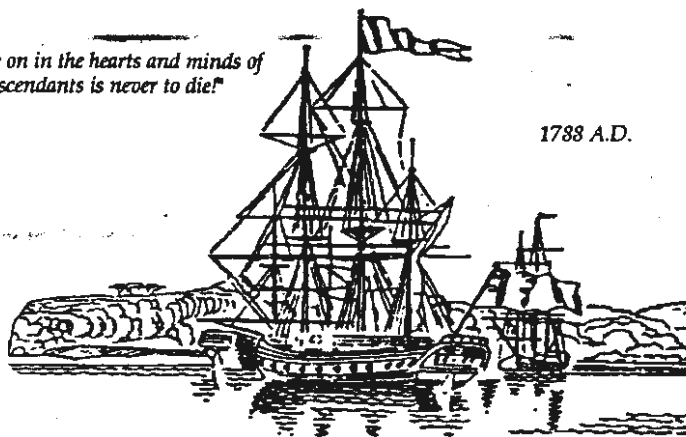


Fellowship of First Fleeters Newsletter

"To live on in the hearts and minds of
Descendants is never to die!"

1788 A.D.



JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF FIRST FLEETERS INC. NSW 1988
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First Fleet House 105 Cathedral Street, Woolloomooloo, N.S.W. 2011
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JULY/AUGUST 1992 Volume 23 No. 4

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I received considerable flack from my last report concerning the debate over the change of flag and a republic for Australia. Your Committee does not wish to take a stance on either issue and I personally do not wish to be implicated with either side of the debate. Our interest is in our nation's heritage. The politics are left for others.

Neither the Committee members nor I initiated the Fellowship's prompt. The Fellowship has been inadvertently brought into the debate because of the activities of people who claim to be First Fleet descendants gaining nation-wide television and radio exposure with a pro-monarchy and pro-flag stance, much of which drew severe and unwarranted criticism reflecting on our Fellowship. Your Committee could not remain idle in the circumstances. I fear that if we had ignored the situation, the publicised actions of a few First Fleet descendants would have unfairly reflected on all of us.

I believe that many of our members saw the display of the views of some First Fleet descendants expressed on television and in the Press. This Fellowship's members were entitled to know the reaction of your Committee to the public criticism of this conduct and my own attitude. I reiterate our neutrality.

In the last few months we have seen the passing of two of our most active mem-

bers, Mrs Dorothea Hosking, alias actress Thea Rowe, and Miss Jean Cowell. I knew Thea well and visited her on several occasions for a cup of tea and a good yarn. She was a real darling. As a genealogist she asked me once if I could prove that actor Errol Flynn was her cousin, as her mother had claimed. Thea was an actress of the highest order and descended from Australia's first actress, Mary Turner. I found the proof that Errol Flynn's maternal grandfather and Thea's maternal greatgrandfather were the same person. She was delighted about it. Errol Flynn was not descended from Mary Turner and was thus not a First Fleet descendant. Jean Cowell went suddenly. Jean was a regular in First Fleet House and a delightful personality. I remember her many kindnesses to me.

A fellow James Squire descendant, Brigadier Stan Deolin, has informed me of a link with the famous author Charles Dickens. James Squire's great-granddaughter, Emily Augusta Deolin, married Charles's eldest son, Alfred Tennyson Dickens. Another of Charles's sons, William, was a member of the N.S.W. Parliament, serving with the grandson of James Squire, James Squire Farnell, Premier of N.S.W., 1877-78.

I attended a service at St. Anne's Church, Ryde, recently in which the book, "The Church on the Hill," on the history of St. Anne's was launched. I was given a copy of the book for the Fellowship library.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1991/92

PRESIDENT: Mr James Donohoe

VICE-PRESIDENTS: Peter Christian, Alice Clarke

SECRETARY: Zona Maguire

TREASURER: Roy Morris

ARCHIVIST: Joyce Cowell, Rod Best, June Bigham, Ula Clarke, Naida Jackson, Jim Maclean, Ron Maguire, Hugh Morgan, Beverley Naughton, Doug Oakes

Closing Date for Next Newsletter

- 23rd September 1992

OFFICE HOURS: 10.00am to 3.00pm Monday through Friday

Opinions expressed herein are those of the article authors and correspondents and do not necessarily reflect the policy or views of the Fellowship of First Fleeters, nor the views of the Editor.

The Editor reserves the right to omit any material considered unsuitable for publication.

Space limitations may result in some material being held over to another issue.

RON MAGUIRE, Hon. Editor

COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR FUNCTIONS

The role of this committee is to organise and coordinate the social functions of the Fellowship.

There are three sub-committees within the Activities Committee:

1. Daytime Fellowship
2. Social
3. Excursions (Weekend)

These sub-committees organise an annual program of events.

Members of the Activities Committee are:

Activities Coordinator:

Beverley Naughton

Daytime Fellowship:

Joyce Cowell, Bernice Smart,

Phyllis Selby

Social:

Alice Clarke, Ula Clarke

Excursions:

Naida Jackson, Joy Pankhurst

Activities Recorder:

Anne Davison

PRELIMINARY NOTICE of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the FELLOWSHIP of FIRST FLEETERS Inc.

to take place on
SUNDAY, 15th NOVEMBER,
1992

to be held in the
NEWCASTLE AREA

Full information will be given in the next issue of the Newsletter.

