

# Hawkesbury Historical Society Newsletter

Newsletter of the Hawkesbury Historical Society Inc.

## HAWKESBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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**Aim:** Hawkesbury Historical Society aims to encourage & preserve the history of the Hawkesbury

**Meetings:** 4th Thursday, alternate months, 7:30pm-10pm

Hugh Williams Room at the Museum in Baker Street, Windsor

**Open to:** People interested in the preservation of the history of the Hawkesbury, new members welcome.

**Patron:** Ted Books

### Office Bearers 2017/2018:

President: Ian Jack

Snr Vice President: Ted Brill    Jnr Vice President: Jan Barkley-Jack

Secretary: Neville Dehn    Treasurer: Heather Gillard

Public Officer: Neville Dehn    Social Co-ordinator: [Vacant]

Publicity Officer: [Vacant]

Hon Curator HHS Collection: Carol Carruthers/ Rebecca Turnbull

Newsletter Editor: Jan Readford

Web Administrator: [Vacant]

Bookshop Manager: Sharon Lamb

Hon Auditor: [Vacant]

Committee members: Sean Flavin, Dick Gillard, Ellen Jordan

**HHS Collection Committee:** Carol Carruthers, Hawkesbury Regional Museum Director – Kath von Witt, Hawkesbury Regional Museum Curator – Rebecca Turnbull

**Publications Committee:** Jan Barkley-Jack, Rebecca Turnbull and Jan Readford

## MEETINGS

Meetings start at 7.30pm

23 August 2018

25 October 2018 AGM

Hugh Williams Room  
HAWKESBURY REGIONAL MUSEUM  
Baker Street, Windsor

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## General Meeting

of the Hawkesbury Historical Society

Thursday, 28 June 2018 – 7:30pm

Hugh Williams Room, Hawkesbury Regional Museum,  
Baker Street, Windsor



Speaker: **Kath von Witt**

Topic: **Museum Activities and HHS Collection**

Kath von Witt will provide an update on Museum operations and activities; progress with collection management like textiles and archives, exhibitions and plans for the year or so ahead, plus aims to have the collections digitised and online for research.

## Dates for the Calendar

Thursday, 23 August 2018

**HHS General Meeting**

Speaker: Dick Gillard

Michael Nowland – an interesting ancestor.

Saturday, 25 August 2018

**Rex Stubbs Symposium**

Speaker: Dr Kate Gahan, Historian, NSW Northern Rivers region.

Topic: *Detail Matters: old & new perspectives on the value of local and regional history*

Speaker: Deborah Vaughan, Regional Program Producer, Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences.

Topic: *Reflecting on MAAS Regional Programs and essentials to good programming.*

9:30am to 3pm

Thursday, 25 October 2018

**HHS General Meeting**

Speaker: Jan Barkley-Jack

Topic: TBA

# 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Museum

On Saturday 19th May, the Hawkesbury Regional Museum celebrated its tenth birthday! Yes, it's hard to believe that the new museum building has been officially open for 10 years!



The event followed a very successful opening of the new museum exhibition *Food Bowl Farming* on the Friday night where over 100 people attended for food, drinks and music, as well as the official opening by the Mayor Mary Lyons- Buckett and a special presentation to museum volunteers on reaching 5 and 10 years service.



John and Beryl Miller with Mayor, Mary Lyons-Buckett

On the Saturday there were old fashioned games and face painting for kids, a free sausage sizzle, and free historic tours.



The curator of the Food Bowl Farming exhibition Dr Kate Gahan gave an interesting talk about her research processes and local historical societies and groups held stalls and displays in the museum grounds.



Kath von Witt, Dr Kate Gahan and Rebecca Turnbull

It was great to see representatives from our own society alongside those of the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society, Hawkesbury Family History Group, Australiana Pioneer Village and the Colo Family History Group. It was a great way to network and share information with the public and visitors about our history and what our group and societies do.



Carol Roberts, Jan Barkley-Jack and Janice Hart

Overall it was a very successful day with over 200 people attending the event.

# Charles Harpur

Information by Neville Dehn, Secretary HHS

The Charles Harpur afternoon, held on Saturday, 2 June 2018, was very successful with about 30 people in attendance.



Dr Michael Falk giving a presentation on Charles Harpur - Australia's earliest Poet and Playwright of renown. Picture: Ted Brill.

