

F.F.F. NEWSLETTER

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Please address all correspondence to the Fellowship of First Fleeters,
G.P.O. Box 4441, Sydney 2001.

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From the President

We are back into full swing this month with our first Executive Committee Meeting and first Lecture Night for 1979. (I am writing this in, and referring to, the month of February). I congratulate Mrs Sally Kalina, who once again has obtained for us very interesting speakers for our Lecture Night and also a couple of wonderful inspections — see last month's lecture sheet.

I started the month on the 1st as Guest Speaker at Epping View Club and the 7th at Campsie View Club. These addresses are proving very important in bringing the Fellowship before many hundreds of women and prospective members.

On Saturday 17th February a party of Members took advantage of an invitation to inspect St James' Church, King Street, the oldest standing church in Sydney. This was really a fascinating experience, and Professor Kenneth Cable proved to be a very able and knowledgeable guide. Those who did not go along were certainly the poorer.

Sunday the 18th saw me again at St James' to represent the Fellowship at the Golden Jubilee Service of the Women Pioneers Society, where I was made most welcome.

My Executive ask assistance from any Members who have proof of any First Fleeter buried on Norfolk Island. It is our hope to place plaques on any graves there in the very near future, so urgently want to hear from anyone with information.

It was with regret we accepted the resignation of Mrs Enid Reynolds as Hon. Secretary owing to pressure of work. Mrs Colleen Bernath has succeeded her, but Mrs Reynolds will continue on as Minutes Secretary. We extend sincere thanks to both these ladies.

Our Hon. Editor, Mrs Joan Ross, has "gone back to school" in order to qualify for Macquarie University to do a course there in Australian History. I'm sure you will all join me in wishing her every success.

Beryl Lewis.

NO ARGYLE DAY THIS YEAR

Please note that there will be no Argyle Day Celebrations this year in The Rocks. Many Members have been inquiring about it, and many have put aside goods of various descriptions for the Fellowship's usual stall. It is understood that Argyle Day will be revived, hopefully next year, but there is definitely no Argyle Day this year!

Lecture Evening, Wednesday 21st February 1979

Our first Lecture for the year was an inspiring one. The speaker was Sister Catherine O'Carrigan, Resident Historian for St Vincent's Hospital, the title of the talk "Sydney Cove — Genesis of a Nation". The topic, early Sydney, was a thesis Sister Catherine had recently completed through her studies at Sydney University, and it was a very pet topic of hers.

The Lecture began with a quote from Dame Mary Gilmore's poem "Old Botany

Bay" (for space reasons the poem has had to be run-on and not published in separate lines):-

"I'm old . . . Botany Bay; Stiff in the joints, Little to say/ I am he
Who paved the way, That you might walk At your ease today; I was the
conscript Sent to hell To make in the desert The living well; I bore
the heat, I blazed the track-- Furrowed and bloody Upon my back. I split
the rock; I felled the tree: The nation was Because of me! "

Sister Catherine gave us a sense of pride in our harsh early struggles, and her love of Sydney clearly showed throughout the Lecture. The slides were very interesting and unusual, from early Sydney to the 'seventies.

Sister Catherine was a speaker who gave a fresh approach to our Australian history; and one could not be unaffected by her enthusiasm and love of our wonderful country. We hope we will have Sister Catherine back in the near future.

Sally Kalina.

Membership Report

The following new Members have been welcomed into the Fellowship:-

Mrs Mary E. Hughes, Bensville. (Anthony Rope - Elizabeth Pulley)

Mr Patrick J. Sullivan, Paul J. Sullivan (junior) and Miss Julie A. Sullivan (Andrew Fishburn)

Mrs Laurel M. Flint, Tharwa, A.C.T. (William Nash - Maria Haynes)

Mr Raymond B. Ravenscroft, Richmond. (Phoebe Flarty)

Mrs Betty L. McAlister, Goulburn. (William Nash - Maria Haynes)

Wing-Commander Ian H. Whisker, Lane Cove, and Mr Keith R. Whisker, West Pymble. (James Squire)

Miss Belinda M. Kew, Blaxland. (Frederick Meredith, Ellen Fraser, James Shiers and Mary Smith)

Mrs Janice N. Fisher, Mt Pritchard. (John Herbert - Deborah Ellem)

Mrs Wendy V. Mather, The Oaks. (John Herbert - Deborah Ellem)

Miss Bernice B. Mawson, Manly. (William Tunks)

Mrs Marion E. Batchelor, Mr Peter A. Batchelor, Ian J. Batchelor (jnr) and Christopher A. Batchelor (jnr), Fisher, A.C.T. (James Wright)

We are particularly pleased to welcome descendants of another "First Flector", James Wright.

