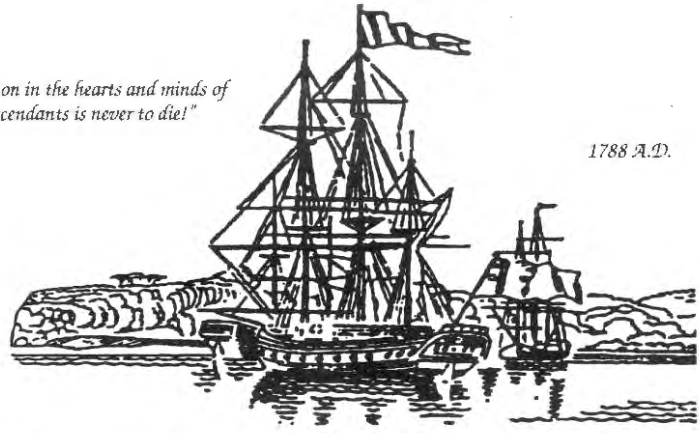


Fellowship of First Fleeters

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

1788 A.D.



N E W S L E T T E R

JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF FIRST FLEETERS INC. NSW 1988

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PATRON: His Excellency the Honourable Gordon Samuels, AC, Governor of New South Wales

OFFICE ADDRESS: First Fleet House, 105 Cathedral Street Woolloomooloo NSW 2011 **PHONE:** (02) 9360 3788, 9360 3988

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1996 VOLUME 27 NO. 6

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our Patron, His Excellency the Honourable Gordon Samuels, Governor of New South Wales, accompanied by Mrs Samuels has graciously consented to be present at our **Australia Day** eve luncheon to be held at the Holme & Sutherland Room, Sydney University on Saturday, 25 January next.

Would you please ensure that your **bookings** arrive plus cheque at First Fleet House by **14 January** at the latest.

We hope to have members of the Australian Colonial Marine Re-enactment Association form a guard of honour on the day. They will be attired in marine and naval costume of the era in which our ancestors arrived in this nation. Looking forward to meeting you on this important day in our Fellowship's history. The Governor has indicated that he would like to meet as many members as possible.!!

At the AGM in November last the following four members were awarded Honorary Life Membership - Olive O'Reilly, Joy Pankhurst, Roy Morris and Cec Thompson. It is envisaged that Life Membership badges will be presented at our Australia Day Luncheon.

On Australia Day Sunday 26 January, there will be a Pioneers Service at The Garrison Church, Argyle Place, The Rocks, at 10am. Before the service there will be a procession of flags and First Fleet Family Descendants Banners, which after the service will be taken in procession to the 'Islands of Friendship' First Fleet Memorial at Circular Quay, where a short memorial

service will take place, and small posies of flowers placed on the Memorial by any First Fleet descendant who wishes to do so. Members of the Fellowship together with any First Fleet Family Associations and friends are all welcome to take part in this service and subsequent procession.

I must congratulate new member Lisa Rusten on her presentation of proof of descent from Anthony Rope and Elizabeth Pulley. From all accounts Lisa, in her early twenties, is a keen genealogist and was not thwarted in the finding of a missing link in the proof of her descent from her two First Fleet ancestors. I hope that her membership of the Fellowship will be long and fruitful.

The ninth Annual General Meeting of the incorporated Fellowship was held at First Fleet House in the presence of some 22 members, on November 3 last. We welcome two new members to the Executive, Joy Pankhurst F.F. Matthew Everingham, and Rose Millwood F.F. William Tunks. We were sorry to lose Phyllis Selby and Bonnie Savill from the Executive. Both have contributed much in time and effort in the past, though they will still hold the fort at First Fleet House on a Thursday, we thank them for their time as Directors of the Fellowship.

The motion re the admittance of a category of 'Friends' of the Fellowship attracted lively discussion. Both Vice President Rod Best and Treasurer Roy Morris put forward a very strong yes case. Equally as strong, Vice President Doug Oakes and Membership Convenor Naida Jackson put forward the no case. The motion was defeated.

In his excellent presentation of the annual financial report, Treasurer Roy Morris sounded a note of warning re the number of members who had overlooked renewal of subscriptions. Whilst we made a small profit for the year, and whilst our average of 100 new members was realised, subscription renewals give some cause for concern.

