

# Founders

Magazine of the Fellowship of First Fleeters

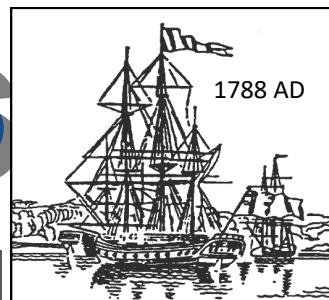
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PATRON: Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

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To live on in the hearts and minds  
of descendants is never to die

## WELCOME TO DEAD CENTRAL

Our headline has nothing to do with an imagined closure of Sydney's main Railway station due to lack of trains and passengers, but rather an impressive, so-named historical display recently opened in the Level 1 Galleries at the State Library of New South Wales.

Fellowship members, from their reading of **Ron Withington's** book *Dispatched Downunder* will be well aware of the significance of 'dead' in the title. The whole area of Central Station, bounded by Elizabeth, Devonshire and Pitt Streets and Eddy Avenue, was once the site of Sydney's second official burial ground, Sandhills Cemetery, in the area known as Brickfields.

This was the main cemetery for Sydney from 1820 to 1888, consecrated by **Rev Samuel Marsden** at a ceremony at St Phillip's Church at 11 am on 27 January 1820.

The area encompassed was more than 11 acres and was fenced by a brick wall. The oldest section, facing Elizabeth St South was first used for all burials and then just for those under Church of England rites. Later the rest of the area was designated for other denominations.

Considering the year the cemetery opened it is understandable that it became the final resting place of many First Fleeters. In summary, records indicate that 46 First Fleeters were buried there, made up of 35 convicts (22 males and 23 females), 10 Marines and 1 seaman. There were no known children.

The cemetery finally contained more than 5000 memorial stones, ranging from humble markers to ornate monuments, erected over forty-eight years from 1820 to 1868, the year of the last burial. When it officially closed in 1888 the estimated final capacity approached 30 000 burials.

By 1900 the grounds had become neglected and it was said at the time 'a thick, disorderly, and in some places almost impenetrable scrub covered most of the ground and tombstones lay scattered in careless confusion all over the place - where standing, they presented grotesque attitudes like a party of drunken men crossing a field'.

By 1901 the NSW Government was planning to use the site for Central Railway Station. Descendants were invited to have the headstones relocated. Many, including those of 10 identified First Fleeters, went to the Bunnerong Cemetery at Matraville, with others going to Rookwood, Woronora,

South Head, Gore Hill and Waverley, the Government meeting the cost of the relocation. It was announced at the time that everything had been cleared from the site of the Sandhills Cemetery which eventually was totally occupied by the Railway Station.

The Fellowship has conducted two dedication ceremonies installing plaques to honour First Fleeters buried at both Sandhills (16 October 1988) and at Bunnerong (26 June 1988).

(continued on page 3)



**FOUNDERS**

The magazine of the  
Fellowship of First Fleeters  
Editor, Layout and Artwork  
Jon & Karys Fearon  
Ph. 02 4311 6254  
E-mail: jkfearon@iinet.net.au

**DIRECTORS 2018-2019**

**President/Chapter Development**  
Jon **FEARON** BA Dip Ed Stud (TESOL),

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Maintenance**  
Denis **SMITH** OAM

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Survey Drafting

**Minute Secretary/Library**  
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**DNA Research**  
Julie **WEBB** BA B App Sc Dip Med Tech  
Dip FH

**Note:** Other tasks are looked after by  
our team of faithful volunteers who  
are at First Fleet House on Mondays,  
Wednesdays and Thursdays.

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**PRESIDENT'S PEN****Jon Fearon**

Your magazine this issue continues a focus that began last time, when the life of one of the marines on the First Fleet, Isaac Tarr, was featured. Two more Marines have their stories told this time, one who died here in the colony at 28, the other who stayed in the service for seventy years and died in England at the age of 90.

Another link to last time is our lead story about the former Devonshire Cemetery which became Central Station at the turn of the 20th Century. If you happen to be in Sydney don't miss the Dead Central Exhibition at the State Library, where the change from graves to trains is expertly presented.

Those of you who belong to chapters will be currently attending your AGMs and electing your executives and committees for the year ahead. It saddens me and other directors when we hear of chapters unable to find willing volunteers to hold office and keep the FFF flag flying. Remember what we say, that the life of the Fellowship is clearly seen in the chapters.

And this brings me to a related matter. Below is your invitation to attend this year's AGM, which will be held at Windsor and hosted by Hawkesbury-Nepean Chapter in October. Our Articles of Association allow for 13 directors. So far only 10 nominations have been received. Currently the Board meets at First Fleet House on the 4th Thursday morning of the month and will welcome any willing volunteers to the table, whether descendant member, associate or friend. Half the current members also serve their own chapters in an official capacity but this is not a prerequisite. It just shows how keen we are! **JON**

**FELLOWSHIP OF FIRST FLEETERS****ACN 003 223 425****Patron: Professor The Honorable Dame Marie Bashir AD, CVO****Vice-Patron: Commodore Paul Kable AM, RAN, Rtd.****NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING****The next Annual General Meeting****Will be held on****Saturday 26th October 2019****Commencing at 11.00am****At: Hawkesbury Regional Museum****8 Baker Street, Windsor, NSW****AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Apologies.
2. To receive and confirm the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27 October 2018.
3. To receive the President's Report.
4. To receive and consider the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Accounts of the Fellowship for the year ended 30 June 2019
5. To approve the appointment of Professor The Honorable Dame Marie Bashir as Patron.
6. To approve the appointment of Commodore Paul Kable as Vice-Patron.
7. Election of Officers:
  - Appointment of Returning Officer,
  - Declaration of vacancy of positions and the election of Officers:
    - President, Vice-President, Treasurer & Committee Members (max 13 Officers)**
  - Declaration by the Returning Officer of the incoming Officers.
8. General business.

**K Thomas, Secretary, 27 June 2019**



(from page 1) A more recent opportunity to revisit the

relocation site at Botany occurred on 13 May 2016 when the First Fleet Memorial Garden was opened and dedicated at Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park.

The **Dead Central exhibition** at the library, which is open until 17 November this year, is a very modern curation, best appreciated using the free smart-phone app provided on entry. Viewers listen to the enacted commentary as they make their way around the seven sections of the display.

The first, **Hidden Histories**, introduces the concept and visitors are invited to visit the past and explore the maps, letters, paintings and photographs, each of which gives evidence of a story to tell.