JAMES BRADLEY APPEAL

Last October I visited St. Anne's Church, Ryde, and was very distressed to find the headstone of James Bradley in an undignified heap in the graveyard. Subsequently I approached the Church Authorities for permission to re-erect it on his grave.

It has taken eight months, many letters and phone calls but they have now agreed.

The stone is not broken, is weather worn, but otherwise in good condition. A stonemason must be employed to do this job and a crane is necessary to lift it into place, as it is unusually thick, large and heavy.

The cost of all this will be in excess of \$500 and I now appeal to other James Bradley descendants to help defray this cost.

If you can help, please send your contribution to me, Mrs Beryl Lewis, 88 Avoca Street, Yagoona 2199.

Hopefully when the job is done a ceremony can be arranged for the Fellowship to place one of its plaques on the stone. BERYL LEWIS (#709)

ONE HUNDRED YEARS ACTIVE

St. Aidan's Anglican Church, in the inner west Sydney suburb of Annandale, setting of some of our most interesting history, is in the throes of celebrating 100 years of a most active community life.

As part of its Centenary Celebrations it has published a history of the Church (cost \$12.00 plus postage) and has arranged for some history walks which would be of general interest. The details of these walks are:

Annandale and the Johnston Family - 3.00pm on August 29 and 3.00pm on September 20. North Annandale - 10.00am on August 30 and 10.00am on September 19.

The two walks each leave from outside St. Aidan's Church, corner Booth and Johnston Streets, Annandale, and have a cost of \$4.00 each.

As well there is a service of Renewal of Marriage and/or Baptismal Vows for those who were either married or baptised in the Church.

The principal church service for the Centenary is to be held at 9.30am on 8 November 1992 in the presence of the Archbishop of Sydney.

Further details of all activities can be obtained from Reverend Peter Middleton, The Rectory, 74 Booth Street, Annandale 2038, or telephone 660 3602.

DAYTIME FELLOWSHIP

All members who came to our rooms for the meeting and luncheon on 2nd July would surely vote it an enjoyable afternoon. Guest speaker Brian MacDonald arrived early and had lunch with us and proved to be a popular person with his relaxed style and approachable manner. We kept him there for quite some time, swapping stories.

All is arranged, and a deposit paid, for our Christmas luncheon. We have chosen The Waratah Inn at 220 Goulburn Street, City, and the date is 2nd December. It is easily reached by bus; details at a later date. With the change away from our usual Club, the price has escalated a bit, but at \$21.00 we feel it is not excessive, and hope for a good crowd.

Our Hawkesbury River trip with the riverboat postman is next though on 2nd September. We proceed to Hawkesbury River Station (Brooklyn) by train where we will have lunch. Fish and chips can be bought, or a cafe meal, or bring your own for a picnic lunch. The ferry leaves at 1.30pm and arrives back between 4.00pm and 4.15pm. We are given afternoon tea on board. For people living in these areas, the train picks up at Strathfield, Eastwood and Hornsby. We look forward to seeing old friends and greeting some new members. Remember to wear your badges. As usual details are set out below for your easier perusal.

We will also be on the water on 4th November. We will take the ferry to Watson's Bay, and see where our footsteps take us after that, if you would like to mark it in your diary.

Details Hawkesbury Cruise.

When - Wednesday 2nd September.

Meet - Central, entrance Platform No 7.

Time - 10.30am for Newcastle train leaving 10.47am.

Cost - \$20 Adult \$15 Concession & Pensioner. Plus return train fare.

Note - Check time if boarding at suburban stations.

BERNICE SMART

Sydney Gazette,

AND
NEW SOUTH WALES ADVERTISER.

Published by Authority.

ACCOUNT of the LOSS of His Majesty's Armed Vessel PORPOISE, and the CATO, Upon Wreck Reef

The Porpoise, with the Honourable East India Company's extra ship Bridgewater and the ship Cato in company, on August 17th last at two in the afternoon, fell in with a sand bank in about 23 degrees 7 sec of south latitude and 155 deg 26 sec east longitude, and 157 miles N. 51 deg E from Sandy Cape on the coast of New South Wales. This bank being 2 deg to the eastward of the situation where the Eliza whaler found the reefs lying off the coast to terminate, it was thought to be such a detached bank as some others seen by Lieutenant Ball and Mr Bampton, which lie much further over towards the north end of New Caledonia, and no expectations of meeting with any more was entertained, especially as the Investigator had before steered for Torres' Strait from reefs several degrees further to the west without interruption. The signal being made to keep under easy working sail during the night and a warrant officer being placed at the look-out on board the Porpoise, the ships steered north-northwest on their course with a fresh breeze from the east-south-eastward, the Bridgewater on the starboard quarter and the Cato on the larboard quarter of the leading ship. At eight o'clock, the Porpoise sounded with 35 fathoms but found no bottom. At half-past nine, breakers were seen ahead, and the Porpoise's helm was put down in order to tack from them, but the fore-sail being hauled up to keep the other ships in sight, she was then under three double reefed topsails, and only came up head to wind: in paying off again she struck upon the coral reef which occasioned the breakers. A gun was attempted to be fired to warn the other ships, but owing to the confusion and the spray that was flying over it could not be accomplished; and before lights were brought up, the Bridgewater and Cato had hauled to the wind on different tacks across each other. The two ships must have touched and gone upon the reef together, had not the commander of the latter ship stopped setting his main-sail, and bore away to let

the Bridgewater go to windward, by which means she cleared the breakers and stood on to the southward; but the Cato missing stays for want of her main-sail when she afterwards tried to tack, struck upon the reef about two cables lengths from the Porpoise.