May I make a personal plea to you to ensure that your yearly subscription is forwarded to First Fleet House. This subscription of \$22 for a full member, and \$13 for a member in receipt of a Social Security pension, barely allows for the publication and postage of the Newsletter in addition to the day to day running of First Fleet House and mortgage repayments. We are a unique Australian Association and it is up to us as members to ensure that the links in our common bond of Fellowship are not severed.

The Christmas message is one of Peace, Strength and Joy in the wider family of nations. May I wish you all a very Happy Family Christmas and may the New Year bring you health and prosperity.

In Fellowship,
Peter.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Period 26 September to 26 November 1996

We extend a warm welcome to new members joined during this period - 15 adults, one spouse associate.

THOMAS CHIPP - JANE LANGLEY: Mr Michael Anthony Parnell.

MATTHEW EVERINGHAM: Mrs Julie Ann Moss.

MATTHEW EVERINGHAM + PETER HIBBS: Mrs Lynnette June Carrall.

ANN FORBES: Mrs Elizabeth Carol Moxham.

JOHN HERBERT - DEBORAH ELLAM: Mr Frederick Paul Moxham.

NATHANIEL LUCAS - OLIVIA GASCOIGNE: Mr Richard Gary Fitzgerald.

EDWARD MILES: Mr John Neil Waring.

SAMUEL PIGOTT: Mrs Leonie Rae Holley

EDWARD RISBY: Mr Keith William Jones; Mrs Wendy Barbara Selman; Miss Fiona Marie Selman.

WILLIAM ROBERTS: Mr Ronald Victor Wallace Roberts.

ANTHONY ROPE - ELIZABETH PULLEY: Miss Lisa Michelle Rusten.

JAMES SHEERS: Mrs Dorothy Florence Falconer.

JAMES WRIGHT: Mrs Karin Luise Elliott (sp. Mr Malcolm Harley Elliott).

BIRTHS

A warm welcome for the following New First Fleeters:

JOSHUA AARON CHARLTON (F.F. Joseph Hatton), 20 July 1996. First child for Michael and Anne, first grandchild for Ted and Joan (#1150). Sixth generation.

NICHOLAS GORDON GREENTREE (F.F. Matthew Everingham), born 26 October 1996 at North Gosford Private Hospital. Second child for Sallianne and Geoffrey.

JOSHUA SELLARS-FAITHFUL (F.F. Owen Cavenaugh - Margaret Darnell), 18 May 1996, to Angela and Barry. A grandson for Harold Woods (#6345). Eighth generation.

ADAM LUKE SMITH (F.F. Nathaniel Lucas-Olivia Gascoigne+James Squire), 26 August 1996. First child for Annette and Lindsay (#1177).

YOUR NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 1996 - 1997

Peter G. Christian	President
Roderick C. Best	Vice-President
Douglas M. Oakes	Vice-President
Roy W. Morris	Treasurer
Zona V. Maguire	Secretary
Alice Clarke	Committee Member
Dorothy E. Jupp	Committee Member
Ronald G. Maguire	Committee Member
Rose M. Millwood	Committee Member
Beverley A. Naughton	Committee Member
Joyce M. Pankhurst	Committee Member
Cecil G. Thompson	Committee Member

FIRST FLEETERS BURIED OVERSEAS

Since 1976 when the Fellowship started placing plaques on First Fleeters memorials over 90 have been found in New South Wales, Tasmania, Norfolk Island and England. Permission has been given to place plaques on 87 of these memorials.

Mollie Gillen in her book *The Founders of Australia* names the burial sites of the following First Fleeters outside of Australia and Norfolk Island and if there is a memorial the Fellowship would like to seek permission to have a plaque attached identifying the interred as a First Fleeter.

William Balmain (1762-1803) died 17 November 1803, buried St. Andrew's, Holborn, England.

Arthur Bowes Smyth (1750-1790) died 31 March 1790, buried Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Essex, England.

James Meredith died 9 July 1841, buried Monmouth, Wales.

Jacob Nagle (1761-1841) died 17 February 1841, buried Canton, Ohio U.S.A.

