

HOBBS SEAL

HAWKESBURY LIBRARY SERVICE - LOCAL STUDIES FACT SHEET

The Hobbs Seal

The Hobbs Seal have been on permanent loan to Hawkesbury Library Service from the NSW Public Trustees Office since 2010. The following includes some of the information relating to the story of the seals.



It surfaced in the 1920s and was brought before the court for probate in 1931, setting off a string of rumours and innuendos.

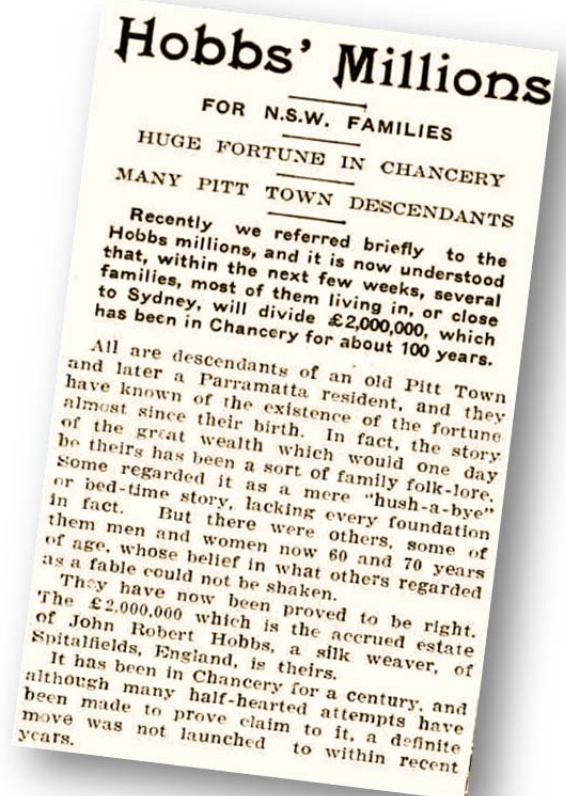
The publicity of the Hobbs Millions made Robert Hobbs famous, more so in death. No one ever received the Hobbs Millions (there were none) however the NSW Public Trustees Office kept Robert's file active and they still had in their possession the Hobbs Seals. For years they had lived in a small cardboard box in the office safe and had survived many audits and questions about what they were and what was to happen to them.

Robert Hobbs and his seals

Little is known of Robert Hobbs early life. He was born in England in about 1763 and following several early misdemeanours, he was tried at the Old Bailey for "stealing on the 20th September 1790 thirty eight pieces of calico, containing 760 yards, value £60 the property of Thomas Martin."

He was found guilty and transported to the penal colony aboard *The Active* arriving in 1791. He joined the NSW Corps and raised a family of nine with Bridget Eslin, a convict who arrived on the *Sugarcane* in 1793. The couple eventually married at St. Matthew's Church of England in 1815. Throughout his life, he held positions such as the District Constable and Pound keeper at Pitt Town. He lived a respectable life on his land grant at Pitt Town until his death in 1839.

Robert owned two gold legal seals plus a gold locket, all joined together with a gold ring – one is engraved with a hill, setting sun and the words "I Will Return". These seals were used by Robert Hobbs when sealing a letter or signing his Will – a will that was to be lost for 92 years after he died in 1839.



Part of clipping from *Windsor & Richmond Gazette*
26 December 1924 p. 8 Retrieved from
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page8930305>

Following interest by descendants including Bev Woodman, a research assistant from the NSW Public Trustees Office investigated Robert's life and the so-called fortune. The multitude of newspaper clippings on the "Hobbs Millions" that helped fuel the saga can now be laid to rest and filed away for future generations to marvel at the hysteria that continued for over 170 years after the death of Robert Hobbs. Trove contains many of these articles in the digitised newspapers collection which is available to access for free at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

On loan from the NSW Public Trustees Office

In 2010 the NSW Public Trustees Office offered the Hobbs Seal on permanent loan to Hawkesbury Library Service. The Hobbs seals are put on display every few years, around the time of the Hobbs Family Reunion. Descendants meet regularly and have a website and Facebook page, see details below.



More information

For more information about the Hobbs family:

Hobbs family website <https://au.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/HobbsFamilyReunion/info>

Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HobbsFamilyReunion2015>

Hobbs group email hobbsfamilyreunion@yahoogroups.com.au

Prepared by the Local History Librarian & updated 16/3/2021

Contact Information

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HOURS

Monday to Friday 9am-7pm
Saturday 9am-1pm
Sunday 2pm-5pm
Closed Public Holidays

LOCAL HISTORY CONTACTS

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<http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/library>
<http://www.facebook.com/HawkesburyLibrary>

Access the catalogue <https://aurora.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/library/>