The presentation by Michael Falk, Assistant Lecturer at the School of English, University of Kent, was excellent giving the audience details of this first significant Australian born poet. Michael traced for us Harpur's career as an author of renown, a farmer and a political campaigner, highlighting his influence on early Australian leaders like Henry Parkes.



Members of Richmond Players. Picture: Ted Brill.

The afternoon was rounded off by the Richmond Players presenting a splendid reading from Harpur's most notable play "The Bushrangers", a play set in the Hawkesbury district.

## Website Update

Member, Roz Chia, has begun the process of setting up the Society's own Website. This will be an exciting advance for the Society. Thank you Roz. ■

# James Ruse Tour

Pre - Book Launch - Hawkesbury Regional Museum

**Sunday, 8 July 2018**

Visit sites farmed by James Ruse in Pitt Town and the Peninsula area of Windsor, as well as land fronting South Creek, taking in some of the most beautiful and historic parts of the district.

The tour will also include information and sites relevant to Ruse's time in the Hawkesbury, such as floods and other significant happenings.

The tour will be conducted by:

Hawkesbury Valley Heritage Tours.  
<http://www.hawkesburytours.com.au/>

**After the tour**, grab some lunch and come back to the Museum for the launch of Michael Crowley's new book on James Ruse, titled 'On Stony Ground' - free, bookings through Eventbrite at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/book-launch-the-stony-ground-tickets-46705445244>

## Society Stall - Windsor Markets

The Society held a bookstall in the Windsor Markets on Sunday 29 April 2018. Whilst it was only moderately successful, our thanks go to the members who volunteered their services, particularly Arthur Cooper who provided the marquee and tables.



Our hardworking volunteers: Arthur Cooper, Heather & Dick Gillard

## Membership - 2018/2019

Members are reminded that your Membership fees are due to be paid by 1st July.

**Concession/Student** \$15.00 with Pension or student card

**Seniors** - \$22.50 with Seniors card

**Single Adults** - \$30.00

**Family** - \$45.00 adults including children under 18 years

The Society also offers an opportunity to take up a 10 year membership to those members wishing to avail themselves of this offer.

Forms have been distributed by the Secretary to members, however, if you still require a form, or would like to pass on to a prospective new member, please contact:

Neville Dehn on 4578 2443.

# Queens Honours List

Congratulations are in order for well-deserved recognition in the Queens Honours List for members:

◆ John Miller and ◆ Sue and Ted Brill



John Miller pictured at the Australia Day Awards 2018 where he had nominated Sister Julia Bligh Johnston for an Award.

Photograph: Hawkesbury City Council

Born April 1929, John arrived in the Hawkesbury in 1955 to farm orchard fruit and vegetables. After seven floods devastated the farm, and all crops washed away, he moved to higher ground in the Hills. There, as a mushroom grower, he became active in the Australian Mushroom Growers Association (AMGA).

In 1986, John joined the Hawkesbury State Emergency Service (SES) and became chief warden, and helped to establish an early flood warning network from Roberston to Wisemans Ferry. He became Social Secretary for Hawkesbury Historical Society; won a Golden Award for Tourism, and was appointed Ambassador for Hawkesbury.

John had established a tour guide service, and in 1996 trained young people as guides for the National Parks and Wildlife Service to develop understanding of European and Aboriginal heritage in the area.

In the mid-1990's, John helped establish a community group to lobby the State Government to raise Warragamba Dam wall; and has made representations to the State Government about building a high level, flood free bridge from Richmond to North Richmond.

John has lobbied for the construction of a Centre for Excellence in aged and dementia care, as well as respite accommodation for the Hawkesbury's ageing population. He has produced a DVD on Hawkesbury's history; raised funds for a Boer War memorial in Canberra; and had a plinth erected in Windsor to honour Sister Julia Bligh Johnston, RRC, who, thanks to John, was recognised posthumously in this year's Hawkesbury Council Australia Day awards

When interviewed, John stated that he was "humbled" by the OAM nomination.

John said: **"I grew up in the Depression years where people helped one another. No one had anything - you got in there and fought for your fellow community members to achieve a better deal. I couldn't lay around and do nothing. ■"**



Ted and Sue Brill.

EBENEZER'S Ted and Sue Brill have spent 40 years living, working and volunteering within their community.

