

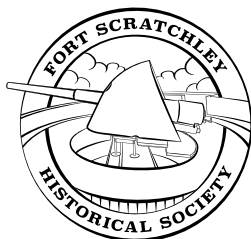
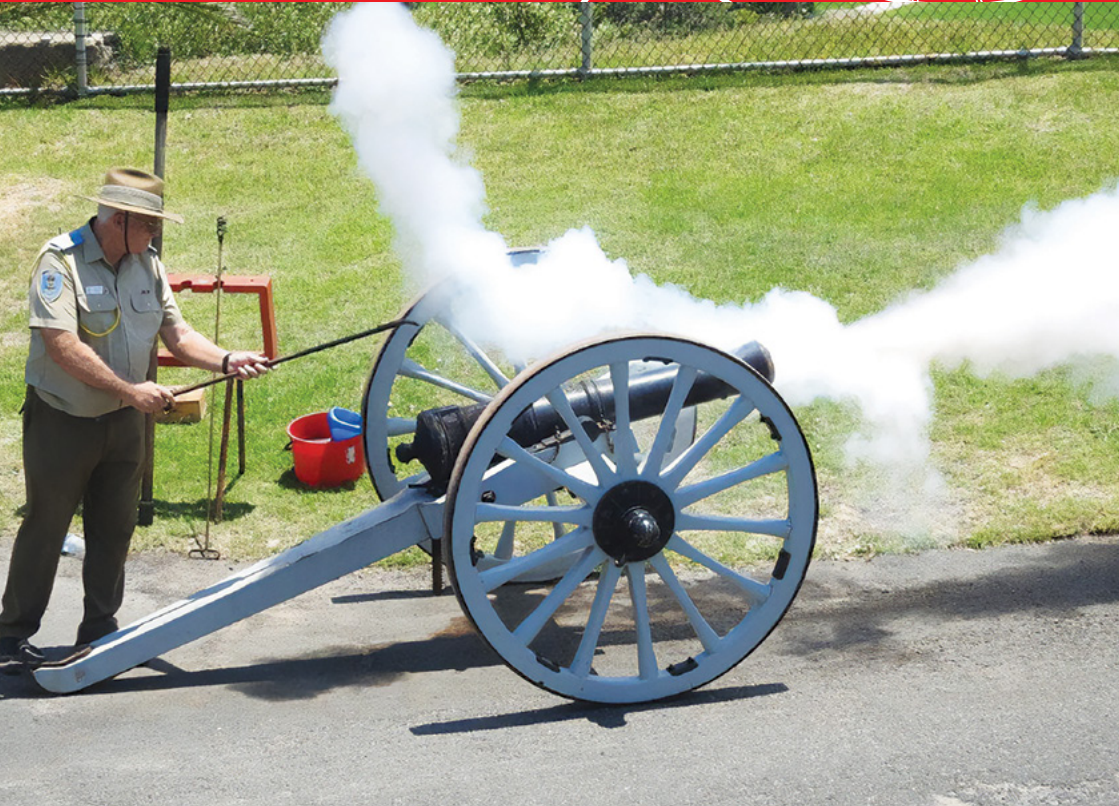
FORT SCRATCHLEY HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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# MUZZLE BLAST

FEBRUARY 2024



## Firing the Time Gun

Guide Wayne Trowbridge pictured firing the Time Gun on the 9th of December 2023.

[fortscratchley.org.au](http://fortscratchley.org.au)



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OUT OF THE SQUARE

## President's Report

Happy New Year to all Society members, I trust you had a safe and enjoyable festive season. I certainly enjoyed a few days away from the Fort.

Since my last report, a few things have happened. We have secured a \$50,000 grant from the Newcastle Port Community Corporation Fund. This grant will allow us to fund the completion of museum rooms 5 and 6 along with the medals display in the new Guard House. It is now up to Ron and his team to do the hard work.

December saw us visited by Channel 9's Travel Guides team; cast and crew were onsite for the entire day. You will be able to see the end result shortly after Easter.

