

Image Courtesy of the SLNSW

# Hawkesbury-Nepean Chapter Newsletter

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## P A M E L A ' S C O R N E R

Brrrrr!

I believe we have experienced lots of liquid from the skies above and that is what caused the cancellation of our April meeting.

Keep your fingers crossed that we are able to see one another on Saturday 18th June at our meeting. I look forward so much to seeing each of your "smiley faces".

There are a couple of months prior to our AGM in August. At this AGM, we have the following positions to be filled: President, Vice President and Treasurer. It would be deeply appreciated if you could give some thought to filling one of these positions.

When we were together at our last meeting, I spoke to you about visiting St Marys Historical Society and this would be a fun outing in the future.

Unfortunately, COVID is still touching some of our lives and this has caused many people to be confined to their quarters! William and I both had our three shots, but COVID decided to take us on, as it has with many other people.

I deeply feel for anyone who is no longer with us and I hope no one in your family has been taken from you.

Just imagine the Newsletter after this one. It will be the beautiful season of SPRING! So much to look forward to with the blossoms of wattle, tulips and all those other lovely flowers.

I am so looking forward to seeing you all soon.

*Pamela Hempel*

Acting President

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**JUNE MEETING 2022**

**Date:** Saturday 18th June

**Venue:** Tebbutt Room, Hawkesbury Central Library  
300 George Street, Windsor

**Speaker:** Rebecca Turnbull

**Topic:** The Great War 1914-1918 “Hawkesbury Heroes”

**Time:** 11:00am



**AUGUST AGM & MEETING 2022**

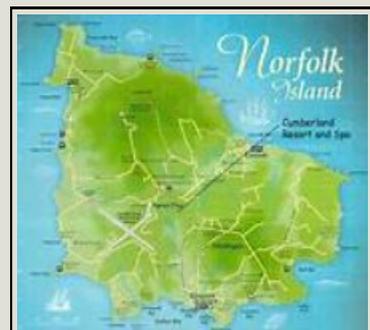
**Date:** Saturday 20th August

**Venue:** Tebbutt Room, Hawkesbury Central Library  
300 George Street, Windsor.

**Speaker :** Patrick Dodd

**Topic:** Norfolk Island

**Time:** 11:00am



## Quotes From The Colony

**Friday 3rd June 1788**

*We perceived that the Governor was in great pain from a return of his complaint. Though his countenance too plainly indicated his torture, he took every method in his power to conceal it.*

**Chief Surgeon White**

**Sunday 5th June 1788**

*It was reported to me that, while many of the convicts were rejoicing at the bonfire last night, there were others practising their old custom of thieving and many of the officers' tents and huts had been robbed.*

**Captain Phillip**

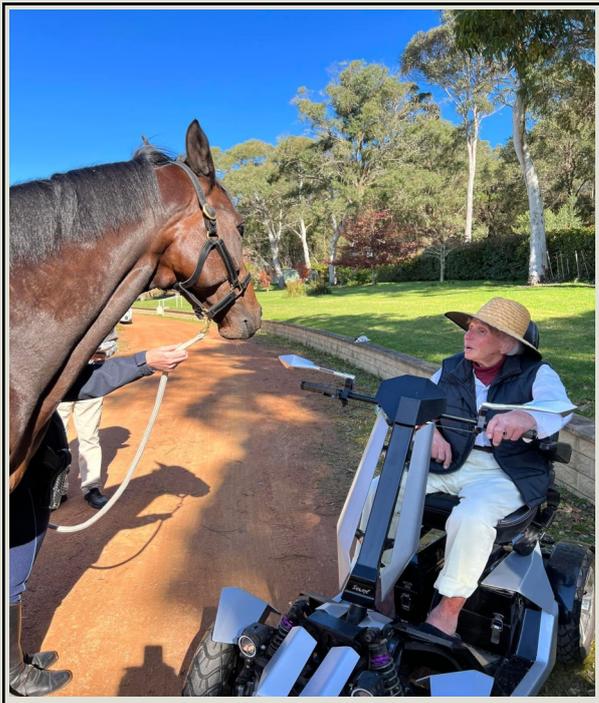
**Friday 5th August 1788**

*I have suspended all public labour whilst this heavy rain persists...it is fruitless to continue any work under these terrible conditions*

**Captain Phillip**

## ERNIE MEETS NAMESAKE TOBRUK

Troop Horse Tobruk reunited with his namesake in the Southern Highlands recently. Mr Ernie Walker, who recently turned 106-years-old, served in the 2/1 Pioneer Battalion which saw action in Tobruk, Kokoda and Borneo. He is one of only nine living Rats of Tobruk in Australia. Ernie is the 3x great grandson of First Fleeter John Morris Stephens.



