

# Founders

Magazine of the Fellowship of First Fleeters

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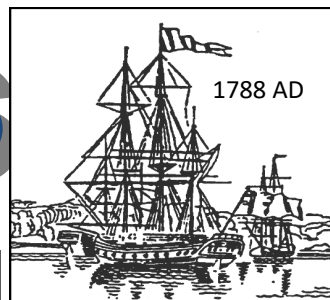
PATRON: Her Excellency The Honourable Marjorie Beazley AC QC

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



## EXCITING NEWS ~ FOUNDERS NOW HAS A FULLY DIGITISED INDEX

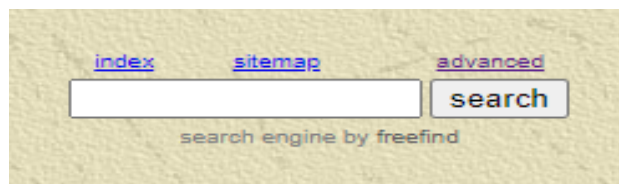
Our Web Weaver, Kerrie Anne Christian, has announced that all copies of our newsletters from 1969 to 2021, including *Founders*, are now digitised with a searchable index. She says:

Back around 2016 I suggested to **Bob Rickards** that it would be great to have a Search tool on the FFF website. Bob came up with a tool called *FreeFind* which searched not only the FFF website pages but also inside the pdf copies of *Founders* from about 2012, but it could not do the earlier copies from 1969. Nevertheless it has been a really good tool for searching the FFF website - and as usual Bob really did find a good product to do the job.

For quite some time, the FFF Directors have wished for a way to also be able to search the earlier *Founders* and Newsletters. Recently, our volunteer at First Fleet House, **Ian Palmer**, and I have been working on a way to also search those earlier copies of *FFF Founders* and Newsletters on the FFF website back to 1969.

We have found a way to do it, so we did a trial with a few issues from 1990 first, and now it is working. I have already found in my own searching that it has dug out articles from some of those old issues. So you may find it useful for your own FF family history research.

You can find the **Search** box at the **bottom left hand corner of the FFF website home page** - <http://www.fellowshipfirstfleeters.org.au/>



So if you search for say 'Ann Forbes' it will bring up as many as 195 suggested references, back to the 1970s. Then you click on a link in the Search results for a suggested Newsletter/*Founders* issue - and it takes you to the start of that issue.

Next thing to do is to click on 'Ctrl & F' - and then enter your search term in the box that appears - it will take you to the right spot in the document.

Some of our very early Newsletters were typewritten and then printed off using Gestetner machines and so the print quality is not so good. Ian Palmer plans to re-scan those to see if he can improve that quality and thus enhance their searchability. But that will have to wait until the Greater Sydney Covid Lockdown ends. **KAC**

**Editor's note:** Amongst the various mastheads shown below, the central image is the front page of the third of at least six journals published by the Fellowship between 1969 and 1972. The first three can be found on our web-site under 'Founders', the next three yet to appear. Were any others ever produced?



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Chapter Office  
Bearers 2021-2022  
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## FOUNDERS

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



## PRESIDENT'S PEN

This year's Annual General Meeting, as it was last year, will be conducted on Zoom. You can attend from home. To do this, email your registration request to [ffaus@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ffaus@optusnet.com.au) and you will be sent the receipt of invitation and the link you will need to join us on the day



### FELLOWSHIP OF FIRST FLEETERS NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The next Annual General Meeting

Will be held by Zoom on

Thursday 28th October 2021

Commencing at 9.30 am

As three of our Directors will be retiring from office at the AGM there will be **four vacancies** to fill. Nominations for the four Committee positions close on 20 October so please contact President Jon Fearon (02 4311 6254; [jkfearon@iinet.net.au](mailto:jkfearon@iinet.net.au)) so that you can be sent the relevant forms via email. For those who belong to chapters the nomination form is available from your chapter secretary. Please note that a directorship is available to any adult member of the Fellowship—that includes Ordinary and Associate members as well as Friends - and is not limited to those resident in Sydney or environs. Technologies such as Zoom allow for distant and much appreciated Board membership. Being a Director involves being given a small portfolio of duties, and, to learn the ropes, 'new young blood' will be very much welcomed by those of us well into our eighties.

