



[www.convicttrail.org](http://www.convicttrail.org)

7/6 Carrington Street Wahroonga, NSW 2076

Email: [convicttrailproject2@gmail.com](mailto:convicttrailproject2@gmail.com)

ABN 85 653 347 076

## June 2017 Monthly Update

It is about this time of year that I start to wonder where did the time go and how can it be June already! As we approach the 30<sup>th</sup> June there is much to report on from the extremely busy month of May.

Firstly a very, very big thank you to the fabulous team of volunteers who assisted with our Heritage Festival walks. Five walks over five weekends in a row is a huge undertaking for an organization of our size and resources. It truly speaks to the heart of the Convict Trail Project, built from the ground up by passionate local organizations and individuals along the length of the road that so many freely gave up their time to help give voice to the history and trails of the Great North Road. Our very own board members Pam Wilson (Hills Historical society) and Jan Kofron (Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society) provided their services as tour guides along with Elizabeth Roberts the Convict Trail Projects Historian, Wollombi's Steve Sullivan, Stuart Gibson and Carl Hoipo volunteering their time to assist with these activities.

### Old Road Camp Site Heritage Festival Walk – Jan Kofron

Saturday May 20 saw the last of the Heritage Festival walks conducted by the Convict Trail Project. Though the weather had been rainy until the morning in fact it was a beautiful warm day. Seven people met at Hawkins Lookout at 10.30am and proceeded to the Road Encampment Site 1. The site is set high above the road. This meant the convicts were near to the work and also that the settlers and passers by were unaware of the site.

We explored the 13 groupings of stone and discussed the likely usage of each. This site contains a large number of fireplaces, which suggest that the convicts individually cooked their own food. If so the site is probably pre 1828. When we looked at the site from the entrance the absence of any tree regrowth points to the large number of men who inhabited the area for some years. The workforce came from No.4 Iron Gang and No 25 Road Party and they were present from 1827 to 1832. We then walked a little up the hill and then found our way down to Site 2. This group contains six more intact remains. The biggest grouping shows signs of clay mortar in its construction. It also has two fireplaces and may have been used by the overseer's.



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There was evidence of quarries at both sites and particularly at Site 2 the wedges where extraction had occurred was fairly obvious. Two of our number found their way down to the top of Courthouse Rock, which sits above the last curve in the road down to Wisemans Ferry. We discussed the differences in the two structures and Liz Roberts suggested that in fact maybe the two sites contained different groups of convicts i.e. Iron Gang at one site and the Road Party at the other. In her recent research she has found references to this at other sites. At the conclusion of the construction the stations were dismantled and the remains of the timber either sold to the local residents or sent back to stores. We are indeed fortunate to have such an undisturbed site available to provide us with some insight into the lives of the convicts working on the Great North Road. We thank Liz Roberts for her input to the morning.

### **Memorial to Road Gang 14**

May welcomed another attraction along the Great North Road with the unveiling of a memorial to the convicts known and unknown of road party 14 who were based close to Five Dock and worked on the construction of the road.

The memorial created by artist Shaun Kirby who worked alongside Alex Gillespie, recognises a largely forgotten chapter in Sydney's history. The memorial features five bronze wedges, representing pickaxes used by convicts in the construction of the road. The Memorial was featured in an article in the Daily Telegraph, which is available in full via a link on our Facebook page post 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Canada Bay City Council has been carrying out a beautification program with the installation of sculptures at various points within their city. The Convict Trail Project was invited to have input into the design brief for the art work to depict the building of the Great North Road, then to be part of a panel that looked at all the submitted design proposals and short-list a number for the council to choose from. The Convict Trail Project also assisted with the provision of convict names for the road gang and talking with media for the launch.

Our congratulations to and Canada Bay City Council all those involved in this wonderful memorial.

### **Out and About**

### **Road Inspection**

Elizabeth Roberts accompanied the Rural Fire Service on a road inspection in preparation for a planned hazard reduction burn between the road to Wisemans Ferry, Mangrove Dam and the Great North Road down as far as Circuit Flat Bridge. Elizabeth was pleased to report that the road and Circuit Flat Bridge are in good condition.

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### **Rio Tinto Funding**

I am happy to report that the funding from Rio Tinto has been approved and the partnership document has now been signed. Stay tuned for further information and meeting date for the next stakeholders meeting.

### **Neighbours on the Great North Road**

Elizabeth Roberts was invited to speak at the Dharug & Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society on her recent research into the families and migration from the Hawkesbury Region up into the Hunter Valley.

### **Social Media Update**

The month of May saw a continued growth in our Facebook page with our followers reaching 1600 people. Instagram continues to grow and showcase the Great North Road to a whole new audience.

The Great North Road website visitation has also grown with 2128 visitors to our site and 5322 pages viewed.

### **Upcoming Events**

***Engineering Heritage Sydney Engineers Australia Public Lecture: Darling Harbour Freeway founded in Sydney's earliest transport and industrial precinct***

**Speakers:** Dr Gavin Donald and Max Underhill

**When:** Monday June 26<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 6.00pm (tea and coffee from 5:30)

**Location:** Harricks Auditorium Engineers Australia, 8 Thomas Street, Chatswood

All welcome. Tea/Coffee from 5.30pm. If coming by train turn right after exiting Chatswood Station turnstiles.

For enquiries: [sydneyheritage@engineersaustralia.org.au](mailto:sydneyheritage@engineersaustralia.org.au)

### ***Rex Stubbs History Symposium – save the date***

The 2017 Rex Stubbs History Symposium will be held during History Week on Saturday 9 September 2017 Hawkesbury Regional Gallery more information in the coming months.

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### ***Membership is now due***

The Board of the Convict Trail Project would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their continued support as it continues to care for and protect the Great North Road. As a not for profit organisation, the Convict Trail Project relies on funding from its membership base, grants, in-kind donations and voluntary efforts to help it carry out this work.

Convict trail membership runs from July 2017 to June 2018. Membership is \$30.00 or \$25 for those with a pension concession card.

To renew your membership please be sure to provide the information below with your payment and return it to:-

The Convict Trail Project Inc.  
7/6 Carrington Street  
Wahroonga NSW 2076

Name:

Address:

Email Address:

No email Address:

Paying \$30.00 \$25.00 Concession number

If you prefer to make a direct deposit the bank account is BSB 032-189 account no 147474. Convict Trail Project Inc. Please identify by your name and email to [convicttrail@bigpond.com](mailto:convicttrail@bigpond.com).

Glynn Jacobs  
Project Director

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