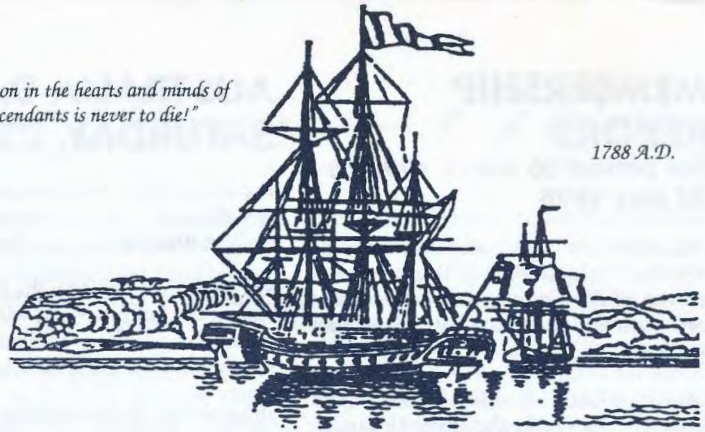


Fellowship of First Fleeters

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

1788 A.D.



NEWSLETTER

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
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MAY/JUNE 1998 VOLUME 29 NO. 3

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There will be a welcome to new members on Sunday, 26 July next at First Fleet House at 2.00pm. All members are welcome but please R.S.V.P. for catering purposes.

I received from Doug Oakes a list of First Fleeters known to have been buried in Tasmania. Surprisingly there were 85 men and women who arrived on the First Fleet and have their last resting place in various parts of the Island.

With this you issue will find a subs renewal form. Please remit this with your cheque as soon as possible and if any spare change please remember the 'Buy a Brick Fund.'

In Fellowship
PETER



A number of members have inquired about the 'Bonds of Friendship' memorial to First Fleet arrivals which was removed during the reorganisation of the Customs House at Circular Quay. We have been given to understand that the memorial will be replaced, possibly albeit in a new spot. As far as the Fellowship is concerned, the 'Bonds of Friendship' cannot stray too far from the Quay area.

I recently spoke to members of the Ashfield View Club and the Sub-branch of Epping RSL. I have about four or five invitations from various organisations for the remainder of the year to speak about the First Fleet and the Fellowship.

Plans are in hand for our 1999 Australia Day lunch. It will be held at the NSW Masonic Club, Castlereagh Street, Sydney, on Saturday, 23 January. Further details at a later date.

The Executive is in the process of investigating the feasibility of a fax/answering machine.

SOUP AND DAMPER DAY

First Fleet House, 105 Cathedral Street,
Woolloomooloo

The Fellowship of First Fleeters' ever-popular annual 'Soup and Damper Day' is being held at First Fleet House on **Wednesday, 8 July 1998.**

The function begins with a meeting at 11.00am followed by the luncheon at 12.00 noon.

This year's Guest Speaker is to be **Maureen Goldston-Morris**, a well-known historian from the Ladies Pioneer Club and many other societies.

Many of our members have had the pleasure of listening to Maureen speak and assure us that we can look forward to a most interesting talk.

Please have your name registered on the Notice Board if you are coming to this function, for catering purposes.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

For period 26 March 1998 to 27 May 1998

We extend a warm welcome to new members joined during this period – eleven adults, one spouse associate and one spouse associate of an earlier member.

JAMES BRADLEY: Mrs Pamela Ruth Cochrane; Mr Phillip Desmond Alexander.

WILLIAM BROUGHTON: Rear-Admiral Peter Ross Sinclair AC AO (Mil).

MATTHEW EVERINGHAM: Mr Oswald James Pearce.

EDWARD KIMBERLEY + DANIEL STANFIELD – ALICE HARMSWORTH: Miss Shirley Irene Bramich.

NATHANIEL LUCAS – OLIVIA GASCOIGNE: Mrs Gail Maree Rose; Mrs Geraldine Eve Somerville.

WILLIAM NASH – MARIA HAYNES: Mrs Faye Seuren.

ANTHONY ROPE – ELIZABETH PULLEY: Mrs Margaret Gwen Townsend; Miss Carol Anne Player.

THOMAS WILLIAMS: Mr Raymond James Williams (sp. Mrs Joan Williams).