Elizabeth (Needham) Mark (1761-1825) died 3 January 1825 at the Star and Garter Tavern, Portsmouth, England.

James Plowman (1750-1811) died 22 June 1811, buried Horsham, Sussex, England.

Alexander John Ross (1779-1800) died 29 June 1800, buried Brentford, Middlesex, England.

Robert Ross (1740-1794) died 9 June 1794, buried Brompton, near Gillingham, England.

Watkin Tench (1758-1833) died 7 May 1833, buried Devonport, England.

Henry Waterhouse (1770-1812) died August 1812, Parish of St John the Evangelist, Westminster, England.

Henry Lidgbird Ball (1756-1818) died 22 October 1818, buried Mitcham, England.

Dennis Consideren died 29 December 1815, at Cumberland Street, Parish of St. Marylebone, London, England.

William Dawes (1762-1836), died Antigua, West Indies.

James Scott, died/buried 1796 Portsmouth, England.

The Fellowship would like to obtain further information on these First Fleeters and in particular details of actual burial sites and whether there is an actual memorial for any of them. The addresses of persons and locations to whom we might write for further details would be most helpful.

Help is sought on this project from our members who may live within the vicinity of these locations, or have relatives and/or friends living nearby, for their cooperation in visiting the areas to investigate and advise the Fellowship of their findings.

DOUGLAS OAKES
Convener Plaques Committee





LUNCHEON

Saturday, 25 January 1997

**THE HOLME BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY**

Our special guest for 'The Day We Celebrate' will be His Excellency the Honourable Gordon Samuels AC, Governor of New South Wales.

There will be pre-lunch drinks and nibbles after which a two-course lunch will be served.

Drinks with lunch are not included in the cost.

This is a time for families to gather and celebrate the day our forebears came to Australia. We need to show our guests the strength of our association.

Dress is lounge suit for gentlemen and short frocks or suits for ladies.

All bookings must be paid for (money or cheques will not be collected at the function) by Tuesday, 14 January 1997.

DATE: Saturday, 25 January 1997

TIME: 12pm Drinks and Nibbles; 12.45pm for Lunch

COST: 45 per person by Tuesday, 14 January 1997

VENUE: The Holme Building, University of Sydney

Parking is available in the grounds. There is a cost.

Bookings may be made by ringing the office on 9360 3788.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY

for

FIRST FLEETERS and FRIENDS

Centred on Dubbo Palms Motor Inn, Dubbo

Cost will be \$435 (**), which includes return coach fare from Sydney to Dubbo.

Single Supplement \$125

** Twin share only

Leave Monday, 5 May 1997

back in Sydney

Saturday, 10 May 1997

Departure times and program to be advised in later Newsletters.

Further information contact First Fleet House: (02) 9360 3788

ALL DESCENDANTS

of

MICHAEL MURPHY

(Marine, Private)

and

HANNAH (ANN) MURPHY,

nee **WILLIAMS (Convict)**

are invited to a

REUNION

at

WARRNAMBOOL, VICTORIA

SATURDAY, 26 APRIL 1997

A Get-together, Bring your own lunch. Dinner at night.

Numbers required so please contact:

WA:

Nancy Pearce 09 331 3141

Qld:

Gayle Thomsett 076 911 394

NSW:

Dallas or Jean Lacc 02 9533 4593

Vic:

Janet Dunstan 050 372 734

Vic:

Beryl Stephens 055 723 633

Vic:

Peggy Sargeant 03 9870 8040

Vic:

Miriam Marshall 051 442 139
(after 6pm)

Or write

REUNION

PO BOX 71

Ringwood East

VICTORIA 3135



BUY A BRICK

Stan Bartlett; P. B. Chalmers; R. F. Cohen; H. W. Cowell; Garner V. Dredge; M. L. Eggleston; Vi Knight; R. W. Morris; Dr R. Roberts; Mrs R. Round; Betty Tamblee.

Maitland

The Hub OF THE Hunter

by

Ruth Davis

(F.F.s Jane Langley – Thomas Chipp)

During 1997 The Hunter Valley will be celebrating its Bi-centenary. This date has been taken from the arrival of Lieutenant John Shortland and the discovery of the river he named Hunter after the Governor, while searching for escaping convicts. Of course he was not the first person nor even the first white person to see the river.