# Thornton Hall

## North Penrith, NSW

Submitted by William Hempel



Thornton Hall is located in the new suburb of Thornton, North Penrith which is on the north side of Penrith Station. It was originally built by Thomas & Jane Smith in the 1870's on 320 acres. Thomas Smith was a prominent local resident and was voted a member of Penrith's first council. One of his sons, Thomas Richard Smith, was elected to the Legislative Assembly for various terms between 1877 and 1904 and Mayor of Penrith in 1889. Thomas Smith also owned large sections of High Street, one of Penrith's main streets and also built the Red Cow Inn (1862 and 1880) which still exists across from the Penrith Station. In its construction, he used 4 columns from the Jamison House at Regentville after it was destroyed by fire.

When Thomas passed away in 1896, he left the property to another son, Sydney Smith. Sydney was also quite active in politics serving as the local representative in parliament from 1889-1898 and then elected as the Representative for Macquarie in the First Parliament of Australia in 1901. After his defeat in 1906, he retired to Thornton Hall. The property was the site of a leisurely contest between the Nepean Cricket Club and Lord Sheffield's touring English side, led by the great W G Grace in 1892. The match was organised by then Penrith Mayor and owner of Thornton Hall, T R Smith who built Smith's Paddock for the match. The site is remembered by the naming of Lord Sheffield's Circuit which surrounds today's Thornton's Cricket Oval.

The property was leased to Henry Lack in 1910 and was used as a dairy. Thornton Hall is considered the birthplace of Australian aviation as Kingsford Smith and William Hart met together on the second floor to plan commercial flights. The property was also the location of the Penrith speedway in the 1930's. In 1941, the whole site was taken over by the Royal Australian Army Engineers Depot and after the war in 1947, the Smith Family then sold the house and 4 acres. The property was again compulsorily acquired by the Commonwealth Department of Defence in 1951 and Thornton Hall was used for accommodation mainly by officers. In the 1990's, the building was abandoned and left to decay. Parts of the building were removed; people rode motorcycles through the house and it was used by the homeless.

In 2011, much of the original property was sold to Landcom, now known as Urban Growth NSW. Part of Urban Growth's promise, along with Penrith Council was to look for expressions of interest for its ongoing management and maintenance. In 2014, Urban Growth sold Thornton Hall to an experienced heritage building specialist, Peter Cipollone.

After 3 1/2 years of restoration by Peter and his crew of hearing-impaired tradesmen, the House was reopened in 2018 as the Greenwood Child Care Centre. At the dedication on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018 was the 3x great granddaughter of Thomas and Jane Smith, Laura Player from Perth Western Australia. Laura had been quite active over the years in trying to get the House preserved and was pleased that her wishes had finally been realised with inclusion of Thornton Hall as part of Penrith's local history.

Recently, Penrith Council has advertised an 11 km historical Penrith Walking Tour which includes passing the Red Cow Inn, St Stephen's and St Nicholas of Myra Church, Thornton Hall, part of the River Walk and ending at Emu Plains. Further information about that walk can be found on the internet on the Penrith Council site.



As a further note, some of the main street names in the new Thornton suburb in North Penrith are related to the history of the property and include: Lord Sheffield Circuit, Cricketers Avenue, William Hart Crescent, Thornton Drive, Sydney Smith Drive and Aviators Way. There are also a few reminders of its military past with Empire Circuit, Cannonball Lane and Engineers Place. In addition, the 5<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer Squadron still occupies a portion of the property. Finally, the current cricket oval which is a main feature of the new subdivision is named the "Ron Mulock Oval" after another well-known former politician and Mayor of Penrith.

*References:*

"Thornton Hall Becomes New Again" [landcom.nsw.gov.au](http://landcom.nsw.gov.au) 03/12/2015

"Thornton Hall Penrith NSW," Penrith [history.com/buildings/houses\\_-\\_penrith](http://history.com/buildings/houses_-_penrith) by vanes, 8/5/2015

"Thornton Hall Reopened After Restoration," Daily Telegraph, 21/3/2018

## Australian History with Patrick Dodd

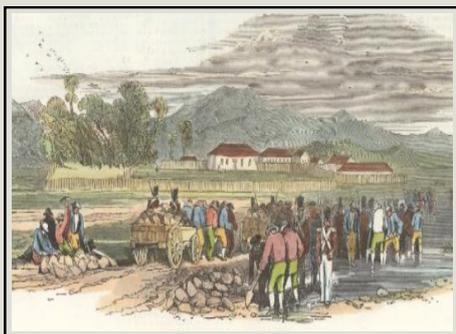
### *From Hell to Paradise - the Norfolk Island Story*

The British Government wanted to use the island as a source of shipbuilding materials using convict labour but this resulted in a living hell for thousands of convicts. The Commandants were the supreme rulers of this tiny island and they were far from the reach of higher authority. The cruelty perpetrated by most of them seems almost unbelievable today. Some were enlightened men but they were overwhelmed by the brutality of the system and the indifference of the government.

