

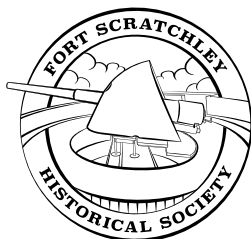
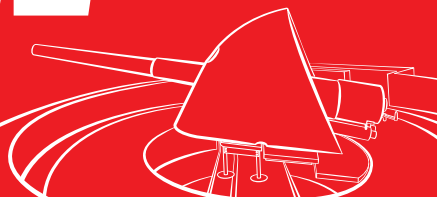
FORT SCRATCHLEY HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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MUZZLE BLAST

OCTOBER 2023



Melbourne Cup Visit

2023 Lexus Melbourne Cup visits the Fort.
Pictured left to right: Clay Campbell, Ross Southern,
Carol Hayes, David Worth and Peter Griffiths.

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PRODUCED IN KIND BY
OUT OF THE SQUARE

President's Report

Welcome to the latest edition of Muzzle Blast. As you read this Robyn and I are somewhere in the South Pacific enjoying a 5-week cruise. As a result, this report is an edited edition of my recent report to the AGM.

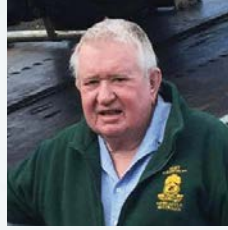
I would like to again thank the Society for my Life Membership announced at the AGM, it was certainly unexpected, and I appreciate the sentiments expressed at the time.

Regrettably 2023 saw the passing of our long-time Patron, Maj Gen Warren Glenny. Warren was farewelled by a full military funeral and was attended by Bill Hopkins and me.

Some highlights from the past 12 months include:

- Return of Music of the Guns and this again scheduled for 4th November.
- "Beat Retreat" for the NSW RSL Congress.
- Sculptures at Scratchley. The Fort will again host this event in 2024.
- Return of Muzzle Blast.
- Visit by 2023 Lexus Melbourne Cup.
- Out of the Square Media comes aboard as a major supporter of FSHS

Sculptures at Scratchley was a hugely successful event and brought an additional 22,000 visitors to the Fort.



The breaching whale is still onsite and continues to create interest. It is anticipated that it will remain on site until early next year when it will be relocated to its final home on the NSW South Coast.

Some interesting numbers for 2022-23:

- Total visitors for the 12 months – 94,277 (included 22,000 attending sculpture exhibition)
- Days did not open due to weather – 5.
- Days closed early due to weather – 8.
- Cruise ships – 8.
- Closed other than normal Tuesdays (no access available).

Supercars 12 and Triathlons 2.

Visitors taking tunnel tours – 9851.

One of the unsung things that the Society carry out is our outreach programme where we make volunteers available to act a guest speaker for organisations such as Probus, Rotary etc. As long as I have been associated with the Fort this role has been carried out by two people, Jim Raine and John Cater. I believe they have spoken at well over 200 presentations. WELL DONE GENTS.

On a less pleasant note, it has come to my attention that pilfering is occurring in the guides area and the workshop. I find this extremely disappointing given that we all work so hard to achieve what we do. Going forward I am talking with council about additional CCTV and should any member of the Society be identified stealing Society or other person's items the committee will have no hesitation in cancelling their membership and banning them from the site. I sincerely hope that it does not come to this.

Now back to more pleasant things. It is impossible to acknowledge every individual effort in keeping this site operating the way we do, however there are a couple of areas I would like to thank.

With our ongoing arrangement with Community Services, Bruce Annis Brown and his team continue to keep the grounds looking outstanding. Well done.

One of the main income sources is the shop and recently staffing has been a huge issue. My thanks to Steve Shaw for stepping up to the mark and ensuring that the shop continues to open. This is also a paid, political ad calling for more assistance in the shop.

I would personally like to acknowledge the ongoing assistance I receive from our two main council contacts, Julie Baird from the museum and Councillor

Peta Winney-Baartz for their support and advice during the year.

To all active volunteers my continued appreciation for your support and assistance. The President's role can cause me to become "agitated" from time to time and it is the friendship and continued guidance from volunteers that makes it all worthwhile.

To the committee my ongoing thanks for your assistance and I look forward to our Society enjoying another great 12 months. In closing I also wish to acknowledge my wife Robyn who puts up with all my frustrations. Last Friday saw us married for 50 years and so I am taking 5 weeks off during September and October to thank her.

Thanks to everyone, please stay safe but enjoy life.

Frank Carter - President

From The Curator: Change of Display Rooms

Following innumerable requests as to where the Nurses and AWAS displays were, the role of Room 8 and the New Guardhouse has been changed. The main area of the Guardhouse will be used for temporary displays and the Number 1 Cell is being developed to display medals, badges etc. The nurses and AWAS will be in Room 8.

Room 8 will have artefacts, photos, documents, etc. relevant to AWAS and Nurses. Some of the AWAS items are

currently on display. Two new female mannequins are to be purchased and dressed as a nurse and an AWAS.

The Room will be shared with the HMAS Newcastle display, which in the early New Year should have John Sharpe's model of her displayed in a new glass cabinet.

Ron Barber, Curator FSHS Inc.



Blast from the Past

The Military Museum Society

The first positive step towards the establishment of a military museum was a display of photographs, documents, plans and a few artefacts organised by Mr Bruce Dawbin, managing architect for the Department of Works and Housing, as a contribution to Heritage Week, 21 to 28 March 1981. The public visited the display in reasonable numbers and as a result a Steering Committee was set up to establish a military museum and it first met on 11 May 1981.