The pair moved to Ebenezer in 1972 from Wagga Wagga, where they both grew up and married. Ted moved to become principal of the Ebenezer Public School, which would also be home for the family separately in its grounds. After a few years of living at the school, they bought their own property in Ebenezer –nine acres –and lived a fairly typical life.

Sue originally had a part-time job teaching sewing classes at the school, then a library assistant, and later teaching computer classes, while she was also the office manager, from 1972 to 2000, when the couple both retired.

Ted and Sue joined the school's P&C, where their community work began. It was here that they helped start up the Ebenezer Art Show, an annual fundraiser for the school, which celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017.

Sue has worked with Richmond-Windsor View Club, raising money for the Salvation Army, and for the past five years has been on the executive.

Ted and Sue have also been heavily invested in the Ebenezer Church. They started the tea room and museum, and Sue still manages the church shop, now since 2005.

Apart from the Ebenezer Art Show, one piece of work in particular that the pair are most proud of is their involvement with the bicentenary of the church in 2009, which attracted 5,000 people from across Australia, many of whom were descendants of the pioneer families who built the church in 1809.

Ted is the Senior Vice President of the Hawkesbury Historical Society. He has written or co-written several books about the history of Ebenezer and the church. He was also a long time member of the Ebenezer Rural Fire Brigade, where he was the brigade secretary for 24 years,

The pair are also Rotarians, and have both been named Paul Harris Fellows, the highest honour possibly for Rotary members. When asked why they do all the work mentioned and plenty more...they said:

**"It is personally very rewarding and it helps you make a lot of friends."**

# The Armistice in the Hawkesbury

By Cathy McHardy

After four long years, the war which seemed so brutal and unrelenting was declared to be finally at an end. On the morning of the 11 November 1918, the Governor General of Australia, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, received by cablegram the following message telling of the Armistice which was to come into effect at 11am that day:



**'Governor General Melbourne. Most urgent armistice signed 5 AM this morning'(1)**

As the news spread across the country, cities and towns erupted into spontaneous celebrations to rejoice in the cessation of the conflict in what had been a bloody and protracted war.

**Peace Celebrations,  
11 November 1918  
in Martin Place,  
Sydney NSW**

State Library of  
NSW, FL1692057





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H11563

**Crowds in Martin Place, Sydney on 11 November 1918, Australian War Memorial [H11563].**

In the months leading up to the surrender by Germany, the allies had maintained a furious and determined campaign pushing to bring an end to the war before the year was out. Private Thomas Jersey Christie from Lower Portland aged 22 years had enlisted at Casula, New South Wales on 12 November 1915 and wrote frequently to his family about his first hand experiences of war. Christie was one of the first from the Hawkesbury to volunteer and did not return home until April 1919, some months after signing of the Armistice.

In his letter to home published in the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* of 22 November 1918, Private Christie wrote about the final 'big push' which had brought about the surrender of Germany to the allies (2).

Our big push commenced on August 8th. T'was only a few days before that we knew definitely that we were to participate in it, although I might say that we had a pretty shrewd idea that we were to play some part. The preparations were marvellous, and the activity behind the line increased a hundredfold a week or more before the stunt. Every night, and all night, there would be a never-ending stream of guns and ammunition, waggons (sic) proceeding towards the front.

The war had exacted a heavy toll on the young men across the country. In small towns and villages, the loss of a significant part of a generation had a particular impact. Often several members of the one family had enlisted for active service and many did not return from the battlefields of Europe and the Middle East.

The loss of many young men from the Currency Creek (now Glossodia) and Freemans Reach area for example was keenly felt in the small farming communities north of the Hawkesbury River where most families were directly affected by the war, farewelling their sons with heavy hearts, not knowing whether they would ever return.

Three boys from the Kingham family joined up for active service. John Henry aged 27 years and Arthur aged 21 years and 10 months, were the first of the family to enlist at Casula NSW on 9 November 1915. They left Australia on 3 February 1916 aboard the troop transport *Wandilla* bound for France and were assigned to the 1st Pioneers Battalion.

In July 1916, Arthur received a gunshot wound to the shoulder and was hospitalised in France until the beginning of 1917. He received another gunshot wound, this time to his hand and was invalided back to England in October 1917.

After being sent back to active duty in France in April 1918 he was repatriated to Australia and discharged on 19 September 1919.