Naida Jackson. Mary Bailey.

Free Public Lecture on Captain Cook

Lord Crathorne, a trustee of the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum at Middlesborough, Yorkshire, will deliver a free public lecture at 6.30 pm on Thursday 22nd March in the Mitchell and William Dixon Galleries of the State Library of New South Wales, Macquarie Street and Shakespeare Place, Sydney. Lord Crathorne's address will be illustrated by slides, and is intended to trace the early life of James Cook and to place him in the context of 18th-century England and in relation to other prominent Englishmen such as Sir Joseph Banks. An extensive display of original documentary and pictorial material relating to Banks and Cook is in the Library. Captain Cook was born on 27th October, 1728, in the village of Marton, which now lies in Middlesborough. The Captain Cook Birthplace Museum displays and disseminates information about the life and work of James Cook, and about the countries he discovered and visited; and also provides scholarships and makes grants.

The Late Mr Roy Ryan

We regret to announce the death, on New Year's Day, of a Member of the Fellowship, Mr Roy Ryan, of Glen Innes. Mr Ryan always looked forward to receiving news of the Fellowship in the Newsletters. The Fellowship extends sincere sympathy to his widow, Mrs Dorothy Ryan, and family.

The Ballad of the First Fleet

By Howard Guinness. (This is the concluding part of this Ballad. The earlier sections appeared in the August, September, October and November issues of the Newsletter)

Elizabeth Farm was a lively example
Of what could be done by the hard-working kind,
Macarthur had brains and a boundless ambition,
His plans for the Colony clear in his mind.
He claimed complete freedom from all interference,
Despising the puppets the Governor wined.

The farm was a model the Colony envied —
Its fruit trees and vegetables, cattle and grain —
And soon there was added the dream of fine fleeces
To rival the costly Merino from Spain.
And lucrative trade in the currency, spirits,
He noticed with glee was the Governor's bane!

But in his success he exceeded all limits,
He crushed every person who stood in his way,
And even the Governors dreaded his schemings —
He fought with them all and excelled in the fray.
But darkness at last claimed this arrogant spirit,
Who sank into madness to finish his day.

More grass for the livestock was urgently wanted,
And Phillip's fair dream had included the west,
Where deep-gullied mountains forbade him a passage
Despite expeditions intent on the quest.
It waited a Blaxland, with Wentworth and Lawson,
To conquer the gorges by hugging the crest.

But hindrance to progress lay mainly in people
Whose selfishness always obstructed the road,
So few had the vision to think for the Country
And offer to carry their share of the load.
The spirit of love was the crux of the matter,
And this only God in his mercy bestowed.

But few wanted God to assist them develop
This "fabulous patch" between mountain and sea,
They'd do it without Him whatever the problems,
Alone they would hammer-out what was to be.
The anvil of labour would yield its own riches
And make their posterity happy and free.

The shadows were long, there was wind on the headland,
Posterity fought with an ultimate fear,
For science had patiently woven its magic,
Inducing a mushroom-like cloud to appear.
Perhaps the Great Spirit whose laws were unchanging
Was telling his children that judgement was near!

Wanted - a Typist!

The Fellowship urgently needs the services of a Member, or Members, who can type and who have the time available on either Tuesdays or Fridays, or both, to assist the Membership Committee and to do general typing. Any Member who can assist, please telephone either the President, Mrs Beryl Lewis (709 8974) or Mrs Margaret Markwell (95 5571).

Coming Events

- March 21: March Lecture, Mr S. Sweeney (expert on early graves and cemeteries), "Sydney's First Four Cemeteries".
March 22: Public Lecture by Lord Crathorne on Captain Cook (see P. 2).
April 18: Dr George Bergman, Lecture "Early Jewish Settlers".
April 22: Inspection at 2 pm of Great Synagogue, Elizabeth St., Sydney.