**Consecrated Ground** focuses on the setting up of the cemetery in 1820. A historic map of Sydney from 1822 directs us to the site alongside a map showing aboriginal cultural sites at the time. There are accompanying art works from the period, including Taylor's 1821 panoramic view of Sydney, purposefully annotated.

In the third section, **Resting Place**, we read the general orders and can marvel at the miniature portraits of significant citizens buried there such as Mary Reiby and Simeon Lord. The spoken guide brings them back from their graves to speak to us. Here also are the health reports from the 1860s with Legislative Assembly proceedings and also excellent photographs of the site's later years as it fell

into disrepair.

The change from cemetery to station is featured in **Station for a City**, highlighting the long years of debate as to where to build a new station worthy of the growing city it was to serve. Most impressive are Norman Selfe's large birds-eye-view watercolours of a proposed city centre, (not Hyde Park, said the demonstrators) and the concerns expressed by many over the disappearance of old Sydney.

A large room is set aside for the fifth section, **Posterity**, where viewers can sit down and watch videos of underground station development juxtaposed with multiple headstones. The audio guide allows listeners to hear some voices from the headstones. In this room we can also see the Epitaph book of sketches and photographs by the heritage couple Arthur and Josephine Foster, dating from 1900 before the headstones were removed.

There are photos in **Exhumation** showing the dilapidated state of the cemetery and workmen removing headstones to the tram for delivery to Botany. The government gazette's extract highlights the decision to locate the station at Devonshire St as an adjunct to Belmore Park and an extension of the rail lines from Redfern.

**Birth of a Station** is the final section, where the focus, through photographs and newspaper cuttings, is the preparation and building in sandstone of 'the handsomest station in the world' The audio includes two minute chats with busy people and on display are the first train and a ticket issued on the day, 4 August 1906.

**Footnote:** Workers preparing the groundwork at Central for Sydney's new Metro recently unearthed, and archaeologists identified, the grave and remains of a draper **Joseph Thompson** who was buried in 1858. An advert calling for descendants found one such, Sydney Uni Professor **Penny Russell**, who is researching for her book about him. How's



## JAMES MCMANUS (1770-1798) and JANE POOLE (1768-1826) ~ Part 1

Author: Dennis James Thomas McManus PSM BA, Dip T and C P, M.B.Env. [dennis.mcmanus3@bigpond.com]

### James McManus 1770-1798 Summary

**Born:** Date and place unknown, about 1770. Likely to be in England or Ireland. Author would appreciate any information. **Occupations:** Marine Private 59<sup>th</sup>(Portsmouth) Company 1785-1791. Arrived on *Charlotte*. He was on Norfolk Island as a settler 1791-1792. Returned to Sydney and joined the NSW Corps on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1792 for 5 years. In 1794 promised a grant and in 1797 granted 65 acres at Mulgrave Place (now Agnes Banks) on the Hawkesbury River. This grant and other land passed to his wife when he died. **Died:** 15 April 1798. **Registered:** St Phillip's Anglican Church, Sydney. **Buried:** Old Sydney Burial Ground, George Street, Sydney - now the Sydney Town Hall site. **Married to Jane Poole:** Norfolk Island in November 1791. **Children of James and Jane:** Sarah (1793-1793) James (1794-1839) and John (1797-1873).

### UK background

In 1786 James was in the 59<sup>th</sup> (Portsmouth) Company serving as a Marine Private on the guard ship *Hector*. He may have joined the Marines in 1785. Prior to that we know nothing of him. I am hoping further information will come forward. I have contacted the Royal Marines Museum and the UK National Archives without success.

### James travels to Botany Bay

There is a discrepancy in the records as to which ship James travelled on. Some accounts say James arrived on the *Charlotte* and others the *Sirius*. Historian Mollie Gillen explains the discrepancy. James was in fact on both ships. He was on the *Sirius* but moved to the *Charlotte* on 19 March 1787 some eight weeks before the first fleet sailed. (Molly Gillen, *Founders of Australia, Sydney*, 1989, p. 233.) *HMS Sirius* was one of the two naval escorts for the First Fleet. The first Governor of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip, travelled on the *Sirius*.

When leaving, the *Charlotte* had 34 marine privates under the direction of Captain Watkin Tench. On the *Sirius* there were 43 marine privates. Prior to leaving England in early 1787 Tench was commissioned by John Debrett to write an account of the journey to the new colony. Four others were also commissioned to write accounts - Governor Arthur Phillip, Judge Advocate David Collins, (both on the *Sirius*), Lieutenant Governor John Hunter and Surgeon John White (on the *Charlotte*.)

All of these accounts and more are available as free e-books at <http://gutenberg.net.au/first-fleet.html> A word search has been made of all five First Fleet accounts. With the exception of Collins, none makes specific mention of

James McManus or Jane Poole. But they provide a first-hand view of the very same small world in which both James and Jane lived even if through a different prism to Marine Private James and Convict Jane.

### First account of James McManus in the colony

The first record of James in New South Wales is a sad one and there are three accounts. *"26 August 1790 confined for stealing a chest containing several articles, the property of Private Charles McCarty; 4 October 1790 charged with stealing 4 shirts value twelve shillings, 5 pairs of trousers value fifteen shillings, one white Dimoty waistcoat value one shilling and six pence, one pair of shoes value three shillings, one pair of stockings value one shilling, all the property of Private Charles McCarty ..... Pleaded not guilty. Evidence was given by Private McCarty, Acting Sergeant John Curry and Private William Charlton all of the New South Wales Corps. The verdict was Not Guilty."* (<http://www.gencircles.com/users/bshaw3/1/data/23>) The Australian History Research site says *"The next day McManus tried to cut his own throat in the guardhouse, but was prevented by Corporal James Bagley after scaring himself in several places. James Scott, a marine sergeant who kept a journal from 1787 to 1792, records that "Since his confinement he seems insane. For eleven days he took no sort of victuals, except a few spoons of flour and water".*

### 1791 - James decides to stay

On 21 September 1791 the *Gorgon* arrived in Sydney. The *Gorgon* was also assigned to transport officers, including Watkin Tench, and the marines back to England after 4 years in the colony (January 1788 to late 1791). Tench says of the event he "hailed it with rapture and exaltation" (Source: Tim Flannery, *Watkin Tench's 1788* p.210.) But apparently this is not how James McManus and another 62 marines viewed it for they decided to stay.



