

Fellowship of  
First Fleeters

Volume 39 Issue 2  
March/April 2008

# Founders

Newsletter of Fellowship of First Fleeters



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## Dates to Remember

- Tour to Camperdown Cemetery, Sun 6 April
- Daytime Fellowship Wed 21 May

## From the President's Desk

2008 is certainly brimming with renewed vigor and vitality. The celebration of our 40th Anniversary on 27 March at Parliament House, Sydney, was a great event, with 130 people attending, together with the Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, accompanied by Sir Nicholas Shehadie. Our host was Mr David Harris MP, Member for Wyong.

Other guests included the President of the Society of Australian Genealogists, Mr Mal Sainty; the President of the Women's Pioneer Association Australia, Mrs Marlene Reid, Margaret Hogge of the Sydney-Portsmouth Sister City Program and a representative of the Historic Houses Trust.

The initial meeting of a new chapter in the Ryde to Parramatta corridor will be held at the Ryde-Eastwood RSL Club on Saturday 5 April at 10.00am. Members in the region have been mailed invitations three months ago and the response has been very encouraging. This is a pilot initiative of your Board to ascertain the feeling of members to the formation of district Chapters in the metropolitan area.

The Board has also agreed to change the printing format of Founders. As from and including the July/August magazine the size will be A5 and will contain mainly articles of historic interest, with many First Fleeter stories. This magazine will be published quarterly for 12 months to ascertain the response to the change from members. The size of the print will remain as is it is in the current magazine. You will notice some new innovations, with our roving reporter, Ron Withington, steering us into new ways of presentation.

The news of outings, invitations to Chapter functions, speakers etc., will be contained in a separate quarterly news-sheet in A4 format. So the deadline for information to be included in the new productions will normally be the third Friday of the month preceding the month of publication so that the mailing should reach our members as close to the 1st of the month as possible. This time schedule will be sent to all regular contributors.

It is encouraging to see so many new members being joined to the Fellowship, as many Grand-Parents are joining the new family members as soon as they are born.

*In fellowship, John Haxton*

## ROSES OF THE HEART — A CALL TO ALL OUR BONNET MAKERS . . .



In *Founders* 38.4 last year we drew attention to *Roses of the Heart*, the project by artist Christina Henri to create an exhibition of 25,266 bonnets of a standardised authentic design — one for each of the lives of female convicts transported to Australia.

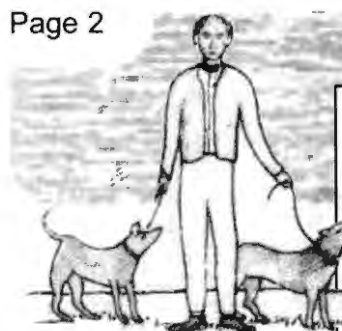
Her aim was that descendants would make a bonnet in memory of each of their female convict ancestors, and that other interested folk could 'adopt' a convict.

Well the project is reaching a climax in NSW, and 10 April sees the Memorial of the Bonnets Ceremony at St John's Cathedral, Paramatta followed by the Blessing of the Bonnets Dinner at Old Government House, Parramatta Park.

The Fellowship will have representation at both events and a full report will appear in the next issue of *Founders*.

We are aware of two FFF members who have contributed bonnets to the Exhibition, but we would like to hear from all other members who have been similarly busy with needle and thread. The idea is that your work will be recorded in the next issue of *Founders*. So it would be great if you could provide the name of the convict or convicts, the name of the ships and the dates of arrival.

Please email replies to Margaret Withington at [margaretwith@ozemail.com.au](mailto:margaretwith@ozemail.com.au) or phone 02 4757 3984, OR to Jean Mortimer at [terryjeanmort@yahoo.com.au](mailto:terryjeanmort@yahoo.com.au) or phone 02 4257 5575.



## FFF Office Bearers 2008

### President

John HAXTON, JP, Dip Chem Eng;  
Dip Corp Mgmt; Dip R.E Mgmt

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Peter CHRISTIAN OAM, JP, Ph.C

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### Assistant Secretary

Bruce ARNETT

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Manager

Jean MORTIMER, Chapter Liaison  
Officer

Ian PALMER, FF House  
Maintenance



## Maintain-a-Brick Donations

We have gratefully  
received donations from  
the following people:

M & G Dingwall, KV Finlay,  
R Kable, M Talbot,  
Daytime Fellowship

## News of Members

### Membership Report for March 2008

We extend a warm welcome to new members  
joined during this period.  
27 Adults, 5 Spouses, 5 Juniors

### THOMAS ACRES

Vincent Joseph Wolfe  
Nigel Luke Wolfe  
Kerrie Lorraine Metcalfe,  
Rodney Charles Bruce  
Vicki Anne Ainsworth-Brown  
Susanne Menger  
(Spouse Neil Roger Menger)

### WILLIAM BROUGHTON

Christine Ann Fensbo

### OWEN CAVANOUGH / MARGARET

DOWLING/DARLING  
Janice Kay Jones  
(Spouse Kevin G. Jones)

### ZACHARIAH CLARK

Mason Alexander Hammond (Junior)

### PHILLIP DEVINE

Jacinta Mary Devine (Junior)  
Elva Una Sewell  
Craig Lloyd Sewell  
Mark James Sewell  
Jason Peter Sewell

### WILLIAM DOUGLAS / MARY GROVES

Brianna May Crane (Junior)

### MATTHEW EVERINGHAM / WILLIAM ROBERTS

Janice Fay Brine  
(Spouse Barry Graham Brine)

### ANN FORBES

Judith Ann Aubin  
Christine Maree Kent  
Daneeka Maree Kent (Junior)  
Joshua Davis Kent (Junior)