## SWEET DREAMS, BIG MAL

**#7787 Malcolm Thomson** (FF William Boggis, Scarborough) was our Founding President of the Mid North Coast Chapter and sadly passed away in his sleep on 02.09.2021 at his home in Forster. Malcolm has left behind a beautiful wife Helen and a legacy of three sons - Andrew, Jeremy and Nick and their children.



Malcolm had an inquisitive and enquiring way about him, and he was a man who knew a lot about a lot – his passions were his family, sailing, history, computers, delicious food and quality wine. Malcolm worked for the CSR for 31 years as a chemical engineer and was also a community man who gave a lot to Marine Rescue, Probus, Rotary, Green Point Progress Ass, Mid North Coast Chapter Fellowship of First Fleeters, a local history group and also wine making. In his retirement years he made guitars and did a bachelor degree at Tuncurry Tafe. He was a great story teller and always saw life in a lot of detail which he passed onto his children and grandchildren.

Some of his friends called him 'Big Mal' and his granddaughter said his favourite saying was 'sweet dreams' in the evening when he was putting them to bed at their Green Point home.

Thank you, Malcolm, for enriching us with your humorous stories and your endless knowledge and dedication to community and our fellowship – you will be missed.

**Tribute from Mid North Coast Chapter**

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## FF JACOB BELLETT 1765-1813 AND HIS HUGUENOT HERITAGE

When telling the story of the Bellett family, it is probably a good idea to start with the Huguenots, a group of French Protestants with a history going back many hundreds of years to an era that existed well before the formation of the German Lutheran Church. The denomination may have evolved from the Protestants of Tours, who, it is said, met each evening with the mythical King Hugonet or Hugon. It was the new church of the day and expanded rapidly as many people no longer wanted the Catholic faith.

Later on between 1562 and 1598 the Catholics and Huguenots fought each other with a lot of violence. The Catholics had the support of the Spanish. The Protestants had **Henry of Navare** who eventually claimed victory over the Catholics in France in 1572. He named himself Henry 14<sup>th</sup> in 1594 and that was the end of the struggle for a while.

After the death of Henry, **Cardinal Richelieu** began to cause trouble. He did some things that were unacceptable to the Huguenots and the fighting between the two churches started again with many killed.

So began the great migration of the Huguenots to countries such as England, North America, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and elsewhere. Some sixty thousand Huguenots moved into Holland. They were made welcome by the Dutch Government but unfortunately it was too great a number to be absorbed into the Dutch community. To overcome the problem, 20 000 Huguenots were moved to the Cape of Good Hope. There are many Huguenots living in South Africa today.

For those Frenchmen who did not emigrate to another country, life became decidedly unpleasant. The Protestants and Catholics had a very powerful and active dislike for each other which, in the end amounted to outright hostility once again, with the Catholics gaining the upper hand this time. In 1685 the Catholic cardinals persuaded **King Louis XIV** to revoke every religion except the Catholic Church.

After the revocation it was estimated that about a further quarter of a million Huguenots left France for other countries as soon as they possibly could.

Enter the newlyweds, **Thomas Bellette** and his young wife **Judith le Sauvage**, who arrived in London in August 1687. They made their reconnaissance at Threadneedle Street, London on 17<sup>th</sup> August the same year. Being Huguenots, they had decided to flee France and start a new life in London. A sensible move considering the dreadful

persecution that was taking place in France. Many an edict was issued by King Louis XIV, all of which attempted to make life increasingly difficult for his Protestant subjects.

The laws and tactics used to attack the position of the Huguenots were similar to those used by Nazi Germany to attack the Jewish people in World War 2. The Huguenots were forbidden to be lawyers, doctors or midwives and they were not allowed any position in the King's Government. Their churches were demolished, schools were closed down and worst of all their children were taken away from them and sent to convents to be indoctrinated into the Catholic faith. Imagine the relief Thomas and Judith must have felt when they arrived in London.



St Leonards Church  
Shoreditch

Three generations later, **Jacob Bellette** was born at Webs Square, Shoreditch and subsequently christened at the church of St Leonards. The year was 1765 with Jacob's birth date as recorded as 21-1-1765.