*Norfolk Island celebrates "Foundation Day" on 6 March each year, the day in 1788 when Lt Philip Gidley King landed on Norfolk Island. Image source: Australian History Research.*



### Government offer of land grants

Phillip's original instructions did not provide wide allowance of land grants. However, with the arrival of the second fleet in 1790, Governor Phillip issued an invitation to non-commissioned officers and privates to take up land. At that time every private soldier was offered an allotment of 80 acres if single and 100 acres if married plus 10 acres for every child. In the same 1790 invitation a bounty of £3.0.0 was offered to every soldier who enlisted in the NSW Corps. They were given a further assurance that "in the case of a proper demeanour on their part, they shall, after a further service of five years, be entitled to double the former portion of land, provided they chose to become settlers in the country.....to be subject to .. annual quit-rent of one shilling for every 50- acres." (Source: Tim Flannery, *Watkin Tench's 1788* p.129-130)

Tench says that 63 out of 160 marine privates accepted the offer to enter the New South Wales Corps and to take up grants at Norfolk Island or Rose Hill. On 5 April 1791 39 persons, sailors or marines, including James McManus, were granted 60 acres of land each at Norfolk Island. (Source: Cathy Dunn, 'Some land grants of 1791 Parramatta NSW and Norfolk Island')

### 1791 - James goes to Norfolk Island

Governor Phillip's Despatches for 1788-1791 show that James McManus was among 29 marines who sailed from Sydney on the *Atlantic* on 26 October 1791 to settle on Norfolk Island.

### 1792 - James joins the NSW Corps and returns to Sydney

We do not know why James chose to go to Norfolk Island. Was it simply because his land grant would be there? Was it related to the convict Jane Poole being there? Jane was sent to Norfolk Island on 11 November 1789. He probably first met Jane on the *Charlotte* on their journey out from England. They almost certainly knew each other before James landed at Norfolk Island because they were married within days of his arrival. We also do not know what happened to the grant offered on Norfolk Island, what he did while he was there nor why he left after a stay of less than 10 months.

In August 1792 James left Norfolk Island on board the same ship he arrived on – the *Atlantic* - bound for Port Jackson. On board was his wife Jane Poole and her daughter Margaret who is reported to have been born on Norfolk Island in 1789. The father of Margaret is unknown.

James joined the NSW Corps on 10 May 1792 while he was still on Norfolk Island and was discharged 10 May 1797. "The NSW Corps was formed in England in 1789 as a permanent regiment to relieve the First Fleet Marines. A fourth company was raised from those marines wishing to remain in NSW under Captain George Johnston, who had been Governor Phillip's aide-de-camp." (Wikipedia) Jane's seven year sentence expired on 19 August 1793 and we have the birth of Sarah who died in her first year in 1793

and James (1794-1839). A third child, John was born in 1797 (1797-1873).

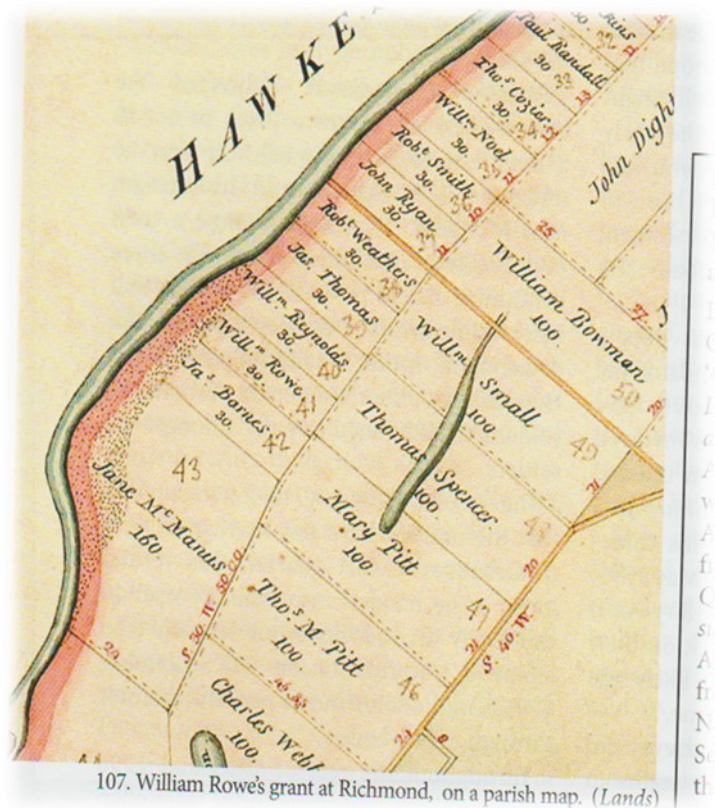
### 1797 - James receives his land grant on the Hawkesbury River

On 10 May 1797 (his discharge date from the NSW Corps; exactly 5 years' service started on 10 May 1792) James was granted 65 acres in the district of Mulgrave Place on the Hawkesbury River by Governor Hunter at a rent of 5 shillings after 5 years (R J Ryan, *Land Grants 1788-1809* p.84).

There is an excellent detailed book on the history of the Hawkesbury settlement by Jan Barkley-Jack - *Hawkesbury Settlement Revealed, A new look at Australia's third main-land settlement 1793-1802*, Rosenberg 2009. From this book we know the details of the grant to James and its later transfer to Jane.

James was one of 23 soldiers, 63 ex-convicts and 5 free settlers promised land at Mulgrave Place in 1794 by Acting Governor Grose. Barkley-Jack explains the 65 acres. James was entitled to 25 acres plus 20 for Jane his wife plus 10 for each of the children still living at that time – Sarah and James Jnr. Barkley-Jack says that James was one of two marine privates in 1794 to be promised acreage on the Hawkesbury based on a family – the other marine was John Atkins at York Reach.

### 1800 - Jane is given a grant of 160 acres.



107. William Rowe's grant at Richmond, on a parish map. (Lands)

Map, above, from Jan Barkley-Jack: *Hawkesbury Settlement Revealed*, Rosenberg 2009. p.294 showing the 160 acre grant to Jane McManus at Mulgrave Place. The 30 acre lots equate to grants to convicts in accordance with Philip's instructions.