Address at Anniversary Dinner

(The address given by Professor Kenneth J. Cable, M.A., F.R.A.H.S., President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, at the Fellowship's 1979 Anniversary Dinner)

It is a great honour for my wife and myself to be here on this occasion, in the lovely surroundings of a hotel called after Australia's first great statesman, in the presence of Sydney's First Citizen and of the First Fleeters, and remember that First Fleeters are in a very true sense Australia's Senior Citizens. I can't claim to be one of your company, though I do bear the name of a not undistinguished member of the First Fleet.

I am not here just to compliment you on what is primarily your day — Australia Day. I am here as President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, and I am here to talk to you about history.

Membership of the Fellowship of First Fleeters is a rare privilege, but also a heavy responsibility. In a very special way you are the guardians of Australian history. Now these are exciting and indeed experimental times so far as Australian history is concerned; and therefore it is your duty, perhaps more than the duty of any other citizens of this State, to play your part in the development and expansion of Australian history. Now how can you do so? There are many ways. In a sense the main thing that you can do as the Fellowship of First Fleeters is to be what your name implies — a Fellowship. Maintain your fellowship, keep up your enthusiasm and preserve your co-operation to make sure the Fellowship really means something.

I spend a long time as President of the Royal Australian Historical Society in visiting local and specialist societies, and it always strikes me that one can tell the vitality and spirit of a society by the sort of fellowship it maintains. There are some societies which have a genuine regard for their members, for the welfare of their members, for the happiness of their members, and only those societies really work. For a society which maintains its fellowship is a genuine society, and none other is.

May I say how glad I am tonight to see around such a wide variation of age. When I visit a local society the first thing I always look for is the age spread. There are many local societies in this State, vigorous and enthusiastic though they may be, where not only the average age but the youngest age is 50! What are they going to be like in 20 years' time? Like many of you, they will not be there at all.

But the point is: Vigorous and energetic though they may be now, in 20 years' time they will have gone and nothing will succeed them, and it rejoices me very much to see in this company tonight so many younger members, so that you can get the continuity which is essential for the preservation of a society such as this.

Nevertheless, on the broader front it is very much your privilege and your responsibility to do as much as you can for the cause of Australian history. There are three fields in which this possibly can be done:

As recently as 20 years ago the Royal Australian Historical Society possessed only a handful of affiliated local, specialist and regional societies. Today it has 118 in New South Wales alone, and these, with generous help from local and central Governments, and supervised by the Royal Australian Historical Society, are doing more and more every day, every year, in the cause of research and publication, maintaining museums and keeping up public interest.

So now we have an enormous network of local societies, or specialist or regional societies, spread throughout this State and promoting knowledge of the history of our country. And not just knowledge — far more important, in promoting historical understanding and alertness and reverence. Understanding as to why people acted as they did, alertness

Professor Cable's Address (Continued)

in looking out for historical material and collecting things, of seeking out old people and gathering their reminiscences, and being sure that material isn't lost. And above all, reverence for truth, for being accurate in fact, being fair in assessment and fearless in judgment, never suppressing the truth or using history merely as propaganda. For in a way history is a moral thing, and local and specialist societies can use it in the service of their community.

So there is one way in which the Fellowship of First Fleeters can be involved. It can be involved in a very real way in this growing network of local societies spread throughout New South Wales and far beyond who are doing their best, often in a humble way, to advance the cause and understanding of Australian history. For we live in a community which is going to know a lot more Australian history than it does at present. Which brings me to my second point.

For years, of course, there has been some sort of Australian history taught in the secondary schools of this State. Years ago it was a pretty poor quality: simply learning in a somewhat mindless fashion the tracks of the explorers, or colouring-in maps, or learning the details of virtually meaningless Constitutions.

In more recent years, particularly in the Junior High Schools, the study of Australian history has improved enormously. It has become exciting, it has become interesting. There is great attention on local history, of getting the children to do history for themselves, of following out in many cases their family history as well, and as a result of all this, the Junior History Syllabus Committee has decided that all students in the Junior High School who are doing History at all will be required to do as part of their course Australian History.

Which means that, in the years to come, many thousands of children will find themselves doing a solid and interesting and exciting course in Australian History. Not just taking Australian History but doing it, being involved in investigating projects, being part of the past, and in this way becoming better citizens of the present.