SPOUSE ASSOCIATE OF EARLIER MEMBER: Mr Craig Russell Anderson husband of Mrs Alison Anderson, #1176.

BIRTHS

Welcome to an additional First Fleeter:

ANGUS JONATHAN BRUCE MEAD (F.F. John Cross, 17 December 1997. Second con to Fran and Jonathan, second grandson to Joan (#1762) and Bruce Maitland. Eighth generation.

DEATHS

Deepest sympathy is extended to the families of the following:

KENNETH COLLINS (#2485) passed away 11 April 1988, also his wife Ella (spouse associate), died late 1997. Descendant of First Fleeter James Bradley.

IRENE MYRTLE ROBINS (#6119), passed away 29 May 1998. Mother of Wayne Robins (#6116), grandmother of Benjamin Robins (#6146), Corinne Robins (#6147) and Nicholas Robins (#6148). Descendant of First Fleeters Samuel Day and Mary Bishop.

AUSTRALIA DAY LUNCHEON, SATURDAY, 23 JANUARY 1999

President Peter Christian and myself were guests of Ron and Zona Maguire to lunch at Cello's, the magnificent heritage dining room of the Masonic Club near the corner of Park and Castlereagh Streets.

We were there to view the venue and make arrangements for the Fellowship's 1999 Australia Day luncheon which is to be held on Saturday, 23 January 1999. Beverly Naughton who was invited but unable to attend has volunteered to organise the luncheon for the Fellowship.

Information is that parking near the NSW Masonic Club on a Saturday is not a problem. There are parking stations available.

Although we are not taking bookings at the moment, we ask that you note the event, date and venue in your diary. Further details will appear in future Newsletters.

Our thanks go to Ron Maguire for his efforts on our behalf.

DOUGLAS OAKES

Convenor Daytime Auxiliary Committee

MARTIN AND RANDALL FAMILY REUNION OLD DAIRY PARK, PARRAMATTA PARK



Daphne Hazell is organising a family reunion for descendants of First Fleeters John Randall and John Martin for Sunday, 19 July 1998.

The reunion commences at 10.00am and all descendants and friends are both encouraged to come and be welcomed to the gathering. John Martin married John Randall's daughter, Mary, and they had eleven children.

At 3.30pm the Fellowship is dedicating a plaque installed on the tombstone of Mary Martin for John Martin at St John's Cemetery, Parramatta.

John Martin a descendant of John and Mary Martin will be reading the eulogy for his famous ancestor. The President of the Parramatta Historical Society, Judith Dunn, with other local dignitaries will be with us at the service. The Australian Colonial Marine Enactment Group will also be with us. They will be dressed in period uniforms and fire a salute at the end of the service in tribute to First Fleeter John Martin.

Daphne Hazell can be contacted on 9502 1440 by any person seeking further information.

Other members of the Martin and Randall families buried at St John's Cemetery the tombstone will be identified with an Australian flag attached to it.

DOUGLAS OAKES, Convenor Plaques Committee

ECUMENICAL SERVICE

On Sunday, 23 August, an Ecumenical Service is to be held at Kissing Point Park, on the Parramatta River, Ryde.

The service, to commence at 11.00am, commemorates 200 years of Christian service at historic St Anne's Church, Ryde.

St Anne's is the third-oldest church in Australia.

Many early settlers of the Ryde district were instrumental in various ways in having the church established.

The service is to commence at 11.00am, with the Rev. Samuel Marsden's descendant, also Rev. Samuel Marsden, conducting. He will be assisted by Rev. Peter Collins, of St Anne's, and by other clergy.

The Hatton Family has decided to make this occasion a family picnic day and invites all Hatton descendants to this historic occasion.

Also of interest to Hatton descendants is the fact that St Charles's Catholic Church at Ryde is built on Joseph Hatton's first grant of land.

Joseph Hatton's son, also a Joseph, was christened at the first christening service held at St Anne's by the Rev. Richard Johnson and Rev. Samuel Marsden (16 July 1800).

Joan Ross

NORTH COAST CHAPTER

Venues and Dates for 1998

2 August: Ron and Pal Benjamin
Mackays Road, Coffs Harbour
Phone (02) 6652 7283.

Turn right into Mackays Road from Bray Street (Baringa Hospital) and keep following Mackays Road over the railway line and veer slightly right and then left and you will see a milk can with 'Mackays Private Road.' Follow this road to the end. Do not take any right or left forks. (There will be small Australian flags to guide you.)