(continued on page 6)



*(from page 5)* Jan Barkley-Jack (pp. 400-401) goes into some detail of the 160 acre grant to Jane and what happened next:

*The grant to ex-convict Jane Poole (McManus) registered in March 1800 was unique in the colony because of the caveat it carried. Governor Hunter had been particularly careful to ensure that no male could ever take over Jane Poole's grant. This was because Jane and her family posed a special case within the settlement. Like John Watts, a double acreage had been promised to marine private James McManus, when he enlisted as a member of the New South Corps in the colony, as it was to all such men. The army had a way of looking after its own in providing for their families even after they had died. Patronage links in 1800 had ensured Jane a 160 acre grant on behalf of her deceased husband James, to replace his smaller acreage given by Grose.*

*By 1800 Jane was farming in conjunction with Ridge, a transportee who arrived on the Atlantic on the Third Fleet. In 1798, two years after he had served out his sentence, Ridge had begun living on his purchased South Creek grant of William Butler. In the 1800 muster, the large McManus grant is listed as belonging to Ridge, although the governor's involvement, does result in the rare acknowledge-*

*ment that part of Richard's property was a grant to his 'wife'."*

*A daughter, Martha, was born in 1803, before the couple split, but by 1806 Jane is shown with four male and two female children. By 1809 Richard Ridge was renting in the Cornwallis area from Sarah Cooley, presumably part of Argyle Farm. He has married Margaret Forrester, the daughter of Robert and Isabella, and it seems Richard and Margaret later lived downriver on Richard's 1804 Portland Head grant, Richard later being a constable and provost marshal's bailiff.*

#### James' Death in 1798

James McManus died in 1798 cause unknown. Assuming he was born in about 1770 he died at about 28 years of age. He was buried on 15 April in the Old Sydney Burial Site in George Street which is now the site of the Sydney Town Hall. This cemetery operated from 1792 to 1820. The Burial Site Register compiled by the City of Sydney holds the names and some detail for 2,266 persons including 73 First Fleeters. James is listed as No 1340: *McManus James, No age, 1798, April 15, Settler*. The main source for the McManus entry is the St Phillip's Church Parish Register.

*(to be continued in the next issue.)*

#### Yarramundi Lane near Richmond NSW

Write a description for your map.



### MEMBERS' MESSAGE BOARD

**#7709 Lynne McDonald** advises that an **Ann Forbes Descendants Reunion** is planned for Saturday 21st March 2020 in the Hawkesbury.

Descendants of the Huxley and Dring lines will gather at **Australiana Pioneer Village** at Wilberforce from 10am to 4pm that day. The aim will be to celebrate Ann's life and descendants, also to connect, ask questions and put more of the family history together. Out of this event it is hoped an Ann Forbes Descendants Association will be formed.

Contact **#7105 Liz Germani** on 0414 924 980 for details.

### Donations received for House Upkeep:

Arch M I, Bannigan P J, Bates A E, Benjamin R, Bercene J, Best R C, Brown V A, Butler N, Coleman A C, Coleman S, Cridland S, Dean B G, Dingwall M, Doyle G E, Earl C O, Entwistle R, Ford W, Francis M, Hadley R, Haxton F L, Hind I W, Hitchcock B, Hunt I G, Jewell C, Kell M I, Kemsley J T, Leech R T, Legge R M, Leo R E, Lincoln D, Little I E, Manuel J A, Martin J, McBeath J, McKee I, McLean B Y, McPherson E, Menger S, Middleton B, Milne J B, Mitchell M, Morgan H G, Morton B J, Nelson M L, Norton G, Nunn S E, O'Neill B, Olivier C, Olivier F U, Orr R D, Pople M, Quick P A, Reed D J, Searchfield C, Searchfield M, Shaw S, Sloan E, Smith M, Snowden N, Solanov J P, Strange M, Symington N, Taylor P E, Theobald M.

**Thank you all for your welcome contributions.**



## JAMES MEREDITH, CAPTAIN LIEUTENANT OF MARINES 24th (PLYMOUTH) COMPANY

Available records indicate that **James Meredith** was born in 1754. The 1841 census shows that in retirement in Monmouthshire he was living with his son **James Henry**, born 17.7.1793, an officer in the Royal Navy. James senior was not born in that county.

His military service records suggest that he himself may have come from a family similarly employed. At 22, in April 1777 he was commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Marines in the 8<sup>th</sup> (Portsmouth) Company while stationed at Halifax Nova Scotia and the following year he was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant after serving on *HMS Magnificent* in the West Indies and Canadian waters. His promotion to Captain Lieutenant came in September 1782 after which he was Marine Captain on the Plymouth guardship, *Culloden*.

In 1786 he volunteered for the venture to Botany Bay and married **Elizabeth Baker Harvey** at East Stone House, Devon in November of that year, six months before setting sail on the *Friendship*, the smallest vessel of the First Fleet, on 13.05.1787. He was already at sea when his first daughter, **Eliza**, was baptised in the November of that year.

He was befriended by **Ralph Clark** during the voyage, agreeing with Clark on the use of severity towards convicts, who should be 'put in irons on the smallest fault'. Clark, despite the friendship, tended to be critical of many of his fellow officers, commenting that James had declined to meet the Spanish Governor at Teneriffe and that he was considered one of the more 'hard drinkers' among the marines.

Ralph Clark's diary is the main source of anecdotes relating to the James Meredith during his nearly four years in the Sydney Cove settlement. James Meredith seemed quite adventurous and was often 'up river' hunting with marine officer friends. Even before the fleet left Botany Bay, Meredith is recorded by several diarists as keen on fishing, how long he stayed out and with whom he was accompanied.

For Parramatta River excursions in early autumn 1788, his usual friends were Clark, **Captain Tench** and (surgeon) **Arndell**, the latter having been with him when the two of them lost their way in the bush, were out all night but not found by a search party and finally returned to the boat the next morning 'very fatigued'. On another occasion an indigenous spear man attempted to attack Meredith just after he left a short 'gift-exchange' to return to his boat. He apparently responded by firing his musket into a group of trees where his would-be assassin was hiding.

Several times during 1778-9 James Meredith was called by **Arthur Phillip** and **David Collins** for duty at the Criminal Court, while on other occasions it was Meredith himself who was wanted for various minor misdemeanours. The complainant in most cases was actually his supervisor **Major Ross**, who seemed to regard Captain Meredith's activities as often bordering on illegality. One time it was an accusation of stealing public garden pumpkins at Rose Hill where he and a party of marines were on duty and on another occasion, back at Sydney Town, he was accused of 'disturbing' **Sarah Bellamy** in her hut. The latter 'charge' was followed by a more serious incident that involved Major Ross's convict secretary, **Herbert Keeling** in October 1789. The angry Ross suspended Meredith as 'unfit for duty' and the matter was blown up in a court martial on his return to England where he hoped to successfully defend himself against his accusers.

The action was officially confirmed by the Governor himself in April 1790 when his

letter to Admiralty Secretary **Philip Stephens**, referred to the death of **Marine Captain Shea** and the suspension of Captain Meredith. With Arthur Phillip's letter was a Return of Marines that had been compiled by **Captain Campbell** and a list of the officers and Marines who wished to remain in the colony at the end of their tour of duty. Phillip himself made note that Captain Meredith had requested a court martial as he 'deemed his conduct to have been such as he could justify'.

