

Our October Windsor History Tour

On Saturday, 13th October, our Hawkesbury Nepean Chapter had the pleasure of visiting a few sites of historical interest in Windsor expertly guided by our very own Rebecca Turnbull, Curator of the Hawkesbury Regional Museum.

A group of about 20 of our members met outside the Hawkesbury Central Library at 10.30 to begin our tour on foot. We first visited the former Hawkesbury Hospital where Rebecca told us about the origins of a hospital in the Hawkesbury and later included a Benevolent Society facility to aid destitute people.



Outside on separate posters we were shown information about the building and its development over time. Behind the building is the original mortuary where people who had died were taken for preparation before burial. We were taken inside where Rebecca explained how those that had died were prepared and then removed through a specially built side door for easier loading onto carriages for the church and cemetery.



From there we were taken to the corner of George and Tebbutt Streets where Rebecca explained about the Victorian Style School and its origins. Evidently, at the time of its construction local communities were responsible for raising funds to build a school for their children. After several poor years due to local financial setbacks, the school was finally built in 1869. On the corner where we were standing was the very well known Tates Hotel. On this site, there has been a hotel continuously since 1840 when it first was known as the Commercial Hotel, later McQuade Park Hotel (after licensee Michael McQuade, a former Windsor mayor), and later in 1894 the Farmer's Hotel. It was then demolished and rebuilt in 1938 by Bert Tate and named Tates until 1990 when it was named the Hawkesbury Hotel. Opposite the hotel is Michael McQuade Park also named after the former mayor.



We then walked further along Tebbutt Street and briefly stopped near the Roman Catholic St Matthew's Church. The reason for both the Anglican and Catholic Churches having the same name was, as Rebecca related, the Governor required everyone to attend St Matthew's on Sundays. In order that Roman Catholics would not feel uneasy going to the Anglican Church and to meet their requirements, the Catholic St Matthew's was built.



We then moved into the park and stopped across from the Rectory of Anglican St Matthew's, built in 1825 by William Cox. Rebecca talked about its construction,

several of the early residents and uses over the years. Samuel Marsden died in the house in May 1838.



We then walked down Moses Street, into the church grounds and then into St Matthew's itself. As we took our seats in the pews, Rebecca explained how people paid pew rentals and of course the wealthier had box pews towards the front of the church. The stained glass windows were of note and with the air base nearby were removed during WWII for fear the base could be a target and also possible damage to the church. The present building was credited to the architect Francis Greenway who was given the responsibility of rebuilding the church that was begun by Henry Kitchen. Greenway designed a totally new church and demolished the work that had been previously started. The first service was held in the church in September 1821 and consecrated by Samuel Marsden the next year. Francis Greenway was also responsible for designing the Windsor Court House and St James Church in Sydney. One other feature of note was that John Tebbutt painted the area over the altar. Tebbutt, an astronomer and owner of the Tebbutt Observatory painted the area with stars to resemble the sky in the Southern Hemisphere.



We then walked into the cemetery that surrounds the church and taken to various graves of notable early Windsor residents including several First Fleeters. Among the First Fleeters were John Cross and his wife Mary Davison, Henry Kable and his wife Susanna Holmes, John Merritt, Daniel Barnet, Benjamin Cusley, Robert Forrester, Edward Pugh and his wife Hannah Smith, Ann Bladdey, and Thomas Arndell and his wife Elizabeth Dalton. Two other graves of note were that of the

Tebbutt Family which was very large and astronomical in its design and that of William Cox who among other activities in the colony was responsible for building the road across the Blue Mountains. At this point, our President, Pamela Hempel, thanked Rebecca Turnbull and all present showed their appreciation for her very well received efforts on the day.

