

**Submission
No 246**

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Ms Barbara Gurney

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I am a resident of Eastwood NSW and am the President of the Clan Campbell Society of NSW.

As such, I have a keen interest in Scottish/Australian relationships and Thompson Square Windsor epitomises this issue.

It was in Thompson Square that two Scotsmen gave their greatest gift to Australia - that of the Fair Go.

One of those Scotsmen was Andrew Thompson, born in 1773 at Kirk Yetholm on the Scottish Borders.

In 1790 when he about 17 he pleaded guilty to two cases of housebreaking and stealing. He was sentenced to 14 years transportation to NSW and arrived on the Pitt in 1792 when he was just 19.

When he arrived he was at first appointed to run a stonemasons yard but in 1792 he was assigned to the Sydney Foot Police Force est. in 1790.

He was first assigned to Toongabbie and then in 1796 he was appointed by the second Governor, John Hunter, to the then named Green Hills (later Windsor) and was pardoned in 1798.

When in Green Hills, Thompson was given a small allotment in Bell Post Square where he built a store and his house in a garden.

Thompson was an enterprising Scot who soon began many businesses such as farming, ship building, trading, brewing, salt making, tanning.

He redeemed himself and sort to win favour back from his family in Scotland who scorned him for the embarrassment he had brought them.

Thompson became the wealthiest man in the Colony.

In January of 1810 Governor Lachlan Macquarie came to the colony of NSW.

Macquarie was also a Scot, born in 1762 on the island of Mull. He was a gentleman of the Scottish Highland family of clan MacQuarrie which possessed Ulva, Staffa and a region of the Island of Mull.

He had heard about Andrew Thompson from his predecessors and quickly appointed him Chief Magistrate of the Green Hills - the first time a convict had been given such a high position.

This action greatly angered a group of Free Settlers who called themselves the Exclusivists who regarded even pardoned convicts as people you might do business with but with whom you would never socialise.

Macquarie and his wife Elizabeth were friends of William Wilberforce and they were inspired by his ideas of emancipation and the Enlightenment. Letters exist of Macquarie's written to Wilberforce asking about the treatment of convicts and it was said by Wilberforce that convicts should be given every chance as long as they worked within the law and for the good of all.

Macquarie and Elizabeth had arrived in NSW with a strong desire to implement many of the ideas of Wilberforce and in treating the convicts well he felt he had achieved some of these goals.

Andrew Thompson died in 1810 after a lung disease he carried was reignited by spending 3 days rescuing settlers from the flooded Hawkesbury River.

A large funeral was held for one of our Nation's first heroes and the chief mourner was Lachlan Macquarie and his wife. Thompson was the first to be buried in the grounds of Francis Greenway's Church at Windsor.

In 1811, Macquarie and Elizabeth returned to Windsor and it was in the little Square that is now the centre of all efforts to be saved from destruction by our own government, that a wonderful thing happened.

Macquarie re-named Bell Post Square to Thompson Square and re-named Green Hills as Windsor.

In naming a public Square for a convict, not a King, or a Lord, or even himself, we have the foundation of our Nation's "Fair Go". Here, in this tiny patch of ground on the other side of the Earth from Britain, in a Colony barely clinging to the edge of a vast continent, the ideals of the Enlightenment were officially recognised.

A Fair Go for all - even a convict. A Fair Go for those who work honestly and for the good of all.

Recently the RMS in carrying out its Salvage Archaeology has unearthed the convict built brick barrel vaulted drains of Thompson Square.

They are in mint condition.

They were ordered to be built by Lachlan Macquarie who designed the Square.

The Square and the man sized drains are both tangible objects from our very earliest colonial days with indisputable connections to three of the giants of their age - two of whom walked the Square itself - William Wilberforce, an emancipist and politician, Lachlan Macquarie, a Governor, and a convict, Andrew Thompson.

Thompson Square is the only Georgian square remaining in Australia and the brick vaulted constructions lying beneath it are there to see, to touch, to enable us to connect to that marvellous event back in 1811 when Macquarie came to honour his friend in death and bequeathed a Nation an idea that would ring down through that Nation's history, sometimes loudly, sometimes softly ...but always.

Both the Square and the convict built drains MUST remain intact and in situ for all to see, touch and come to know this great story that occurred in this humble place so long ago in our young Nation's formation.

The heritage precinct of Thompson square, the historic bridge and now the marvelous tunnels must remain as a centre for tourism for the Hawkesbury and for the Nation.

The RMS must now either re-configure their bridge design to allow for the preservation of the tunnels or preferably should now embark on finding a path for a bypass bridge which goes around this wonderful piece of history.

To throw all this away makes our Nation look like it is run by vandals who have no idea of their heritage and who can't recognise when their own people NEED to keep their culture intact.

Thank You.