



PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS INC. NEWSLETTER – ISSUE NO: 63 MAY - JUNE 2025



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The Parramatta Female Factory - Augustus Earle 1826 - nla.pic-an 2818460 National Library of Australia (NLA).

Patrons: Meg Keneally & Thomas Michael Keneally AO

President: Gay Hendriksen; **Vice President:** Frank Williams; **Public Officer/Treasurer:** Sharyn Byrne; **General Secretary:** Jane Cain; **Committee:** WHS **Officer:** Gary Carter; **Technical Officer/Tour Coordinator:** Kevin Dodds; **Site Watch:** Judith Dunn OAM; **Editor/Publicity Officer:** Ronda Gaffey; **Membership Secretary:** Lorraine Henshaw; **Minutes Secretary/Guest Speaker Coordinator:** Lyn Watkins

Next 2025 Bi-monthly Members' Meeting:

Friday 20 June at 12pm followed by afternoon tea. Guest Speaker 1.30pm

Venue: PFFF Rooms, 5 Fleet Street, North Parramatta.

Parking available at Parramatta Leagues Club Car Park.

Parramatta Light Rail from Parramatta Square to Ngara - short walk to site.

Content

President.....	
Photo Gallery - Heritage Festival....	
Noticeboard.....	
History Corner.....	
'Our Girls' - the <i>Mariner</i>	
Research Centre Muster.....	
Workshop Report.....	
Guest Speaker.....	
Out & About.....	
Serendipity.....	
Stop Press!	
PFFF Calendar 2025.....	

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Factory Friends,

Welcome to our May - June edition of the Newsletter as we approach the end of Autumn.

First, I would like to welcome our new secretary Jane Clain who comes with excellent experience for the position and a personal connection to Parramatta with work and family history.



April and May have been brimming with activity. This has ranged from our usual programming to festival activities. As part of our Speaker Program, historian Dr. Mark Dunn spoke about 'the Convict Valley', focusing on the Newcastle Region prior to 1830. The Friends participated in the National Trust Australia Heritage Festival and value added to the National Trust celebration hosted by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. The Factory was abuzz with our tours, two of the speakers were ours, there were membership enquiries and the shop had a constant flow of customers and visitors. The Research Centre volunteers were busy all day hosting and responding to Factory and family history inquiries. Matron Gordon's Tearoom and sausage sizzle worked non-stop. A great addition to the day was the spinning and weaving demonstration given by members, Mel Ridge and Mel White, an engaging nod to work by the Factory women. I would like to thank everyone involved, it was a fantastic effort.

In early May, we also had another successful workshop on Colonial Craft - Straw Plaiting series (part two), led by Lyn Watkins, paying homage to the work done by the Factory women.

Advocacy has continued with ongoing engagement with key stakeholders. We are currently waiting for further information regarding the submissions concerning future developments in North Parramatta.

Our Creative Initiative Grant applications have now closed. We have received some fabulous entries. The successful applicant and highly commended award will be announced soon.

We continue to contribute to engagement with our amazing heritage place and its many stories.

All the best and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Gay Hendriksen
President PFFF



At the Factory - the National Trust Australia Heritage Festival

Photograph - courtesy DPHI.

PHOTO GALLERY - NATIONAL TRUST AUSTRALIA HERITAGE FESTIVAL
Saturday 17th May



Photography - courtesy Gay Hendriksen.

Thank you to the Committee and to all our wonderful volunteers!

NOTICEBOARD

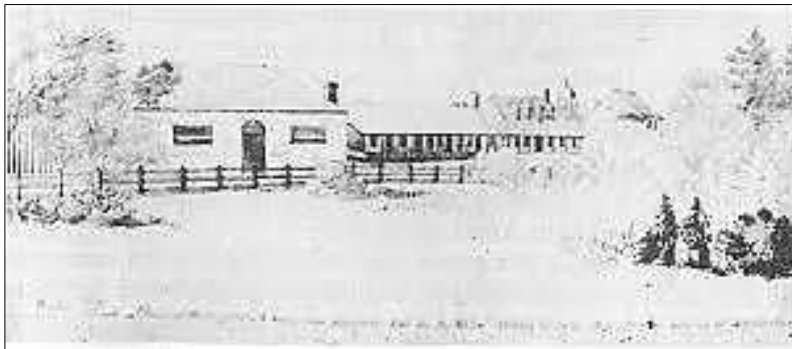
A warm welcome to new members: *Michelle Kingsbury, Nicola Hoskins-Murphy, Annette Fitzgerald, Kylie Swain, Lynette Taylor, Jennifer Mary Jones, Megan Lawrence and Jane Cain.*

- **NOTE THE NEW TIMES FOR MEETINGS:** Next Bi-monthly Members' Meeting Friday 20th June at **12pm** followed by Afternoon Tea - **1.30pm** Guest Speaker: TBC.
- **PFFF ANNUAL FEES** are due **1st July 2025** - please be aware that your renewal payment requires completion of the Membership Renewal Form which will be in your (e)mail box soon! Thank you for your ongoing support - Lorraine Henshaw - Membership Secretary.