ANDREW GOODWIN / LYDIA MUNRO  
Professor Paul Robert McCrory

JOHN HERBERT / DEBORAH ELLEM  
Maxwell David Laroux

EDWARD HUMHREYS  
Norma Elizabeth Smith

FREDERICK MEREDITH  
John Keith Blair

MICHAEL MURPHY  
Nancy Otelie Friebe  
(Spouse Robin G. Friebe)

THOMAS SMITH / ANN COLPITS  
Joyce Elma Jones

ANTHONY ROPE / ELIZABETH PULLEY  
Marie Gwen Kildey  
(Spouse: Robert Owen Kildey)  
Patrick Augustine Troy Johnston

JOHN SMALL / MARY PARKER  
John Norman Denning

EDWARD WHITTON  
Warwick Brownlee Allen

JOSEPH WRIGHT  
Steven Gordon Murphy  
Serena Mary Murphy

## Deaths

Deepest sympathy is extended to the  
families of the following:  
MARIE CHIPLIN. Died 4 January 2008  
Wife of Ken.#5599 Late of Chapel Hill QLD

## Daytime Fellowship

Wednesday 21 May  
Speaker: Joan Lawrence

## A CONVICT COLONY? NONSENSE!

*The terms "convict colony" and "penal colony" are simply not correct, and the so-called convict-colony concept is fallacious. NSW was established as a normal British colony.*

Many history books for education and for general reading say quite arbitrarily, that the only reason the settlement in NSW was established in 1788 was that British gaols and prison hulks were overcrowded because transportation to America was no longer possible after the War of Independence.

This has led to NSW being called a convict or penal colony. This concept is nonsense! Let me give you a surprising analogy. The Americans landed on the moon in 1969. If they now said that because of overcrowding in Federal prisons in the United States they were going to establish a convict settlement on the moon would believe that this was the title reason?

Yet those who say that NSW was settled as a convict colony ask you to believe that, solely to relieve overcrowding in British jails, a colony was established in an unknown part of the world more than 12,000 miles away and six months by sea, at a place only known to have been visited by one European explorer some 17 years before,

Even in our Bicentennial year we did not give full recognition to the hazardous voyage of the First Fleet. Although they were not called at, the only two British possessions on the route were the tiny islands of St Helena and Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic. The Spanish port of Santa Cruz, the Portuguese port of Rio de Janeiro and the Dutch port of Cape Town were vital for supplies for both the voyage and the two years' reserves of food deemed necessary.

After leaving Cape Town the 11 tiny ships, carrying some 1500 souls and crammed with livestock and supplies battled through uncharted waters in the roaring forties for just over two months to reach Botany Bay.

The concept of a convict colony results from the announcement of the decision to establish the settlement. This was done in an inter-departmental memorandum from the Home Secretary to the Treasurer in August 1786 which, after summarising the situation in the gaols and hulks, requested that ships be provided "for the conveyance of 750

convicts to Botany Bay together with provisions, necessaries and implements for agriculture as may be necessary for their use after arrival".

An enclosure to this memo began: "Heads of a plan for effectually disposing of convicts and rendering their transportation reciprocally beneficial to themselves and the state by the establishment of a colony in NSW". This is the main basis of the concept and it is obviously strengthened by the fact that out of the 1030 persons in the first settlement 716 were convicts.

But this concept has also gained enormously from apathy, lack of interest and that radical form of nationalism – the more squalid the British motive in establishing the colony and populating it, the greater the Australian achievement.



*Our convict FF ancestors –  
Empire Builders, not simply  
felons.*

If the British government was solely concerned with the problems of the prisons, why choose a place so far away from the mother country? There must have been a reason to prefer Botany Bay to somewhere else.

With Africa hardly colonised and place, like Bermuda, eastern Canada, New Foundland, St Helena, Tristan da Culha, the Falklands and many other places available, it is hard to accept that all other options for a purely convict colony had been exhausted.

If great distance was required to prevent prisoners returning after release, what about New Zealand? It was better known than the east coast of Australia – it had been circumnavigated by Cook, who had visited it twice and reported favourably on it for settlement. It also had flax and timber, two strategic

items that Phillip was ordered to procure. But what about more-guarded prisons in Britain or elsewhere, which had been recommended for many years.

In August 1786, when the decision was made, Britain was officially at peace with France and Holland, but their increasingly friendly relations and the possibility that the French might use Dutch bases in the East Indies were worrying the British Government. Had Britain not established herself in eastern Australia at that time, some 16 years after Cook had taken possession, there was it good possibility that someone else – most probably the French – would have done so.

The British decision was sufficiently important for the French to have sent a courier to a place La Perouse was scheduled to visit and he was ordered to discover the extent of the British plan. The sequel of course, is that La Perouse arrived off Botany Bay two days after the arrival of the First Fleet.

Little publicity is ever given to the fact that fear of the French and the Dutch in northern Australia led to Norfolk Island, Tasmania, Southern Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory being garrisoned and settled, yet the advocates of the convict-colony concept do not allow for foreign annexation to have been a factor at all in the decision to establish the first settlement in New South Wales.

The south-west and west coasts had, of course, been discovered 150 years before Cook discovered the east coast. The quickest way to the East Indies was to sail with the prevailing wind due east from the Cape of Good Hope for some 3000 miles, or when the coast of Western Australia was sighted, and then turn north.

But the East Indies seas were difficult for sailing ships, with monsoons, calms, narrow straits, pirates and unhealthy ports. For Britain there was the added problem of the Dutch and Spanish bases.

Cook's Third Voyage had opened up the north-west coast of America and its fur trade: Britain was also trading with China. A few, months before the First



## ***An address by Brigadier John Howard to the Australasian Pioneers' Club in 1988***

Fleet sailed, 29 of the capital ships in Macao were British. A safe, healthy and good-sailing route to the Pacific and China that by-passed the Dutch and Spanish bases in the East Indies must have been attractive.

