

WINDSOR BRIDGE: 140 YEARS YOUNG & STILL GOING STRONG

In an extraordinary response to birthday celebrations for the historic Windsor Bridge, over 1,000 local community members and enthusiastic supporters today flocked into Windsor, north west of Sydney, to celebrate the Bridge's 140 years of sturdy service to the Hawkesbury Community.

In an affair echoing the original bridge opening, the community walked across the bridge accompanied by 'Mayor McQuade' and his wife in a horse and cart, 'Marines', vintage vehicles and representatives of the RFS. The parade paused on the Bridge where the venerable Sydney Town Crier, Graham Keating, regaled in full period costume, introduced "Mayor " McQuade who performed a ceremonial cutting of the ribbon before the crowd again gathered in Thompson Square to hear further speakers and taste the 'fine roast bullock' being served.

A report at the time of the original event records, "This ceremony is a time honoured one in the Hawkesbury; and the inhabitants appear to understand how to roast a bullock to advantage." Judging by the enthusiastic response from all those munching on today's feast, this Hawkesbury skill has not been lost in the mists of time!

Below on the waters of the Hawkesbury River, to the excitement of maritime buffs, the long boat from the Replica Bounty, with mast and sail and accompanied by local canoeists, was there to witness the occasion. The Parade was led by a Lone Piper and accompanied by the Hawkesbury District Band.

Many had come in period costume, adding to the festive air created by flags and bunting. The costumes added authenticity to a performance by local actor, Sean Duff, who played the part of Mayor McQuade, delivering the words uttered by the original Mayor 140 years ago on 20th August 1874, amidst great fanfare and ceremony.

The crowd was further entertained by the Hawkesbury District Band before a traditional welcome to country by Darug Elder Uncle Greg and another resounding speech from The "Mayor".

CAWB Chair Mr Dail Miller says "The participation and support of our local businesses and the community has been particularly significant. There is little doubt that the Windsor Bridge still provides a vital and viable community link some 140 years after its original opening."

Member of CAWB, and long time local resident, Harry Terry said "It was great to see all the people in costumes and community members all participating in this wonderful celebration. "

Dail Miller

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