Into the New Year and Newcastle played host to the Around the World Clipper Race, which involved a fleet of 11 yachts with professional and amateur crew sailing around the world. The Fort was asked to fire one of our guns to start the race leg from Newcastle to Airlie Beach and willingly provided our 1882, 80pdr gun to start the race. We also fired three rounds from No 2, Mk VII to salute the yachts as they passed the Fort.

Lastly, it is very pleasing to report that in the last 6 months we have welcomed 44,132 visitors to the Fort. This is an increase of 10,259 to the previous 6 months. Tunnel tour numbers are also up by 532.

Until the next edition,  
Frank.



## Disposal of 50 Calibre Machine Gun

Many Society members would not know that prior to becoming the Fort Scratchley Historical Society we were known as the Fort Scratchley Military Museum. As such our collection policy was much broader and many items accepted are no longer relevant to our collection policy.

Recently we started to identify items which could never be displayed and look at what could be sensibly done with them. One such item was an aircraft 50 calibre machine gun.

Contact was made with Fighter World to ascertain if it was of interest to them and this enquiry brought immediate response. This weapon was fitted to Mustang aircraft flown by the RAAF in the Korean conflict, and they would love to have it on display at Williamtown. Then followed the bureaucratic process to allow the handover.

With everything finalised in early December the weapon was handed over to Warrant Officer Paul Clarke from RAAF Williamtown Aviation Heritage Centre where it will be displayed.

We are now in discussions with the National Maritime Museum regarding transferring a radio from HMAS Vendetta.



## From the Curators Office

Over the last few years, numerous illustrated story panels and display cabinets have been developed and installed in various areas of the Fort. The area which took the most research and time is Museum Room 4, which tells the story of the WWII Newcastle Defence Area with a major emphasis on the role of Fort Scratchley.

The members of the Fortress Newcastle Project conducted a great deal of research for these displays. Our sources generously provided a wealth of additional facts and detail for us. Much of this information is incorporated into the story panels in the room.

Members of the Museum Team took responsibility for researching and developing the cabinet displays:



*Soldier's Kit and First Aid*



*Communication*

**John Notley** – early research for AWAS cabinet and the cabinets displaying Newcastle Industries and volunteers such as the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC), Wardens and the like.

**Graham Danks** – the Soldier's Kit and First Aid items.

**David Morrow** – the Communications Cabinet.



*Homefront Newcastle, Wardens & Other Volunteers* AWAS



*Newcastle Industry and VDC*

## Gun Shed / Workshop - Neil Robinson

Since the last Muzzle Blast, our gun crews have been very busy with the October Labour Day Holiday, a successful day with all guns and crews performing well.

The effort by all the Workshop Team might go unheralded, but they perform an excellent job starting before 7am for Open Day shoots. It takes a considerable effort to transport and set up the 25lbr Bofor gun and display vehicles and both Mark VII's. Also, a special mention to the ladies who prepare our lunch. Thank you from all the team members. We enjoy it immensely.

Mention in Despatches also needs to be made to John Rodham and Bobby Pritchard for overcoming some issues we were experiencing with our aging attractions – the guns. Their combined efforts enable us to entertain and make lots of noise which is appreciated by all.

November saw us pull off the Music of the Guns presentation as the weather gods smiled once again. Guns 1 and 2 performed (in tune of course) a grand finale to the band's stirring performance. According to the critics and those in the know, it was one of the best shows for some time and the Gunners will gladly take full credit of course.

In the following weeks the guns and crews fired for the cruise ship Grand Princess, the welcome of HMAS Hobart, followed on the 9th of December by an Army Changeover ceremony. Another firing scheduled on the 20th being cancelled due to inclement weather.

The commencement of 2024 has seen the firings ramp up with the 9th of January firing for the Channel 9 Travel Show. This will feature on the TV network mid-year. On the 11th our 80lbr RML signalled the commencement of the Around the World Clipper Race and No 2 Mark VII farewelled the yachts with a 3 shot medley as they raced out of the harbour. On the 20th, we fired 3 rounds for the cruise ship Seven Seas Explorer. At the moment all guns are performing well which is a testament to the crews plus the attention and maintenance the guns are enjoying. Finally an acknowledgement to the Mark VII and 80lbr gun crew members Clay, Don, Ross, David, Carol, Neil, Peter, Jim and Di, John, Bobby and Rick - well done.