Phillip's Second Commission, like his First Commission, increased the extent of Cook's claim and defined the limits of NSW as being the eastern half of Australia including Tasmania and the islands of the Pacific to the east. New Caledonia, New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji and even Tahiti were within the jurisdiction of Governors of NSW. King approved a Justice of the Peace for Tahiti in 1801 and Macquarie approved Justices of the Peace in New Zealand and Tahiti in 1814.

As a scheme to rid Britain quickly of felons, NSW was not a success. The average was only 500 convicts a year for the first 22 years, half the number transported annually to America, and the cost was very high. It averaged £35 a year per convict in the first 12 years compared with £10 a year on the hulks and a once-only cost of £5 paid to the contractor who transported convicts to America and sold them, mostly to plantation owners.

What seems to have been overlooked by some historians is that NSW, like America, lacked an indigenous workforce and the settlement had to be established from scratch with absolutely no help, or hindrance for that matter, from the indigenous population.

The employment of criminals in remote and rising settlements was a long-approved British and European practice and one that did not stop, as far as Britain was concerned, with the establishment of NSW.

In the written instructions given him just before he left England Phillip was told to send a small establishment to Norfolk Island as soon as he could "to secure the same for us and prevent its being occupied by the subjects of any other European power". In 1790 Phillip was instructed to have a small detachment of the NSW Corps stand by for embarkation in British warships which were to call at Sydney on their way to Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island,

where the Spanish were annoying British traders.

The plan lapsed. When war broke out in 1793 Britain captured Cape Town, Trincomalee, Colombo, Malacca, Amboina (Ambon) and the Banda islands north of Australia. In 1797 and again in 1807 the NSW Corps stood by to embark troops and naval forces to take part in expeditions against the Spanish settlements in South America. The plans lapsed, but whalers from Sydney crossed the Pacific and brought two Spanish ships back to Sydney as prizes.

In 1810 Britain captured Mauritius, the Seychelles and Java. How can the settlement of NSW be isolated from the building of the British Empire? Twice as many marines volunteered for the marine battalion as were required. They referred to themselves as the garrison and refused to supervise the convicts. Phillip was forced to employ the better-behaved convicts as overseers.

At the end of their tour half the marines stayed on in a company of the NSW Corps, or as settlers. Many of the officers and officials of the first settlement were well educated, widely experienced and with illustrious family backgrounds. A number reached very high rank. They were not the sort of people "who would be interested being involved with a convict colony.

Also of great significance is the fact that the First Fleet diarists, Captains Watkins Tench and David Collins and the Lieutenant Governor, Major Ross, all profess in writing to be ignorant of the intentions of the government in establishing the settlement. If it was a convict colony, would not the senior officers have known this?

Some historians have made a case for the colony's being founded with the motive of opening up trade with China and South America and tapping the North American fur trade. Others have stressed the importance of whaling and sealing as a motive.

Professor Blainey has argued that NSW was chosen as a source of strategic materials (particularly mast timber) from Norfolk Island and flax from

New Zealand for ropes and sails. As far back as 1817 some historians had believed that there were other motives and influences than the transportation of convicts taken into account when the decision was taken to establish the colony.

Strangely, this whole debate (which has been particularly active in the last 50 to 60 years) has drawn little or no publicity.

In conclusion, as I have said before, if Britain was solely concerned with the criminal population why choose Botany Bay? There must have been some reason or reasons to prefer Botany Bay to somewhere else.

The unknown country, the distance, the length of journey and the sensitive lines of communication and the high cost must have been taken into consideration. Documents exist that more than balance the document on which the convict-colony concept is based.

In view of all this, the proposition that the colony was founded only to rid Britain of convicts becomes a nonsense. All the evidence points to the underlying reasons being the necessity of forming a colony quickly to forestall annexation by another European power, the colony's location from a commercial and strategic point of view and its potential to absorb and utilise a large number of convicts.

The terms "convict colony" and "penal colony" are simply not correct, and the so-called convict-colony concept is fallacious. NSW was established as a normal British colony.

I think that it is about time that we accept statements from people who should know. Phillip said in his first dispatch "this country will prove the most valuable acquisition that Great Britain ever made"; and Captain David Collins, the Judge Advocate, in his book *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* published in 1798, said "Great Britain alone has followed up the discoveries she has made in this country by at once establishing in it a regular colony and civil government".

*Ends*

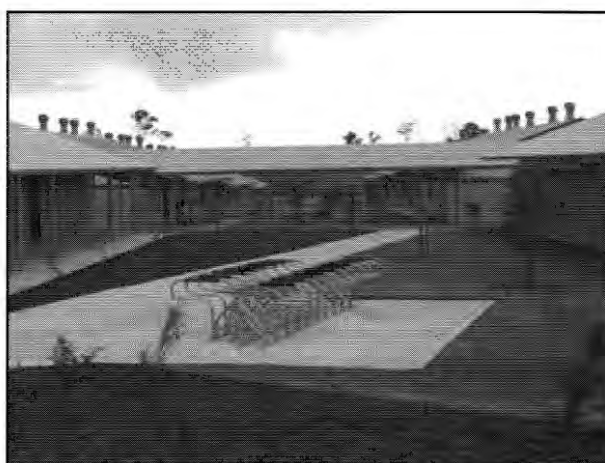
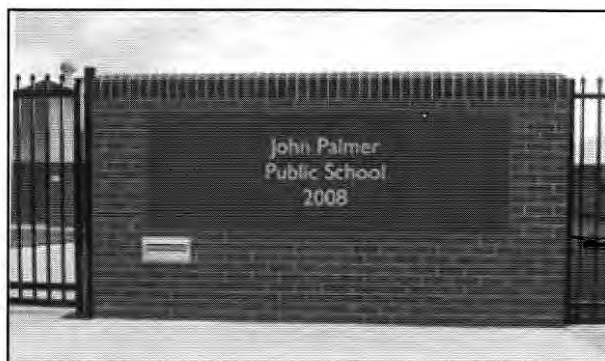
## NEW SCHOOL HONOURS OUR FIRST 'BANKER'