Naturally enough, James Meredith's activities in relation to his work as a marine garner much more official comment than anything referring to his 'private life'. Despite his wife Elizabeth and Eliza both being 'alive and well' in Devon, Meredith lived with a common-law convict partner in Sydney, **Mary Hughes (AKA Mary Johnson)** from October 1789. Their son **James** was baptised on 9 May 1790, on the same day as another **Meredith, Frederick**, a sailor, had his daughter by the convict **Mary Allein** baptised. *(continued on page 8)*



St Mary's Church, Welsh Newton, Herefordshire



View of Nave, with wall plaque

**(from page 7)** Captain James Meredith left the colony for England on board the *Gorgon* on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1791, taking 18 month old James junior with him. Mary Hughes remained in the colony with her daughter **Mary** who was born 3 months after her father's departure. *Gorgon* reached Portsmouth on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1792, the Plymouth marines being then transferred to their home base Plymouth on board *HM Juno*. Captain Meredith of course was part of this transfer and once on home soil, his rank of Captain conferred on him at Sydney after the death of Captain Shea was confirmed.

The Meredith family, in its two locations during 1792 and 1793 suffered considerable sadness. James junior died first in Portsmouth in October 1792, four months into his time in England. His full sister back in Sydney, Mary, died exactly 12 months later. She too, as did her brother, had received a full baptism in St Philips church the previous year. All was not lost, however for the family's future, because on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1793, James and Elizabeth together again, welcomed their son James Henry into the family.

James Henry's birth was registered in the parish of Old Lakenham, near Norwich, where his parents must have been domiciled at the time. It is not yet known what took them there so soon after James's return to England. Perhaps there was a family connection to the area, or even a marine service appointment.

His impressive career in the marines continued without interruptions for the rest of his life, after his requested court martial in Plymouth in September 1792 was found in his favour. His name was cleared and the charge made by Major Ross those years earlier was declared 'groundless and malicious'.

In March 1794 he was promoted to brevet Major and in December of that year he embarked on *Hannibal* as Major of Marines. He served on her until the end of September 1800, mainly in the West Indies. During that six year period he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. *Hart's Army List* for 1841, the year of James Meredith's death, indicates further progress through the ranks of the Royal Marines : Colonel in April 1808, Major-General in June 1811, Lieutenant General in July 1821 and General in June 1838.



His death at his residence in Monk St, Monmouth on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1841 was recorded in the Monmouthshire press 'at the patriarchal age of 88'. His wife, Elizabeth had predeceased him by seven years. Her death notice in *The Merlin* of 9<sup>th</sup> August 1831 reads 'Died, on Tuesday night, aged 73, Elizabeth, the wife of General Meredith of this town. The demise of this esteemed lady, which was awfully sudden, is much lamented in the circle of her acquaintance.'

The couple are buried in their nearby village church, St Mary the Virgin, Welsh Newton, in Herefordshire, where they are honoured in a marble plaque on the interior wall of the historic 13th Century church. The plaque, pictured at left, below, reads as follows:

NEAR THIS SPOT ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF  
**JAMES MEREDITH ESQ**  
 A GENERAL IN THE ARMY AND A COLONEL OF ROYAL MARINES  
 WHO DIED AT MONMOUTH JULY 9<sup>TH</sup> 1841  
 IN THE 88<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF HIS AGE  
 HAVING HELD A COMMISSION IN HIS COUNTRY'S SERVICE 70  
 YEARS, 50 OF WHICH HE WAS IN ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT  
 IN ALMOST EVERY PART OF THE GLOBE  
 DURING THE MOST EVENTFUL PERIOD OF ITS HISTORY  
 ALSO OF **ELIZABETH** HIS WIFE  
 WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE AUGUST 5<sup>TH</sup> 1834  
 IN THE 75<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF HER AGE  
 BELOVED IN LIFE AND LAMENTED IN DEATH

The esteem shown by the local community for this couple can be gauged by the fact that they are buried in the church itself. The rolled back central aisle carpet reveals the inscribed flagstone showing their initials and dates of death.



#### References:

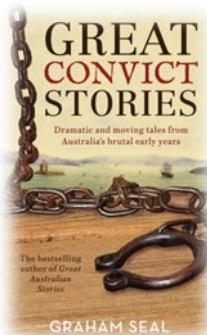
- Founders of Australia*, Mollie Gillen, Library of Australian History 1989
- Sydney Cove 1788*, John Copley, Hodder & Stoughton
- Sydney Cove 1789-1790*, John Copley, Angus & Robertson.
- Remarks on A Passage to Botany Bay 1787-1792*, Trustees Public Library of NSW, in Association with Angus & Robertson.
- An Account of The English Colony in NSW Vol 1*, David Collins, Edited by Brian Fletcher (RAHS) A H & W Reed
- The Journal and Letters of Lt. Ralph Clark 1787-1792*, Edited by Paul Fidlon & R J Ryan, Library of Australian History
- Journal of a Voyage to NSW*, John White, Edited by Alec H Chisholm (RAHS) Angus & Robertson



## NORFOLK ISLAND TO COMMEMORATE THE SIRIUS SINKING

**[Advertisement 1 - N.I. Travel Centre]** A warm invitation is extended to all Fellowship of First Fleeters members to be on Norfolk Island in March 2020 to witness events commemorating the **230<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the wrecking of HMS *Sirius***. As the flagship of the First Fleet, her March 19th 1790 wrecking records her as undoubtedly the Nation's most important shipwreck.

The exciting news is that a **very special week of events with special guest presenter Professor Graham Seal, author of *Great Convict Stories*** and Professor of Folklore at Curtin University has been organised by Norfolk Island Travel Centre. Graham will spotlight many extraordinary happenings and convicts, possibly including those who lived throughout this tumultuous event. Other presenters are history and folklore specialists Don and Sue Brian, who have uniquely collected the stories, songs and poems of convicts, whalers and others from this period; and museum staff with responsibility for the HMS *Sirius* collection.



Together, our presenters offer the opportunity to honour your ancestor's story, delve deeper into the writing about convict lives and stories and understanding the importance of this devastating event in the Nation's early history.

We highly recommend taking out the Optional 230<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Package that includes:

- Welcome dinner and presentation
- Four workshop presentations by Graham, Don and Sue and museum personnel
- 19<sup>th</sup> March special waterfront event under opposite the wreck site at Kingston, including a sumptuous luncheon, presentations and entertainment

### **[Advertisement 2 - Australian History Research and Heritage Tourism]** *Sirius Week Package includes ...Return 'Seat & Bag'*

airfare to Norfolk Island and all pre-paid Airline taxes from Sydney or Brisbane and Norfolk Island airport transfers.