The Porpoise heeled in upon the reef and laid upon her broadside, so that the surfs flew over but did not fill her: the fore-mast went very soon, but the other masts stood till they were cut away. The Cato unfortunately took the opposite inclination, and the sea breaking furiously in upon her decks tore them up and every thing within the ship almost immediately: leaving the crew no place where they could prevent themselves from being washed off by the seas but the inner fore chains, where they clung all night with their eyes bent to the south-westward after the Bridgewater, and waiting anxiously for day-break, when they confidentially hoped that the boats of that ship would come to their relief.

An hour after the porpoise had struck, a small gig and a fixoared cutter were got out to leeward, but the latter was stove and full of water. Observing that the breaking water did not extend any distance to leeward, Captain Flinders spoke to Lieutenant Fowler, the commander of the ship, and told him of his intention to get the charts and log books of the Investigator's voyage into the small boat, and get on board the Bridgewater, that with her boats he might be able to get the people out of the ship as soon as possible; this was assented to, and with six men and two oars he got through the surf without being swamped, though nearly full of water. The smooth water was found to be on a coral reef, and just deep enough to float the boat. After rowing for a short time towards the Bridgewater, Captain Flinders saw that unless he tacked it was impossible for him to come near her, and as her light showed her to be standing on, he determined to get back to the wreck, leaving his charts and books in the boat; but the surf ran too high for this to be done in the night, and therefore he kept rowing gently under the lee of the breakers, and the cutter which by this time had got her leak partly stopped and had shoved off, he also desired to keep near the ship until morning.

A raft was prepared during the night, lest the ship might go to pieces, and at daybreak Captain Flinders got on board by the help of the fallen masts. A dry

sand bank was now seen near the wreck, sufficient to receive every body and all the provisions and stores that might be saved out of the ship, and they had the still further satisfaction to see the Bridgewater standing towards them. Every body was now set to work to get up provisions and water to be landed on the sand bank, where Captain Flinders went with the small boat in order to go off to the Bridgewater so soon as he came near, to point out to Captain Palmer the shelter to leeward where he might safely take every body on board with what else might be saved. On landing at the bank he hoisted up two handkerchiefs to a tall oar, but about ten O'clock it appeared that the ship had gone upon the other tack, not being able probably to weather the reef, and she was not seen any more during the day. Whether the Bridgewater saw the wrecks or the bank cannot be certainly known, but her courses, if not the hull, were visible from both the ships.

As the tide fell, the people of the Cato quitted her and got through the surf to the Porpoise's small boat which waited within side to receive them, and at low water, which happened about two O'clock, the reef was dry very near to the latter ship, and every person was employed getting provisions, water, and their clothes upon the reef, from whence they were taken to the bank by the boats, for round the bank the water is deeper. Before dark, five half-hogsheads of water were landed, as also some flour, salt meat, rice and spirits, besides pigs and sheep, and every person had got on shore with some necessaries, together with the Cato's people. These last had left their ship naked, but having got on board the Porpoise, Mr Fowler had clothed four or five in lieutenants uniforms, and some promotions of a similar kind had also taken place amongst the Porpoise's seamen.

Those who had saved great coats or blankets sharing with those who had none, they laid down to sleep with some little comfort; and except a few of the Cato's men who were bruised on the reef, there was no complaining heard upon the bank.

The three boats of the Porpoise were hauled up at night under the lee side of the bank, but the small boat not having been well secured was found to have been carried away by the tide.

As there was no hope of saving the

Porpoise, the tide by this time flowing in and out of her, on the 19th in the morning Captain Flinders thought proper to do away the circumstances of his being a passenger, and took command of the whole party. He divided the Cato's people, who had saved nothing, among the Porpoise's men quartering them in the messes in the proportion of one to three; and then Lieutenant Fowler, with a large working party in the two cutters, went off to the ship. The Cato had gone to pieces during the night, and one of her quarters had floated in upon the reef; but nothing of her cargo or stores remained with it.

During this and the following day, the wind continued to blow fresh from the south-eastward, and the Bridgewater not coming in sight it was supposed Captain Palmer was beating to windward waiting for finer weather to relieve the unfortunate people with more safety to himself; but the 21st and 22nd being fine days with moderate winds, and still no appearance of the ship, it made them almost give up hopes of seeing her more.

They continued to work hard upon the wreck, and got much provisions, water, sails, and many other stores upon the sand during the above mentioned four days; but all hopes of seeing the Bridgewater having then vanished, Captain Flinders called together the principal officers to consult upon the steps proper to be taken for transporting the two ships' crews and passengers to some frequented port. The plan that met with general approbation was as follows: *That the largest cutter should have a light hatch-deck laid over her, and that Captain Flinders and Mr Park, commander of the Cato, should proceed in her to Port Jackson, and either procure from His Excellency sufficient*

colonial vessels to carry every body back to Port Jackson or otherwise to hire a ship for that purpose, or to carry them on to India, from whence passages might be procured to Europe:—but lest an accident should happen to the cutter, that a small vessel sufficient to carry all but one boats crew should be immediately laid down by the carpenters, to be built from what was and might be saved from the wreck, and that this vessel should in two months proceed to Port Jackson, or so soon after as she should be ready. The small cutter Captain Flinders proposed to remain with stores for a few weeks longer, if the provisions would permit of it, and then for her to go to Port Jackson also, if no colonial or other vessel should arrive before that time. On consulting with the carpenter of the Investigator about the possibility of building such a vessel, and the time it might require, he gave his opinion that two boats sufficient to carry the people would be sooner built, and perhaps answer the purpose as well; and this seeming to be the general opinion, it was adopted by the Commander.