The Ponds, a developing suburb west of Kellyville Ridge, has a new primary school. It is situated on part of the 3000 acres of land granted to FF John Palmer (1760-1833) by Governor Macquarie. Accordingly on December 17 2007, with the consent of his surviving descendants, it was officially named the **John Palmer Public School**. It opened in February 2008 with a capacity for 615 students.

John entered the navy as a captain's servant at 9, and was educated entirely in the navy. During the American War of independence he served in *H.M.S. Richmond*, was captured by the French off Chesapeake Bay in 1781 and for two years was a prisoner-of-war. He arrived at Port Jackson, a purser on *Sirius*, and in 1791 became commissary for Sydney. As such, he kept the public accounts and funds of the colony and was at once official supplier, contractor and banker to the settlement. In a topsy turvy later life he operated a bakery and a windmill on the Domain, became a seal skin trader, a highly successful primary producer and a served as a magistrate. From 1803 to 1824 was a member of the Female Orphan Institution committee. He was a player in most of the settlement political dramas of his era. Palmer died at Waddon and is buried at St John's, Parramatta.

With his eclectic background and interests there is little doubt that John would have appreciated the features of the new school. It has 18 classrooms, an administration building, a library, a special programs room, a hall, a canteen, covered outdoor learning areas, games courts, staff carpark, bus lay-by and parent pick-up zone and landscaped playing fields. There is cabling for networking, internet and email access for students and staff.

It is encouraging to find greater numbers of First Fleeters being recognised in the naming of public buildings, especially where there is a strong connection to the site.



Lot 1077 The Ponds Boulevard, The Ponds NSW  
Map Reference: Gregory's 214 H2  
(Street not yet named)

## A GENEALOGICAL CODICIL

There are clearly instances among our Fellowship members, where the family genealogical records are in the hands of more than one family member. Indeed some families have established their own association or fellowship structure. On many occasions, however, the research and records, the background to establishing FFF membership and much other valuable materials, are held by a single, senior, dedicated family member.

Upon the death of that member, it is often the case that there is no one in the next generation readily able and willing, or even sufficiently aware, to assume the role of custodian. And so emerges the likelihood of the records being placed without due thought or index in the depth of some public archive, or worse, lost or destroyed.

The following **Genealogical Codicil to My Last Will and Testament**, plucked from the *Murrumbidgee Ancestor*, June 2007, sets out to deal with the issue and may be of use to members of the Fellowship:

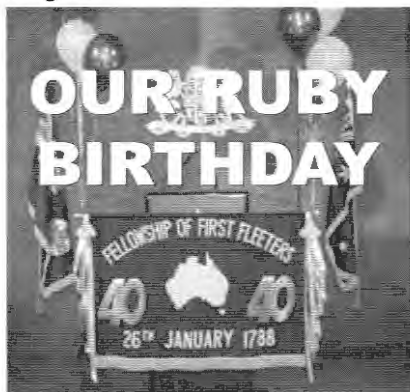
**To my spouse, children, guardian, administrator/or executor:**

Upon my demise it is requested that you DO NOT dispose of any or all of my genealogical records, both those prepared personally by me and those records prepared by others

which may be in my possession, including but not limited to book, files, notebooks and computer programs for a period of two years. During this time please attempt to identify one or more persons who would be willing to take custody of the said materials and the responsibility of maintaining and continuing family histories. (If you know who within your family or friends are likely candidates to accept these materials, please add the following point:) I suggest that the persons contacted regarding the assumption of custody of these items include but not be limited to: (List the names of individuals, with their addresses and telephone details if known.)

In the event that you do not find anyone to accept these materials, please contact the various genealogical societies or state or national archival bodies that I have been a member of, or whose charter is relevant to my records, and ask if they will accept some or all of my genealogical materials. (Insert a list of organisations, addresses and phone numbers and contact persons if available as well as state/national contact information and addresses)

Please remember that my genealogical endeavours consumed a great deal of time, travel and money. Therefore it is my desire that the products of these endeavours be allowed to continue in a manner that will make them available to others in the future.



We assembled in the inner sanctum of Parliament House in the Dining and Reception area, and on arrival of the Governor we struck out boldly with the singing of our National Anthem. But our courage failed us on the second verse. MC, John Boyd, essayed a hasty apology, but Her Excellency, ever mindful of human weakness, came to our rescue. She admitted that it had taken her some close study to become fluent in the words and she was often tempted to default to the original second verse, asserting as it does, that Britannia rules the Waves. "Unfortunately, that's a bit outdated," she said.

Her Excellency went on to say that she never tired of introducing newcomers to images of the First Fleeters. And to speak with pride of the enthralling story of their strength and fortitude in laying, against all odds, and providentially only two days before La Perouse planted his French flag, the foundation of our modern nation. "You are all of fine genetic material," she said. "I raise a toast to you. Happy birthday, and I hope the FFF goes on for ever and ever."

Our gathering place was at the kind invitation of our host Mr David Harris, MP, Member for Wyong, (circled above) who gave recognition to the traditional owners, the Cadigal band and the Eora people, and remarked that it was quite

appropriate that the Fellowship should be celebrating its birthday in the oldest parliament in the country in the presence of its state governor. "It is amazing to consider," he went on, "that this must be the only society that meets to recognise its convict beginnings!"

