secondary of the City of London*, an ancient title of a City officer. His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service manages the courts and administers the trials but the building itself is owned by the City of London Corporation, which finances the maintenance and running of the building and the staff costs out of their own resources.

All judges sitting in the Old Bailey are addressed as "My Lord" or "My Lady", whether they are High Court, circuit judges or recorders. The Lord Mayor and aldermen of the City of London are entitled to sit on the judges' bench during a hearing but do not participate in hearings. Where a ceremonial tradition is followed, a judge, sitting solo, will sit off-centre in case the Lord Mayor should decide to come in, in which case they would take the centre chair. The most senior *permanent* judge of the Central Criminal Court has the title of Recorder of London, and their deputy has the title of Common Serjeant of London. The position of "Recorder of London" is distinct from that of a recorder, which is a part-time judicial office, holders of which sit part-time as judges of the Crown Court or County Court.



The Way We Were



QUOTES FROM THE COLONY

Friday 4th November 1788 .

The land at the new settlement and the surroundings country is as fine as any I have seen in England. Cultivation with out heavy clearing of the land is rare.

Captain Phillip

Sunday 27th November 1788

In short, everyone is so taken up with their own misfortune that they have no pity to bestow upon us

Extract of a letter from female convict

Thursday 22nd December 1788

By the surgeons returns it appears that twenty have died from disorders of long standing, and which is more than possible would have carried them off sooner in England

Captain Phillip

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