By the evening of the 23rd the whole of the water, and almost the whole of the provisions were landed on the bank, and their stock was now found to consist of the following quantities and proportions for 94 men at full allowance:

Biscuit	- 920 pounds
Flour	- 6944 ditto 83 days
Beef in 4 pounds	1776 pieces
Pork in 2 pounds	592 ditto 94 days
Pease	- 45 bushels - 107 days
Oatmeal	- 30 ditto - 48 days
Rice	- 1225 pounds - 114 days
Sugar	- 370 pounds
Molasses	- 125 ditto 84 days
Spirits	- 225 gallons
Wine	- 113 ditto
Porter	- 60 ditto 49 days
Water	- 5650 gallons - 120 days

at half a-gallon per day with some four krout, essence of Malt, vinegar, and salt

The other stores consisted of a new suit of sails, some whole and some broken spars, iron work, the armourer's forge, a kedge anchor and hawser, rope, junk, canvas, some twine and other small stores; and four half-barrels of powder, two swivels, and several musquets and pistols, with ball and flints

Until the 25th they were employed in fitting up the cutter, which was now called the Hope, for her expedition, and in still adding to their stock upon the bank; for although the sea had much shaken the ship since the holds were emptied, yet she still stood, and they hoped would keep together at least until the next spring tides.

At Lieutenant Fowler's own request Captain Flinders ordered that he should remain with the stores until the last boat; and that Lieutenant Flinders; and Mr John Aken the master of the Investigator should take charge of the two large boats, with a master's mate in each capable of conducting them to Port Jackson, should illness or any accident happen to the two officers.

On Friday the 26th of August in the morning, Captain Flinders and his companions embarked in the cutter, to the number of 14, with three weeks provisions. With minds full of hope mixed with anxiety, they returned the three cheers given by their shipmates on the bank, who immediately hauled down the ensign which had been hitherto hoisted with the union downwards as a signal of distress, and now hoisted the union in the upper canton.

INTELLIGENCE RESPECTING THE BRIDGEWATER

We have the satisfaction to hear of the safe arrival in India of the Bridgewater, Captain E.H. Palmer, about the beginning of January.

A Bombay Gazette of the 11th of that month contains a detailed account, given by Captain Palmer, of the melancholy event at Wreck Reef, which is nearly similar to that contained in the Sydney Gazette of the 11th of last September.

The causes why the shipwrecked did not receive the assistance of which they were so much in need we transcribe from Captain Palmer's Narrative, after the ship had cleared the reef. "We held an early consultation on the possibility of sending assistance to the crew of the Porpoise; when all agreed, that from the state of the weather, which was now much aggravated by the increase of wind and sea, and which from the appearance of the night was likely to continue with

increasing violence; as also the surf upon and near the reef, which a boat could not approach without certain destruction; all these taken into consideration, it was concluded impossible to yield any assistance that night; but it was determined, if possible, to be with them by break of day next morning.

"We had not long stood off the reef before we saw a light on board the Cato; we at this time shewed three lights, and continued lights all night at the mizen top mast head; at one A.M. wore ship and stood for the reef; at 2 A.M. the reef in sight at the distance of about half a mile, the sea breaking very high; wore ship and stood off to the southward; at day break wore ship and stood for the reef, and when the day was broke we had the mortification to perceive the Cato had shared the fate of the Porpoise; the bow and bowsprit of the latter only at intervals appeared through the surf;

the former lay with her bottom exposed to the sea, which broke with tremendous fury over her, not a mast standing. Finding we could not weather the reef, and that it was now too late had it been in our power, to have given any assistance; and still fearing we might be embayed or entangled by the supposed chain or patched; all therefore that remained for us to do, was, either by dint of carrying sail to weather the reef to the southward, or if sailing in that, to push to leeward, and endeavour to find a passage between the patches of the reef to the northward. At ten A.M. we found by chronometers we had got considerably to the westward, and that it would be impossible, with the wind as it then was, blowing strong from the S.E. with a heavy sea, to weather the southern reef, we therefore determined, while we had the day before us, to run to the westward of the northern reef.

"At 2 P.M. of the 19th, got sight of the reef bearing N.N.E. - at 5 P.M. we could perceive the wrecks, and ascertained the Westernmost extent of the reef to lay in 155 42 30 East Longitude.

"After passing the reef we lay to for the night; and in the morning had lost sight of it, having drifted to the Northward."

Here we beg leave to quote the following passages from Captain Flinders' Account of the unfortunate event contained in the Gazette of Sept. 11.

"Several blue lights were burnt on board the Porpoise during the night, and some on board saw the Bridgewater answer them by shewing a light, whilst others took it to be only a general light which was still visible; it was last seen about two in the morning.

"A raft was prepared during the night, lest the ship might go to pieces, and at day break Captain Flinders got on board by the help of the fallen masts. A dry sand bank was now seen near the wreck, sufficient to receive every body, and all the provisions and stores that might be saved out of the ship, and they had the still further satisfaction to see the Bridgewater standing towards them. Everybody was now set to work to get up provisions and water to be landed on the sand bank, where Captain Palmer went with the small boat in order to go off to the Bridgewater so soon as she came near, to point out to Captain Palmer the shelter to leeward where he might safely take every body on board with what else might be saved. On landing at the bank he hoisted up two handkerchiefs to a tall oar, but about ten O'clock it appeared that the ship had gone upon the other tack, not being able probably to weather the reef, and she was not seen any more during the day. Whether the Bridgewater saw the wrecks or the bank cannot be certainly known, but her courses, if not the hull, were visible from both the ships."