St Leonards is situated near the boundary of Shoreditch and Bethnel Green and has an interesting history. Another church had stood in its place dating from the thirteenth century until 1736 when destroyed by fire. It too had been called St Leonards. Two hundred years later in 1944, the new church of 1736 was badly damaged by a flying bomb as were surrounding streets. It was repaired after the bombing and can be seen on the map of Shoreditch. This church is famous for its thirteen distinctive bells.

Considering the social conditions in England at the end of the eighteenth century, historians estimate that approximately 115 000 people were living from the proceeds of crime. Not only that, the people of London consumed at least eight million gallons of gin annually. It was estimated that there was a Gin House for every one hundred and eighty people. Gin was made locally and cheap to buy.

The police service was run mainly by the church with some help from other organisations assisting with police work. The first government controlled police force commenced duty in 1829. **Robert Peel** was mainly responsible for this initiative and the early policemen were known as *Peelers*.

(to Page 4)



Sir Robert Peel  
1788-1850

*(from page 3)* It is estimated that more than seventy per cent of children born in London died before the age of five. The lower classes simply could not afford to keep their babies. They developed a practice of abandoning their little ones on door steps of different places around the city in the hope that someone would take the child in and look after it. England, in particular London, must surely have been one of the saddest places on earth. The term *Merry England* hardly sees applicable.

To his great credit **King George 2<sup>nd</sup>**, with the help of some wealthy citizens opened some orphanages around the city of London. They introduced a system where baskets were placed at the entrances of the various institutions so that any mother could simply leave her baby in one of the baskets whereby the child would be taken inside and cared for by the staff at the respective orphanage.

Children would be looked after until the age of six when they would, sadly, be turned out to look after themselves. British history sank to what is possibly its lowest moment when a six-year old boy was hung for stealing a handkerchief.

How fortunate was Jacob Bellett? Considering the above, both he and his siblings had been very well brought up by their parents. The family did not have a lot of money but their mother and father were able to have the children educated by the French Sisters. As they were part of the Huguenot society, it is not unreasonable to assume that Jacob would have been literate in French as well as English.

Jacob worked for a silk weaving company, **Gearing Vaux and Taylor** with his father. On Christmas Day, 1784, at the age of nineteen, he was arrested for stealing a quantity of cloth on the evidence given to the police by the factory foreman, **William Cole**.

Three weeks later he was tried at the Old Bailey 12<sup>th</sup> January 1785 and found guilty. He was sentenced to death but that was eventually commuted to seven years transportation beyond the seas. He was to sail on board the transport *Scarborough*, after some time spent on the prison hulks, *Ceres* and *Censor*.

Whether Jacob was guilty or not is highly debatable. He was convicted on the word of his factory foreman who gave two different versions of events. Firstly, William Cole gave a statement to the police which resulted in Jacob being arrested and three weeks later at the Old Bailey gave a totally different story altogether. The sad part was that neither the judge, or the clerk of the court and more importantly, the police, questioned Cole about giving two different stories.

Being able to read and write English and almost certainly French, Jacob was, by the standards of the day, well educated. On the other hand, Cole was illiterate. It is likely the educated young man was an asset to the company and

Cole saw him as a threat to his position and in order to get rid of him, concocted a story. He had the temerity to take it to the police who acted upon it. What a pity the judge, clerk of the court and police did not do their job and query the evidence given by Cole.

The First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay on 18 January 1788 and six days later on 26 January all ships had anchored in Port Jackson, the now chosen and superior site for settlement. Jacob remained in Sydney for the next two years

A colony had been set up on Norfolk Island early in 1788 so *HMS Sirius* was sent there in March 1790 transporting convicts, including Jacob Bellett, and much needed supplies. On 19 March 1790 *Sirius* was wrecked off Norfolk Island, some of the supplies never making it to shore. After the *Sirius* was lost the Brig *Supply* was now the only link between Port Jackson, Norfolk Island and the rest of the world.

In January 1790 a Second Fleet of six ships had left England for Port Jackson. The fleet was stocked with provisions but also carried more convicts. The *Surprise* and the *Justinian* were sent to Norfolk Island in August 1790 which saved the colony of Norfolk Island from starvation. Aboard the *Surprise* was **Ann Harper**, future wife of Jacob Bellett. Ann was convicted in Bristol for receiving stolen goods and was transported aboard the *Lady Juliana*.