11 October: Boambee Bay Reserve.

6 December: Tony and Robyn Condliffe,
13 McGregor Close, Bayldon.
Phone (02) 6653 3615.

Turn into Linden Avenue from Toormina Road and McGregor Close is the third street on the right. Go to the very end of the close and you will find No 13.

All meetings start at 11.30am.

If you require transport to any venue please contact Secretary, Robin Condliffe, phone (02) 6653 3615.

JOHN NICHOLLS FAMILY SOCIETY REUNION

to be held on 23 August 1998

at

PARRAMATTA

10.00am to 4.00pm

For further details contact

BARBARA COLEMAN
23 Maxwell Street
Turramurra 2077
Phone (02) 9449 2494

HIBBS FAMILY REUNION

Notice to all interested descendants of First Fleeter Peter Kenny Hibbs of Sirius.

On 13 September 1998, commencing at 9.00am, a reunion will take place at the Spencer Community Hall, Wisemans Ferry Road, 1km past the Spencer Public School, going towards Wisemans Ferry

Tea, coffee and hot water will be provided.

Please bring along your own picnic lunch, folding tables, chairs, rugs, cushions, etc, plus any photographs or documentation relating to your descent from Peter Hibbs and his Second Fleet wife Mary Pardoe. It will be appreciated and put on display at the reunion.

In the event of rain, the hall is available to shelter in.

Let's make this the biggest gathering of Hibbs descendants, ever!

1998 marks the 210th year of the landing of the First Fleet and for us is a cause for celebration.

If you have any questions please telephone
Betty Warn (02) 4294 2735;
Elaine Young (02) 9874 6272;
Elgine Kelly (02) 9587 0697;
Roy Cox 0418 270 263.

**Come and bring your family ...
THE MORE THE MERRIER.**

TOUR OF SYDNEY AIRPORT

WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER AT 10.00AM

BY COACH FROM CENTRAL STATION

COST: \$20.00 (Includes Morning Tea)

Bookings and details FFF Office 9360 3788

The Wentworth Adventure

20 May – 26 May 1998

Forty-two people joined us on this year's annual holiday which was to Wentworth, NSW. The group included members from Western Australia and Grafton, NSW. We also had people who had booked independently and were included in our party by the coach company.



The Murray/Darling confluence

The bus left Sydney Central at 8.00am and after picking up three at Strathfield we journeyed along the M4 tollway via Parramatta to the Blue Mountains, with the first stop at Echo Point, Katoomba. This was the first visit to the area for some and the clear weather showed off the spectacular views of the Three Sisters and the Jamieson



Valley. Lunch was had at Bathurst and after a drive around Mount Panorama where in October international touring car racing is conducted, we journeyed through Henry Lawson country to West Wyalong to stay the night.

The second day we travelled along the Sturt Highway through Hay, Balranald and Euston to Wentworth, our base for the next four days. Prior to settling in we were taken to where the Murray and the Darling rivers joined.

The third day we drove to the Wentworth Botanic Gardens to see the rose garden and other specialty gardens of Australian native plants before visiting Mildura.

Here we heard all about the Chaffey brothers and their verdant irrigation vision of a hundred years ago. Then a visit to the gem store with a trip into Aladdin's Cave, a feature of the day. This was followed by a visit to Alamby Winery where many travellers stocked up with the local distillation. After lunch it was back to Wentworth to voyage on MV Loyalty down the Murray to join the Darling, through the lakes area and back to home. On the way back to the motel we visited the Wentworth jail.

On Saturday we left early to go to Broken Hill. The long trip was to be eased by a screening of the interstate 'State of Origin' football match of the night before, unfortunately the tape was not compatible with the video on the bus.

A visit to White's mine with a talk on the operations and mining techniques in the good old days was fascinating to say the least, with the site made over to be like

the mines used to be before the advent of computers and large machinery. We then visited Pro Hart's gallery with all his spectacular art collections and displays. We all received a gift of a print and the 1998-1999 calendar.

We then journeyed on to Silverton, the venue for many Australian films such as A Town Like Alice, Mad Max 2, and many others. The town is full of galleries and gem shops, not forgetting the local jail. It was then back to Wentworth for a well-earned rest.