HISTORY CORNER - The Boy's Orphan School - 200 years on...

Ronda Gaffey

One of the lesser known Colonial "Orphan" Schools is the establishment for boys at Bonnyrigg, c1825.



Sketch: School House - Boy's Orphan School - Mitchell Library, SLNSW.

By the early 1800's, there was an increased need to provide care for young children who were homeless, abandoned or orphaned through tragedy and children of convicts.

The first orphan school was established in Sydney in 1801. This was followed by the Female Orphan School at Parramatta 1813 - 1818 and in 1825, a new establishment for boys at Bonnyrigg. The latter was intended to combine social welfare and industrial training.

The complex was extensive and included a Master's House, staff quarters, dormitories, dining rooms, a school, a nursery, a hospital, a bakery and other workshops. There was an associated farm with numerous crops under cultivation.

The Boy's Orphan School closed in 1850 and was relocated to Parramatta.

Today there is nothing to indicate the historical significance of the site, though the Master's House, "Bonnyrigg House", c1825, designed by Colonial architect Francis Greenway, remains. It is located on the top of a hill with extensive views and it is privately owned. The house is State Heritage listed. Orphan School Creek is nearby, which does reference the area's early history.



Below: Bonnyrigg House today.

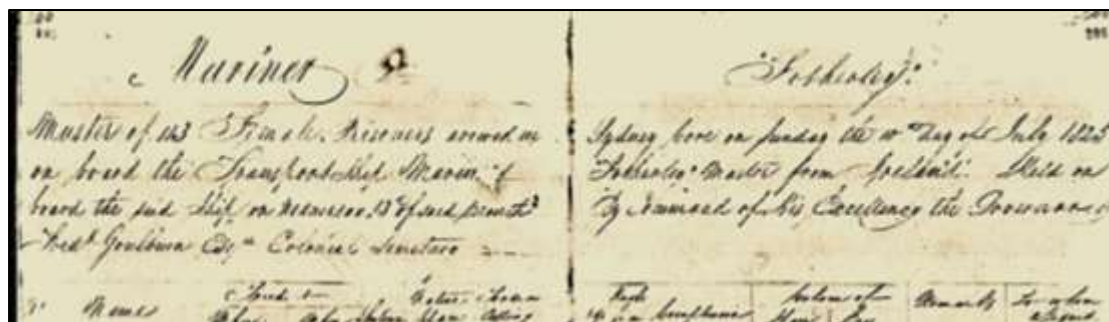


References:

Bonnyrigg House - Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org>

Vicious and Rebellious?: Life at the Male Orphan School, 1819-1850: Fairfield City Museum and Gallery 2005, NSW Department of Environment and Heritage; *The Male Orphan School* - notes by Anne Mathews.

The convict ship *Mariner* with its 'cargo' of Irish women, arrived in Sydney Cove on Sunday 19th July 1825. The Ship's Muster shows 113 women were landed and according to the Ship's Surgeon Superintendent, all were in good health. Following an inspection by Colonial Secretary Goulburn, the women were *drafted by water* to the Female Factory at Parramatta¹. Over the next few years, women were sent to numerous assignments as servants. Many of the older women from the *Mariner*, though described as *quiet* on the voyage, once here, reacted to their circumstances and tested authority as the following profiles reveal².



Cecily Toohey (aka Toohy, Tookey) was aged 46 when she was transported. She was from County Mayo and a dairy woman by trade. She is described as 5ft 2", with grey hair, a pock marked complexion and chestnut eyes. She was a widow with nine children. Perhaps she was understandably 'quiet' on the journey to NSW, having left a large family behind but within two years of arrival, Cecily, a mature age woman, was reacting to her circumstances³.