The Narrative contained in the Bombay Gazette further states, that Captain Palmer relinquishing the design of going through the passage between New Guinea and New Holland, shaped a course between New Guinea and Georgia; on the 25th of August made Cape Deception on the west end of the island of New Georgia bearing North 8 leagues; stood to the westward during the night, at 7 A.M. land was seen from the mast head at S.S.W. as no land was laid down in the charts in that direction,

hauled to the S.S.W. to examine it, at half past 11 A.M. the ship was within from 2 to 3 miles of a dry patch of sand, on which the sea did not break; this patch lies about 3 or 4 leagues to the Northward of an island which they supposed not to have been seen before, & called by Captain Palmer Princeps island, and the dry patch of sand the Bridgewater's shoal.

The Bridgewater afterwards narrowly escaped being captured at Batavia, from Captain Palmer's account of which we extract the following, viz.

"On the 6th of November at 1/2 past 6 P.M. anchored in Batavia roads; found riding there 15 Dutch ships, three Dutch brigs, one American and one English ship. - At 7 P.M. the Guard boat with an Officer came on board and received every information respecting the ship; from whence she came, commander's name, number of guns, men, &c. soon after he had left the ship a Mr. Lubock came on board, who informed me he was first Officer of the English ship in the roads; that she was called the Prince of Wales, and belonged to a Mr. Elliott of Prince of Wales' Island; he then informed me of the war having taken place between England, France, and the Batavian Republic; and that the ship to which he belonged was detained and in possession of the Dutch that his sails and rudder were taken on shore; that he had permission to leave his ship on a pretence of going on board the American when he came to give us this information; he informed us there was not any one ship in the roads that was superior to the force of the Bridgewater, and that she was not within reach of the guns from the battery; that a Dutch Frigate and a brig that were stationed there had sailed two days before for the straits of Sunda, to convoy to Batavia a Sweed that was arrived from Europe, and was then at anchor in the Straits, and which had brought late information respecting the war: this gentleman then left the ship, saying we might expect to be boarded as soon as the land wind came off. A consultation was held and we at first determined to cut and run with the land wind, which Mr. Lubock had informed us would commence about eleven o'clock, and continue till ten or eleven the next morning; the night was particularly dark, and from our anchoring so late in the evening, we had not the bearing of either of the Beacons which are at the entrance of the roads, the chance of our avoiding the Shoals was thought a hazard equal to that of remaining until day light.

"I ordered the hands to be quietly turned up, when I informed them of the war; with the situation of the ship, and the determination to defend her against th enemy, for such we deemed them; they all to a man declared they would risk every thing in fighting their way out, preferring death to a prison at Batavia.

"With this resolution the hammocks were stowed in the nettings, and every thing in readiness to prevent being boarded the powder designed as a compliment, for our guns were all loaded, as we intended to salute the Fort at Sun-rise, was reserved for the preservation of the ship; the small arms all in readiness and the men at their quarters during the night, with a good look out on Deck, - at eleven o'clock a boat came under our stern but on being hailed instantly rowed off. We observed the ships near us were employed all night, and boats constantly passing from the shore to those ships - at 4 A.M. hove short, at day light weighed and made sail out of the roads, with a light air of wind off the land, - it was instantly observed we had weighed by those ships next to us, when a signal was made and two of the largest ships with two brigs slipt and made sail after us - at this time a boat with twelve men and an officer in her came within hail of the ship, and when desired to keep off he said he wished to see Captain Palmer; on my requesting to know his business he said the Commodore wished much to see me on shore; I answered I did not doubt it, but could not possibly wait on him that morning, and then made sail. We determined to push for the Straits of Sunda at once, and if possible to pass the ship and brig before they received information from Batavia of our having quitted the roads: and should they attempt to stop us, to resist while we had powder, and trust to our sailing and to chance for the rest. At half past 3 on the 7th the frigate, brig and Sweed stood on our course, and we cleared ship for action; the frigate and brig hauled right up for us, the latter about a mile a head of the former, stood on until within gun-shot, when she bore up and stood to the eastward. The frigate continued to stand towards us within the same distance, when she bore up. We continued our course, the Sweed right a head; and at sunset the frigate and brig anchored. It being calm we also came to an anchor, between St. Nicholas Point and Pulo Bay, and at day light next morning observed prows passing from the frigate to the brig which we doubted not had been dispatched from Batavia, - she cleared the Straits of Sunda without any other interesting occurrence."

UNVEILING OF JAMES SHEERS PLAQUE AT HOLY TRINITY, KELSO

Between 150 and 200 people gathered in Bathurst on 7th June 1992 to honour one of Australia's founders.

The descendants of James Sheers/Mary Smith and Captain John Piper/Mary Ann Sheers gathered in Bathurst to honour the memories of these early settlers at a plaque unveiling at Holy Trinity Church, Kelso, and at the Pioneers of Bathurst Wall in lower William Street, Bathurst.

The first of the ceremonies was the unveiling of the plaque dedicated in memory of James Sheers who was buried in the graveyard of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Kelso, in 1838.