No record has been found of a marriage certificate but according to **Phillip Gidley King's** Journal, 'Several of the Settlers requested my permission to marry some of the best-behaved female convicts; As the Rev. Mr Johnson, Chaplain to the Territory came here in the *Atlantic*, I requested him to marry them; Upwards of one Hundred Couples were married in the course of three Days'. **Reverend Richard Johnson** visited Norfolk Island in November 1791.

Jacob's sentence expired in December 1791 when he was listed as farming twelve acres in First Settlers Vale, today known as Music Valley. He was living with his wife Ann who had been given a grant of thirty-nine acres next to Jacob's grant and the two holdings were farmed as one.



*Remains of the Bellett's house, First Settler's Vale, N.I.*

Ann Harper was the only woman to be given a grant of land in her own right. Her sentence expired in 1796 and that year, with all the land officially theirs, the young couple decided to stay on Norfolk and make a go of living on the island rather than returning to England.

Later Jacob became a constable and apart from being seen as trustworthy by the authorities he was literate and that would have been a big plus for him when only a small percentage of settlers could read and write. Their farming efforts were successful, and seven children were born to them while on the island, from **Elizabeth** in 1792 to **William** in 1805.

A decision was made, however, to close the Norfolk Island settlement. Jacob and Ann Bellett and children departed Norfolk Island in September 1808 aboard the *City of Edinburgh* to travel to Hobart.

On arrival in Hobart Jacob was granted 45 acres at Queenborough and a further 40 acres at Gloucester, areas known today as Sandy Bay, Pittwater and Sorrell. They finished up doing quite well for themselves from their farming endeavours. In March 1812 Jacob and Ann had another son, **George**.

Jacob died suddenly in Hobart Town on 3 December 1813, aged 47, and was buried in St David's Cemetery. When the cemetery was refurbished as St David's Park in 1926 several of the extant headstones, including that of Jacob Bellett, were incorporated into a memorial wall. Ann died at Sorell on 10 September 1842.

On 22 January 1814 the Sydney Gazette reported his death thus:



Headstones- St David's Hobart Tasmania

*'Died suddenly at Hobart Town on 2<sup>nd</sup> December ult., Mr Jacob Bellette, settler, formerly of Norfolk Island. A minute or two before his death he was in jocular conversation with some of his friends from whom he was in an instant snatched by the awful mandate of a supreme director, leaving behind him a wife and infant family in whose affection all who were acquainted with him must feelingly participate'*

**Contributed by #1379 Peter Bellette**

**[Editor's Note: Many descendants of Jacob Bellett have pointed out that the age and death date on his headstone in the wall are incorrect. The Fellowship is aware of this and is currently taking steps to replace the plaque placed on the wall in 1988 with the correct information.]**

## CENTRAL COAST CHAPTER CELEBRATES ITS 15th BIRTHDAY

The Chapter's newsletter editor, **Karys Fearon**, has submitted this extract from *Boora Boora* 52, published in August 2021, her final issue after 9 years in the role. Thank you, Karys, for that dedication— who will replace you?

June meeting was **Birthday Party** time and we were fortunate to celebrate together just before more COVID restrictions scattered us once again. Kanwall Bakery did us proud with the best sponge cake any of us had enjoyed before. Karl, as our oldest member, had the privilege of cutting the cake this year. Lunch at Gosford RSL followed for us all.



## THE ECCENTRIC TOURIST ON THE FIRST FLEET ~ PART 2

Guest historian, Professor Ged Martin of Shanacoole, Republic of Ireland, concludes his tentative identification.

According to the website of the Fellowship of First Fleet-ers, James Smith was returned to England on HMS *Gorgon* in 1791.<sup>[9]</sup> The *Gorgon's* captain sailed home around Cape Horn, a voyage that took the ship deep into iceberg-infested latitudes, rounding South America before calling at Cape Town.<sup>[10]</sup> If James Smith survived the voyage, he would have joined the small band of eighteenth-century travellers who had circumnavigated the globe. It would have been a remarkable achievement for someone who was such an unlikely pioneer. His return journey, however, was almost certainly less comfortable than his passage out, and his subsequent history, if any, is totally veiled.

