

# Hawkesbury Historical Society Newsletter

Newsletter of the Hawkesbury Historical Society Inc.

## HAWKESBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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**Website:** [www.hawkesburyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.hawkesburyhistoricalsociety.org)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/hawkesburyhistoricalsociety](https://facebook.com/hawkesburyhistoricalsociety)

**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 2020/2021:

President: Jan Barkley-Jack

Snr Vice President: Ted Brill

Jnr Vice President: Richard Gillard

Secretary: Peta Sharpley

Public Officer: Neville Dehn

Treasurer: Heather Gillard

Social Co-ordinator: [Vacant]

Publicity Officer: [Vacant]

Hon Curator HHS Collection: Carol Carruthers/ Rebecca Turnbull

Newsletter Editor: Jan Readford

Web Administrator: Dick Gillard

Bookshop Manager: Heather Gillard

Facebook Administrator: Peta Sharpley

**Committee members:** Rebecca Turnbull, Sean Flavin, Ellen Jordan and Peta Sharpley

**HHS Collection Committee:** Carol Carruthers, Hawkesbury Regional Museum Manager and Curator – Rebecca Turnbull

**Publications Committee:** Jan Barkley-Jack, Ellen Jordan and Jan Readford

## MEETINGS

Saturday, 26 June 2021 - 2pm

Saturday, 28 August 2021 - 2pm

Thursday, 28 October 2021 - 7:30pm- AGM

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

## CONTENTS

- ♦ General Meeting – 26 June 2021: Speaker – Kath von Witt.....1
- ♦ Invitation: Back to Tebbutt's Sky Watching Astronomical Evening ....2
- ♦ The Fitz Roy Steam Mill, George Street Windsor.....3
- ♦ Air Force 100: Centenary of the Royal Australian Airforce in Australia:
  - Pre World War II .....5
  - World War II .....7
- ♦ Ebenezer Church Remembrance Day with Ted Brill .....9
- ♦ Books available ..... 11

## General Meeting

of the Hawkesbury Historical Society

**Saturday, 26 June 2021 - 2pm**

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

**Guest Speaker: Kath von Witt**

Kath von Witt, Museum Director, will speak about the Museum's plans to house the archaeological artefacts from Thompson Square excavations.

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME**



## INVITATION REMINDER

**BACK TO TUBBETT'S OBSERVATORY**

**SKY-WATCHING ASTRONOMICAL  
EVENING**

**Saturday, 19 June 2021 at 5:30pm**

See inside for details - Page 2

**BOOKINGS**

**ESSENTIAL**





(Founded in 1956)

## **Hawkesbury Historical Society Inc.**

**PO Box 293 WINDSOR NSW 2756**

**ABN 91 099 233 587**

**INVITES YOU TO COME AND ENJOY ONE OF THEIR PERIODICAL  
'BACK TO TEBBUTT'S SKY-WATCHING ASTRONOMICAL EVENINGS'  
AT THE HISTORICAL TEBBUTT'S OBSERVATORY IN PALMER STREET WINDSOR  
ON SATURDAY JUNE 19 STARTING AT 5:30 PM**



The sky will be seen through modern Telescopes provided by local astronomy enthusiasts. **The original 8" Grubb Refractor Telescope, installed in 1888 by John Tebbutt Astronomer, will also be open for inspection** and a tour of the grounds will be led by the present John Tebbutt. Given a clear sky we will observe the moon just into its 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, view the craters & mountains of this, our closest celestial neighbour. Venus will be low in the N.W. sky. Mars, well past Opposition, will be visible, but will have faded somewhat. Many well-known star clusters, double stars & nebulae will be visible. Suggest wear warm clothing against the winter chill & bring a torch covered with **RED cellophane**. A copy of Astronomer John Tebbutt's beautiful "Astronomical Memoirs" book in which the author recounts his long years of work at the Windsor Observatory will be given as a gift to each family or single adult.

**Please Note: Bookings and payment are essential prior to the event as only 40 participants can be accommodated.** The event will proceed in all but severe rain.