The Steering Committee, in order to launch the Military Museum Society, convened a public meeting on 10 February 1982. This was attended by some fifty people who elected a small interim Committee to institute the Fort Scratchley Military Museum Society, to draw up a constitution and to set up the nucleus of what has become a very interesting museum.

Mr Ernest Boulton, who has been elected as president at the inaugural meeting, did a fine job during the few weeks following to ensure a very worthwhile official opening by Major General J Whitelaw, AO, CBE, on 3 April 1982.

This date was chosen as being the exact centenary of the completion of the Fort to Colonel Scratchley's original design. The Newcastle Morning Herald, on 4 April 1882, reported that 'Yesterday the last of the heavy guns in connection with the fortification armament on Allan's Hill was finally placed in position'. (Allan's Hill was one of the many early names for the site of the fort.)



The above is a reprint of the first portion of Part II of Dick Mort's article as printed in the Muzzle Blast in August 1985 - Volume 4 Number 4.

Note: The Muzzle Blast at this time being the Official Newsletter of the Fort Scratchley Military Museum Society.

Grace Kelly

Grace served at Fort Scratchley from 1945 to 1946 and was then posted to Fort Wallace (Stockton). Later she served at Watson's Bay and then Melbourne.

In 1948 Grace and her long-time friend Maud O'Brien, another signalwoman returned to Fort Scratchley to volunteer as our first female guides, continuing in this role until their health caused them to retire.

Grace was born in Newcastle on 17th September 1923 and has just celebrated her 100th Birthday.

The Fort Scratchley Historical Society has invited Grace to fire the famous Mark VII 6"gun at 11am on Monday 2nd October 2023. Grace will be accompanied by members of her family who will bring her to the Fort.



*Grace Jones
Australian Army Signal Woman (Rtd)
Fort Scratchley 2nd September 2015*

Guns

Since my last report, we now have two new Life Members David Roser and David Worth. Peter Griffiths, who has just joined our crew is a new member and is keen to be on the 80 pounder. At the time of writing, we were hoping for fine weather on the Labour Day long weekend

in October. All seven guns will be firing on Monday 2nd. Coming up is our Cruise season and looking at the numbers, will be challenging. Also on our calendar is Music of the Guns being held on November 4th.

Clay Campbell

Melbourne Cup Visit



Images courtesy of Out of The Square

WHO SAID THE TIME GUN WAS TOO SMALL TO SMOKE?

For those who are not familiar, the time gun, a unique cannon at the fort, is fired 6 days a week by guides at 1pm. Originally used to signal 1pm for ships, it now sparks friendly rivalry between our gun crews and guides.



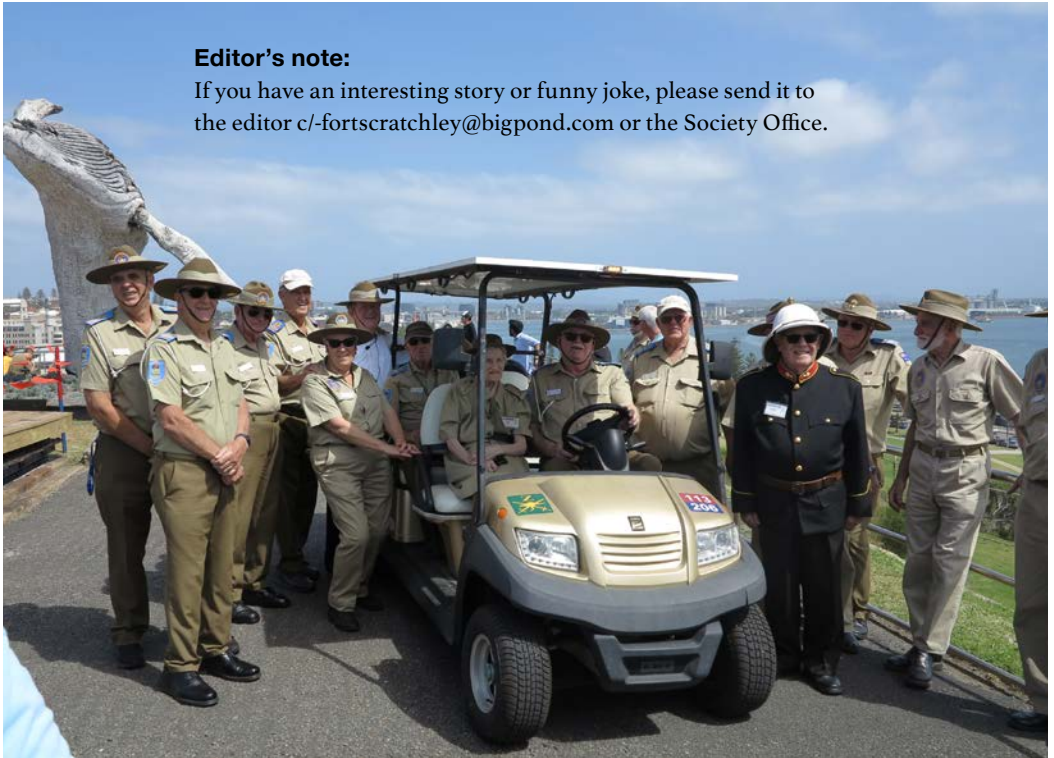
Management Committee

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

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

Editor's note:

If you have an interesting story or funny joke, please send it to the editor 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.