But behind us there's another chorus of guys who make up the 25lbr and Bofor crews, the mechanics and maintenance boys who support the operations of the workshop. I hope that they will be the feature of our next Muzzle Blast where we will highlight the vital role they perform.



*Image credit Marty Adnum – Out of the Square*

## Trivia Quiz

1. Who discovered the site known as Fort Scratchley?
2. What name was it given at that time?
3. What European name was given to the island off the headland?
4. What is this islands Indigenous name?
5. In what year did the building of Macquarie's Pier commence?
6. What year did military rule end in Newcastle?
7. When can you experience the field gun firing?
8. What year did Fort Scratchley open as a museum?
9. What was the name of the submarine that conducted the Shelling of Newcastle in 1942?
10. What is the name of the hill that Fort Scratchley is situated upon?

*Answers on last page!*



*Frank and Yvonne Williams with the lamp they have donated to the Fort Scratchley Historical Society.*



*The installation of new doors on the Workshop.*



*80 Lbr, starting the Clipper Race and the Gun Crew responsible.  
The gentleman in the blue shirt is John Charles from the Cruising Yacht Club.*



## Changeover Parade

On the 9th of December 2023, the Handover of Command Parade took place at Fort Scratchley. At this Parade 8 Combat Services Support Battalion (CSSB) became part of 5 CSSB.



The flag photos shown are of the 8 CSSB Rising Sun Flag being lowered and replaced by 5 CSSB's rainbow flag. The colours come from the various corps that make up the battalion.

16 Transport that was a part of 8 CSSB will now be called 16 CSST as part of 5 CSSB.



*Note: We acknowledge Lynn Farmer, Secretary 16 Transport Association for her assistance with information and allowing the use of the photos included.*

## Blast from the Past - Our Logo

The original of the logo which appears at the top left hand corner of your "Muzzle Blast" (April 1986) appeared on Australian Garrison Artillery letter-head about the turn of the century. A sheet of this paper was used by the late Allen Ridley when writing to LT. Colonel "Dick Mort". In 1981; the logo was photographed, enlarged and colourings researched.



*Original Logo  
Vol 5 April 1986*



*Present Logo  
Jan 2024*

*Item taken From Muzzle Blast Volume 5, 1 April 1986*

## Special Report

Well everybody here it is! Living proof that our President has seen the light. Yes, he has gone on the water wagon. It was at the Xmas luncheon at Wangi Wangi RSL, to which we had been invited as their guests. This was to show self-control and to be the perfect representative from Fort Scratchley Historical Society. I must say, I was most impressed by his self-control and willpower and congratulate him.

Unfortunately, I could not bring myself to show such dedication and self-control, so I took it upon myself to make up for our President's abstinence by socialising twice as hard. It was a tough job but I did my best. Well done Pres!

Your roving reporter.



PS: I think he fell off the water wagon rather quickly.

## Trivia Answers

- |                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Lt John Shortland  | 6. 1823                          |
| 2. Braithwaite's Head | 7. 1pm each day, except Tuesdays |
| 3. Coal Island        | 8. 2008                          |
| 4. Whibayganbo        | 9. Japanese submarine I-21       |
| 5. 1817-1818          | 10. Flagstaff Hill               |

# Management Committee

**President:** Frank Carter  
**Vice President:** Bob Harper JP  
**Secretary:** Rick Carter  
**Treasurer:** Frank Graham JP

**Committee:** Ron Barber  
Stephen Shaw  
Lionel Keevers  
Rod Davies  
Clay Campbell  
John Crosbie  
Geoff Gumbleton  
Cr Peta Winney-Baartz

## Editor's note:

If you have an interesting story or funny joke, please send it to the editor [c/-fortscratchley@bigpond.com](mailto:c/-fortscratchley@bigpond.com) or the Society Office.



No responsibility is accepted for any errors, omissions, or other shortcomings of this or other issues of this newsletter.