**Booking's email [secretaryhawkesburyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryhawkesburyhistory@gmail.com) or phone 0410 498 944**

**When booking by email please give full name, number of people, a contact number and bank payment reference.**

**To avoid the disappointment of being denied entry early bookings and pre-payment are essential**  
**Payments to ANZ Account Hawkesbury Historical Society Inc**

**BSB: 012874**

**Account: 227709583**

**Costs: Family \$15. This cost includes supper (children to be provided with poppas) & a free book**  
**Singles \$10 p.p. Including supper & a free book**

**For further enquires please contact Sean [sflavin\\_32@bigpond.com](mailto:sflavin_32@bigpond.com)**

**Or telephone Sean 0438 289 222**

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# The Fitz Roy Steam Mill, George Street, Windsor

Cathy McHardy

June 2021

If you were standing in George Street, Windsor on the corner of Christie Street in the grounds of the Presbyterian Church in 1890, the streetscape in that part of the town would look very different to that of today.

Writing in 1908, James Steele (1) noted that in earlier times there were three buildings opposite the Presbyterian Church. Mr. J.T. Fitzgerald had operated a school known as Eltham College in one of the buildings (still standing and known as Home Décor until recently). Next door there was a large three-storey building which was the Royal Hotel in which Sir Henry Parkes was entertained in September 1869, when he laid the foundation stone of the Windsor Public School. This building was demolished in September 1938 by the owner Mr Hibbert who constructed a timber cottage on the site. The block is now occupied by Centrelink.

The third building was a flour mill which was known as Hopkins' and then Moses' which was sited next to Raymond Villa (built by George Robertson, builder and monumental mason). This mill known as the Fitz Roy Steam Flour Mill was established by William Hopkins at 309 George Street, Windsor, New South Wales and operated from the 1840s until the building was demolished in the 1890s. The block has been occupied by the Sun Sing Chinese Restaurant since the 1960s.

The growing of grain crops in the Hawkesbury area began as early as the 1790s and instigated the construction and development of many mills in the Hawkesbury district powered by both steam and water. Productive grain crops continued to be grown until the emergence of the destructive fungus known as rust decimated the industry in the 1870s, forcing the decline of milling and the eventual demolition of associated structures.



Excerpt from Charting Map: Sheet Reference 11 (VG Sheet) for this section of Windsor showing the Presbyterian Church on the corner of Christie Street and the blocks opposite. Portion 5 of Cope's Subdivision is marked with the Primary Application No. 8928.

Retrieved on 10 June 2021 from

<https://www.nswlrs.com.au/>

On 13 October 1843, William Hopkins purchased portion 5 of Mrs Maria Cope's Catherine Farm subdivision facing George Street, Windsor for the sum of £40 (2). Towards the back of this block he constructed a steam powered flour mill. Also built was a baker's shop at the front, a residence for his family behind the shop and a number of other ancillary buildings. The [\*Sydney Morning Herald\*](#) (3) described the mill machinery in November 1848:

The engine is of the high pressure kind, of ten horse power, driving two pair of four feet mill stones, one dressing machine, one smut machine, one set of meal elevators and self-acting hoisting tackle altogether the most complete piece of machinery ever setup in this neighbourhood, and reflecting the highest credit on the engineers (Messrs Rogers and Robertson).