According to the aboriginal interpretation of drawings of Biamee, the dominant spirit of the valley, in a cave near Broke, the seven lines from his outstretched arms indicate that seven tribes lived along the banks of the river and gained sustenance from its waters. Two of these tribes were the Woremi and the Awabigal. These date back for many thousands of years.

Richard Sadlier, appointed in England to inquire into measures to be taken towards the 'civilisation and education' of Aborigines in 1826, later wrote of the Hunter Natives in glowing terms: 'They have a nobility of character. The fact is now incontrovertible, that they possess much capacity, considerable intelligence and are capable of instruction, have the same affections and the same domestic and social relationships as ourselves, are subject to special laws and defend their country with patriotism.'

As for the first white persons to find the Hunter River, on 28 March 1791, William and Mary Bryant and their two children, James Martin, James Cox, John Butcher, Samuel Bird, William Allen, Samuel Broom, Nathaniel Lilly and William Morton during an epic bid for freedom from Sydney Cove in an open boat put in to the mouth of the river. They lit a fire with coal they found on the beach, so they discovered coal in the area.

In 1796 a party of fishermen was wrecked between the mouth of the river and Port Stephens. They were taken back to Broken Bay by a group of Aborigines, as no mention of a harbour or lake was made in their report it is thought they travelled by the land route through where Maitland, Cessnock and Wollambi now stand. They must have crossed the river and were therefore the first white people to see the Maitland district.

In 1801 Governor Hunter sent the Lady Nelson, commanded by Lieutenant James Grant, together with Lieutenant Colonel William Paterson, Surgeon John Harris and Ensign Francis Barralier to survey and assess the Hunter River. They explored the river to above where Maitland stands, naming it Shanks Forest Plains after the designer of the Lady Nelson. The Williams River was found and explored also.

Six months later the new Governor King sent Francis Barralier and Charles Grimes to do a more thorough survey. This time a tributary was found and named the New River, but later called the Paterson. These men are considered the first official Europeans associated with the Maitland District.

From this time on a penal settlement was established at Newcastle which failed but was revived in 1804. Cedar getting ranged further up the valley and a camp was established at the junction of the river and a creek now named Wallis Creek. This small camp now gave the area its second name The Camp.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie had a profound influence on the area. He visited the Hunter in January 1812. After this trip four settlers were permitted to settle on both sides of the Paterson river. These were the first settlers outside the area termed the metropolitan area of Australia. Settlers were established in the Maitland city area by 1813.

Macquarie then gave Maitland its next name, Wallis Plains. Wallis creek was also named and is the only name still held in the area from those early namings.

By 1820 there were 42 women in the Hunter settlements, seven were at Wallis Plains. Molly Morgan was perhaps our most colourful personality, so much so that the area was known as Molly Morgan Plains for some time. She was the owner of the Angel Inn, which was leased to George Yoemans.

Most of the alluvial land had been allocated by 1825, and many of properties, people and places, still found in the area, began to appear, such as: Windermere, Alynwick, Melville, Francis Greenway, Woodbury, Lang, Dunmore, Anambah, Bloomfield, Duckenfield, Morpeth, Lochinvar and many others.

In 1824 a carriage road was ordered to be built between Wallis Plains and Newcastle. In 1825 a stone store was built on the river bank and commerce began. A regular boat service to Wallis Plains began and in 1827 the first bridge was built across Wallis Creek, which was deep and up to now had been crossed in a rough ferry.

This bridge almost finished the river trade to Wallis Plains as it was only three miles by road over the new bridge, from the head of deep water, at Morpeth, to Wallis Plains store, while it was a long, 25 miles, and difficult row through the many bends of the river.

Morpeth started as a private settlement and later a planned town by Lieutenant Edward C. Close. This now developed as a major port for the area, where first sailing ships and later paddle steamers plied from Sydney through Newcastle to the head of navigation.