Seven nights accommodation in one bedroom or two-bedroom self-contained apartments (Single - twin/double - triple share or quad). Motel style rooms also available.

Hire car to explore Norfolk Island (one car per apartment or motel room)

Discovery half day Norfolk Island tour.

Walk in the footsteps of your ancestors: Tour of old Sydney Town of the first settlement.

- Dedicated HMS *Sirius* tour by Norfolk Island Museum personnel.

- Four Norfolk Island Museum Pass including tag-a-long

- Fabulous farewell fish fry dinner with talk and entertainment with singing and island dancing.

Other optional activities include attending government House open day and a Cabbage-hat style making demonstration with Devonshire tea.

And why not extend your experience by beginning your journey a little earlier when **First Fleet Celebrations** start with Foundation Day on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. Foundation Day celebrates the arrival of 23 First Fleeters on the 6th of March 1788 when Norfolk Island became the second NSW colony settlement.

Please email Maria Massey for full details at [maria@travelcentre.nf](mailto:maria@travelcentre.nf) or call 1800 1400 66 for further information. Norfolk Island Travel Centre would love to help you be here in March 2020.



Enjoy the special day for the 230th Shipwreck anniversary of the Shipwreck *HMS Sirius* on Norfolk Island, including lunch with heritage guest speakers.

Discover modern day location of your ancestor's land.

Visit to the first Settlement burial ground 1788 and cemetery showcasing the 1<sup>st</sup> Settlement headstones.

HMS *Sirius* 230<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Souvenir Medallion and Booklet

Norfolk Island 1<sup>st</sup> Settlement Family History research zone

Norfolk Island 1<sup>st</sup> Settlement History and Family History research resources and primary records

Norfolk Island HMS *Sirius* Heritage Dinner

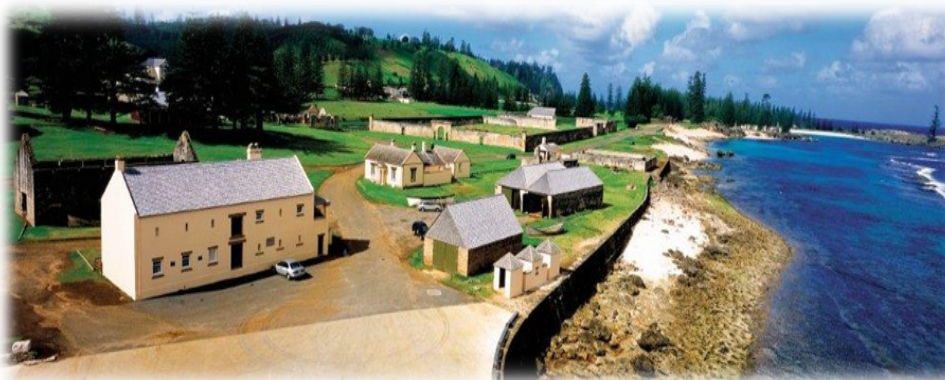
Personalised heritage and history guide and much more.

Norfolk Island is considered Australian Domestic travel. Flights leave International airports in both Sydney and Brisbane. A valid driving licence - photo identification or passport is required for travel.

Further enquiries contact Cathy Dunn (02) 44554780 email:

[office@australianhistoryresearch.info](mailto:office@australianhistoryresearch.info).

*HMS Sirius Week Norfolk Island March 2020* is a project of Australian History Research and Heritage Tourism

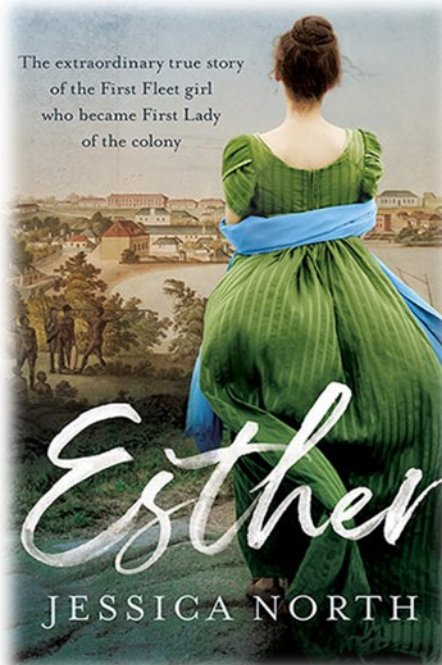


## BOOK REVIEW ~ *ESTHER* by JESSICA NORTH

With so many well-known histories of the first settlement years, particularly those written by family historians, it is surprising that only two books in the Family History section of the Fellowship library are about First Fleeters **George Johnston** and **Esther Abrahams**. So this new book by Sydney author, **Jessica North**, published by Allen and Unwin in 2019, particularly as it relates to Esther, is a welcome addition.

The author's thorough research over a ten year period has uncovered many interesting aspects of Esther's life and times and the attention to detail is readily discernible throughout the book. The *select* bibliography lists over 90 titles and the book is well indexed.

Instead of numbered endnotes or footnotes, Jessica has appended each of the thirteen chapters with a short account of the chief texts used to create the incidents that form the story line. This is a helpful approach where novelistic anecdotes have been included to flow the story along. As indicated this is a *true story* and the task in family history is always to make the story readable and the characters engaging. The author has partially achieved the latter with creative additions of her own. They work well because of the Chapter Notes, where specific sources are cited and the imagined segments acknowledged.



There is no doubt, however, that this is a family history rather than a novel where we would find characterisation further developed. As such, relations between Esther and George are not really taken to any depth. Some themes are developed, such as Esther's interplay with her indigenous friends and their families and her need to be accepted by the local emancipist citizenry.

A clever device used by the author is to link Esther's long-time friendship with the **Henry Kable** and **William Bryant** families and the more well-known incidents involving these fellow convicts are carefully interwoven into the storyline. The heroine's life is well set into the chronology of the times and the dated historical snippets make for easy reading. As such, the well-attested Irish uprising at Castle Hill and the arrest of **William Bligh** leading to Esther's becoming *First Lady* are obvious inclusions because of the Johnston's significant involvement in both incidents. Esther's Jewishness is underplayed.

In summary, it is an enjoyable book to read, with a textual style which engages the reader. Its 16 pages of col-

our prints on glossy paper are a worthy inclusion, particularly as some of the scenes chosen are not usually included in the literature covering the history of the period. **WJF**

## AN HEIRLOOMS REGISTER

### An excellent idea for chapters & family groups:

**#7787 Malcolm Tompson**, President of Mid North Coast Chapter, writes:

I have added an heirlooms register to our chapter website. Go to [www.fffmidnorthcoast.com.au](http://www.fffmidnorthcoast.com.au) and find the link on the Home page. This follows the list of First Fleeters started some months ago.