Who was James Smith? Eccentric, ephemeral, elusive – that seems to summarise the sketchy tale of the First Fleet's only paying tourist, Australia's first free (although unsuccessful) settler. Probably exploited in his naivete by an unscrupulous sea captain, who took his cash and kept him under wraps, James Smith's fantasy cruise to an idyllic new world ended in an uncomfortable and humiliating nightmare of floggings and famine. After three grim years, he vanished into the obscurity from which he had emerged.

However, there were two clues that said a little more about him. Arthur Bowes, the surgeon aboard the *Lady Penrhyn*, hailed from Tolleshunt D'Arcy, a village overlooking the Essex marshes. As the First Fleet ploughed on into the lonely southern oceans, he became increasingly homesick for his friends back home, and that was the key to his friendship with James Smith, who had 'a thorough knowledge of my intimate acquaintance in the County of Essex'.<sup>[11]</sup> This suggested that James Smith had either lived in, or at least visited, the area where Bowes had grown up. Presumably there had been some distance between their respective homes, since they had never met, even though they knew people in common. The second clue lay in the respectful categorisation assigned to James Smith, both by Bowes and by Ross: he was always 'Mr', which, in the sensitive gradations of eighteenth-century class, indicated a man of birth, wealth and consequence – however unimpressive his actual personal qualities. Might these pointers to location and class be sufficient to identify him?

In most parts of England, attempting to identify someone called Smith – the most widespread name in the English-speaking world – would be a hopeless task. However, in Essex the surname was widely supplanted by the synonym Wright.<sup>[12]</sup> Another advantage to a Smith-hunter is the existence of the Essex Record Office, one of the leading local archives services in Britain. Its Seax

website provides an online calendar that indicates the nature and sometimes the content of documents. Seax is easily searchable, and can be filtered by date.<sup>[13]</sup> Since Essex is the tenth largest by area of the historic counties of England, it is easy to dismiss James Smiths from its more remote corners, while the specific class identification of the Australian example equally rules out namesakes from more humble backgrounds.

There is one James Smith who fits the requirements of neighbourhood and status. He lived at a village called Messing, about six miles (ten kilometres) north of Tolleshunt D'Arcy.<sup>[14]</sup> He was probably a lawyer who chose to invest in land, the key to acquiring status in Georgian England. Seax shows him renting the Parsonage Farm in 1752, with about forty acres, and two years later adding Bouchers Hall, one of the local manor houses, on a 21-year lease. He was mentioned as a prominent resident of Messing by the county historian Philip Morant in 1768.<sup>[15]</sup> 'James Smith, gent. of Messing' died in August 1784. The James Smith of the First Fleet was presumably a son or a nephew, an unworldly individual who inherited wealth but, it would seem, very little else. Seax has one other intriguing item. Around 1780, a lawyer, Samuel Shaen of Hatfield Peverel, 10 miles (16 kms) from Messing, compiled notes about a case investigating the sanity of a Mr Smith. The issue appears to have related to his capacity to inherit and manage property. The witnesses came from Messing.<sup>[16]</sup>

Although Messing and Tolleshunt D'Arcy are relatively close, it is not altogether surprising that members of their local elites had not met. They were divided by one of the largest areas of common land in eighteenth-century Essex, Tiptree Heath, which according to a historian of 1861, 'up to the beginning of the present century was a wild and lawless district ... abandoned to a few miserable cattle and the vagrant gipsy rover'.<sup>[17]</sup> There was an element in romantic exaggeration in that description, designed to glorify Victorian improvement of that now-enclosed tract, but it is likely that the Heath constituted something of a psychological barrier between the communities.



*Tiptree Heath, Essex, 'a wild and lawless district' in the 18th Century.  
Photo, 2021 by Phil Walker*

In addition, while gentry in Georgian times were expected to take part in local government and law enforcement, administration was carried out through traditional divisions called hundreds: Messing was included in the very large Lexden Hundred, which stretched away further to the north, while Tolleshunt D'Arcy formed part of the much smaller Thurstable Hundred.

Essex had two ancient boroughs, which functioned as ports, market towns and social centres for banquets and balls. Their spheres overlapped, but it is likely that upper middle-class Messing predominantly looked east to Colchester, whereas comfortable Tolleshunt D'Arcy was more likely to turn west to seek its pleasures at Maldon. Difference in age may also help to explain why the two men first met on board ship: Bowes was 37 when they became friends, but James Smith was probably some years older.