Cecily was reported for absconding from the Factory for the first time in June 1826 and then for a second time in April 1827. Her punishment was to be returned to 3rd Class after spending 24 hours 'in solitary confinement in the cells'. Undeterred and looking for any excuse to escape the Factory, Cecily made her escape from 3rd Class during the 1827 'disturbance' (the Riot) and is recorded as 'at large' in October, 1827. She was caught and returned.

Throughout 1829, Cecily faced numerous charges - in January 1829, she was punished for 'disobedience of orders' and sent to solitary confinement by Matron Gordon. In March, Cecily was up to further mischief in the Factory, being charged with 'concealing a quantity of rice' which brought the punishment of seven days in the cells. Researchers wonder whether the rice was for her own consumption, to sell or even for barter.

In September 1829, she was reported for a third time of 'running' from J. Henery of Sydney and once more, she was returned to the Factory. Cecily was assigned again in September the following year, however the reason for her return was noted as 'Not the servant required'. Cecily was returned to 1st Class. Why was she thought to be unsuitable? Was Cecily too old? Did she present with an attitude? What were her master or mistress's expectations?

Cecily's last offence was in August 1836 when she was charged with a felony - a charge which brought nine months in 3rd Class at the Factory. She was aged 56 and had been fighting the system for eleven years.

References:

¹Jenni Willetts - *Free Settler or Felon - the Convict ship Mariner*- online;

²Anne Mathews and Beth Matthews - *Our Girls* - unpublished work sourced from original papers, SRNSW;³ Ibid;

Colonial Secretary's Correspondence SRNSW; NSW Gaol & Entrance Books SRNSW; Convict records - Cecily Toohey - online, <https://convictrecords.com.au>

Mary Jane Hamilton was a widow from County Down. She was a milker, a butter and cheese maker by trade. She was tried in Monaghan, receiving the maximum sentence of transportation for *Life*, for stealing linen.

In the Ship's Indent Mary Jane is described as 'quiet'. She was aged 50.

Age did not deter Mary Jane and within a year of arrival, on 14 November 1826, she remarried - her spouse was William McFarlane, a widow, aged 47 per *Earl St Vincent*⁸. They married at St. Philips Church Sydney, both signing the register with their mark - x³.

Mary Jane received her Ticket of Leave in 1830. Her whereabouts subsequently, are unknown.

Margaret McKenna was one of the oldest women on board the *Mariner*. She was aged 59 when transported for seven years for the theft of clothes. She was a milker and butter maker by trade and described as 4ft 11" tall, fresh faced and pockmarked with dark brown hair and grey eyes.

She too had her moment of protest, being charged with 'refusal to work' at the Factory.

Rose McQuillan, aged 60, was the oldest woman on board. She was from Monaghan and a spinner by trade; her husband was a labourer; her sentence was seven years for the crime of pickpocketing. She was described as 'quiet' on the voyage and she appears to have stayed out of trouble after her arrival. In 1831, Rose gained her Certificate of Freedom. By then she was 66 years old.

With any convict woman, but with these older women in particular, we wonder why they committed a crime - we wonder about their circumstances in Ireland and, following their transportation with no hope of return, we wonder about their lives in the Colony after their final release from the Factory system.

CERTIFICATE OF FREEDOM.	
No.	11917
Date	1 September 1831
Prisoner's Name	Rose McQuillan
Ship	Mariner
Master	Fotherley
Year	1825
Native Place	Monaghan
Trade or Calling	Spinning
Offence	Pickpocketing
Place of Trial	Monaghan
Date of Trial	1 August 1826
Sentence	Seven years
Year of Birth	1765
Height	Five feet
Complexion	Dark
Hair	Grey
Eyes	Grey
General Remarks	Had a Ticket of Leave 11: 2436, dated 5 Sept 1829

Extract from the *Mariner's Indent* - the women prisoners arrived 'in good health..and have been favourably spoken of...' Signed, Harmon Cochrane Surgeon Supt., , William Fotherley Ship's Master.

References:

³ Marriage Record, St. Phillips Church Sydney; Convict Records - online, Seb, D. Wong; Ship's Indents - *Mariner*, Ancestry online; Biographical Database Australia (BDA) online; Additional research; John Gaffey; Ronda Gaffey.

There has been great progress recently on the ordering of our book resources. This work has been done by Leslie Richman, Philippa Crosbie, Pip Palmer, Matt Rutkin and Ange Hardy.

As always, Research Centre volunteers host in the Centre and deal with the many research inquiries and the recent National Trust Heritage Festival was a great example. We also hosted our most recent craft workshop on straw plaiting which was a great success and enjoyed by all the participants.