I have inherited several relics of the Boggis/Tompson family over the years and have wondered about others scattered through the family. While I possess these things, I feel I am only a caretaker and have a responsibility to make them available for others to see. So I have started the register and will encourage other family members to display their heirlooms on it. There is a sad case where a family member died who had possessed a family bible. She had only step-children who were not interested, so the bible has disappeared. Had it been on the register, there would have been some hope of retaining it.

The register is designed for first fleeters only and users

must nominate their first fleeter ancestor to enter/display an item. Photos are desirable.

As an example, you can see the heirlooms for my first fleeter by entering "William" and "Boggis".

*The Register entry lists : Item, Ancestor, Inheritor, Email, Location, Description and Image.*

*This is a letter seal owned by Charles Tompson, inherited by Malcolm Tompson, whose email is provided and location stated. It is described as 'A gilt seal with the Tompson coat of arms and the initials CTDV ie Charles Tompson Deus Vult (God Willing)'.*





# OUR CHAPTERS IN ACTION

## ALBURY-WODONGA DISTRICT – Both sides of the Murray River.

**Venue:** usually at Albury Library/Museum, Kiewa St. Albury, monthly meetings, third Saturday at 10:00 for 10.30 am. **Next Meetings:** 17 August: AGM and Speaker, TBA. **Contact:** Mary Chalmers-Borella 6025 3283

## ARTHUR PHILLIP – Milsons Point to Brooklyn and across to all northern beaches.

**Venue:** Meeting Room, Old Gordon Public School. 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon – monthly meetings, third Friday at 10.30. **Next Meetings:** 16 August: Mary Small, *Lennies' Ride*; 20 September: Jo Harris OAM, *Wales to Wahroonga Wireless*; 22 October: John Jeremy, *Cockatoo Island Dockyard 1857-1991*. **Next Events:** 6 August: 9th Anniversary Luncheon at White Rock Café, Long Reef Golf Club; 11 September: Heritage Walking Tour of Hunters Hill; 18 September: Morning Tea for Arthur Phillip's birthday. **Contact:** Judith O'Shea 9797 0240

## BOTANY BAY - Southern Sydney, from Cooks River to Waterfall and west to Liverpool

**Venue:** The Gardens on Forest Function Centre, 764 Forest Road Peakhurst. 10:30 am. **Next Meeting:** 17 September: Kerrie Anne Christian, *DNA*. **Next Event:** 22 October: 10 am, *Bligh Exhibition* at Maritime Museum. **Contact:** Carol Macklin 0415376434

## CANBERRA – ACT, Queanbeyan and surrounds.

**Venue:** Various locations in Canberra. **Next Event:** Saturday 14 September: Annual Luncheon, 12 Noon, at Southern Cross Yacht Club. **Contact:** Geoff Cameron 62514095

## CENTRAL COAST – From Lake Macquarie to Broken Bay, highlands to coast.

**Venue:** Point Clare Community Hall – meet monthly, second Saturday at 10 am for 10.30. **Next Meetings:** 10 August: Mark Bundy, *Rookwood Cemetery*; 14 September: Margy Logan, *Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur*; 12 October: Cassandra Holmes, *Guide Dogs of Australia*. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Jon Fearon 43116254

## DERWENT - Southern Tasmania

**Venue:** Bi-monthly, 11am, first Saturday at Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Sandy Bay. **Next Meetings:** 3 August: AGM, Speaker, *The Digitisation of the JW Beattie Historic Photo Collection*; 5 October: Speaker TBA. **Next Event:** Date TBA: Visit to Rokeby Cemetery, led by Dr Dianne Snowden. **Contact:** Paul Dobber 0401566080

## EASTERN FARMS – Ryde, Eastwood, Parramatta, Kings Langley, Pennant Hills and surrounds.

**Venue:** The Hall at Brush Farm House, 19 Lawson St. Eastwood – monthly meetings, first Saturday from 10am **Next Meetings:** 3 August: Jennifer Farrer, *Australian Plants used by Early Settlers*; 7 September: Geoff Davidson, *Napoleon and the Australian Connection*; 5 October: Rob Shipton, *Big Ben*. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Jennifer Follers 97991161

## HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN --Western Sydney, Penrith to Windsor, Blue Mountains.

**Venue:** Windsor Library, Penrith Library and in Springwood. -- monthly, second Saturday, 11 am. **Next Meetings** 10 August (at Windsor): Judith Dunn, TBA; 14 September: (at Springwood Presbyterian Church) Doug Knowles, *Rails, Roads and Bridges on the Mountains*; 12 October: (at Windsor) Lorraine Turtle, *The Grey Scheme*. **Next Event:** **Contact:** William Hempel 0410950101

## HUNTER VALLEY – Hunter Region, Newcastle and surrounds.

**Venue:** Teralba Community Hall Supper Room, 15 Anzac Pde Teralba – bi-monthly meetings, usually third Monday from 10am – 12.30pm. **Next Meetings:** 19 August: AGM, Roger Heading, *Convict Escapees, Mary and William Bryant*; 21 October: Janice McDonald, *Bee-Keeping in the Hunter*. **Next Event:** 16 September: Visit to Alison Homestead, Wyong. **Contact:** Kerry Neinert 49615083

## MID NORTH COAST -- Taree and Surrounds, Bulahdelah to Kempsey.

**Venue:** Presbyterian Church, 76 Albert Street, Taree, Bi-monthly on 4th Tuesday at 2pm.. **Next Meeting:** 24 September: Speaker TBA. **Contact:** Heather Bath 0427018566

## MORETON – South East Queensland.

**Venue:** St. Augustine's Anglican Church Hall, Hamilton – bi-monthly meetings, at 10 am on an available 2nd Saturday. **Next Meetings** 10 August: AGM, Members, *A Leaf from my Tree*; 12 October: Julie Webb, *DNA*. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Julia Cornford 0418747891

## NORTH COAST – Boambee, Coffs Harbour, Dorrigo to Maclean

**Venue:** Either at Mylestom Hall, Coramba Hall or at members' homes, Bi-monthly, usually first Sunday at 10.30am. **Next Meetings:** 4 August, at Col and Pat Robertson's: AGM; 6 October, at Pat and Darrell Davis's: Earl Cruickshank, *Rowing down the Thames*. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Robyn Condliffe 66533615