The magnificent Mungo National Park was Sunday's treat. The park is a series of dry lakes but still a haven of native flora and fauna. Brian the local koori guide took us around showing us relics of a past as far back as 40,000 years. The area may only be visited under the supervision of a local guide to ensure the preservation of the area's culture. No other area of inland Australia combines a record of such past environmental and human history.

A woolshed built over 129 years ago and still standing was open to show us how the places were built and operated in times gone by. It was then back to base via the historic Port of Pooncarie to Wentworth.



Monday we left Wentworth and travelled along beside the Murray River to Albury to stay the night. The following morning we started on our way home, travelling along the Hume Highway. The Dog patiently sitting on his Tucker Box five miles from Gundagai welcomed us for refreshments, and we arrived in Sydney around 4.00pm to separate and wend our way to our homes.

Among the travellers was member Lyn Harper from Western Australia. Lyn would like to hear from other members living in Western Australia. She can be contacted on (08) 9341 2542.

My thanks go to Phyllis Selby who organised the trip with the help of Bonny Saville and treasurer Joyce Rixon.

DOUGLAS OAKES



John and Mary Small Descendants Association

The Small Family Association is making plans for its twenty-eighth family reunion at St Anne's Memorial Hall, Church Street, Ryde, in the morning of Sunday, 11 October 1998. The Thanksgiving Service will be held in the afternoon at the historic St Anne's Church commencing at 2.30. The function commences with an exhibition of family memorabilia on the walls of the hall at 10.30am. This will be followed by the annual meeting and a catered luncheon.

The association is still seeking new family names and any alterations for the records. A revised update book is scheduled for the annual reunion in 2001.

Beverley Earnshaw, from the Hyde Park Barracks Museum, will be guest speaker after lunch at the reunion.

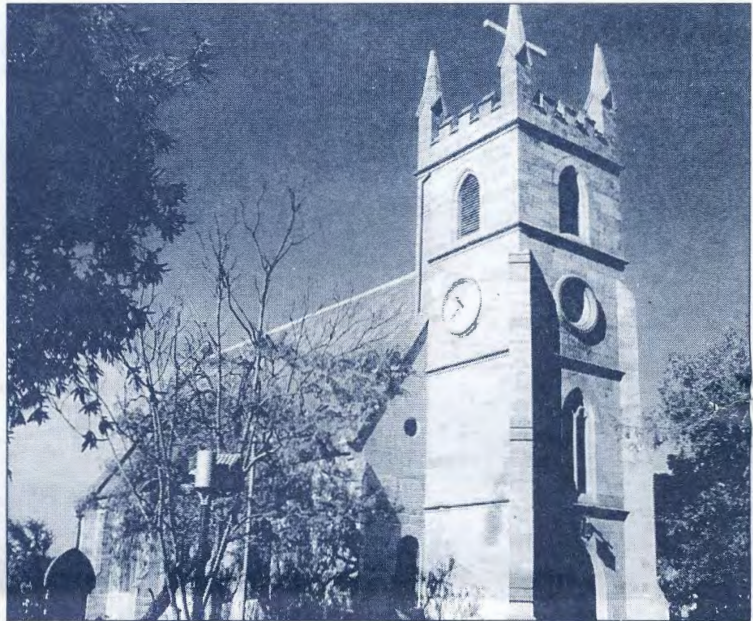
The Hyde Park Barracks Museum has invited the Small Family Association to participate with it in a convict genealogy exhibition at the museum. The exhibition will commence mid-1999 and will be on display during the Olympics. The museum is in Queen's Square, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

There will be three convict families featured. One from New South Wales, one from Tasmania and one from Western Australia.

The Small Family Association has submitted an application to the Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour, for the inclusion of the names of First Fleeters John Small and Mary Parker on the Welcome Wall at Darling Harbour.

The wall extends 100 metres along the northern boundary of the National Maritime Museum and faces the water and the Pyrmont Bay ferry terminal. The first names on the wall will be unveiled during the Sea Change Olympic Art Festival in September 1998. New names will be added each Australia Day, culminating on 26 January 2001.

Any inquiries on the reunion can be made to the secretary, Douglas Oakes, on 9428 2806.