His older brother John (Jack) also suffered a very serious injury. In November 1917 while on active duty in Ypres, France, he sustained a gunshot wound to his thigh. He was taken to England on 9 November 1917 for treatment and assessment and then returned to Australia aboard the troopship *Borda* returning to Australia on 1 June 1918. The medical report stated that the wound had healed but damage to the nerves in his leg had resulted in a condition called 'dropfoot' which resulted in his inability to raise the front part of his foot off the ground as he walked. John was declared medically unfit for any type of service and discharged on 30 November 1918.

Little brother Stanley Norman Kingham was the third member of the family to enlist. Aged just 18 years, the consent of his father Edwin was required to enable him to join up as he was under the statutory age of 21 years. After enlisting at Ashfield on 23 February 1916, he was assigned to the 34th Battalion and he sailed for France on 23 June 1916. Only a few months later on 24 February 1917 he was fatally wounded in the abdomen and died the same day. He was buried in the Military Cemetery Trois Arbres, Steenwerck, France.

Two boys from the Smith family of Freemans Reach also enlisted. Albert Edward and Walter Charles Smith were sons of Walter Smith and Eliza Coulter and earned a living from their small orchards and mixed farms. These young men could never have imagined the terrifying reality of war they were soon to experience.

Albert's tour of duty was destined to be very brief. After spending some time in a French military hospital with mumps during April and early May 1916, he was wounded while on active duty on 12 May and died the same day.

His brother Walter had enlisted at Casula, NSW on 15 February 1916 and embarked for England from Sydney aboard the 'Kyarra' on 3 June arriving in Plymouth, England on 3 August. Like his brother he also succumbed to the mumps and spent time in hospital during September 1916. He was promoted to sergeant in the 2nd Battalion Infantry of the Australian Imperial Forces just before he was killed in action in Belgium on 5 October 1917. He was buried in the Ypres Memorial Cemetery.

For service men and women the jubilation of the Armistice was tempered by the physical and psychological reminders of warfare. Surrounded by devastation, they were haunted by the memories of violence they had witnessed and the mates they had lost. Reportedly, there was a feeling of numbness amongst the troops, the landscape had changed from constant explosion and destruction to one of uneasy quietude as the bombs ceased to fall and the shells no longer rained down on soldiers in the trenches.

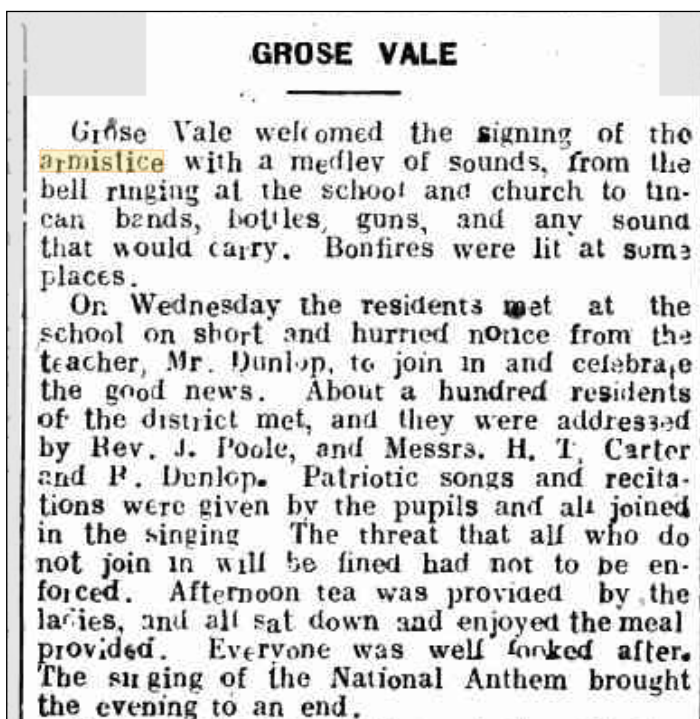
For those back in Australia, the prospect of the homecoming of loved ones would be a bitter-sweet moment. There was much rejoicing that the war was over but the happiness was mingled with grief for the many who would never return. The correspondent from Comleroy Road poignantly wrote:

...The weeping of many mothers whose loved ones lie in foreign lands will mingle with the acclamations of those whose merry making may, in many instances, make their suffering harder to bear under to under the irony of conflicting emotions (3).

