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From the President

Firstly I extend sincere thanks to our two Vice Presidents, Mr Roy Kable and Mr Roderick Best, for carrying out my duties whilst I was in Adelaide. It is good to have two such willing helpers.

My visit to Adelaide was primarily to attend the Second Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry at the Adelaide University. This was an outstanding success, with over 220 delegates attending. Much was learned by all present. Each seminar was well attended, and the speakers were excellent. The paper I presented was very well received and gave rise to some interesting questions and discussions. Most of the papers have been printed in book form, and contain a wealth of information. They are available at \$15 each (plus postage) from the host society: The South Australian Genealogy & Heraldry Society, P.O. Box 13, Marden, South Australia 5070.

A highlight of the Congress was an official dinner on the Saturday night, when amidst scenes of great jubilation and excitement the Premier of South Australia announced "public access to the records" in South Australia to historians and genealogists. This is a first for Australia, although one other State is expected to announce a similar arrangement very soon. I can only add, May New South Wales soon follow.

It was particularly pleasing to meet other First Fleeters attending, and I feel this can only foster better relations between Societies from every State, New Zealand and Great Britain, to meet in an atmosphere of common interest and learning. We each have our place in present-day society -- one complements another -- and this certainly shone through in the happy fellowship in Adelaide. A committee was formed to look into the use of mini computers in genealogy, something which must come in the future.

Following the Congress the Annual General Meeting of A.F.F.H.O. was held. Mr Brian Brooks (a past President of the Family History Group in Britain) attended as an observer and chaired the meeting for the election of officers. I was honoured to be re-elected a Councillor (the only one in New South Wales).

Since last reporting to you it has been my privilege to be a guest speaker for the following groups: Maroubra and Bexley View Clubs, Drummoyne Rotary Club, South Australian Women's Group (City of Sydney) and Turrumurra Primary School, which held an Australiana Week. I was delighted to see the interest and response of these children. Their Headmaster, Mr F. Gray, is certainly setting a fine example.

With other Executive members I attended the Official Opening of the exhibition at the Bank of New South Wales, Sydney, "1788 to Gallipoli."

It was a great pleasure to attend the launching of Mrs Valerie Ross' book "Matthew Everingham -- a First Fleeter and his times." Dr David Armstrong

President's Report (Continued)

spoke in glowing terms of this book. Nine years of hard work and research have gone into this publication, and I certainly congratulate Mrs Ross, a fellow "First Fleeter."

On Saturday 3rd May I went on a coach trip (as a member of the R.A.H.S.) to the Captain Cook Commemoration. It was a very inspiring ceremony, and I commend it to Members. This is an annual event.

I have been asked by the Executive Committee to appeal to Members to contribute articles, of historic or genealogical interest, for printing in our Newsletter. If we all share our knowledge and experience we make things so much more interesting for our Members. Also, we would like your reaction to a section of the Newsletter being devoted to a "Can You Help?" column, to help families in contact and research. The appeals to be open to any financial member. Do let us know your thoughts on this.

In closing I thank those Members who responded to my appeal for donations towards the plaques at The Rocks and the First Fleet memorial at Circular Quay. A progress list is printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Beryl Lewis.

Membership Report

The following new Members are welcomed into the Fellowship:

Mrs Joan E. M. Grider, Glen Waverley, Victoria. (Frederick Meredith)

Mrs Nola Brunton, Carlingford, NSW. (William Tunks)

Mr Raymond V. Mullins and Mr Geoffrey P. Mullins, Greenacre, NSW.
(Andrew Fishburn)

Mr John D. Herbert, Mr Brendan P. Herbert and Mr David J. Herbert,
Deniliquin, NSW. (John Herbert and Deborah Ellam)

Miss Marea F. Herbert, St Kilda, Victoria. (John Herbert and Deborah
Ellam)

The Membership Committee looks forward to meeting any new Members at our monthly lectures.

Membership Committee.

Donations Towards Plaques

Donations have been received from the following Members towards the cost of the plaques at The Rocks and on the First Fleet memorial:

Dawson, Mrs N. E.

Friend, A.

Hunt-Smith, Mrs Betty (W.A.)

Kable, Mr R.

