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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

Goodbye 2021-Welcome 2022

This year we will recollect in years to come, as a period in our lives so different. Positively looking forward to a New Year in 2022, may it give us more doors we can open and lots of light!

I have said before, just how much I have missed seeing you during this past year and unfortunately I will have to wait until our February meeting to be reunited.

We have the schedule for February, April and June. February and June taking place on 3rd Saturday of the month. April had to be changed, due to Easter on Saturday 9th in the Tebbutt Room where we will meet one another for morning tea at 10.30am.

May I send my wishes to each of you and the thoughts that you may share Christmas with family and friends.

Thank you to each of the members of our committee and my appreciation to Kathleen who creates our seasonal newsletter. Our newsletter is a short one this season. Please consider submitting an article so we can continue to share stories of our past.

Pamela Hempel

Acting President

Quotes from the Colony

Sunday 10th January 1788

The weather deteriorated into a raging storm, never before had we seen the sea in such turmoil, it was all over as white as snow. Every ship in the fleet sustained damage. The storm lasted half an hour so very heavy

Captain Phillip

Thursday 22nd December 1788

By the Surgeon's returns it appears likely that twenty have died from disorders of long standing, and which is more than probable would have carried them off sooner in England

Captain Phillip

Friday 23rd December 1788

Yultide is almost upon us and my hope is by no means exhausted despite the difficulties met with, given time, and additional force, together with proper people for cultivating the land....I know now I can make a nation

Captain Phillip

FEBRUARY MEETING 2022

Date: Saturday 19 February

Venue: Tebbutt Room, Hawkesbury Central Library

300 George Street, Windsor

Speaker and Topic: to be confirmed

Time: 11am

APRIL MEETING 2022

Date: Saturday 9th April

Venue: Tebbutt Room, Hawkesbury Central Library

300 George Street, Windsor.

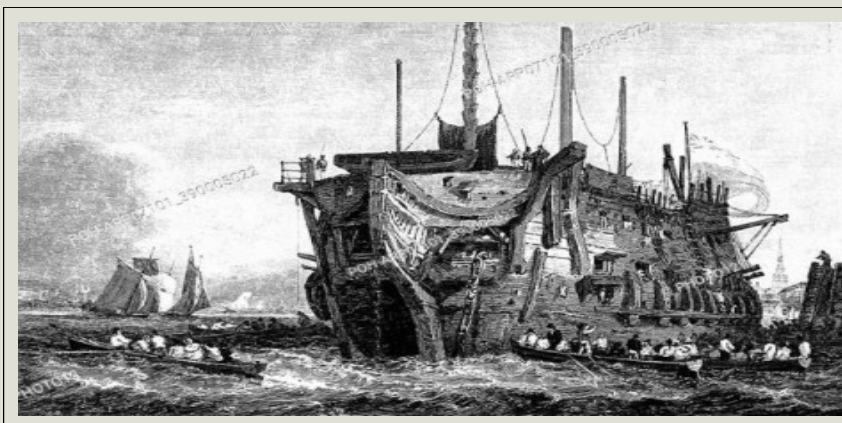
Speaker and Topic: to be confirmed

Time: 11am

Description of Dunkirk Hulk– submitted by Joy Jorgensen

Joy Jorgensen is currently gathering information to write the story about her First Fleeter John Morris Stephens aka John Morris. During her research Joy came across a description (contemporary of the time) of the hulk *Dunkirk*, on which John was detained before being transferred onto the *Charlotte*, at Plymouth. The *Dunkirk* was lying in the Hamoaze, an estuarine stretch of the Tamar River at Plymouth. The Dunkirk is described below:

"A derelict ship, its mast gone, its sides covered in green slime mired in a mud bank. This was the prison ship *Dunkirk*, The convicts smelled the hulk before they saw her, for she reeked of sewage and the foul stench of decaying wood and unwashed humanity. Towering over the surrounding flats, her hull blackened with mire, the hulk *Dunkirk* loomed up before the approaching convicts like an apparition. A dark and spectral form around which the rising tide began to lap". (National Archives at Kew)



British Prison Hulk. Stock photo

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A Snippet of Esther Abrahams-submitted by Judith O'Donohue

Esther Abrahams was born in London in 1767. In 1786 she was found guilty of stealing lace to the value of 50 shillings and tried in the Old Bailey. Sentenced to transportation to Sydney Cove for 7 years, Esther was held in Newgate Prison and whilst there gave birth to a daughter named Rosanna. The father of the child is unknown. Within two months, Esther and her daughter were on their way to Sydney Cove. Esther left London in May 1787 aboard the Prince of Wales but was transferred to the Lady Penrhyn mid voyage reaching Sydney in January 1788.

Aboard ship she met George Johnston, a first lieutenant who offered protection to her and her child. Not long later, George Johnston Jr. was born and baptised. Esther's sentence expired in 1793. Esther would go on to bear seven children to Johnston including three sons, Robert, George Jnr and David. In 1805 Robert enlisted in the Royal Navy, the first Australian to do so. He was eighteen years old. Daughter Rosanna married Isaac Nichols who became our first Postmaster. George had received many land grants because of his rank and in 1799 he and Esther decided to build a house which he called Annandale House.