Maitland developed as two separate townships. East Maitland was on the eastern side of Wallis Creek and was the centre of the official activities of the town. The first magistrate's court was held there in 1829. This town was planned with several streets running parallel to the road to Morpeth which crossed the road to Newcastle at right angles. West Maitland was on the western side of Wallis Creek on the southern bank of the river at a point where the river curves in a wide bend.

In 1835 Governor Burke gave instructions for the boundaries of the two towns to be marked out owing to the rivalry between them and the dislike of the Wallis Plains settlers of being governed from East Maitland. The Wallis Plains area was to be known as West Maitland and the government town as East Maitland. For one hundred years these names existed and the rivalry of the two towns continued.

The three municipalities of West Maitland, East Maitland and Morpeth, together with the shires of Bolwarra, Kearsley and Tarro were amalgamated in 1945 and the city of Maitland came into being. There are other small settlements within the city limits.

Largs, where the school has the honour of being the oldest continuous government school in NSW was built by the Rev. Dunmore Lang as a church and then used as a school. The Government took it over in 1848.

Lochinvar, where the NSW Equestrian Centre is located, is also the site of the Head House of The Sisters of St. Joseph, (The Black St. Joseph nuns) which was started by Blessed Mary McKillop.

The greater City of Maitland has many beautiful historical buildings dating back to the early and later 1800s. The district is famous for its fertile and producing market gardens, pasture for dairy herds, fodder crops, vineyards and poultry farms. Many industries flourish such as National Textiles and coalmining.

Morpeth is preserved as a historical town and is the centre of crafts for the district. In recent years the High Street of Central Maitland has been changed to a Heritage Mall and many shops restored to their previous glory. Each year Maitland celebrated its past with the steamfest weekend, when the part steam trains played in its history is remembered. Many tourists visit Maitland for this display and carnival and stay at the many comfortable motels and hotel in the city and district.

The Maitland City Council has established a replica slab hut, in memory of the first dwellings built along the river, as a tourist information centre. It is situated on the New England Highway in a park near East Maitland Bowling Club.

Maps and information about the three heritage walks around some of the historic buildings of Maitland, East Maitland and

Morpeth also directions to outlying historic homes and the surrounding district can be obtained at the Tourist Centre.

A historic slab hut has been restored and stands in Largs school grounds.

Some of the important buildings still standing are: Bridge House 1829-31, Caroline Chisholm's Cottage 1840, Oldehome 1838, St. John's Catholic Church 1844-46, Aberglasslyn House 1840, Melville 1839, Dunmore House Largs 1833, Tocal Paterson 1829 now part of Tocal Agricultural College, Maitland Mercury 1843, Closebourne Morpeth 1829-31.

The mirror image Victorian residences of Brough and Grossman Houses now used by the National Trust as art gallery and museum 1860s. There are many more. Maitland is one of the most historic cities in Australia where much of the past has been reserved.

I trust many of you will visit and walk or drive around and see the beautiful relics of our past and soak up the history of the development of one of our early non penal settlements.

... names of properties, people and places, still found in the area, began to appear,

such as:

Windermere

Alynwick

Melville

Francis Greenway

Woodbury

Lang

Dunmore

Anambah

Bloomfield

Duckenfield

Morpeth

Lochinvar

and many others.



The author, Ruth Davis, third from left

HUNTER VALLEY CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday 19 October 1996

I was privileged to attend and chair this year's annual meeting of the Fellowship's Hunter Valley Chapter held at the Joy Cummings Centre, Newcastle, in attendance with fellow life member and convenor of our membership committee Naida Jackson.

The retiring Convenor/President Ray Meredith welcomed us and at the same time introduced us to a very keen and enthusiastic group of members. This was the Chapter's tenth annual meeting.

The management committee appointed for the next ensuing year is:

President and Convenor –
Ray Meredith

Vice President –
Cliff Mackie

Minutes Secretary –
Verne Mackie

Treasurer –
Jean McKenny

The members are looking forward to 1997 as this is the bi-centennial anniversary of the establishment of Newcastle.

We again invite members living near to Newcastle to join with the Hunter Valley Chapter in the functions during the year. They meet on the third Saturday of every month at the Joy Cummings Centre, corner Scott Street and Pacific Highway, Newcastle. The meeting commences at 1.30pm with the first meeting for 1997 on 15 February.