Lewis, Mrs B.

Meredith, Mr R.

Montgomery, Mrs

Rowe, Mrs

Whiley, Mrs M. C.

In forwarding her donation, Mrs Hunt-Smith, of Quinn's Rocks, W.A., said that, while she enjoyed living in Western Australia, "I do miss Sydney in many ways, particularly when I read about your various interesting activities."

"Matthew Everingham, a First Fleeter and his times"

Copies of the above book are still available from the Fellowship. Please contact the President, Mrs Lewis, on 709 8974. Copies available at a concession rate through the Fellowship.

Constitution Available

The Fellowship's Constitution has been reprinted (updated version) in a small neat book, and is available to financial Members upon request.

Lucas Family Get-Together

On Sunday 15th June (Queen's Birthday Weekend) the descendants of Nathaniel Lucas and Olivia Gascoigne are invited to a family get-together at Worrenora Dam, located 55.8 km south of the G.P.O., Sydney.

The turn-off to the Dam is just south of Waterfall, on the Princes Highway. Hours of opening -- 10 am to 5 pm. Please bring your own lunch. Barbecue facilities and hot water available.

Any enquiries, please contact Rhonda Kroehnert, 14 Fitzpatrick Crescent, Casula 2170. Phone Sydney 602 4657.

Hope to see you there.

Lucas Descendants

Come on, Lucas descendants, send in those Family Trees for our Bi-Centenary Book. Post to: Betty Taber, 3 Garuwa Street, Fingal Bay, via Nelson Bay, NSW 2315.

Death of Sir Bruce Small

The death occurred on 1st May at the age of 84 of Sir Bruce Small (John and Mary Small). Sir Bruce, who made his fortune through the Malvern Star bicycle, was best known in Australia for his promotion of Queensland's Gold Coast, particularly with the bikini-clad meter maids. He was Mayor of the Gold Coast for six years, from 1967. A flamboyant, popular but sometimes controversial figure, Sir Bruce had the further distinction of being the oldest person elected to an Australian Parliament for the first time, when he won the Queensland State seat of Surfers Paradise in 1972 at the age of 76.

The First Emancipist

(One of the Chateau Tanunda "Historical Firsts" Series)

Australia's first emancipist was John Irving, who was given an absolute pardon by Governor Arthur Phillip on December 15, 1791, only a day before two other men and a woman received similar pardons.

In his instructions for management of the Colony issued in 1787 Phillip had been given the right "to emancipate and discharge from their servitude" convicts he considered deserving, but final authority to do so apparently became official only when he received the Royal Warrant and seal along with an affirmation of these powers in September 1791.

The Governor had anticipated the warrant when he issued a general order in February 1790 making public his decision to emancipate Irving and appoint him assistant surgeon at Norfolk Island. For his "unremitting good conduct and meritorious behaviour" Irving was "a proper object of Royal mercy," the Order declared.

Irving had been convicted for larceny at Lincoln in 1784, and transported in the First Fleet. He appears to have begun his service during the voyage, as an assistant to the surgeon aboard the convict ship "Lady Penrhyn." On arrival he took on similar work at the little hospital erected in Sydney Cove, staying there until his transfer to Norfolk Island. After returning from Norfolk Island he was posted in 1791 to assist Surgeon Arndell at Parramatta, where he died in 1795.

Irving's Warrant of Emancipation has pride of place in the register of pardons, but within a day several others had also been emancipated. Bricklayer James Bloodworth, who had worked on most Sydney Cove buildings and trained other tradesmen, was one; John Arscott another for his "valorous behaviour" in helping save the ship "Sirius" from burning. A woman who married a superintendent also received an absolute pardon, and 14 convicts were awarded conditional pardons for their work on the ship "Guardian" before and after its wreck.

Throughout the history of convicts in Australia several forms of

The First Emancipist (Continued)

emancipation were practised. Pardons were issued primarily for good conduct, services to the Government or acts of bravery, and later to convicts who agreed to become constables for a specified period.

Few of the emancipists returned to England. There was no Governmental assistance after emancipation for repatriation, but there was for settling in the new Colony. Only absolute pardon carried the possibility of return; for others to do so was a capital offence.