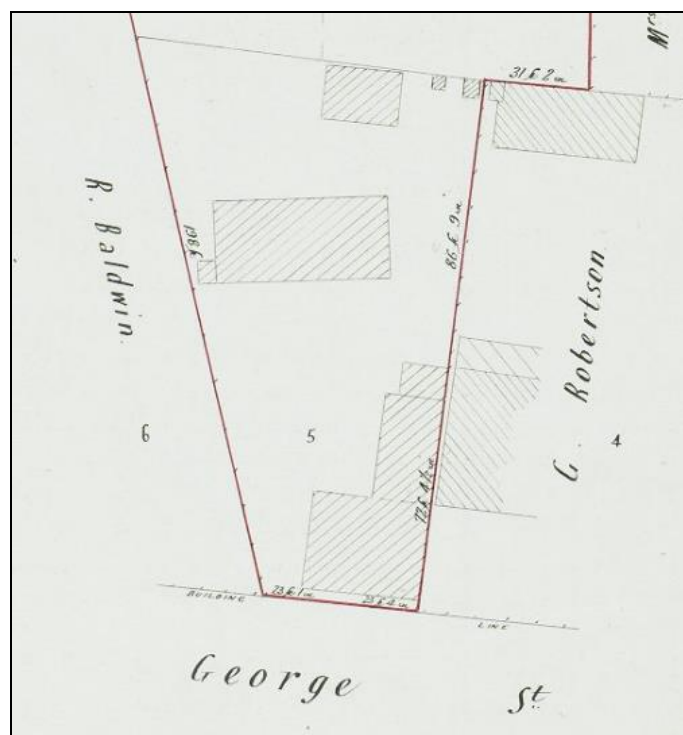
Owing to the peculiar construction of the furnace, a great saving is effected in the consumption of fuel, and I am told that 25 cwt of wood will be as much as can be used during sixteen hours full work of the mill.



William Hopkins died in January 1862 leaving the mill to his son Isaac (also a miller) and his widow Susannah who sold the property to Henry Moses of Windsor for £1200 (4). Moses operated the mill for about eight years before it was again on the market, selling to Henry Keys (Keyes), a grazier from the Barwon River at the increased value of £1500 in May 1870 (5).

Keys died in 1893 and in July of that year, George Wells, a Commission Agent from Sydney and Jeremiah Dodd of Reedy Creek near Mudgee, drover, became the new proprietors. Wells and Dodd had invested in other portions of land in Windsor including two blocks adjoining the mill and facing Church Street (now Little Church Street).

Wells and Dodd applied for the conversion of the property from Old Systems to Torrens Title (6) and the first certificate of title (7) includes a plan of the mill property showing the existing buildings.



Plan of property at 309 George Street Windsor showing the existing buildings including the shop and residence at the front and the mill structure in the centre. George Robertson had his yard and residence next door at this time. Torrens Title Volume 1101 Folio 126. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>

James Steele noted that the mill was demolished in October 1893 and by this time the milling industry in the Hawkesbury had collapsed. At the auction sale of the former estate of Henry

Keys, the mill property was sold to Miss Annie Caroline Keys for £850 (8).

**At the auction sale of property in the estate of the late Henry Keys, conducted by Mr. W. Gosper on Saturday last, the prices realized were as follow:—Residence and old flour-mill in George-street £850, Miss Keys, purchaser; lots 2 to 5, four allotments of land in Church-street, were sold to Mr. W. H. Dean, lot 2 realizing £40, lot 3 £89, lot 4 £88, lot 5, £27.**

Results of auction sale of the property of the late Henry Keys of Windsor from the Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 21 October 1893, p. 3.

The property changed hands several times during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and previous owners included George Marden of Windsor, Postmaster who also owned Raymond Villa for a time.

In the late 1950s, the site was purchased by Hinchey and Cross (9), a firm of Windsor builders and in the early 1960s the building housing the Chinese restaurant was constructed.

## REFERENCES:

- (1) Steele, James. *Early Days of Windsor*. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1302241h.html>
- (2) Old Systems Book 5 No. 87. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>
- (3) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 November 1848, p. 3. Windsor. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12907316>
- (4) Old Systems Book 79 No. 728. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>
- (5) Old Systems Book 119 No. 564. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>
- (6) Primary Application 8928. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>
- (7) Torrens Title Volume 1101 Folio 126. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>
- (8) *The Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 21 October 1893, p. 3. Retrieved 9 June 2021 from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/72544081>
- (9) Torrens Title Volume 1120 Folio 129. Retrieved 9 June from <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>

# AIR FORCE 100 – Centenary of the Royal Australian Air Force in Australia

*This year marks 100 years of RAAF service to Australia.*

*From modest beginnings in 1921, the RAAF has grown into a potent, world class Air Force which Australia relies upon in both conflict and peace.*



## PRE-WORLD WAR II

*In the years preceding WWII there were significant advances in aircrafts and flying. This in turn coincided with an increase in aircraft crashes. Some of these occurred locally during training exercises and mock aerial combat. Reporting terminology also changed from aircraft to aero plane.*

### 1932 - CRASH AT RICHMOND

The pilot Flying-Officer Charles Middleton Blamey was killed and a mechanic Aircraftsman John Plumb escaped with slight injuries on 6 December 1932 when a RAAF Gipsy Moth biplane was swooping near the ground, when a wheel apparently struck a fence, and it plunged nose first to the earth.