Our Factory women's list continues to grow so please keep those names and stories coming in. You can give these directly to us at the Research Centre or email to: parramattafemalefactoryfriends@gmail.com and put 'Research Centre' in the subject field. That way we can ensure they are shared with all Australians.

Connecting up

This is a new part of the Research Centre Muster, prompted by the many family history and research connections that happen in the Centre. If you are looking for a particular ancestor or have a particular area of research and you want to connect with others with the same interests, you can send me your interest and we will include it here in future newsletters.



Heritage Festival - 'Factory' descendants with Lyn and Gay.

A day in the life of...

In May 1825 there was plenty for sale and the Shipping Intelligence shows just how busy the Colonial shipping channels were. At least thirty ships including brigs, cutters and schooners, were anchored in Sydney Cove.

THREE AND SIX MONTHS' CREDIT.
 BY MR. S. COOPER,
 On Tuesday, the 31st Instant, and following Days, at 11 o'Clock precisely, without Reserve, on the Premises of Mr. S. LEVEY,
ALL the STOCK in TRADE ; consisting of
 12 and 15 yard calicoes, blue gurrahs, black silk handkerchiefs, silk and crape shawls, chests of hyson and hyson-skin tea, sugar, soap, pepper, saltpetre, gentlemen and ladies' shoes, crockery of all sorts, mugs and wash-hand basons, large blue cups and saucers, tea-pots, sugar basons, milk jugs, iron of sorts, beams to weigh two tons, with scales and chains complete, white, blue, green, yellow, and black paints, oil and turpentine, copal varnish, blue, black, and other coloured cloths, a few pipes of good port and Madeira wine, Scotch ale, in cask of 4 and a half dozen each, nails of sorts, nankeens and other China goods ; all of which will be Sold in Lots to suit Purchasers, at the above Credit, on Conditions of Purchases from £20, and upwards.

Shipping Intelligence.

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On Saturday last arrived from England, the Isle of France, and Hobart Town, the brig *Cyprus*, Captain Todd, with sugar and other sundries. Passengers, Capt. John Briggs, Mr. E. Cox, Mr. Wm. Cox, Mrs. Harris, and Mr. Earle.

Same day, the Australian Company's ship *City of Edinburgh*, Captain D. Mackellar, also from Hobart Town, having sailed originally from Leith, on the 16th Nov. with passengers and merchandize. Passengers from Leith;---Mr. Wm. Black, Mr. Wm. Forsyth, Mr. Shine Craig, Mr. J. H. Buchanan, Mr. George Brown, Mr. William Brown, Mr. D. Mackellar, Mrs. Mackellar, and 2 children, Mr. Lockart Millar, Mr. John Greig; Andrew Milligan, Dennis Sullivan, wife, and child. From Hobart Town;---Mr. Jeremiah Walters, Mr. Alexander Ferguson, and Mr. James Ferguson.

On Tuesday night arrived from the Isle of France, with a cargo of sugar, wines, &c. the colonial ship *John Bull*, Captain Thomas Reibey.

Remain in the harbour, the ships *Helena*, *Ardent*, *Phoenix*, *Valetta*, *Phoenix*, *Cumberland*, *Hoogly*, *Pocklington*, *Asia*, *Royal Charlotte*, *Lady East*, *Sir Charles Forbes*, *Hercules*, *Alfred*, *City of Edinburgh*; with the brigs *Active*, *Brutus*, *Woodward*, *Deveron*, *Nassau*, *Hawes*, *Fame*, *Governor Macquarie*, *Cyprus*, *Elizabeth Henrietta*; the schooners *Prince of Denmark*, *Elizabeth* and *Mary*, *Prince Regent*; and the cutters *Mermaid* and *Lord Liverpool*.

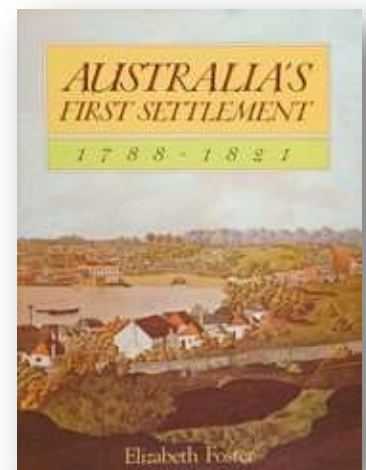
Good read and online history adventures

Australia's First Settlement 1788-1821 by Elizabeth Foster, covers what life was like up to the beginning of the Parramatta Female Factory and is highly recommended reading.