Most of the convicts were assigned to unpaid work, either for the Government or for free settlers and officials who had businesses or farms. One early form of recession of sentence, introduced by Governor Hunter, was the "ticket of leave," which released convicts from assignment, gave them the right to earn a living by charging for their services, and at the same time saved money for the Colonial administration.

Tickets of leave became common, but had restrictions. Holders were not allowed to move from one district to another without the permission of a magistrate, could not own land, and could not sue or be sued.

During part of the convict days, women were often granted tickets of leave upon arrival in Australia, if they had husbands in the Colony, or dependent children, or were unable to support themselves. Tickets were issued freely until the 1850's, more than a decade after transportation to New South Wales was stopped and after a probation system had replaced the old system of assignment of convicts to freemen.

Governor Phillip was sparing in using his powers of pardon, with 12 men and three women officially freed by the end of 1792. The age of emancipation probably began when Governor King took what has been called "the first significant steps toward giving well-behaved convicts the opportunity to lead useful and rewarding lives."

Governor Bligh issued only two pardons in his entire term of office, but Governor Macquarie was the most generous -- too much so, according to some of his contemporary critics. Macquarie issued about 2500 tickets of leave, 1500 conditional pardons and nearly 400 free or absolute pardons.

Controlling the Commissariat

(The first part of this article appeared in the February 1980 issue of the Newsletter. It dealt with the first two commissaries in the Colony -- Andrew Miller and John Palmer. Miller, who came out on the "Sirius" with Phillip and who for a short time was his secretary, was the first; his health broke down under the strain of the job and he resigned in 1790, dying on his return journey to England. Palmer, the purser on the "Sirius," became the commissary in June 1791. Besides issuing Government stores, Palmer was responsible for negotiating with merchants to buy in new stores; he also had to keep accounts and virtually act as banker to the Colony)

Palmer, sophisticated and self-confident, with a friendly personality, and good intellect, handled his great responsibilities well. He decided to stay in the Colony, brought out his family and built himself a fine house at Woolloomooloo. Here he entertained the highest gentry in the Colony. He was seated at the Governor's table on the night of Bligh's arrest in the Rum Rebellion. His support of the Governor involved him in difficulties with the N.S.W. Corps, but he was reinstated by Macquarie. However, the commissariat was restructured, and Palmer lost some of his power. But he remained an influential man in the Colony till his death in 1833.

Another First Fleeeter employed in the commissariat was William Broughton, who came on the "Charlotte" as servant to surgeon White. He was at first storekeeper at Rose Hill, but his most important work was done as acting deputy commissary of Norfolk Island. He also held positions in the commissariat in Sydney and Hobart. He was highly

Controlling the Commissariat (Continued)

praised for his honesty and hard work by Macquarie. Later he took up farming and stayed to found a family in the Colony.

Australia was fortunate to have men of such character to put in charge of the housekeeping requirements of the young Colony.

Joyce Cowell.

(Note: Joyce Cowell also wrote the interesting item "Schooldays with the First Fleeters," published in the April Newsletter. Her name was inadvertently left off the item)

Early Encounters Between Europeans and Aborigines in New South Wales

(More of Ena Harper's papers on the subject, reprinted by kind permission of Ashfield Historical Society and Ena Harper. The last instalment concluded with a brief description of Brickfield Hill, which was then the meeting place of the Aborigines in and around Sydney)

The Sweets of a Different Mode of Living

Corroborees at Brickfield Hill. South of modern Bathurst Street, George Street used to continue up a hill where clay suitable for bricks and tiles had been found on the eastern side. Below a steep incline between Bathurst and Goulburn Streets the ground sloped to a small stream in the vicinity of present-day Campbell Street. This was originally a wooded area. Huts for workmen had been erected nearby. It was in this area that the Aborigines held their dances and contests.

These gatherings provided a diversion for the Europeans in the monotony of daily life and the hardships they had to endure in the wild new land. In the early years one of the recreations of Sydney people was to take a stroll in the evening down the track that led to the brickfields, and while there to watch the activities of the natives. Sometimes they assembled to sing and dance. Tench speaks of their dances in his Journal:

"At their dances I have often been present; but I confess myself unable to convey in description an accurate account of them. Like their songs they are conceived to represent the progress of the passions and the occupations of life. Full of seeming confusion, yet regular and systematic, their wild gesticulations and frantic distortions of body are calculated rather to terrify than delight a spectator."