James Sheers, Scarborough, and Mary Smith, Lady Penrhyn, arrived in Port Jackson on the First Fleet in 1788.

Their daughter Mary Ann married Captain Piper, a pioneer of early Sydney and the early settlement at Bathurst.

The supply and unveiling of James Sheers's plaque was arranged by the Fellowship of First Fleeters in pursuance of its policy of trying to mark the burial places of all First Fleeters as can be identified.

During the ceremony at Holy Trinity, which is under the direction of the Plaques Convenor, Mr Doug Oakes, the opening address was given by the Fellowship's President, Mr James Donohoe, who welcomed all attending and spoke

of our ancestry. This was followed by the eulogy given by, Fellowship member Ken Huxley, a descendant of James Sheers. Mr Theo Barker of the Bathurst Historical Society gave a short talk on the background of Holy Trinity. In conclusion of the ceremony, Canon Campbell Brown, Rector of Holy Trinity, gave a sincere and moving dedication service.

The Committee of the Fellowship of First Fleeters was very well represented, with the President, Mr James Donohoe, Vice President Alice Clarke, the Secretary, Mrs Zona Maguire, Archivist Joyce Cowell, Miss Ula Clarke, Jim Maclean, and Ron Maguire, being in attendance at the ceremony, as were other Fellowship members including Norm and Tonia Kingham, Joan and Bill Cox and Norma Dawson, to name a few.

After the dedication service of the James Sheers memorial, most of the participants gathered over the other side of the Macquarie River to unveil the plaque to the Piper family pioneers on the Wall at the lower end of William Street. After this ceremony was concluded the throng repaired to Tyers Park for a descendants reunion.

A highlight of the afternoon's activities was an address by Mr Theo Barker on the life and times of Captain John Piper during the early years of the Bathurst settlement.

A JOURNEY TO KELSO

6th - 8th June 1992

The dedication of a plaque to First Fleeter James Sheers was held in conjunction with the Captain John Piper Family Reunion at Kelso, NSW, over the Queen's Birthday holiday weekend. People travelled long distances to attend these functions which took in the full weekend.

During the week preceding the holiday weekend, I received a call from our Secretary, Zona Maguire, saying she had left the Fellowship banner, to be used at the Service, at First Fleet House in Woolloomooloo, and, as it was on my way from Lane Cove to Bathurst, would I be a "dear and pick it. up! Grimacing graciously, and after a deep breath, I agreed to make the "slight" detour so we would have the banner for the dedication service.

Accompanied by the Fellowships Archivist, Mrs Joyce Cowell, we journeyed on Saturday along the new F4 tollway from Strathfield to Penrith, then along the Great Western Highway to Bathurst. We met Alice and Ula Clarke at the Bathurst Museum.

Saturday evening we sojourned to the Bathurst Leagues Club for dinner and a night with other visitors to 'the Piper Family reunion.

Although the weather had been warm on the Saturday, unfortunately a thill developed and it increased on the Monday.

On Sunday morning we went to the Morning Service at Holy Trinity Church, Kelso, after which the dedication service for the James Sheers plaque took place. The rest of the day we participated in Family Reunion activities. Sunday evening saw us sampling the wares of the R.S.L. Club at dinner.

For Monday morning a bus had been hired to take us on an interesting tour of the Bathurst area. Our host was Theo Barker whose knowledge of the history of Bathurst kept us absorbed.

That afternoon we journeyed home via the Bell Line of Road to miss the traffic. Unfortunately for us, everybody else must have had the same idea.

However, the weekend was voted a wonderful success.

DOUGLAS OAKES,
Plaques Convenor



A EULOGY FOR JAMES SHEERS : FIRST FLEETER

English history of the eighteenth century repeatedly tells us that it was a time of hardship and poverty, with seemingly little hope for the ordinary people, with children being forced to work in factories and down mines, learning to be pick-pockets and thieves, in order to survive. During that difficult period, James Sheers, the man whom we are gathered to remember today, was born c.1735-1746; Mary Smith c.1762, and Captain John Piper born in Maybole, Ayrshire, 20th April 1773.

Although much research had been pursued by his descendants, his origin is not known and the first recorded history of James Sheers reveals that he was arrested on 2nd July 1784, whilst proceeding through the Strand in London, presumably to his place of employment at Smithfield Market. On 7th July he was tried at the Old Bailey, and "indicted for feloniously assaulting Charles Wright on the King's Highway, and feloniously taking from his person, and against his will, 1 watch with the outside case made of Shagreen, and an inside case made of base metal, value 40s; a metal chain, value 5s; 1 ring, value 5s; 1 seal, value 1s; a metal key, value 6d; and a metal hook, value 6d; his property." A total value of 52/- Verdict: Guilty. Sentence: Death!

This seems to be a doubtful arrest and a one-sided trial. When we read the Old Bailey report, we find that James was not permitted to give his evidence, as he could not read a written paper, he did not have any witnesses, and the times given were different. Charles Wright, clerk to a banker, testifying "past 2 o'clock," and James's defence "about 5 o'clock." Wright was accompanied by several people who had apparently "been on the town" with him, and above all, the watch could not be found. For this "Highway robbery" James Sheers was first sentenced to death, then reprieved to transportation to Africa for life on 19th March 1785, and confined to the hulk *Ceres* at Woolwich on 5th April 1785. The proposed area for a penal settlement at Das Voltas Bay, at the mouth of the Orange River in Southwest Africa being found unsuitable, his sentence was changed to transportation to the Eastern Coast of New South Wales.