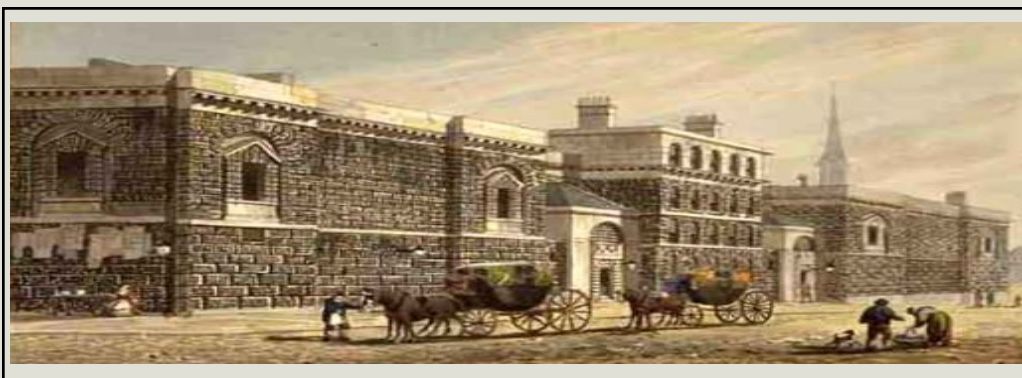
On 26 January 1808 George Johnston, now a major, led the Rum Rebellion against Governor Bligh and became the acting Lieutenant Governor of the colony. Whilst Johnston was in England for 4 years answering charges of Mutiny regarding the Bligh affair, Esther remained in charge.

A year after his return to Sydney, George and Esther were married on 12 Nov 1814 at St. Johns Church Parramatta. Isaac Nichols died on 9 Nov 1829. George their eldest son who never married died in a riding accident on 19 Feb 1820. George Johnston died 5th Jan 1823 and bequeathed Annandale House to his wife Esther for the rest of her life.

Her son Robert who was to inherit Annandale House after Esther's death started court proceedings against her to have her declared insane and incapable of running the Annandale property. The court threw the insane claim out but trustees were appointed to look after the running of Annandale House.

Esther went to live with her son David. She died in 1846 and was buried with her family on the Annandale property. Her remains and that of George Johnston and 47 of their descendants were moved to a new mausoleum at Waverly Cemetery in 1904.

Reference: Wikipedia



Newgate Prison where Esther gave birth to first child Rosanna

Early Breadbasket of the Hawkesbury submitted by Judith O'Donohue

The breadbasket of early Sydney were the plains of the Hawkesbury River. Without the rich soil of the Hawkesbury to grow crops, Sydney was on the verge of starvation. The Assistant Surgeon on the First Fleet Dr Thomas Arndell retired in 1792 to take up his land grant at Cattai Creek where it flows into the Hawkesbury River about 10km North of Windsor on the property he built. The property included a family homestead, cottages for the grainary workers and a windmill to grind the wheat which he cultivated on the land. Dating from 1804 it was the first flour mill on the Hawkesbury. Arndell's mill stocked unprocessed grain which was sent by ship to Parramatta and Sydney. The Hawkesbury produced grain until the 1860's when wheat rust brought the process to an end. By 1829, the mill no longer appears in any farm accounts. Arndell died in 1821. At the time of his death, Arndell still owned 750 acres of land and had 406 domestic animals. Today, the farm buildings and the windmill ruins are a part of the Cattai National Park. Although the site is not accessible to the general public, the Hawkesbury Branch of the National Trust do occasional tours of the area.

On the grant of Dr. Arndell, overlooking the Hawkesbury River, is a very notable landmark for miles around—the old grist windmill and barn attached. Such an historic place should be painted by an Australian artist before it goes utterly to ruins.

Further, it should be mentioned that the second generation of Arndells, those of Mr. Thomas Arndell (II.), descendants, as also himself, worshipped at Ebenezer, since the occasion of the ceremony of marriage, which took place at St. Matthew's Church, Windsor, by the Rev. John Cross, of Mr. Thomas Arndell (II.) to Miss Sophia Loder, of Windsor. That was on the 6th January, 1824 (nigh one hundred years ago).

The writer of the note on the Arndells of the Hawkesbury days, referring to land grants given to First Fleeters, says he believes that Arndell's "is the only case where the family still retains land granted to the original settler of the name." That may be so, but I am doubtful.

Courtesy of Windsor and Richmond Gazette (NSW : 1888 - 1961), Friday 14 December 1923, page 8

To the MEMORY
of
THOMAS ARNDELL
ESQ^r.

Who Departed This Life
May 2, 1821. Aged 69 years

He was one of the earliest Civil
officers in the Medical Department
and one of the oldest Magistrates of the
Colony and was humane and
honourable in each station he was
publicly esteemed and privately beloved.

As an affectionate Husband
kind Parent and firm Friend
he has left few to surpass him

He was simple in his
manners and upright in his Conduct,
but Reader

"Our life is short, but to extend that span
To vast eternity is virtue's work."

"mors sola fatetur
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula"



Welcome Funding for the Parramatta Female Factory

The NSW Government announced last week funding of \$53.8 million to secure the future of the Female Factory at Parramatta. An arts and cultural precinct will also be developed.

This is welcome news for all those who fought so hard to save the factory, particularly the Parramatta Female Factory Friends group and to those who want the rich history of the factory preserved for future generations.

Mr Ayres said, “This is a landmark moment in our state’s history. The Parramatta female factory is an extraordinary site, a place of aboriginal and colonial culture and heritage significance. It is a site of living history and memory for many people, particularly those with connections to the many institutions that operated there”.

Mr Harwin, said “This funding lays the foundations for the complete restoration of the historic site, transforming the Parramatta Female Factory into a museum that tells the stories of our history for generations to come. This remarkable location deserves to be properly protected, and I am committed to working towards achieving a World Heritage listing for the site.

Planning will begin immediately with a final business case to inform a decision on the Parramatta Female factory museum to be presented back to Government in 2023.

Edited Version of NSW Government Press Release



Images courtesy of The Daily Telegraph