Joan Ross (circled opposite page) rates herself as the oldest living member of the Fellowship who was present at its formation. "I am number 13," she said. "It must be a lucky number!"

Joan proceeded to describe the first meeting in March 1968 at the AMP building in Circular Quay, chaired by John Levett, and attended by 370 descendants. She joined the committee then formed, which immediately set about the tricky tasks of setting the proof standards for membership eligibility, and of overcoming the possible sensitivity relating to convict ancestry. The first meetings were held in John's office, but he resigned and Frank Everingham took over as president. The group met in all sorts of places but finally settled in a rented building in Margaret St, Sydney. A Gestetner appliance was purchased and a newsletter distribution was begun.

Presently Frank decided that the Fellowship should have a base on land on the Hawkesbury River near Wiseman's Ferry for meetings and recreation. Shares to the value of \$100 were issued and two parcels, to be known as Australia Farm, were purchased on 12 June 1972. It soon became clear that the purchase was imprudent — there was no public road, approach was by water only and access through private land was denied. The land was sold on 13 August 1975, and Joan recalls that, despite the troubles, the original shareholders doubled their money!

Later the Margaret St office was deemed unsafe and the search was on



for new premises, the final result being the purchase in 1988 of FFF House, 105 Cathedral St, for \$144,000. The deal was financed largely by the Buy-a-Brick campaign to members, and the building was fully owned by the year 2000.

Joan rejoices in the present sweep of Fellowship activities — the regular office staffing, the library, the website, the Chapters, the Daytime Fellowship, the Soup and Damper Day, the tours, Founders, the guest speakers, the Australia Day Luncheon — all of which offer lots of opportunities to members.

Joan's closing words were a reference to the now current acceptance of felonious ancestry. "As actor Jack Thompson said on a TV program recently, upon discovering his descent from a convict, 'Good, I've joined the elite.'"

Supported by Peter Christian, Rod Best chose to give us a snapshot of what he called a crisis year in the life of the fellowship — 1988!

The lead-up years 1985-88 produced 3000 new members, and in May 1987 the Re-enactment Fleet set sail from Portsmouth. A delegation was present for the departure and met with the Queen. Plaques were placed at Portsmouth, Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town, as well as across sites in regional Sydney. Trips were organised to Norfolk

## FF ANCESTORS OF ATTENDEES

At our Australia Day Luncheon, the 130 attendees represented 57 First Fleet Ancestors.

At this, our 40th Anniversary Cocktail Party, the same number of attendees represented no fewer than 84 First Fleet Ancestors!

All of the Ancestors represented at the Luncheon were also represented at the Party. Their names have been recorded in the previous issue of *Founders*.

Here then are the names of those other 27 among all whose memories were roundly toasted at Parliament House:

Martha Beddingfield  
Jacob Bellett  
Mary Dickenson  
William Douglas  
William Eggleton  
Elizabeth Fitzgerald  
Olivia Gascoigne  
John Gowen  
Mary Groves  
Mary Harrison  
William Hubbard  
Edward Jones  
John Long  
Nathaniel Lucas

Frederick Meredith  
Richard Morgan  
John Nicholls  
Joshua Peck  
Samuel Pigott  
Bartholomew Reardon  
Edward Risby  
William Roberts  
James Squire  
Ellen Wainwright  
James Williams  
Thomas Williams  
Joseph Wright





President John Haxton with Past Presidents, Rod Best, Beryl Lewis and Peter Christian.

Island and Tasmania. Family lists were published. A contribution was made to the Bells at St Saviours, Goulburn, and to the Newton Fowell Letters publication. There were the Macquarie St Parade, a memorial at Brighton on Botany Bay, the incorporation of the FFF, the purchase of FF House, the luncheon with Graham Freudenburg as speaker and the toast proposed by Prime Minister R.J. Hawke. Sadly, FF chronicler John Cobley died soon after, but 1988 saw the induction of our new Patron, His Excellency, Governor David Martin.

All of this took place in a blaze of media interest. Rod recalled that Peter was asked to sash a winner at Randwick in the HMS Supply Handicap. And Peter remembers being asked by a journalist if our records could reveal a modern-day convict descended from a First Fleet convict!

The speeches completed, FF members circulated among invited guests over finger food and coffee. The lucky door prizes were drawn by the

President of the Women's Pioneer Association Australia, Mrs Marlene Reid. The winners were Wendy Brown, Joan Charlton, Bruce Bentley, Joyce Pankhurst and Helen Silk.

The Governor with charming forbearance delighted all with her willingness to stay and be photographed time and again with eager members. And there was opportunity to thank our past presidents in attendance, Beryl Lewis, Peter Christian and Rod Best, and to remember those other leaders who had also laboured, James Levett, Frank Everingham, Fred Daniels, Edgar Kable and Jim Donahue.

**Ron Withington**



The Governor, on her second visit to the FFF in two months is greeted by Claire Boyd.



Beryl Lewis cuts the birthday cake, assisted by President John Haxton.

## VALE GORDON SAMUELS

1923-2007

**T**he Honorable Gordon Jacob Samuels, AC, CVO, QC, was Governor of NSW from 1996 to 2001, and was our FFF Patron for those six years of our forty-year history. He died on 10 December 2007 at the age of 84.

On Monday 25 February 2008 a memorial service was held in the Clancy Auditorium of the UNSW, at which Gordon was Chancellor from 1976 to 1994. Emeritus Professor John Niland, AC, (former Vice-Chancellor) remarked that:

"Few were unmoved by his oratory and eloquence, by his sheer mastery of the spoken word and his mellifluous, measured delivery, laced with wit and insight, acerbic when the need arose.... Gordon Samuels is the exemplar of service freely given and duty truly met. Hercules is said to have pondered the ultimate choice; whether to engage in pleasure or to meet the demands of duty. For Gordon there was no such choice or trade off. For him service was the source of pleasure, especially as Chancellor."