We are the survivors

(an article for those born before 1940!)

We were born before television, penicillin, polio-shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos, frisbees, freebies and the Pill. We lived before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens; before dishwashers, tumble dryers, electric blankets, air-conditioners, drip-dry clothes and before man walked the moon.

We got married first, then lived together ... how quaint can you be? We thought fast food was what you ate in Lent. A Big Mac was an oversized raincoat and crumpet we had for tea. We existed before house-husbands, computer dating and dual careers. We lived at a time when a meaningful relationship meant getting along with your cousins and sheltered accommodation was where you waited for a bus.

We were alive before day-care centres, group homes and disposable nappies existed. We had never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electronic computers and artificial hearts, nor of word processors, yoghurt and men wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness, a chip was a piece of wood or a fried potato; hardware meant nuts and bolts and software wasn't a word.

Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams; a stud was

something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on the bus until it reached the depot. Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee were unheard of. In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was kept under control with a lawnmower, coke was kept in a coalhouse, a joint was a piece of meat you had on Sundays and pot was what you cooked it in. Rock music was grandmother's lullaby, a gay person was the life and soul of the party.

A porn shop was a pawn shop. The recycling unit was known as the rag and bone man. Debt and illegitimacy were secrets. MacDonald was an old man with a farm. A doona was Dad's overcoat and the Top Ten used to be the Ten Commandments.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the ways in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make ... no wonder we are confused and there is a generation gap!

But, by the grace of God, we have survived

Hallelujah!

[From Australian Family Tree Connections, Sept. 1997]

From There to Here – 1788

Peter Christian, President of the Fellowship of First Fleeters, gave a series of talks recently over Radio 2CBA FM about the history of the First Fleet and the people who arrived on that Fleet 1788 and the unique organisation known as the Fellowship of First Fleeters, and we consider them worthy of recording in the Newsletter. It will be a continuing series over the next few Newsletters.

Jn 1786 Thomas Townshend, Lord Sydney, announced that His Majesty King George the Third had authorised the establishment of a settlement at Botany Bay. The Admiralty and Treasury were ordered and I quote 'you do forthwith take such measures as may be necessary for providing a proper number of vessels for the conveyance of 750 convicts to Botany Bay, together with such provisions necessaries and implements for agriculture as may be necessary for their use after the arrival'.

The American War of Independence put a sudden halt to the passage of convicts across the Atlantic. From 1718 thousands of Britain's felons, some 50,000, were sent to the American colonies as indentured servants, so, after several attempts at a solution to rid the country of convicts, it was Botany Bay that was chosen.

The British Treasury arranged eleven ships to be prepared for the journey consisting of two naval ships, Sirius and Supply, six transports, Alexander, Lady Penrhyn, Scarborough, Charlotte, Friendship and Prince of Wales, and three storeships, Fishburn, Borrowdale and Golden Grove. For some months stores were loaded in addition to guns and ammunition. In the quaint language of the day the following were listed on the ships indents—

Barrels of Flour – Firkins of Butter – Tierces of Beef – Casks of Water and of Beer – Cauldrons of coal – Chords of Wood – Bags of Bread (Bag being spelt BAGG) – Portable Soup – Hogs Heads of Seeds, in addition to Pease, cheese, Rice Pork Beads, Looking Glasses and other trifles for the natives encountered – Tools – Agricultural implements (strange with regard to this last item as there was probably only one person on the Fleet who would be familiar with agriculture – James Ruse) There were

medical supplies, surgical instruments, handcuffs and leg-irons, a prefabricated tent for the Governor, 5,000 bricks and the piece de resistance one piano belonging to Surgeon White!

The Fleet set sail from Mother Bank, Portsmouth, on Sunday 13 May 1787. So aptly put by Surgeon George Worgan, aboard HMS Sirius, in his diary 'Thus equipped each ship like another Noah's Ark, away we steered for Botany Bay.'

The eleven ships of the First Fleet got under way eventually for Botany Bay. I say eventually, because of a strike – a portent for many to come to the future land. The crews of the Fishburn and Alexander mutinied over wages and conditions, but it was only short-lived due to a lack of public interest – no one in Britain would have been in the least interested that a fleet consisting of some 1,500 souls was sailing into the unknown. The news of the day for those who were literate was the secret marriage of the Prince of Wales to Mrs Fitzherbert and the impeachment of Warren Hastings for imperial crimes in India!