However, it seems apparent that the assembly of natives was very often to settle grievances. Here a kind of rough justice was meted out by violent methods. Tench describes such a case where the man tells the tribe how he has been wronged. After listening to his story they agree to support him and seek revenge. Then all are summoned to the contest.

"Battle ensues: they discharge their spears at each other, and legs and arms are transpierced. When the spears are expended the combatants close, and every species of violence is practised: they seize their antagonist, and snap like enraged dogs: they wield the sword and club; the bone shatters beneath their fall; and they drop the prey of unsparing vengeance."

As has been said, the area near Brickfield Hill became the chosen spot for such contests. David Collins speaks of this in December 1793. "The natives who lived about Sydney appeared to place the utmost confidence in us, choosing a clear spot between the town and brickfield for the performance of any of their rites and ceremonies; and for three evenings the town had been amused with one of their spectacles, which might have been denominated a tragedy, for it was all attended with a great effusion of blood."

It is obvious from various accounts that the Aborigines lived a violent

Early Encounters Between Europeans and Aborigines (Continued)

life among themselves. From all the evidence of the Journals the Aborigines fought amongst each other as much as they did against the settlers.

Aboriginal Attacks on Farms. In the early days of the settlement the Aborigines reacted to the settlers' cultivation of the land in various ways. There are many accounts of stealing by the natives. In June 1792 Collins says that, in addition to the depredations of the convicts, the natives had for some time been suspected of stealing the corn at the settlements beyond Parramatta. On the 18th a party of about 16 Aborigines was observed coming out of a hut at the middle settlement, dressed in clothing they found there, and taking with them a quantity of corn in nets.

In their desperate struggle to survive they took to stealing whatever foodstuff or crops they could, and soon acquired a taste for the white man's food. Collins tells of their liking for corn (May 1795).

"The natives appeared in large bodies, men, women and children, provided with blankets and nets to carry off the corn, of which they appeared as fond as the natives who lived among us, and seemed determined to take it whenever and wherever they had the chance."

As a result soldiers were sent out from Parramatta by Captain Paterson to kill as many natives as they could find, and erect gibbets with the hope of striking terror into the rest of the tribes.

The above account gives some idea of life as it was in the western suburbs area where farms had been established between Sydney and Parramatta and beyond. As can be seen, the situation was almost chaotic as far as the native population was concerned. In February 1796 Collins wrote:

"Those natives who lived with the settlers had tasted the sweets of a different mode of living, and, willing that their friends and companions should partake, either stole from those with whom they were living, or communicated from time to time such favourable opportunities as offered of stealing from other settlers what they themselves were pleased with."

There are accounts of depredations on farms in various localities in the Sydney Gazette of 1804. In August there is an account of an incident at Georges River.

"In the vicinity of Georges River several depredations have recently been committed by the natives on the settlers' stock, grain and other property. At the beginning of the last week the farmhouse of Gilbert was attacked, and his wife treated with barbarity, unpardonable in the most savage race of men. The poor woman, perceiving that they were driving her little flock of poultry off the ground, reproached them with their injustice, and fain would have rescued a portion of her property; but the unfeeling wretches turned their spears upon her, nearly twenty of which they threw, but happily without the intended barbarous effect."

"One of the miscreants ran into the house and seized a musquet, which she also grasped, and determined not to part with; she maintained a short struggle against the assailant's whole exertions, who at length yielded to her resolution and quitted his hold, but with a violent blow on the head brought her to the ground. The wretches then took away everything that was portable and made off."

As will be seen, desperate times drove both parties to desperate measures. Settlers defended themselves by firing on the natives with muskets, and sometimes formed punitive parties. The military were at times called on, but there does not appear to have been any wholesale massacre of Aborigines in defence of the farms. (To Be Concluded)

Coming Event: June 18 - Mr Robert Irving, Senior Lecturer, Department of Architecture, University of N.S.W.: "The Lost Windmills of Old Sydney."