James Smith: a tentative identification I summarise the hypothesis, acknowledging that it is provisional and requires further research. Between 1752 and 1775, a wealthy lawyer called James Smith established himself as a landed proprietor in the small Essex parish of Messing. After his death in 1784, his estate passed to a namesake, probably his son. Questions arose about the mental condition of the heir, with witnesses examined from the village. Probably he was eccentric, for it seems that he was allowed to inherit, which gave him enough cash to buy a ticket to Botany Bay. Although he is not listed as having studied at either Cambridge or Oxford, he was obviously a bookish personality, as evidenced by his gift to Bowes of a four-volume compendium of knowledge. This may suggest that he was captivated by Hawkesworth's celebrated account of the voyages of Captain Cook, published in 1773. Hawkesworth's three-volume work was undoubtedly popular with the public, but James Smith was probably unique in actually being inspired to visit the south Pacific.

Selling him a place as a cabin passenger to Botany Bay was probably an unscrupulous act of exploitation by the master of the *Lady Penrhyn*, and Christopher Sever was perhaps responsible for ensuring that James Smith kept a low profile until the First Fleet reached Rio de Janeiro. Arthur Bowes, who came to know Smith as they sailed the south Atlantic, seems to have been so pleased to encounter somebody who could talk about his native county that he overlooked the obvious point that the mere fact of



*Voyages of Captain Cook, published in 1773 by John Hawkesworth*

Smith's presence on the *Lady Penrhyn* suggested that his companion was an oddball. When the expedition arrived in New South Wales, Phillip was persuaded to allow James Smith to remain, but although he was granted patches of land at Sydney Cove, presumably then at Parramatta and certainly on Norfolk Island, his total unsuitability for pioneer life quickly became apparent, and he was sent back to England in 1791.

Unfortunately, since I have reached an age where I can no longer pursue research in archives, my identification of James Smith is necessarily tentative. Much depends on the enquiry by the lawyer Samuel Shaen into the sanity of 'Mr Smith' and the evidence of witnesses from Messing, which will either support or undermine the hypothesis. I can only make appeals to historians in Essex and Australia to extend (and test) the story.

By Professor Ged Martin- <https://www.gedmartin.net>  
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ENDNOTES I am grateful for advice from Gillian Doyle, Vice-President & Research Director of the Fellowship of First Fleeters. Websites were consulted during January 2021

[9] <http://www.fellowshipfirstfleeters.org.au/storie4.html>. In his note, Peter George Christian states that 'advancing age and infirmity led to his dismissal'. Old age is a relative concept. If the James Smith of the First Fleet was the son of the James Smith of Messing, Essex, who died at the age of 70 in 1784 (note 16, below), then he was unlikely to have been older than his mid-50s by 1791.

[10] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, i (2), 572; M.A. Parker, *A voyage round the world in the Gorgon man of war ...* (London, 1795). The author, Mary Ann Parker, was the widow of Captain Parker who had commanded the *Gorgon*. She wrote the book to glorify her late husband and raise money to support his orphaned children. James Smith is not mentioned, and he was not listed as a subscriber. Nor was Smith named by the diarist Lieutenant Ralph Clark, who chronicled deaths on board. P.G. Fidlon and R.J. Ryan, eds, *The Journal and Letters of Lt. Ralph Clark 1787-1792* (Sydney, 1981), 224-38.

[11] Bowes was born at Tolleshunt D'Arcy in 1750, and would die there in 1790, shortly after his return from the East. *The Journal of Arthur Bowes Smyth*, xix, 51.

[12] The point is not noted by historians of Essex, but appears *prima facie* to be correct.

[13] <https://www.essexarchivesonline.co.uk/>

[14] Messing is believed to owe its unfortunate name to an early Anglo-Saxon sub-tribe, the people of Maecca. Essex also has villages called Mucking and Ugley. Messing is associated with an early emigrant to the American colonies, Reynold Bush, claimed as the ancestor of two American Presidents.

[15] P. Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex* (2 vols, London, 1768), ii, 125. A county newspaper, the *Chelmsford Chronicle*, was established in 1765, and many early issues are available on line. Although the file is searchable, optical character recognition systems cannot cope with the long S used by printers as part of the double-S in Messing, A local historian with knowledge of the parish community might be able to search more closely.