Mary Smith's case was more positive, as she was caught with a missing pair of boots under her cloak, and on 31st May 1786 was also sentenced to death at the Old Bailey trials, the sentence being changed later to "Received his Majesty's

pardon on condition of being transported for 7 years to the Eastern Coast of New South Wales." During their trials there is no mention of their origins, so we must assume that James and Mary were both Londoners.

On 26th January 1787, Mary was delivered to the *Lady Penrhyn*, and on 27th February 1787, James was delivered to the *Scarborough*, at Portsmouth. They were transported to New South Wales on board these ships, arriving with the First Fleet on 19th January 1788 at Botany Bay, and on 26th January 1788 were "at anchor" in Sydney Cove.

James apparently could not read, but could sign his name, as he did so when he witnessed the seventh marriage in Australia on 13th February 1788, and when he married Mary Smith at Marriage No. 26 on 21st February 1788. Could they have known each other in London?

From Jane Adelaide Piper's diary, we learn that their daughter, Mary Ann, was born on 4th August 1789, and so would have accompanied them to Norfolk Island on the ill-fated last voyage of the *Sirius*, which arrived there on 13th March 1790, disembarked the convicts at Cascade, and sailed around the island to Kingston, where it was wrecked on the reef, on 19th March 1790. Records do not reveal why James and Mary were sent to Norfolk Island, but it is presumed that they were reliable, trusted people, able to look after themselves, as well as support other convicts, Elizabeth Wishaw and Mary Tuck, under Major Ross's plan; and also to acquire and dispose of several lots of land; James being employed as Government butcher, which could have been his trade in London.

Following his Conditional Pardon on 23rd March 1796, Captain Piper wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor Paterson in 1809 and James Sheers's Free Pardon was granted on 17th September 1810.

The two Sheers children were to make their mark in the Colony. Mary Ann became the wife of Captain John Piper, in 1816, and James junior, born 26th February 1794 (his mother most probably being Elizabeth Wishaw, as Mary Smith died on 9th December 1792 and is buried on Norfolk Island), may have become Australia's first native-born surgeon, but he died in Sydney on 8th November 1814 in his twenty-first year, when he was Medical Apprentice to Dr William Redfern at Sydney Hospital.

On Norfolk Island, James Sheers was the holder of Settlers Block 12, which adjoined Settlers Block 7, held by another married couple, John Owles and Mary Wilson, being separated by Stockyard Creek and located where the present sawmill is situated in Mill Road. As Mary Smith died in 1792, and Elizabeth Wishaw disappeared from the records in 1802, it is most probable that James Sheers took Mary Wilson as his wife after John Owles died on 14th December 1806, and they returned to Sydney together on HMS *Kangaroo* in February 1814, after being part of the "Clean-up Party." The Mary Sheers who died in Sydney 15th August 1816 must have been the former Mary Wilson/Owles, as in the General Muster of New South Wales 1814, Mary Wilson is shown as the wife of James Sheers.

Little more is known about James, except for him being a butcher in Sydney in 1814 with a convict, Patrick Evans, assigned to him; being a resident in the Colony in 1821; servant to Captain Piper in 1822; and employed by Captain Piper at Bringelly in 1825. When the Pipers moved to Bathurst in 1827, James must have accompanied them and lived at Alloway Bank, where he died on 17th December 1838, and was buried here at Holy Trinity Church, Kelso, on 19th December 1838, the Entry No. 443 in the Register of Burials giving his "Quality or Profession" as "Gent." His death notice in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 18th December 1838 stated his age to be 103 years and five months, and that "he had retained all his faculties until three days before his death ..." It has been said that he could only have been aged 92, which is a ripe old age, anyway. So, I consider that we should admire his strength and fortitude in surviving at least 42 years in eighteenth-century England, including three years in prison, the voyage to Sydney and the first two years of the Colony, then 24 years in Norfolk Island; to live for 50 years 11 months of the first colonisation of Australia. He was probably one of the oldest First Fleet convicts to die in Australia.

In conclusion, I am sure that James Sheers, being a co-founder of this nation we know today, could not have foreseen that he would have had so many descendants, a large number of whom are present, to honour him and be proud to say — "He was one of my Ancestors."

KEN HUXLEY (#1977)
Great-great-great-grandson

OBITUARIES

Deepest sympathy is offered to the families of the following:

ENID JOYCE CHEYNE (#5680) F.F. James Squires. Died 6 February 1992 (Virginia, U.S.A.). Husband of William, mother of Sandra, Pamela and Susan, sister of Joan Warwick and Edna Dalby (#5725), brother of Arthur Young.

EDWYN C. GIVNEY (#2059) F.F. Frederick Meredith. Died 13 May 1992. Husband of Eileen J. Givney.

JUNE ELLEN BOUTCHER (#5937) F.F. Robert Williams. Died 13 January 1992, aged 72 years. Wife of Leslie G. Boutcher.

THEA ROWE (Dorothy Lenore Hosking), Final Curtain

THEA HOSKING #330 F.F. Mary Wilks (Turner). Died 13 June 1992, aged 85 years. Wife of Breffni Hosking.

Thea was born in Balmain, the daughter of Clement Rowe and Ada Batty, and we know the pride with which she traced her ancestry back to the First Fleet.

From a very early age Thea showed her interest in the theatre, and it was as a young woman that she established two little theatres and subsequently the Thea Rowe Theatre School.