Going on to describe the celebrations which erupted in that district as a 'row-making' contest, the correspondent detailed the variety of 'instruments of torture to jaded nerves' including cars careering along the roads, horns blaring and towing an assemblage of empty kerosene cans.

*The Windsor and Richmond Gazette* also reported the reaction to the news of the Armistice from other correspondents across the district. A cacophony of sounds emanated from the paddocks of Grose Vale. There was bell ringing at the school and church, tin cans rattling along the streets, bottles, gunshots, and bonfires to warm up the festivities. In a more orderly fashion, about 100 residents met at the school and joined the teacher Mr Dunlop in the singing of patriotic songs culminating in the National Anthem. Afternoon tea, as was customary, provided by the ladies (4).

The celebrations in Windsor were a much more sedate and organised affair. A crowd of about 300 attended a united thanksgiving service in McQuade Park which



*Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 22 November 1918, p.2.

included the singing of hymns accompanied by Windsor Band and gave thanks for the victory of the allies. The ceremony was attended by official guests such as the Mayor, Ald. J. W. Chandler and Col. J. J. Paine who read the King's message to the Governor-General of Australia.

The afternoon was spent in much more active pursuits. A spontaneous sports meeting was quickly organised by a ladies committee and a group of the leading gentlemen of the district. Numerous novelty races including foot races, boy's three-legged race, old duffer's race and a hurdle race. Most of the prizes awarded were in cash but there were a number of souvenirs captured from the German troops in Rabaul, New Guinea to be distributed to winners of the finals.

In the evening, a street procession from the School of Arts to McQuade Park was hastily organised. George Street was packed with revellers who witnessed a parade of decorated motor cars, horse-drawn wagons and sulkies and then fell in behind the parade. In McQuade Park speeches were made and music was played amid great cheering at every opportunity from the crowd reported to be over 3,000.

Homecoming celebrations were held across the district for individual family members and for groups of soldiers as they returned home often many months after the declaration of the Armistice. Most carried the physical and psychological scars of their ordeal all their lives and many never spoke of their experiences to family or friends.

**THE KING'S MESSAGE.**

**TO AUSTRALIA.**

MELBOURNE, Tuesday.

The Governor-General has received the following message from his Majesty the King:—

"At the moment when the armistice is signed, bringing, I trust, an end to the hostilities which have convulsed the whole world for more than four years, I desire to send a message of greeting and heartfelt gratitude to our oversea people, whose wonderful efforts and sacrifices have contributed so greatly to secure the victory which now is won.

"Together we have borne this tremendous burden in the fight for justice and liberty, together we now rejoice at the realisation of those great aims for which we entered the struggle. The whole Empire pledged its word not to sheathe the sword until our end was achieved. That pledge is now redeemed. The outbreak of war found the whole Empire one.

"I rejoice to think that the end of the struggle finds the Empire still more closely united by the common resolves to hold firm through all vicissitudes, by the community of suffering and sacrifice, by the dangers and triumphs shared together. The hour is one of solemn thanksgiving and of gratitude to God, whose Divine Providence has preserved us through all perils and crowned our arms with victory.

"Let us bear our triumph in the same spirit of fortitude and self control with which we have borne our dangers."

(Signed) GEORGE, R.I.

Sydney Morning Herald, 13 November 1918, p. 11.

Driver Richard Scholer, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Scholer, returned from the war on Friday evening, after over 3½ years absence. The railway station was decorated, as usual with flags and bunting, the work of the ladies of the town, headed by Miss M. Hall. There was no procession or public demonstration, owing to the 'flu restrictions, but the young soldier was met at the train by a large crowd of people. He was formally welcomed home and congratulated on what he has done for his country and Empire, by Ald. J. W. Ross, Deputy Mayor. Driver Scholer and his people were then taken home in a motor car. "Dick" was wounded in the head, but has quite recovered.

Welcome home for Driver Richard Scholer who was met at Windsor Station by his family, friends and the Deputy Mayor Ald. J. W. Ross. Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 11 April 1919, p. 4.

Web References:

1. Australian War Memorial Collection [AWMEXDOC60](https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/1918/victory) retrieved 18 May 2018 from <https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/1918/victory>
2. *The Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 22 November 1918, p. 1. Retrieved 18 May 2018 from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/86151236>
3. *The Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 13 December 1918, p. 6. retrieved 18 May 2018 from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/86149875>
4. *The Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 22 November 1918, p. 2. retrieved 18 May 2018 from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/86151234>

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