Ray Meredith may be contacted on (049) 431246 for further inquiries.

Doug Oakes
Vice-President
Fellowship of First Fleeters

The President of Hunter Valley Chapter, Ray Meredith, at the annual general meeting on 19 October 1996 reported that the year was saddened by untimely death of John Bone, Vice-President. John being a foundation member will be sorely missed by the Chapter. A precis of the President's annual report follows.

Through the year there were some very interesting and well-illustrated talks on members' family history, one of which was Dorothy Johns's narrative on John Weaver and his part in the development of Ryde. A plaque has been fixed on the banks of Parramatta River recording this history.

Ruth Davis's talk on Jane Langley proved to be interesting, as Ruth was the first Jane Langley descendant to join the Chapter, and once again there have been the lively snippets from Pat Sherrif taking us back to our history in England. Pat after many hours of the hard endeavour and in-depth research has put her book to print.

Luncheons at Sizzlers continue to be popular activity days. The September activity day, a tour of Newcastle historical sites on the replica tram, was a very enjoyable afternoon with information supplied on the tour by a guide who could best be described as gregarious and entertaining.

The President evinced great pleasure in being invited to attend and speak at the December meeting of the Northern Rivers Chapter of the Fellowship of First Fleeters. This proved to be a very enjoyable experience as it has members from all areas of the North Coast, some of them having links back to his own antecedents and to the Hunter Valley.

Ray went on to say: 'I am disappointed at the lack of interest shown towards our group by the organisers of the Hunter River Bicentenary in 1997. However, as you know, our governing body has agreed to hold the 1997 AGM in Newcastle, and will [consider] supporting us in any activity we may decide on.'

'I would like to see us make a success of the 1997 AGM, as we will not only be honouring our own First Fleeter, John Shortland, and his part in the history of the Hunter River area, it is also the tenth anniversary of the convening of our Chapter and an opportunity to demonstrate the part played by First Fleeters not only in the Sydney area, but in all parts of Australia.'

The President thanked the minute secretary, Verna Lumby, and the treasurer, Jean McKenny, for their support throughout the year, and the Fellowship's President, Peter Christian, who is always there to listen and support, for his co-operation,



SECOND STAGE OF WILLIAMS FAMILY VAULT RESTORATION TO PROCEED

On Friday, 27 September 1996, the following personnel met at the parish centre attached to St. Peter's Anglican Church, Richmond NSW: Reverend Jim Payne, Jim and Shirley Mills; Les G. Boutcher; Desmond J. Williams; John Phipps (secretary, St. Peter's Cemetery Trustees) and Gordon A. Brown (monumental lettercutter).

Following a very generous donation of \$1,000 from Les Boutcher, it was decided that the second stage of restoration of the Williams family vault in St. Peter's Cemetery should proceed forthwith. The task will be completed by the end of 1996.

The first stage was finalised last year. On 25 June 1995 a service took place in St. Peter's, Richmond, to mark completion, followed by the dedication of a Fellowship of First Fleeters plaque for Robert Williams, senior. (Robert Williams junior and Charlotte Eather were the first family members to be buried in the vault.)

Jim Payne paid a warm tribute to Les Boutcher on two counts. First, of the \$2,700 required for the complete restoration work, Les had contributed \$1,500. Secondly, it was due to the lengthy, painstaking research carried out by Les Boutcher that Robert Williams senior was officially recognised as a First Fleeter. The delay in such recognition was because the earlier accepted birth date of Robert Williams junior was in error ~~and~~ obscured his relationship to the First Fleet convict of the same name. (Les Boutcher's late beloved wife, June, was a descendant of First Fleeter Robert Williams and of Charlotte Eather.)

A SECOND REUNION

The meeting on 27 September also decided to hold a second reunion for descendants of First Fleeter Robert Williams, Robert Williams Junior and Charlotte Eather. It will take place on Sunday, 22 June, 1997, with a 12 noon service at St. Peter's Richmond followed by a picnic at Pugh's Lagoon.

Further information:
The Reverend Jim Payne,
10/42 Jinka Street, Hawker. ACT 2614
Telephone (06) 254 6722.