Digital resource:

<https://www.hawkesbury.net.au/claimaconvict/search.php> is a community developed website with lists of ships and convicts. It gives great details on the convict ships and includes information on convict men and women that have been uploaded by community members

Of course you can find these resources at the Friends rooms including the PFFF Research Centre and Babette Smith Collection – where we can help you help yourself in your history and family history discovery!



Members of the PFFF Research Team with staff at the NSW State Archives - receiving conservation training as part of the Friends' digitisation project. Photograph - courtesy Gay Hendriksen.

From the moment I walked into Lyn's Colonial Craft Workshop, I felt comfortable straight away. The ladies were welcoming and friendly. We helped each other, some ladies were new and some were returning.

While we plaited, we chatted and learned about each other's family history. Some of the ladies had a personal connection to the Factory and told their ancestor's story.

I had an enlightening experience, joined the association and left with only eight metres left to plait!*

Thank you Lyn for your inspiration and for facilitating this enjoyable and productive workshop and thank you to Lorraine for the catering.



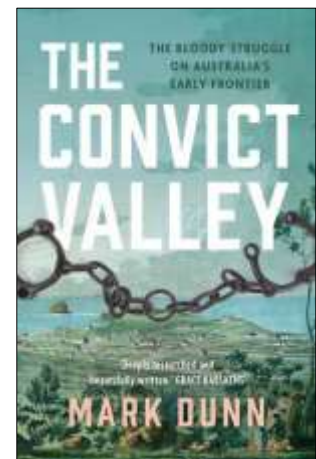
*At least nine metres of plaited straw is required to make the bonnet.
Thank you to new PFFF member Julie Swain for her article. Ed.

PFFF were most fortunate to have Dr. Mark Dunn as guest speaker in April. Mark is a professional historian whose area of interest and research has been the Colonial interactions of Newcastle.

For this talk, Mark's topic was the early story of Newcastle and included its foundation as a convict penal settlement. The story is a fascinating one and there are many links with Parramatta. For example, in 1831 following the Riot at the Parramatta Female Factory, over twenty female convicts were transported there.

And there was a serendipitous moment for me - Mark had an ancestor, Rose McGarry, who was involved in the 1831 Riot and transported to Newcastle along with one of my ancestors, Honora Harrington.

Thank you Mark for such a well illustrated talk and such a detailed history of Newcastle and the local area.



For further reference and reading, see Mark's publication: *The Convict Valley - The Bloody Struggle on Australia's Early Frontier*, shortlisted for the Premier's Award for Australian History, 2021. Ed. Photograph - courtesy, Kevin Dodds.

OUT AND ABOUT - TOUR OF GLEBE CEMETERY EAST MAITLAND

Lyn Watkins

On 4 May 2025 I was able to attend a tour of the Glebe Cemetery, Maitland. My interest was I have two convict ancestors buried there.

There is something which has always puzzled me about their burial, so I asked how come my ancestors both Catholics, were buried in an Anglican Cemetery? I was advised that there would not have been a Catholic Cemetery in the area at that time and the Catholics were buried just outside the border. Burials were also carried out under the cover of darkness, only to be discovered as a fresh mound the next day.

Matron Ann Gordon is also buried there, there is no tombstone for her but there is one for her descendent, Florence Jane Gordon. There is also talk that Francis Greenway was buried there.

The oldest recorded burial was Andrew Sparke who was interred in 1830¹. Beside their grave is a grave covered by a heavy metal fence laying flat on the ground with lots of grass over it, so you cannot read the headstone, if in fact there is one there. Apparently Francis Greenway was a neighbour of Andrew Sparke, so maybe it is him!



1.

Postscript: At the Heritage Festival Open Day, a visitor to the Friends' Rooms, was enquiring about Matron Ann Gordon - I asked what her connection was and she replied: *I am descended from her daughter Caroline*. Lyn was chuffed when they were introduced and there was plenty to share after her visit to the Glebe Cemetery the week before! Ed.

SERENDIPITY

concept by Janice Ruse Huntington

Postscript to Lyn Watkin's report and serendipity (page 10) - intriguingly, there was a further serendipity uncovered during a conversation at the end of Mark Dunn's Talk as Kevin Dodds relates:

In that quick discussion at the end, Mark and I learned that we shared this in common. We were both born in Newcastle, both have a lot of relatives in the Singleton area, both have common relatives in Singleton - and yes, we are related by marriage. What topped it off, we both played as children and most likely together in the famous Baiame Cave, as well as on the nearby Farm, which is my ancestor's property and still in the family - Glen Anne, Milbrodale.