## NORTHERN RIVERS – Lismore and surrounds.

**Venue:** Ballina Cherry Street Sports and Bowling Club - bi-monthly meetings, fourth Sunday at 11.30am followed by lunch; **Next Meeting:** 22 September. **Contact:** Karla Rojo 66884306

## NORTH WEST – Tamworth and surrounds.

**Venue:** Various locations – bi-monthly meetings, usually first Saturday at 1.30pm **Next Meetings:** 3 August at Tamworth Hospital Museum: AGM and Museum Visit; 5 October: Regular meeting at Family History Rooms, Speaker TBA. **Contact:** Diana Harband 67652122

## SOUTH COAST – Engadine to Burrill Lake.

**Venue:** Scribbly Gum Room, Ribbonwood Centre, 93-109 Princes Highway, Dapto – monthly except. Jan, May and Dec. – first Tuesday at 10am - 1pm. **Next Meetings:** 6 August: Winter Warm Day, Dawn Crowther, *Clifton School of Arts*; 3 September: Jillian Wilson, *Channel Islands*; **Next Event:** **Contact:** Rob Ratcliffe 42321842

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS – Mittagong, Moss Vale and surrounds.

**Venue:** Mittagong Community Centre – bi-monthly – second Wednesday at 10.30am \$5 Admission. **Next Meetings:** 14 August: AGM and Chapter Chats. 9 October: Ted Westwood, TBA. **Next Events:** **Contact:** Wendy Selman 48624849

## SWAN RIVER – Perth, Fremantle and surrounds.

**Venue:** 16 Inwood Place Murdoch, bi-monthly, usually first Saturday, at 2pm. **Next Meetings:** 3 August: AGM, Speaker Richard Offen, TBA; 5 October: Glenn Farley, *FF Andrew Fishburn*. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Toni Mahony 0892717630

*Karys Fearon*, Chapter Liaison Officer

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Closing date for this page for the next issue is 23 September 2019

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

## FOR HISTORY BUFFS

**Ordinary and Pensioner Members**

**PHILLIP DIVINE** aka **THOMAS HILTON TENNANT**

#8978 Michele Gail Watts

#8983 Beverley Gwatkin

**JOHN NICHOLLS**

#8979 Enid Jeanette Taylor

**JOHN ROWE**

#8980 Brett Vincent Waters

**BARTHOLOMEW REARDON**

#8981 Susan Jane Binning

**JOSHUA PECK**

#8984 Louise Ellen Leslie

**THOMAS ACRES**

#8985 Kathryn Gai Cook

**ELIZABETH FITZGERALD**

#8986 John Reginald Brown

**Student Members**

**JAMES BRYAN CULLEN**

#8976 Aislinn Grace Fearon

#8977 Caleb Jonathan Fearon

**Junior Members**

**NATHANIEL LUCAS/OLIVIA GASCOIGNE**

#8982 Bryson Bagnall

**Associates**

#8957.1 Bob Frain

#6077.1 Helen Mattick

**Friend**

#F194 Heather Stevens

**Additional First Fleeter**

**THOMAS SPENCER/MARY PHILLIPS**

#8974 Christopher James Grant

## DEATHS

**ANN FORBES/THOMAS HUXLEY**

**#7765 Ronald Ayton**, of Tamworth, New South Wales, died on 22.05.2019, aged 90. Ron had belonged to North West Chapter since joining in 2009.

(Advertisements from members)

**Irish Famine Commemoration Committee**

**20th Annual Commemoration**

**Outside Hyde Park Barracks Museum**

**2 pm Sunday 25 August**

**Ongoing celebration to follow; just turn up.**

**Descendants' Day at Dalwood**

**Buffet Lunch at the Dalwood Cellars, Wyndham Estate, East of Branxton**

**For family and worker descendants**

**(free and convict) RSVP 15 August**

**1 pm Saturday 7 September**

**\$55 Book at [www.trybooking.com/BDNDL](http://www.trybooking.com/BDNDL)**

**Thomas Best Bicentennial 1799-1874**

**200 years of Settlement at Middle Dural**

**3-5 pm Sunday 8 September**

**Glenroy Cottage, 1 Glenroy Pl Middle Dural**

**RSVP 30 August [pellinkof@bigpond.com](mailto:pellinkof@bigpond.com)**

## CHAPTER OUTING TO FIRST FLEET HOUSE

A glance at Page 11 each issue will indicate the great variety of programmes our chapters across the country have developed. Outings, from bi-monthly to occasionally, feature in most of them.

**Botany Bay Chapter** has opted for the alternate plan and on the 11 June a group chose to visit First Fleet House for their very first outing. Directors 'on duty' were pleased to welcome them all and show them the building, explain its origin and genesis as the FFF 'headquarters' in 1988 and answer a multiplicity of questions.

As well as a hearty morning tea the highlight definitely seemed to be the *Sirius Room* with its *Borrowdale Library*. It was good that prospective members **David Payne** and **Christine Williamson** found many of the books a great help for their research.

Earlier members in the group also found many of the new acquisitions most helpful in their own understanding of the lives of their FF ancestors. It was good, too, to welcome **Glen and Margarita Farley** (FF Andrew Fishburn) visiting NSW from Swan River Chapter

**Morning Tea in the Sirius Room.**

**Visitors and directors, pictured, from left:**

Vanessa Hicks, Glenn Farley, Carol Macklin, Margarita Farley, Sharon Lamb, Karen Lovett, David Payne, Dorelle Smith, Elaine Snowball, Kevin Snowball, Christine Williamson and Jon Fearon.

## CHAPTER SECRETARIES

**ALBURY-WODONGA DIST.**

Mary Chalmers-Borella  
02 6025 3283

**ARTHUR PHILLIP**

Judith O'Shea 02 9797 0240

**BOTANY BAY**

Carol Macklin 0415 376 434

**CANBERRA**

Brian Mattick 02 6231 8880

**CENTRAL COAST**

Jon Fearon 02 4311 6254

**DERWENT**

Paul Dobber 0401 566 080

**EASTERN FARMS**

Jennifer Follers 02 9799 1161

**HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN**

William Hempel 0410 950 101

**HUNTER VALLEY**

Kerry Neinert 02 4961 5083

**MID NORTH COAST**

Heather Bath 0427 018 566

**MORETON**

Julia Cornford 0418 747 891

**NORTH COAST**

Faye Smith 02 6653 1019

**NORTHERN RIVERS**

Karla Rojo 02 6688 4306

**NORTH WEST**

Diana Harband 02 6765 2122

**SOUTH COAST**

Rob Ratcliffe 02 4232 1842

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

Wendy Selman 02 4862 4849

**SWAN RIVER**

Toni Mahony 08 9271 7630