SMALL FAMILY REUNION

The descendants of First Fleeters John Small and Mary (Parker) Small held their twenty-sixth annual gathering at St. Anne's, Ryde, on Sunday, 13 October 1996.

John and Mary Small were married in St. Anne's on 12 October 1788. This year celebrates the 208th anniversary of their wedding. This year also celebrates the 200th anniversary of William's, their fourth child, birth on 14 December 1796.

John and William Small are both buried at St. Anne's Church cemetery.

The proceedings started at 11.00am with an exhibition of family memorabilia and a display in memory of William Small.

William Small lived most of his life in Ryde. His home, called Williamsdale, still exists and is owned and occupied by a descendant, Walter Small.

The annual meeting resulted in Janice Thomas being appointed as president. Janet is a descendant of John Small, John and Mary Small's third child. She has been a member of the association for a number of years and contributed greatly to the publication of the family books.

Janice has taken on the task of collecting all further updates or possible other publications and family records.

Susan O'Brien, the past president, has stood down but remains on the committee.

Thora Moxon is the association's new assistant secretary. Bob Cambourn has returned to the committee after a few years rest.

The association had received a request from the Rector of St. Anne's Church for donations from the family members for the restoration of Miriam Small's memorial. The memorial was found broken in two and has been repaired and re-erected by the church committee. The descendants present at the gathering donated generously to this project.

Bert Weston

No 964 Bert Ernest Weston, 1901-1996 – Adventurer, soldier, historian, tale-teller.

Bert Weston joined the Fellowship of First Fleeters in February 1973 after attending the Fellowship's dinner held on 26 January 1973 at the North Sydney Anzac Memorial Club, Cammeray.

Bert was a descendant of First Fleeters George Johnston and Esther Abrahams.

Bert like all the other descendants was proud of the fact that Captain-Lieutenant George Johnston is reported as being the first person ashore at Port Jackson in 1788. Although others may claim that their First Fleeter was the first person to step ashore in the Colony, historians inform us that the person most likely would have had to have been an officer. Therefore as George Johnston was not only an officer but the senior officer at that, his claim to be the first ashore would have to be taken over all others.

Bert Weston among other things was an enthusiastic historian and gave speeches at a number of our functions and to other groups on behalf of the Fellowship. He also wrote numerous articles for the press.

The Small Descendants Association's committee is in discussion with the Society of Australian Genealogists for the inclusion of its family records on to the Society's computer.

After the annual general meeting, luncheon was provided.

Later in the afternoon the thanksgiving service was held at the historic St. Anne's Church, the service being conducted by Rev. Gordon Killow.

Donald Shanks AO OBE from the Sydney Opera Society, whose wife Pamela is a descendant of William Small, sang a solo during the service. Pamela Shanks read the first lesson and Valda Small read the second lesson. Valda Small is also a descendant of William Small.

The association was pleased to observe a steady increase of descendants in attendance over the last few years.

The twenty-seventh annual gathering will be held on Sunday, 12 October 1997, the 209th anniversary of John and Mary Small's wedding at St. Anne's Church, Ryde.

DOUGLAS OAKES

Secretary Small Family Association.



Bert was present at the unveiling of the Fellowship's plaque on the plinth in front of Annandale House Gates at Annandale Public School (from George Johnston's home – see picture page 8) on 15 March 1992. At this service Bert mentioned that he was proud of the fact that George Johnston's youngest daughter Blanche, his great-grandmother, used to nurse him as a baby, and therefore eyes that had seen him had also seen Governor Macquarie, John Macarthur, William Wentworth and many others connected with our early colonial history.

Bert served with distinction during the war in New Guinea.

One of his prewar activities was motorcycle racing, winning his last race in 1923 at Maroubra.

He was a very good friend of the late Sir David Martin also a descendant of George Johnston and a member of the Fellowship. They used to meet regularly at family reunions.

Bert Weston was born at Albion Park, NSW, on 23 February 1901 and died at Greenwich, NSW, on 14 October 1996. Our sympathies go to his daughter Shay Martin and family.

'BACK IN THEM THAR HILLS'

[The following is an interesting piece of history written by Bert back in 1982 and is presented for your enjoyment and to remind you of his tale-telling mastery.]