[16] *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 13 August 1784. The household goods and some of the farm animals of the elder James Smith were auctioned, which may suggest that his heir did not intend to live in the village, *ibid.*, 5 November 1784. The Essex Record Office call number of Shaen's notes is D/DU 139/2/1.

[17] D.W. Collier, *The People's History of Essex* (Chelmsford, 1861), 400-1. For the role of 18th-century Maldon as a "minor pleasure resort", see A.F.J. Brown, *Essex at Work 1700-1815* (Chelmsford, 1969), 123. For Colchester, *Victoria County of History of Essex*, ix, 169-75 (<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol9/pp169-175>)

## WAS PETER KENNEY HIBBS REALLY ON THE ENDEAVOUR?~ PART 2

What makes people suggest, presume, accept, and/or convinced that Peter was on the *Endeavour*?

First, **Peter Hibbs** himself had told others that he sailed with Cook, and there is no evidence that anyone in or outside the family have ever challenged or doubted his claim.

It was relayed by his son in the latter's obituary in the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, (Saturday 3 May 1890, page 3): 'The Late P. Hibbs. From a correspondent we have received the following interesting item: Mr Hibbs's father, was 91 at the time of his decease, and was without doubt the second Englishman who set foot on Australian soil. He was one of the crew of the good ship *Endeavour*, and when Captain Cook on April 28, 1770, sent off a boat at Botany Bay with Joseph Banks, then Mr. Banks, to search for water and exploit the coast, Peter Hibbs was the next man to jump ashore after the distinguished naturalist. Years went by, and in January, 1788, Peter found himself once more in the bay he had so often thought of during his seafaring career, this time in the capacity of bosun's mate aboard the *Sirius* under the command of Governor Phillip'

In the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, (24 June 1911, p 10 it was written:

'Peter Hibbs was born 1757 Swanage, Dorset England, he was baptised 24 January 1762 in Swanage, Dorset England, son of George HIBBS and wife Mary nee KENNEY. Peter is said to have travelled as a member of the crew of Captain Cook's ship, the *Endeavour* in 1770, he would have been a cabin boy; 'Peter Hibbs, coxswain of the boat in which Captain Cook went ashore in the days when the aboriginals of Kurnell were almost scared to death at the sight of white men and ship'.



*Coombe Keynes, Dorset, home village of Mary Kenney*

In the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, (9 January 1925) an article appeared on the life of Peter Hibbs:

'It may be of interest to recall to those interested in Hawkesbury history that Peter Hibbs, at the age of 13 years was with Captain James Cook on the *Endeavour* 28th April, 1770, and again at the age of 31 years accompanied Governor Arthur Phillip as a free seaman in the first fleet of 1788. In June, 1789, the first Peter Hibbs was selected as one of a picked crew which the Governor took on an exploring expedition of discovery to the Hawkesbury River.'

Well-regarded historians also wrote about this as being

as true or as possible:

**Dr. Jonathan King**, is an award-winning author of 25 books on Australian History, and descendent of First Fleet naval officer and New South Wales Governor, Philip Gidley King. In his book **The First Fleet** he wrote (p3): ..... 'There were people like Peter Hibbs who had been out before with Captain James Cook on *Endeavour* and was visiting Botany Bay for the second time.'

**Don Chapman**, an author in London and Sydney. A member of the Royal Australian Historical Society, historical researcher, historian of Australia History, he wrote in 1788, *The People of the First Fleet*: 'Peter Hibbs was born in England around 1756, and sailed with Captain Cook as one of the crew of the *Endeavour*. He claimed to be the second European to set foot on the shore of eastern Australia, after Joseph Banks. He returned to Botany Bay as a seaman on board the *Sirius*'.

**Mollie Gillen** acknowledges the possibility that Peter sailed with James Cook. Mollie (née Woolnough 1908–2009) was an Australian historian, researcher, writer and novelist whose book *Founders of Australia: A Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet* in 1995, was the reason that she received Hon.D.Litt. from her alma mater. She writes about Peter Hibbs the following about his early seafaring and age: 'HIBBS, Peter (c1762-18470. Peter Hibbs aged 24 from Ramsgate, Kent, joined *Sirius* as able seaman on 25 March 1787. He had been serving in 1786 on the Portsmouth guardian ship Goliath, whence he was discharged to *Sirius*. It has been said that he sailed with Captain Cook, but there is no man of this name on the musters of any of Cook's ships.'