The farm workers and officials from the aerodrome extricated Blamey, who had evidently been killed instantly. Plumb was taken to hospital by the Richmond Ambulance. He was treated for cuts and shock.

Officials at the aerodrome immediately began an inquiry into the tragedy. Witnesses were taken to the aerodrome, and a guard was placed over the wrecked machine.



Image: Wreckage from the aircraft which killed Blamey. Hawkesbury Regional Museum Collection.

### 1934 - BADLY DAMAGED

During gunnery practice on 18 August 1934 a RAAF Wapiti biplane crashed in the bush near Londonderry Racecourse. The pilot suffered minor injuries and the gunner escaped without injury.

The plane had developed engine trouble while diving and firing at a target. A forced landing was attempted and almost succeeded when the wheels became embedded in soft earth and the plane turned on its nose while travelling at a considerable speed, crumpling every part of it except the tail.

### APRIL 1938 – SO CLOSE TO THE GROUND

Pilot-officer L. R. Sutherland of the RAAF in a Bristol Bulldog biplane was killed when he lost control and crashed to the ground, while practicing a "slow, upward roll" at the Richmond

Aerodrome for an upcoming Anzac Day Pageant. It is not known what caused Sutherland to lose control of his machine, but pilots who witnessed the crash expressed the opinion that Sutherland could probably have recovered and gained altitude and safety had he not been so close to the ground.

## **JUNE 1938 – PRAISE FOR LOCAL WOODCUTTER**

A Hawker Demon aircraft undertaking mock aerial combat crashed at Llandilo, witnesses reporting that the plane had been flying very close to the ground.

The crash caused substantial burns to Rigger AC Purdy and the death of Sergeant Ralph Dunstan Pomery, pilot.

The Coroner praised local woodcutter James Mills, for his action in tearing the burning flying suit from Purdy and restraining him from making another attempt to rescue Pomery.

## **DECEMBER 1938 - FORCED LANDING ON FARM, EERIE COINCIDENCE**

A Royal Air Force (RAF) Vickers Wellesley bomber undertook a forced landing when the engine cut out suddenly after leaving the aerodrome, landing in a flat paddock in Mr Smith's farm at Cornwallis.

The paddock planted with potatoes and corn, and was bumpy and damp with rain. The machine hit the ground heavily, sending up clouds of dust, bounced, landed again, cut through a barbed wire fence, carrying- strands of barbed wire with it. Mr. Jack Drayton, who was ploughing in the paddock where the machine crashed, escaped death by inches.

Because of his bad hearing he was unaware that the plane was landing- until his horse started to bolt, and he looked round to see the plane roaring over the field towards him. He flung himself on the ground, and one wing passed a few feet over his head. By a strange coincidence, this accident occurred in the same paddock where Mr. Smith's father was killed by a plane in 1929.



Image: A Wapiti biplane in flight over the Hawkesbury. Hawkesbury Regional Museum Collection





## WORLD WAR II

*Richmond RAAF base expanded further during World War II, with additional squadrons and units established, including No. 1 (Fighter) Wing and No. 3 RAAF Hospital. No. 8 Squadron formed on 11 September 1939, and No. 11 Squadron two weeks later.*

*Richmond became a base of major importance to Australia's defence during this time, and as such incidents still occurred in the local area.*

### 1939- CRASH AT RIVERSTONE

As part of Air Navigation course training, an Avro Anson A4-32 of 6 Squadron RAAF left Richmond on 28 April 1939, flew out to sea and returned, maintaining constant radio communication and the flight proceeded without incident. A radio message was received that the aircraft was within a few minutes of landing above the Riverstone area. This was the last message received from the aircraft. At 3:30pm the Avro Anson A4-32 crashed into the ground.