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Fred Hilmer, AO, announced the establishment of 'The Gordon Samuels Professorial Chair in the Faculty of Law' to commemorate the outstanding contribution he had made to Australian society.

His widow, Dr Jacqueline Samuels, in closing, said of Gordon's life and work:

"A lot of his philosophy about tertiary education was based on his years at Oxford and particularly his college of Balliol, where he seems to have spent more time reading novels, listening to music and playing sport than in serious study. I don't wish to convey the impression that no work was done. He was a great believer in the concept of effortless superiority. You were allowed to work as hard as you could as long as no one saw you at it!

"I want you to understand how much the University gave to Gordon and me. It became the centre around which we wove our lives. I don't think we would ever have had a chance to talk to each other if we hadn't had those car trips from Bellevue Hill to the campus and back, and those endless discussions late into the night with a bottle of wine, about education policy. It was an apprenticeship for our later Vice-Regal job.

"Going through his papers I found a short verse he composed in the dentist's chair on his eighty-second birthday:

To stay alive at eighty-one  
Is really sooner said than done,  
But if one gets to eighty-two  
And contemplates the year just through  
One views the advance to eighty-three  
With something less than ecstasy."

**We salute his memory ... John Haxton**



the names of the voyagers on a particular ship. Adjacent to each group of tablets, in its own garden bed, is a tablet engraved with the name of the ship and its framed colour image. I kept a tally, and all 11 ships are there!

At the end of the walk is a photo mural featuring logs from the actual participants describing the early history of the colony



biographies of dozens of Fleeters and their families, and as a raconteur he is an unstoppable force.

The Garden was officially opened on Australia Day 2005 by surgeon, Dr Mervyn John Cross OAM, who like Ray, is a descendant of FF John Cross (see box).

The multi-award-winning Garden is a priceless legacy, not only to Ray Collins-Cross but also to the people of Australia.

Study the photos (each worth a hundred words) and do plan a visit!

Wallabadah is 395km from Sydney. Ray operates a grassy caravan park under the she-oaks adjacent to the Garden on the banks of the Quirindi River. He lives nearby and has the Garden open for visitors Monday to Sunday from sunrise to sunset.

Ron Withington

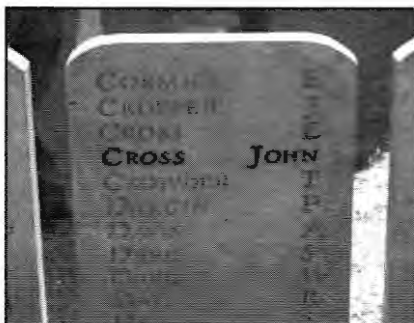
Situated at Wallabadah, some 55km south of Tamworth on the New England Highway, the First Fleet Memorial Garden momentarily seems an anachronism. That is until you meet the founder, designer, stone mason, gardener and caretaker, Mr Ray Collins-Cross. Ray will quickly tell you that the site for Australia's only memorial which lists all the names of those who sailed on the First Fleet is not so important. Flourishing his visitors' book, he will point out that descendants arrive from all over the country and from overseas, and that families gather from wide and far for reunions and moments of reflection. He will go on to emphasise that among the many Councils he approached, it was only Quirindi (now Liverpool Plains) Shire Council which chose to support his vision.

And what an achievement it is!

The first impression is that the garden is a cross between a lavish lawn cemetery and a botanical conservatory. A stone-pillared gateway leads directly to a pink brick-paved path which meanders around a generous green lawnscape. Central to the whole area is a garden bed in the shape of Australia with a high flagpole. Along the path one encounters groups of stone tablets, each group, with quiet dignity, recording

and the treacherous voyage to New Holland. A picnic area features not only the familiar triangular shades over the tables, but also a superbly appropriate set of square-rigged sails. There is a five-star toilet block for those many visitors who needs must linger longer.

Outside the attractive metal fencing, Ray will point to an area approved by Council for Stage Two – a Memorial to

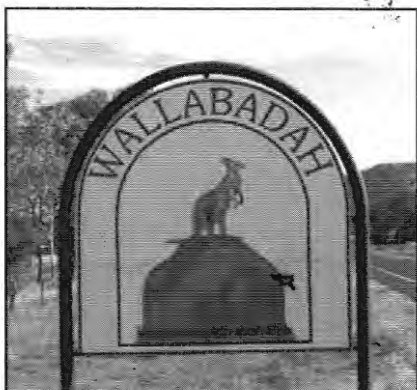


the Second Fleet – the stone tablets for which he has already begun forming.

Ray began the work in 2002, on land provided by Council, and with the enthusiastic backing of the general Manager, Mr Robert Hunt, and Council resources.

At inception, Ray said the site was a run-down caravan park with 44-gallon drums overflowing with garbage.

The transformation was speedy. The major job was the accurate research and encription of the names on the tablets. Ray worked alone on this task, hand-chiselling each letter, eschewing totally the modern practice of sand-blasted lettering, which he insists will simply not stand the test of time. In the process he has developed instant recall of the







## PLAYING THE FIRST FLEET PIANO ....

If you have visited Bonn or Budapest you may have seen Beethoven's pianos. If you are a virtuoso pianist with an international reputation you may even have been allowed to play them. Otherwise it is the usual case of "look but don't touch". I have long imagined that the piano brought to Australia by Surgeon Worgan on the First Fleet would, had it survived, be similarly cosseted. As a former music teacher and organist at St Philip's Church Hill I have a more than passing interest in historical musical instruments. That is why I am a member of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia, active in the effort to secure Australia's fine legacy of historic pipe organs. But I have always assumed that the First Fleet Piano had returned to dust.