When war came, the little theatre closed down and Thea began to work on her folk-song programs. These were first given as radio broadcasts, then later in costume to live audiences.

Thea's programs gave pleasure to people all over Australia and it would not be an exaggeration to say that all who saw her could never forget the joy and sparkle with which she presented our great heritage of British folk songs.

Thea toured for the Arts Council and for Music Clubs. She visited countless schools and gave so much pleasure and inspiration.

In 1976 Thea's work was recognised by the award of the M.B.E. In 1977 Thea, returning from a wonderful trip to Britain, was struck with some mystery sickness which caused her to lose her memory for some time, but like a good trouper eventually returned to poetry readings and segments of plays in the Theatre in a Nutshell, at Waverton.

In 1988 the poetry readings were expanded to visiting Nursing Homes and other such venues, sharing their interests and giving great pleasure wherever she went.

Last year, Thea was given a special citation by NIDA for her musical "The Dutch Kitchen," which had first been performed in Western Australia.

MARION BATCHELOR #1405 writes of a memorable encounter of 50 years ago:

It was with great regret that I read in the Sydney Morning Herald of the death of Thea Rowe, aged 85 years.

I feel that Thea has been quite a bit of my life. I first encountered her about 1942, I was about eight years old at the time, when she

came to the Orange Primary School that I was attending with a presentation of her wonderful folk music. Those, of course, were our "British" days and Thea's songs were the traditional songs of the British Isles, "Cockles and Mussels," "The Ash Grove," and so many more. Hers was such simple act, with wonderful songs and the only changes were to her costumes with a change of hat or shawl. That afternoon 50 years ago left a life-long impression on me.

My eight-year-old son was attending school at Randwick in 1964 when the headmistress, Mrs Sheila Cleary, invited me to the school for a performance by Thea Rowe. How absolutely delighted I was, and such a nostalgic afternoon I had, the only difference being that Thea had adopted a slightly more Australian attitude to her songs.

After joining the First Fleeters I could not have been more surprised and delighted to find that the wonderful Thea Rowe was also a member. How I enjoyed those Australia Day ceremonies when she came along in her colourful costumes and I had an opportunity to renew our acquaintance and have delightful chats with her.

I feel that I have really lost a part of my life with her passing, but how honoured and privileged I was to have known her.



BIRTHS

A warm welcome to the following New First Fleeters:

JORDAN DEAN BURDEN 15 April 1992, F.F. Thomas Acres. Son of Cathy and Russel Burden, grandson of Valma (#5810) and Fred Burden. Another 9th generation Australian.

LAURA ANNE and JESSICA MAY GOLDING 7 January 1992, F.F. Thomas Acres. First born daughters to Robyn and Craig, granddaughters to Fay (#4420) and Bert Golding, and great-granddaughters to Sarah Golding.

JESSICA MAE LAW 6 April 1992, F.F. John Nichols. Third child for Karen and Peter Law and sister for Rachael and Andrew. Granddaughter for Shirley (#3705) and Kevin Doherty,

FOUNDATION MEMBER OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Jean Elaine Cowell, #152 F.F. William Tunks, a foundation member of the Fellowship of First Fleeters, died in Calvary Hospital, Kogarah, on 6th July 1992.

When Mr John Lavett advertised in The Sydney Morning Herald some 24 years ago for descendants of First Fleeters to contact him with regard to forming an association, Jean saw his advertisement and attended the meeting at which our Fellowship was planned. When it was launched, Jean and her sisters, Berra and Lorna, joined as foundation members.

From that day until May, 1992, Jean was a dedicated "hands-on" worker for the Fellowship. In the early days, she attended the lunch-hour meetings in Mr Lavett's city office doing a great deal of the clerical work involved in establishing the Fellowship. When she retired from work herself, she came into the office twice a week, every week, to man the office, keep the financial records to assist the Treasurer, and solve many problems that many of us were inclined to put in the too-hard tray.

Jean had the distinction of being probably the only member to be a twice-over life member. At the beginning, in order to raise funds for the fledgling society, life membership could be purchased. Jean was such a member. When this practice was discontinued, honorary life memberships were very sparingly granted to those people who had given many years of active service to the Fellowship. Such honorary life membership was granted to Jean at the Annual General Meeting in 1990, and her badge was presented to her by the Governor, Rear-Admiral Peter Sinclair AC AO, at the Australia Day dinner in 1991.

Jean will be sadly missed by her many friends in the Fellowship and by the Fellowship of First Fleeters.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

22nd July 1992

We extend a warm welcome to members who joined during this period - four adults, seven juniors, and one spouse associate.

JOHN IRVING: Mr Lindsay McLeod. JAMES SQUIRE: Miss Claire Rae Limbach (jun.). MARY BISHOP - SAMUEL DAY: Mr Benjamin James Edward Robins (jun.). Miss Corrine Louise Robins (jun.). Mr Nicholas Matthew Robins (jun.). EDWARD GOODIN: Mr Ian Richard Palamara (jun.). EDWARD WHITTON: Mrs Shirley May Anderson. JOSEPH WRIGHT: Mr Jack Terrill Stirling (jun.). JAMES WRIGHT: Miss Jacqueline Luck (jun.). WILLIAM TUNKS: Ms Patricia Joan Webb. BENJAMIN CUSLEY: Mr Horace Lewis Smith.

SPOUSE ASSOCIATE OF EARLIER MEMBER: Mrs Sharon Lorraine Booth wife of Mr Alan J. Booth #5308.