The four crew members were killed instantly:

Pilot Officer Maxwell Leonard Hickson (Navigator)

Pilot Officer Lloyd George Harness (Pilot)

Aircraftman Raymond Duncan Knight (Wireless Operator)

Aircraftman Harrie Clarke (Fitter Armourer)

At the coronial inquest in September 1939 the assistance to the crash given by civilians was recognized, including that of a young local woman:

*Dorothy Dobson, single woman, Riverstone, stated that about 3.30 pm on April 28 she was walking along Carnarvon Road, Riverstone, when she saw an aeroplane, the noise from which at the moment was quite normal, and which was flying in the direction of the aerodrome, from Sydney, at an average height. While she watched, it glided down, and at the same time turned to the left and dipped a little on the left wing. The witness then heard "two bangs", and saw dark-coloured smoke come from the plane in two streams, one from each wing. The engines roared immediately afterwards, and the machine levelled off, when its nose appeared to rise slightly, then, with its engines still roaring, it dived straight towards the ground at a spot about 70 yards from where witness was standing. As soon as it crashed witness ran to the scene, where bits of the machine were scattered about, and, seeing the body of one man in the debris, tried to drag it clear, but saw that it was so mutilated that life must be extinct, and desisted from her efforts. She could see other bodies in the wreckage, and had started to move away to get assistance when three men came to the scene, and, in answer to their inquiries, the witness informed them that the bodies of the crew were in the wreckage of the machine. She then started to walk to a nearby house but "felt giddy and fell", and was taken to the house.*

Windsor and Richmond Gazette, September 1, 1939

## 1944 - FIRST AIR WOMAN LOST

Another Anson was lost on 18 December 1939, this time at Richmond Golf Course with all five crew on board. Towards the end of WWII another crash occurred that killed eight aircrew members - six technicians, the pilot and the wireless air gunner.

One of those killed was a member of the Woman's Auxiliary Air Force (W.A.A.A.F) Aircraft Woman Nancy M. Ralph. The plane was returning from an instrument checking flight at one afternoon, when it crashed on its landing approach to Richmond RAAF Base.

While making a normal flap and wheels down landing, the aircraft was seen to swing, then crashed after hitting power lines on Dight St, Richmond, suggesting that an engine failed. Those killed were all buried at the Richmond Cemetery located adjacent to the RAAF Base.



Image: Grave of Air W.A.A.A.F Aircraft Woman N. M. Ralph,  
at Richmond Lawn Cemetery,  
Courtesy of Hawkesbury on the Net.



Image: Avro Anson during WWII, 1941. Courtesy of Tom Walsh.

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## Dates for the Calendar

Saturday, 19 June 2021 – 5:30pm  
Saturday, 28 August 2021 – 2pm –  
Saturday, 11 September 2021 – 1:30pm (Tentative)  
Thursday, 28 October 2021 – 2pm –

[Date to be determined]

**Astronomical Sky-Watching**, Tebbutts Observatory  
**General Meeting**  
**Book launch** – Andrew Thompson by Annegret Hall  
**Annual General Meeting** – combined with:  
**Ian Jack Memorial** – Speaker: Judith Dunn  
**Alan Aldrich Memorial Event** – Speaker: Mary Casey -  
Archology of Government Houses, including Windsor



## EBENEZER CHURCH HERITAGE DAY – 15 MAY 2021 WITH TED BRILL

Hawkesbury Historical Society were very appreciative of Ted Brill and his team of helpers for making our Society members and visitors welcome to an enjoyable day. It was a lovely day of organisation where we were able to come and share with family and friends in the quietness and peaceable surrounds of the Ebenezer Church. There were many other people attending also to hear the history and stories that Ted presented.



Ted is a great story teller of history and everyone really appreciated and enjoyed his presentation especially including seeing the old photos he shared in his presentation.

A number of folks also shared their stories of their knowledge of Ebenezer history. The morning was a history lesson of stories but very entertaining and enjoyable.