You might appreciate my astonishment, therefore, when an old friend recently invited me to accompany him on a visit to a private collection in Sydney to play Surgeon Worgan's piano. Unfortunately it cannot be proved that the instrument I played is indisputably the first piano to have come to Australia. However, its claim to fame may be better than the small handful of other, larger contenders for the honour.

First, there is no doubt whatsoever that Surgeon Worgan brought a piano with him on the HMS Sirius. It is listed as his on the inventory. Worgan was the son of a well-known London organist and his playing the piano during the long voyage to Sydney to entertain some of his shipmates is recorded. He kept it in his cabin. Once in Port Jackson there would have been no difficulty in off-loading it. It is small and light: 145cm long, 51cm across and 23cm deep, the size of a small dining table. Secondly it is a fact that Worgan's piano passed to Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur at Elizabeth Farm when Worgan returned to England in 1791. She kept it until at least 1810 when she acquired the first of a succession of grander instruments. Thereafter the fate of Worgan's piano is uncertain. Its present owner, Mr Stewart Symonds, states that the Macarthurs had it auctioned by Simeon Lord to an anonymous purchaser who lived thirty miles from Sydney—probably in Windsor.

The piano I played languished for many years in the laundry of a house in Windsor until it was purchased for Mr Symonds in 1986. It was made in 1786 by Frederick Beck of London. The maker's name appears in penwork on a

boxwood tablet. Beck was a great piano-maker, one of twelve who fled War on the continent to London during the Seven Years' War. It is a fortepiano of the sort known to Mozart, the wooden-framed predecessor to the iron-framed pianoforte we play today. There was more than one way to make them. The design of the instrument I played is a 'square piano'. The strings of drawn iron and brass extend horizontally at an angle to the ivory keys. It has a compass of five octaves from FF to F3, 61 notes. The case is made from mahogany with ebony and boxwood bands, a beautiful piece of work.

What gives this piano its strong claim to have been Worgan's are its legs. They are of a German cabriole design, hinged at each end so that they could be folded. In a small ship's cabin this would have been a significant convenience, perhaps a necessity, along with the instrument's small size.

The piano was restored about 10 years ago. Like all of its kind it needs frequent tuning. Its tone is pleasant and intimate. This is not the piano on which to attempt the Emperor Concerto: Home Sweet Home would be more appropriate. It was a privilege to play something so old and a thrill to be able, with good reason, to suppose that it is Australia's first piano.

*Peter Meyer, FF Eleanor Redchester*



*Not the Worgan piano, but an example of a Square Piano. This one was built by Johann Christoph Zumpe, 1767: now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

### Foundlings - a First Fleet Quiz

Ten questions to be answered in each issue of *Founders*, answers to appear in the following issue.

**ANSWERS TO BE:** emailed to:

margaretwith@ozemail.com.au

**OR** text messaged to 0439 360 024

**OR** mailed to Foundlings, 105 Cathedral St,  
Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011 by 30 April 2008

The best correct answer will receive a copy of *Where First Fleeters Lie* by Joyce Cowell and Rod Best and untold kudos!

1. What did the First Fleeters call the fish snapper?
2. Of whom is Australia's only portrait of a convict First Fleeter? When was it painted and by whom? Where does it now hang?

3. Who lived in a "little cabbage tree cottage"?
4. The captain of the Scarborough left something behind when he left Port Jackson. Who was he, what did he leave and with whom?
5. A subset of 18th Century London criminals included: star-glazers, sawney-hunters and bluey-hunters. How did each of them operate?
6. In the early days of the settlement, a carpenter, a seaman and a boy of Prince of Wales were caught in the women's tents. What was the punishment?
7. Who regularly swam ashore naked at Cape Town to meet with his lover and child. What happened to him?
8. In autumn 1788 a man tried to catch a turtle in the surf at Norfolk Island. Did he succeed? What happened? Who was he?
9. While in Rio de Janeiro the Fleet was permitted to erect a small tent on the island of Enchados. For what purpose?
10. Who discovered "gold" in the colony in winter 1788?

## From the Chapters

### Canberra Chapter: (ACT, Queanbeyan & surrounding areas)

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon, 5 July, followed by our Annual Dinner on Saturday 26 July. More details about both events closer to the date. Geoff (02) 6251 4095.

### Central Coast Chapter: (Gosford, Tuggerah Lake, Wyong, Budgewoi)

Meetings are held at Wyong RSL on the second Saturday of each month starting at 10.30am.

**Next Meeting:** 12 April. Guest speaker: Mr Ray Love. Topic: *Early Australian Railway History*.

**Next Outing:** 10 April to St John's Cathedral Parramatta for the Blessing of the Bonnets. A mini-bus will be hired at a nominal cost to each passenger. BYO Lunch. For more information phone Beryl on (02) 4353 2524.

### Hunter Valley Chapter: (Hunter regions, Newcastle, & surrounding areas)

Meetings are held bi-monthly on the third Monday from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Members may arrive at 10am.

Venue: St John's Hall on the corner of Parry & Dawson Sts, Cooks Hill, Newcastle.

**Next Meeting:** Monday 21 April. Guest Speaker: Historian Warren Hislop, who will speak on a variety of topics and is happy to stay and carry his discussion into an informal lunch.

**Next Outing:** 19 May – Historical Tour of Morpeth. Full details at the April meeting. All welcome (02) 4942 2631

### New England Chapter: (Armidale & surrounding areas)

**Next Meeting:** Saturday 10 May, at 12.30pm, at the home of member, Emmie Parkes. An interesting afternoon has been arranged. Further information from Robyn on (02) 6772 3140.