There were countless brutal floggings and many public executions – sometimes of several men at a time. The convicts found their own way of fighting back – only to suffer further harsher punishments. They eventually developed a frightening sub-culture of their own which was as cruel as that of the authorities.

The island now is a place of great beauty and tranquillity but the physical evidence of those terrible times can still be seen in many places. Join Patrick at our Chapter meeting this August to hear more about the fascinating story of this unique place.

**Join Patrick at our August meeting on 20th August.**



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**Early History of the Discovery of the Nepean Area by Lyn Forde,  
President/Research Officer of St Marys & District Historical Society Inc.**

Watkin Tench was an Officer of marines born in May 1758 in Chester, England, the son of Fisher and Margaritta (Margaret) Tench. His father was a dance master and proprietor of a respectable boarding school. In January 1776 Watkin entered the Marine Corps as Second Lieutenant and during the war for American independence he served off the American coast, first in the *Nonsuch* and then as First Lieutenant in the *Mermaid*. When the *Mermaid* was driven ashore, he spent three months as a prisoner of war in Maryland and then from October 1778 to March 1779 he served on the *Unicorn*. He was promoted to Captain-Lieutenant in September 1782, but with the war over he was placed on half-pay in May 1786. Towards the end of that year, he volunteered for a three-year tour of service with the convict settlement about to be formed at Botany Bay. He sailed in the transport *Charlotte* in May 1787 as one of the two Captain-Lieutenant of the marine detachment under Major Robert Ross and arrived in Botany Bay in January 1788. After the transfer to Port Jackson and the formal establishment of the settlement Watkin was occupied with his military duties. He was a keen explorer and much of his leisure was spent as a leader or a member of expeditions to the west and south-west of the settlement, discovering the Nepean River and tracing it to the Hawkesbury. He died at Devonport in May 1833. When the Nepean district was named by Governor Phillip in 1789, he called it "Nepean" after the Under Secretary of State in the Home Department in England called Evan Nepean. That made it in "the District of Evan" in the County of Cumberland that was also named in that year in honour of the Duke of Cumberland who was the second brother of King George the III. The first 20 years of the colony from Sydney to the Cumberland Plains, the district was established with mostly farms. Most of the early grants in the St Marys district were given to high officials such as Governor King and his family, Governor Bligh's daughter Mary Putland/O'Connell, Reverend Samuel Marsden, John Oxley the Surveyor General (whose grant extended from Queen Street to Ropes Creek, from the Highway to the Railway Line), John MacHenry a Magistrate and blacksmith and military officers such as Major George Druitt, James Whalan and Colonel James Erskine. In 1810, Governor Macquarie with his wife Elizabeth journeyed by carriage on a very rough Western Road to the Evan district to see at first hand the development in the area. They stopped at "Dunheved" at South Creek (as it was known then) the farm of Anna Josepha King now the widow of Governor King and still in England. The area was later known as "The Farm" and "Dunheved" was named after a Launceston medieval castle that was used by the powerful Earls of Cornwall. He documented that the farm had around 700 fine horned cattle in high condition and descendants of a few from the Government flock at the Cowpastures along with goats, sheep and swine. Sheep were also brought from John Macarthur's flock, and they also stopped at "Mamre" the land grant of Reverend Samuel Marsden and inspected the barns and stockyards of "Bayly Park" belonging to Captain Nicholas Bayly on South Creek and the grant of free settler Gregory Blaxland who, at that stage, had a hut built on his grant that he named "Lee Holm". A stop was also made at the land grant and farmhouse of James Badgery who was another early free settler of "Exeter Farm" who had a fine garden and surrounding cleared paddocks then onto Mary O'Connell's "Frogmore" grant (now known as "Werrington Park" and owned by the University of Western Sydney's Werrington Campus. In 1941 the main "Dunheved" house was