This successful voyage, the transportation of some 1,500 souls and ten times that amount in distance, of eight months was due in no small part to the navigational skills of Arthur Phillip. Phillip was born in London of an English mother and a German father. He had served in the British Navy during the seven-year war between Britain and France. He also served, with permission from the Admiralty, with the Portuguese Navy and in 1778 he returned to the Royal Navy to serve in the war again against France. In 1781 he was promoted to the rank of Captain and saw action in 1782 and 1783. He then undertook surveying work for the Admiralty. He was handed his commission to lead the expedition to Botany Bay in October 1786 and was given the daunting task of setting up the administration of the settlement that would lay the foundations to be built on for years to come.

Thea Stanley Hughes in her book 'Arthur Phillip' writes 'so in 1788 the destinies of Cook, Phillip, Britain and Australia were brought into close association'.

The voyage of the eleven ships continued. The Canary Islands were reached on 3 June 1787 and at the Port of Teneriffe stores were taken on board. It was here

that it was discovered that the marines had no musket balls for their cartridges. A very serious oversight with fortunately no serious consequences! Rio De Janeiro was reached on 6 August 1787 and the Fleet remained in this port for nearly a month. Again stores were taken on board – ships were caulked and Phillip and his officers were made most welcome by the Portuguese colonists.

Phillip writing to his friend Evan Nepean of the Home Office said – 'with respect to the convicts they have all been allowed the liberty of the deck in the day and many of them during the night, which has kept them much healthier than could have been expected.'

The Fleet arrived in Cape Town on 13 October 1787, after an uneventful trip of 39 days. It was here that Phillip was involved in long and tedious negotiations with the Dutch authorities to purchase supplies for the Fleet in preparation for its final stint to Botany Bay. Fresh stores and livestock were taken on board. Midshipman Newton Fowell, whose letters now repose in our NSW State Library, wrote to his father in November 1787 – 'Honoured father, Before we sailed we took in a great quantity of stock such as oxen, 6 cows and sheep and hogs – all the people thoroughly clear of scurvy as the Dutch supplied us with mutton, vegetables and all other things for the preservation of mens lives on so long a voyage'.

Lieutenant Ralph Clark, marine on the Scarborough, noted in his diary, with regard to the 30 sheep taken on board Friendship into quarters vacated by some of the female convicts. 'I think we will find them more agreeable shipmates than the women were!'

The Fleet sailed from Cape Town on Monday 12 November 1787 on the last leg of its voyage to Botany Bay.

COULDN'T BEAR TO BE PARTED

Leaving Cape Town, Phillip decided to divide the Fleet in two in the hope that the faster ships would reach Botany Bay to prepare for disembarkation of the convicts. He transferred his pennant to Supply and placed Captain John Hunter in charge of Sirius. The ships, however, arrived at Botany Bay within two days of each other, Phillip having arrived on the 18 January 1788. Immediately Phillip went ashore and we are told that in his making contact with the original

(continued on page 8)

inhabitants of this land he ordered all weapons to be laid down and the Aborigines responded in like manner accepting beads and trinkets albeit in a suspicious manner. We are also told that on the following day a large band of natives were assembled on the beach at Cape Solander waving their spears above their heads. Many of the newcomers could not think otherwise that they were not welcome.

Phillip decided, after visiting Port Jackson on 21 January, to move the Fleet and prepare a settlement at Sydney Cove. On 26 January 1788 Phillip sailed Supply to Port Jackson, with orders for the remaining ships to follow later in the day. It was a Saturday, clear weather, light south-south-east breeze and a temperature of 70o Fahrenheit. To the utter astonishment of Captain Hunter, leading the rest of the Fleet on Sirius towards Port Jackson, there appeared two French ships preparing to anchor in Botany Bay.

In the meantime Phillip and his party went ashore at Sydney Cove, began clearing ground near a run of fresh water, which later became known as the Tank Stream, and a flagstaff was erected at the landing place and possession was taken for His Majesty King George the Third. At about 6pm on that day the ten remaining ships anchored in Sydney Cove. Arthur Phillip had accomplished an incredible feat of endurance – undaunted by unknown dangers, navigating over 15,000 miles of distance, with 1,500 souls in his care and only losing 55 during this epic voyage. Twenty-two babies were born en-route. The only major outbreak of fever occurred on Alexander where 16 convicts died – the ship was fumigated and cleansed during the voyage which fact seemed to have abated the epidemic.