After Ted's presentation, Dick Gillard expressed appreciation to Ted for his presentation on behalf of everyone present. He apologised to Ted about the new book "Andrew Thompson" which he had wanted to present to Ted in appreciation, however,

the book didn't arrive on Friday as expected from the Printers. However, at the next meeting, this will be given to Ted, as the books arrived this week.

Morning Tea was then served followed by the grave's site, visiting in three groups. Stories were told by the three leaders about the early settlers who were buried in the grave yard. There was much interest in the graves which have underground vaults under them. Lunch then followed and after lunch those who wished to continue on to the Quarry where lead by Ted on this excursion.

Thanks to Neville Dehn for bringing the Hawkesbury Historical Society banner and pamphlets. Peta Sharpley also brought some pamphlets for our book stall table, so thanks to Peta too. Neville and Deidre Dehn shared telling visiting folk of their knowledge of the local history and where historical photos could be taken plus where to visit historical buildings.

Overall Result for HHS Book Stall:

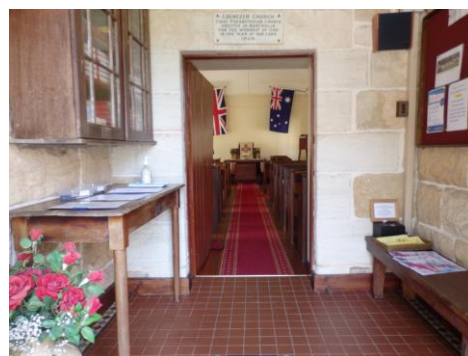
- The Book Stall sold \$234 worth of books which was a great financial benefit to HHS.
- Many HHS brochures were taken from the table and many folk spoke about wanting to discuss membership etc.
- Apologies were offered to folk for only taking a few Hawkesbury Books to sell on the day (where only a couple of books on a topic were taken, the books were sold out).
- Suggestions were made to folks to visit the Hawkesbury Regional Museum where all HHS books on the Hawkesbury, Early Colonial, plus Hawkesbury Novels and Children's books are available. They were also advised that family records could be seen in Church Registers and Hawkesbury Pioneer Registers, which too could be purchased there.
- Book descriptions of categories were on the bookcases to help people find the applicable book/s they requested on Saturday.

I very much appreciated the expertise in history and storytelling, and the willingness to assist, chat & listen. May we all be blessed by our dedication and willingness to work together.

Heather Gillard  
Bookshop Manager







**All photographs taken by 10 year old Tilley Gillard**





## **ANNOUNCING THE RELEASE OF A NEW BOOK!**

**By Joy Shepherd and edited by Greg Upton**

**The pioneering of electricity in the old Colo Shire and  
the Municipality of Castlereagh from 1934 to 1965.**

**A story that has never been told before—the history  
behind the scenes and the tales of many of those  
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Excellent Accommodation and Every Attention paid to the Wants of Patrons.

**George-street,  
WINDSOR.**

Windsor and Richmond Gazette,  
Saturday 7th April 1900 (Trove)

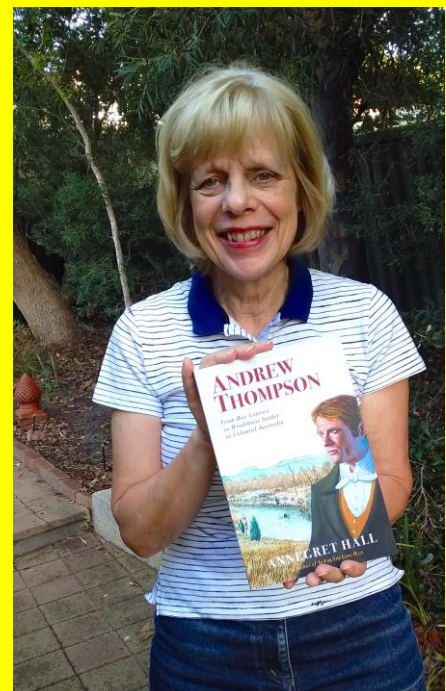
## NEW BOOK

Now available at Museum

**ANDREW THOMPSON**

By Annegret Hall

\$30



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