(continued on page 8)



Descendants of people who arrived in NSW in the First Fleet and during the ensuing forty years and who now in general live comfortable suburban or city lives naturally have no personal knowledge of the life-style of their early colonial forebears except as passed down in writing and by legend.

I am possibly one of the few who, much earlier this century, lived in close contact with a community

possessing a way of life little changed from that of the 1820s, this was located in the valleys and foothills of the Illawarra Range west of Albion Park on the NSW South Coast.

To inject a snippet of NSW history into the story in explanation of my presence on the scene, I might explain that the first 25 years of my life was lived on the 1500-acre property at Albion Park known as the 'Macquarie Gift', it being a grant from Governor Macquarie to his friend Major George Johnston of the First Fleet.

Johnston's youngest daughter Blanche married Captain G.E. Weston of 'Horsley' at Prospect NSW. His youngest son David of George's Hall near Liverpool married Selina Willey.

The eldest Weston son married David's daughter, Esther – cousins – and were given the 'Macquarie Gift' property as a dowry and where over a residence of forty-five years Major Ned Weston bred race and show horses, dairyfarmed and cultivated crops.

Eventually their son Alick came into possession hence my existence there as the eldest of his family. It was on this land that the first clover grown in Australia came from a bag of seed given to George Johnston by his lifelong sponsor the Duke of Northumberland.

There has existed a family rumour that the Duke was in fact Johnston's father. Certainly, he was instrumental in obtaining for him a commission, at age twelve, in the 45th company of marines in 1776. In later years George Johnston was twice sent back to England to face courtmartial and stayed there for periods of two and four years respectively, living for much of the time with the ducal family, and on each return to NSW

brought back livestock, farm implements and seed given to him by the duke.

The abovementioned slopes of the Illawarra Range, in what is now the Macquarie Pass area, possessed originally large stands of cedar which in the early 1800s attracted numbers of escaped convicts, emancipists and adventurers who worked at felling, pit-sawing the cedar logs into planks and shipping the timber to Sydney.

Eventually the trees were cut out and the cutters turned to other pursuits, many took up small holdings in the same area, acquired female partners and eked out a living by subsistence farming, splitting fence timber and in operation of illicit whisky stills with maize and potatoes as the base material.

They lived as a very withdrawn community, married within the group and raised large families who in turn lived in much the same

way as did their succeeding generations up into the 1900s when I came to know them.

Their mode of speech was probably little removed from that of the first arrivals except that regional differences from various areas of Great Britain had over the years merged into a more or less common form, and which at times was hard to follow.

One of their popular community activities was the annual corn husking bees. The cobs were snapped off the stalks in the paddock and carted into a barn. Some time later the husking would be an evening event to which I was invited on several occasions.

After some hours of steady work there would be a great pile of husks which became the scene of much horseplay as girls and young men wrestled in its depths. This was one phase of early courtship among those mountain folk.

The husking would be followed by an enormous supper of farm cooking and a dance in the kitchen from which the furniture had been hurled out into the yard. Music was provided by an 'orchestra' consisting of a fiddle, concertina and mouth organ, belting out tunes of songs such as 'My Lassie from Lancashire', 'The Miner's Dream of Home', and 'We parted on the Shore', all bearing relation to their ancestors' forced departure from the Old Dart.

The girls and women possessed Amazon qualities and could swing an axe, handle a plough and dig postholes as competently as the men. It was no trouble for one of them to pick up a struggling, squealing hundred-pound pig and heave it up into a cart. Their dances were noisy boisterous romps, and a few twirls with one of those muscular damsels was somewhat akin to being partnered by a combination threshing machine and a woolpress.

On one occasion, it was the first day of the Albion Park Agricultural Show, I visited one of the families to arrange for a fencing job. Riding up to the front of the house I was met by the man and his wife. Seeing none of their numerous brood of teenagers about, I inquired as to their whereabouts and was told by the mother that 'Our'uns be gorn t'show the day, us'uns be goin amorry'.

Eventually blackberries and rabbits drove them off their holdings, education stepped in and later generations were absorbed in the outside community in ways far removed from those of their grandfathers.