And here again the co-operation of local and specialist societies such as your own is going to be of enormous importance. For only you can provide as it were the groundwork for the kind of searches which have been going on for some years and will continue to go on. Children can be encouraged, seeing you acting as an example of what a love for and reverence for history can do.

Now I have said "children" deliberately, for, for a great many years, only the younger children in the State have had a chance to learn Australian History at all. Unlike Victoria, where Australian History has dominated the senior scene for many years, the Senior School students of this State have never had the opportunity to study Australian History at an advanced level for the Higher School Certificate. And even in the old and perhaps better days of the Leaving Certificate, Australian History was a tiny and very restricted course, rarely attempted.

This senior level, the level of the 17- and 18-year-olds, is truly an excellent age to be studying Australian History. Students at this age are mature and experienced enough to be able to relate the past to the present. In many respects this is the most sensitive and sensible age for the serious study of Australian History, and yet it has never been attempted. So several years ago the Modern History Syllabus Committee, which looks after Modern History in the Senior School, began to devise just such a syllabus, and, as noted by your President in her speech, from this year a course in Senior School Australian History will be available for the Modern History students of this State.

I am indeed happy tonight to see that one of your own members, Jack Meredith, has long been an important and valued member of the Committee which drew up this syllabus.

(Continued on next page)

Professor Cable's Address (Continued)

It is a different kind of syllabus from that which younger students get; it doesn't work through the normal kind of patterns but tries to break new ground. What we have done is to divide some of the important elements of Australian History, from the beginning to the present day, in 10 different sections, and to say to teachers and students that they can do three or more of them within a year. There are themes which we think are very important and recurring ones in the history of our country.

One theme is migrants. We tend to think of migrants as people who arrived here after 1947. If you study migrants, you start with the convicts and you go to the Greeks and Italians and Yugoslavs who arrived last week. The first white migrants in this country were your own ancestors.

There is another theme on Aborigines, since it is now possible to study seriously the oldest inhabitants of this country. There is, of course, an important section on the history of women in Australian History. There is one on religion in Australian History, one on conditions of work and labour, another one, of which we are rather proud, called simply "The Australian". With regard to this last theme, What is it like to be an Australian?; what did it mean to be an Australian? - the answer is different at different times.

It is part of your responsibility - who are, in a sense, the real senior citizens of this society - to do whatever you can to encourage the study of Australian History in the schools. To give encouragement to particular people, to make yourselves available if senior school students want to see what descendants of the original convicts are really like. If it is a case of your becoming museum pieces, so be it!

For a great many years many of the historical memorials and monuments of this State, as elsewhere, have been ruthlessly damaged or destroyed, and only in the last quarter of a century have the National Trust and local societies, and the more enlightened local councils, and a vast groundswell of public opinion, gradually become concerned with the preservation of historical material. Still, for many years the study of Australian History in this State lagged behind many of the other States.

By the Heritage Act a Heritage Council was formed, and I have the honour, as President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, of being on that Council. I draw your attention to it because it is something of which you should be aware, and it is a field in which you, as First Fleeters, can help greatly.

The Heritage Council has extensive powers in preserving historical buildings. If it so chooses, it can advise the Minister to put an order of eight days, which will prevent any demolition or any alteration for that period. It may, if it chooses, advise the Minister to put a conservation order on an historic building which may last up to two years. And it may put on a permanent order which may last in perpetuity. And there are quite heavy penalties for those who disobey these orders -- such as the developer who accidentally leans his bulldozer on an historic building on a Sunday night and is duly contrite next morning; he can lose development rights on that piece of ground for 10 years.

That, of course, is the negative side. The positive side is that the Heritage Council can encourage people to preserve, can provide technical help to mobilise public opinion, to mobilise local bodies and authorities. It can grant tax and rate rebates for people who own historic buildings and find it difficult to keep them up, and this is a real problem. It can make loans and grants of money to people for that purpose, and it can even purchase buildings.

But it can't do everything. It needs support, needs to know where historic buildings are, and what might be going to happen to them, unless we watch it. We need your help and support. So, while it is fitting indeed that you should be here to celebrate Australia Day, you must take part in the changes I have noted, and thus help to honour and reverence those people whose descendants you are proud to proclaim you are.