On arrival the male convicts were landed together with most of the marines – land was cleared – a tent hospital was set up on the western side of the cove now known as The Rocks and Phillip chose the site of his Government House slightly uphill south-east of the cove. On 3 February the first religious service was held by the Reverend Richard Johnson, Chaplain. His text was taken from Psalm 116 Verse 12 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me'.

One wonders what the convicts may have thought about that text. Little would most of them have known that those promised benefits would come their way in future years.

On Wednesday, 6 February, the convict women from the Lady Penrhyn were disembarked – Surgeon Arthur Bowes-Smyth noted in his diary and I quote 'We had long wished for the pleasure of seeing the last of them leave the ship. They were dressed, in general, very clean and some few amongst them might be said to be well dressed'. He went on to record a night of debauchery which ensued, in the midst of which occurred a most violent thunderstorm!

The next day all were assembled to hear the Governor's Commission read by the Judge Advocate, Captain Collins. Phillip's authority was defined in this Commission, in the Act of Parliament establishing the Colony, and in the Letters Patent constituting the Courts of Law.

Amongst instructions, the Governor was enjoined thus to endeavour by every possible means to open an intercourse with the natives and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all our subjects to live in amity and kindness with them. He was also given power to emancipate convicts for good behaviour and industry and more importantly to grant them land. This

was to be a salvation to many convicts who had indeed for want of circumstances and upbringing never ever had a chance in life and for their past misdeeds had been jettisoned from one hostile environment to another.

On 14 February, 1788, under the command of Phillip Gidley King, Supply sailed for Norfolk Island with a party of marines and fifteen convicts. The idea of this settlement was twofold – to harvest flax for yarn and investigate the Norfolk Pine trees for shipbuilding. They took stores with them for six months. Phillip writing to Lord Sydney in July stated he had made Gidley King Superintendent of Norfolk Island. Again in September he reported that crops had failed on that island and indeed the two colonies were in dire straits as to supplies.

Spars of Norfolk Island pine were sent to Deptford – found of little use for ship timber.

The infant colony on Norfolk was victualled by Supply over the next months. On 19 March 1790 Sirius was wrecked at Sydney Bay, Norfolk Island, which further added to the birth pangs of the Colony of New South Wales.

In November 1791 Phillip in a letter to Lord Sydney reports – 'I can still say with great truth and satisfaction that the convicts, in general, behave better than ever could be expected and that their crimes with very few exceptions have been confined to the procuring for themselves the common necessaries of life.'

In March 1793 Lieutenant King reported to Governor Phillip from Norfolk – 'no robberies or riots are going on here – never was a set of people who behaved so well, if London was 1/2 or 1/4 so honest and quiet as we are here there would be a danger of our being forgotten by our friends in England – therefore good comes from evil.'

By this time in 1793 Norfolk population had been gradually increased to alleviate victualling problems on the mainland. Little by little the Botany Bay project prospered.

In 1797 the second Governor of the Colony, John Hunter, reported to Lord Sydney – 'The vast number of women for whom we've had little work are a heavy weight on the stores of Government – if we estimate their merits by the charming children with which they have filled the Colony – they deserve our care.'

Bearing those sentiments in mind, two centuries later Dr Portia Robinson of the History Department, Macquarie University, observed in her book 'The Hatch and Brood of Time' that the children – the so-called currency lads and lasses of these First Fleeters – were a most law-abiding generation.

That first generation of First Fleeters come into their own. Dr Craig Smee in his book "First Fleet Families of Australia" says – and I quote – 'but whatever the circumstances of their arrival, the First Fleeters planted a seed of the native born, who soon acquired a character which is both different in nature from their origins in England, and similar to each other in their new adopted land. A character with characteristics such as self reliance, initiative and a sense of fair play'. How true this is and really when we come to realise it we have integrated those characteristics over succeeding generations until today we may well say that those descendants of First Fleeters are becoming a microcosm of ethnic Australia

(To be continued.)