### North Coast Chapter: (Coffs Harbour, Woolgoolga, Leigh & nearby regions)

**Next Meeting:** Sunday 1 June. Guest Speaker: Pat Davis will speak about her husband's First Fleet ancestors, John Small and Mary Parker. Venue: The home of John & Jeanette Williamson. For enquiries call Robyn on (02) 6653 3615.

### Northern Rivers Chapter: (Lismore & surrounding regions)

**Please Note New Meeting Venue until further notice:** At the home of Vilmai & Don McDonald, 269 Richmond Hill Rd, Richmond Hill 2480. We meet bi-monthly on the 4th Sunday at 11.30am, starting with a BBQ lunch for the cost of \$7 members and \$8 non-members. A meeting follows the BBQ, followed by a speaker or activity.

**Next Meeting:** Sunday 25 May. All enquiries to Vilmai (02) 6624 2972.

### Northwest Chapter: (Tamworth & surrounding areas)

**Please Note New Meeting Venue:** Tamworth Family History Group Rooms in the V. Guy Kable Building, Marius St, Tamworth. Bi-monthly meetings at 1.30pm. For dates and further information contact Jo on (02) 6766 8255.

### South Coast Chapter: (from Engadine to Burrill Lake)

**Please Note New Meeting Venue:** 93-109 Princes Hwy, Dapto, in the Ribbonwood Centre, Sassafras Room. Turn into Fowlers Rd for the Heininger St Car Park.

**Next Event:** Saturday 17 May, a luncheon to Commemorate the 221 Anniversary of the sailing of The First Fleet from Portsmouth in 1787. Venue: Dapto Leagues Club. Special Guest: Wendy Richardson Author & Playwright. A two-course meal. Cost \$28 for FFF Members, \$30 for Visitors. Arrive 11.30am for 12noon start. Bookings essential.

Phone Jean for booking forms on (02) 4257 5575. All FFF Members Family and Friends welcome.

**Next Meeting:** 3 June. Guest Speaker: Elsie Watson #74. Topic: *A Proud Heritage*.

### Southern Highlands Chapter: (Moss Vale, Mittagong & surrounding areas)

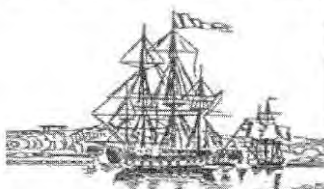
Meetings are held at Mittagong Community Centre, Cnr, Albert Lane & Queen St, Mittagong. Meeting times bi-monthly on Wednesday from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

**Next Event:** Tuesday, 13 May, Celebrating the First Fleet Sailing Day. Visit to Berrima District Museum followed by Lunch at The White Horse Inn. \$34 pp. The tour starts at 10.30am. Lunch at 12noon. Bookings essential.

Phone Wendy on (02) 4862 4849 for booking forms.

**Next Meeting:** 11 June. Guest Speaker, Rosie Block. Topic: *Wish I'd asked Aunt Esther! Oral History & the Family*.





TO LIVE ON IN THE  
HEARTS AND MINDS OF  
DESCENDANTS IS  
NEVER TO DIE

*Closing Date  
for  
Next Issue:  
May 23*

### Chapters

#### CANBERRA

Geoff Cameron  
6251 4095

#### CENTRAL COAST

Beryl Haxton  
4353 2524

#### HUNTER VALLEY

John Brooker  
4926 5535

#### NEW ENGLAND

David Newling  
6771 5099

#### NORTH COAST

Mary Kell  
6657 1962

#### NORTHERN RIVERS

Betty Harriman  
6683 4493

#### NORTH WEST

Jo Crossing  
6766 8255

#### SOUTH COAST

Jean Mortimer  
4257 5575

#### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Neville Usher  
4869 1406

## Fellowship of First Fleeters

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**www:** [www.geocities.com/fellowship\\_of\\_first\\_fleeters](http://www.geocities.com/fellowship_of_first_fleeters)

*Copy of current issue is available for download via website*

## Chapter Liaison News

Greetings! By the time this edition of *Founders* is distributed another Chapter will have been written into the FFF History as "Established." Eastern Farms Chapter (Named after a historic location) is situated in the Ryde/Eastwood area. We do not have stringent boundary rules and all who find the travel accessible are welcome to join. More about it in the next edition of *Founders*.

Mr Alan Barton #3163 our correspondent for Longreach, Queensland, spoke about the FFF and a possible Midwest Queensland Chapter on ABC Rural Radio recently. The first person to contact him was a Kable/Holmes descendant — they can be found everywhere, the South Coast Chapter has an abundance of Kable/Holmes members.

If you have family in Midwest Queensland who wish to join the FFF and participate in the formation of a Chapter to meet 3 or 4 times a year, please inform Alan. He is ready to take your call on (07) 4658 9147.

*In Fellowship*

*Jean Mortimer, Chapter Liaison Officer.*

*Email: [terryjeanmort@yahoo.com.au](mailto:terryjeanmort@yahoo.com.au)*

## Hosting an Australia Day Ambassador

The busy Northwest Chapter hosted an Australia Day Ambassador, veteran newscaster, Garry O'Callaghan, for lunch at the First Fleet Memorial Garden, Wallabadah, where they inspected plans for the extension of the garden to include a Second Fleet Memorial. (see page 8)

Later in the day the members acted as ushers for the Tamworth Regional Australia Day Council function.

Di Harband pictured here (left) in deep conversation with Chapter Co-ordinator, Jo Crossing, is quite oblivious to the embarrassing situation of Grahame Harband.



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. JANET SELBY Hon. Editor