used as a depot for surveyors and engineers working on the construction of the ADI munitions factory and the house was later demolished in 1947. In 1799 Samuel Marsden bought 38 acres from a lapsed grantee at South Creek as well as purchases of 200 acres and founded "Mamre" property. Between 1803-05 Samuel made several reports to Governor King on the prospects of sheep-breeding and wool-growing. The flood in 1805 at South Creek destroyed an experimental plantation of hemp and flax that Samuel was hoping to establish an export industry. King thought Marsden 'the best practical farmer in the colony' and when he visited England on leave in February 1807 he was recommended by Governor Bligh as one who had made the 'nature and soil' of the colony 'his particular study'. Samuel concentrated on the development of strong heavy-framed sheep such as the Suffolk breed that had a more immediate value in the colony than the fine-fleeced Spanish merinos imported by John Macarthur. In 1808 he had his own wool made up into a suit by the Thompsons of Horsforth in Yorkshire that so impressed George III he gave Samuel a present of some merinos from the Windsor stud. Gregory Blaxland whose family were among the first settlers of unquestioned respectability to come to the colony where they quickly grasped the essentials of its economy and turned their attention to trading speculations. Both Gregory and his brother John thought themselves entitled to far more Government assistance than they received, and they became 'extremely troublesome' within the Colony and when Gregory committed suicide in January 1853 his death was scarcely noticed in the press.

*Sources: From the diary of Watkin Tench 1790 & Australian Dictionary of Biography, Historical Records of New South Wales, vol 2; Historical Records of Australia, series 1, vol 1; manuscript catalogue under Nicholas Nepean (State Library of New South Wales), Macquarie's Diary, Marsden 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1796 HRA ser. 1, Vol 2, pp 101-102, "Samuel Marsden – the Great Survivor" by A T Yarwood, Historical Records of New South Wales, vols 5-7; Historical Records of Australia, series 1, vols 5-9, 11, 13, 14, 16; G. Mackenness*

## ELIZABETH RYMES: A Remarkable Life

Ian White recently published a book about his five times great grandmother Elizabeth Rymes. Needing to fill his time during lockdown this became his COVID project. Elizabeth Rymes was convicted in the Old Bailey in 1789 at the young age of 15 years and then transported to NSW aboard the Second Fleet. After arriving in Sydney, Elizabeth met and married a young convict named Matthew James Everingham who had arrived on the First Fleet. Elizabeth would go on to become matriarch of the Everingham dynasty, a family that has many descendants in Australia today. The story is about an amazing woman, and magically pulls the reader into the opening scenes at the Old Bailey as if they were standing by Elizabeth as she is sentenced and then follows her path through life. Ian has decided to write a trilogy.

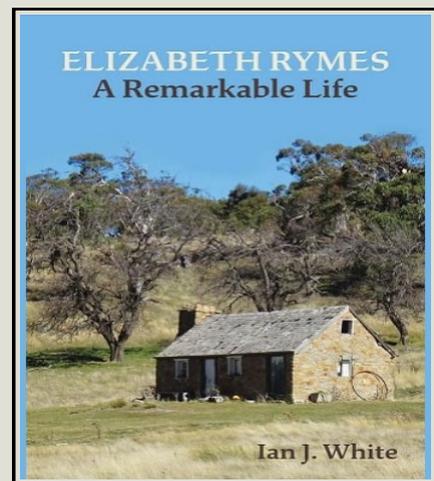
Book two is currently with the editor and expected to be in print within the next few months. The subject of Book Two will be the Woodbury Line.

Ian is currently working on Book Three which will be based on Matthew James Everingham.

All books will be available the website below:

[www.themustardseed.net.au](http://www.themustardseed.net.au)

**COVID  
PROJECT**





# **'Bathurst Remembers World War 2 Exhibition 2022'**

## **marking VJ Day & end of WW2**

**LATEST DATE - Exhibition now from Friday 12th August to Monday 15th August 2022 - Open: 9am to 5pm**

The four day event will be held in four pavilions at the Bathurst Showground, Sydney Road  
This WW2 Exhibition will consist of "Snapshots of World War 2" - 600 enlarged photos of soldiers in action, battlefields, training, the home front, Bathurst Army Camp, etc. There will also be the "Wall of Valour" - Over 130 enlarged photos of World War 2 Service Men and Women with an association with Bathurst who enlisted and served" over 2000 assorted photos in all.

Guest Exhibitors will display over 3,000 military items and WW2 memorabilia, uniforms, large display by Military Vehicle Group of NSW and other vehicle groups, medals, RAAF & POW items, Damien Parer St Stanislaus College photo display, a rustic military picture theatre, Military Guest Speakers and lots more.



Supported by the Bathurst District Historical Society, Bathurst RSL Sub branch, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Bathurst Regional Council, and the Bathurst Showground Land Manager.

For further details contact Curator - Alan McRae on 02 63315404 [amcrae@lisp.com.au](mailto:amcrae@lisp.com.au)

February 2022