Mark and I both have stories passed down to us from our early settler ancestors and their pacifist interactions with the Wonnarua tribe, which have not been written about. Some will change history and need to be told, so we may work collaboratively in the future with the Wonnarua nation's people to tell those stories, truth-telling.

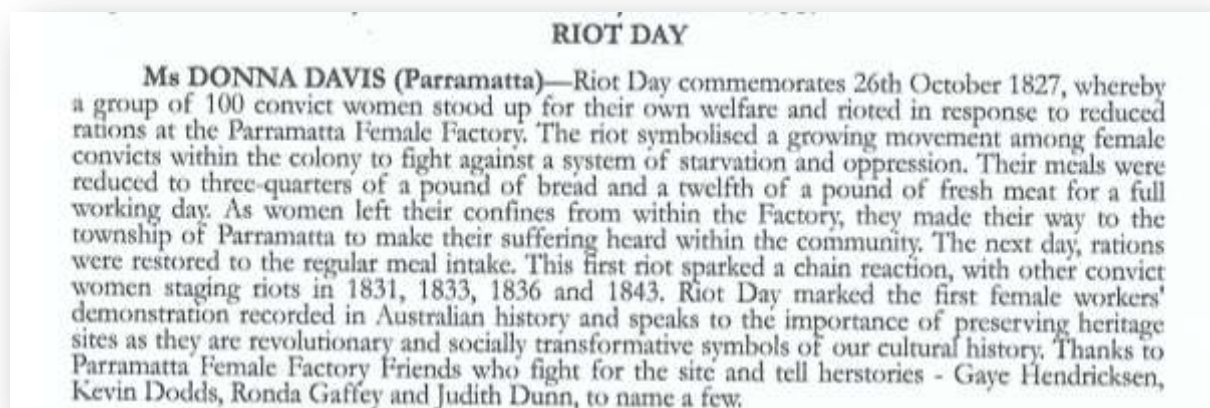


Above: Baiame Cave Right: Approach to Glen Anne.

Photographs - courtesy Kevin Dodds

STOP PRESS!!!! - HANSARD SAYS IT ALL! CONGRATULATIONS PFFF

Each sitting day, Members of the House (NSW) may give one minute Community Recognition Statements for a total of thirty minutes. These are recorded in the Hansard of the day. For State Member for Parramatta, Donna Davis MP, to recognise the PFFF in this way was unexpected and is so well deserved. Thank you Donna!



Entry - Legislative Assembly (NSW) HANSARD - 7th May 2025

Research notes: Kevin Dodds.

REGULAR & BESPOKE SITE TOURS - BY APPOINTMENT. CONTACT: TOUR COORDINATOR parramattafemalefactoryfriends@gmail.com
 BI-MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS 11AM. BI-MONTHLY MEMBER'S MEETING 12PM FOLLOWED BY AFTERNOON TEA. GUEST SPEAKER 1:30PM.
 PFFF RESEARCH CENTRE IS OPEN 10AM - 2PM every Friday. Research assistance by appointment.

2025	PFFF MEETINGS - EVENTS &	ANNIVERSARIES
June	Friday 20th Bi-monthly Members' Meeting Guest Speaker	15th June - Maitland FH Conference AGM PREPARATION
July	Newsletter 18th Committee Meeting Open Day - Macquarie Anniversary Fri 11th July Workshop July 11th - Using AI As a Research Tool Andrew Redfern Members' Morning Tea- Saturday 5th July.	Wed. July 9th 207th Anniversary - Gov. Macquarie laid the foundation stone for the <i>new</i> Factory.
August	Friday 15th AGM Bi-monthly Members' Meeting	History Week (16 th - 24 th August)
September	Newsletter 19th Committee Meeting Saturday 12th September- Workshop - Member's Morning Tea TBC	NSW & ACT Assoc. of Family History Soc. Annual Conference TBC
October	Friday 17th Bi-monthly Members' Meeting Guest Speaker	
November	Sat 25th RIOT DAY - 198th Anniversary Event The Annual Thomas Keneally Lecture	Riots: 27.10.1827; 11.10.36
December	Newsletter 21st Committee Meeting Friday 14th Workshop TBC Friday 12th Bi-monthly Members' Meeting PFFF Christmas Party	Riot: 29.11.1831 Parramatta Foundation Day Festival TBC



Photograph - courtesy DPHI