Historian **Stephen Yarrow** announces the existence of a report by Arthur Phillip: 'I had a close friend and fellow-historian, now deceased, who spent two years researching history in England, which was not related to the Peter Hibbs story. During his research he stumbled by chance upon a report on the First Fleet, in which Arthur Phillip recorded that Hibbs had been especially chosen to join the crew of *HMS Sirius* because Hibbs 'had previously visited these shores'. (The only ship to have done that was the *Endeavour*). As my friend was not researching that aspect of history, he didn't reference the entry, but as he was impressed with the realisation that a First Fleeter had also been with James Cook, he made a note on it and informed me about it'.

Yarrow comments on Mollie Gillen's account about Peter Hibbs: 'First, in her research Mollie Gillen appears to have come across either the same documentation or reference to Peter Hibbs having been aboard *Endeavour* as my fellow historian, though her statement seems to indicate the information came to her second-hand. Nonetheless, we now know that the knowledge of Arthur Phillip making such a comment has come to the notice of at least two past researchers.'

We do not know where Mollie Gillen got her information from. Clearly from what she said, she never sited the original source material but her source must have had some credence for her to have bothered to reference it. Unfortunately she did not record by whom "it has been said" or how she came to know about it. As for my fellow historian, he spent 2 years in London going through volumes of stored documents and came across it in passing. Where he saw it, whether it still exists, and if so, where he saw it, is not known'.

So at least two previous researchers have come across references to Peter Hibbs being on board the *Endeavour*.

The crew of the flagship *HMS Sirius* was hand-picked by Arthur Phillip. Peter Hibbs was serving aboard *HMS Goliath* when the fleet was being assembled, so Phillip must have requested Hibbs be transferred to *Sirius*. Phillip would not have done so without a reason and there is no evidence they had previously met or served together. Furthermore, the request was granted, indicating the reason Phillip put forward for wanting him aboard was deemed valid by Phillip's superior, Lord Sydney, to approve the transfer. Throughout their time together, Phillip and **Hunter** showed Hibbs great favours, appointing him to numerous tasks that would not normally be given to an able seaman or a boatswain's mate, but to someone with a much high ranking and degree of experience and education. One could say Hibbs received special treatment.

Though it is all circumstantial, it is evidence nonetheless, and strong enough to make me believe he did travel on the *Endeavour*. If others choose not to believe it, then so be it. Whilst it is not 100% proof, what in the history of mankind is supported by 100% proof? So much of what we believe to be historical fact is based on the reported words of people who we don't know and have never met, with little or no solid evidence to support what they say.



#### Peter Kenney Hibbs' life before the *Endeavour*.

So what do we know about Peter before he boarded the *Endeavour* in 1768? According to the documents Peter was born between 1757 (death certificate) and January 1762 (birth certificate).

So in July 1768, the year the *Endeavour* sailed, he would have been then between 6 and 11 years old. Boys as young as 8 at the time, were employed as a ship's boy, but this was a very important expedition for the King, the Ad-

miralty, science and the country, so to take a possibly homesick 6 year old boy would be unlikely, especially as it seems that he had no family on board. And this was the navy who sailed the oceans, not a rowing boat on a river. Previous explorer **Captain Wallis** had even refused to take any boys on board his circumnavigation around the globe.

So we might be able to conclude that Peter had sailed before joining the *Endeavour* maybe even from when he was seven. As he, or the other two boys were never entered with the adults in the muster book, they were not older than twelve when they returned, or there was no benefit for James Cook to do so. **Nick Young**, another possible minor on board where they call him 'young Nick', became a servant of Mr Banks, so was paid/kept by him. By then Banks had lost in his party two servants and an artist, so he had spare rations. Later Nick became a surgeon's assistant.

Why Peter Kenney Hibbs joined we do not know, but he was exposed to sailors simply from where he lived in a seaside town where ocean ships passed, where the small harbours were frequented by anchored ships, sailors roamed the streets and filled the pubs, and where stories of faraway countries, adventures and exotic girls were hanging in the air. There were bales and barrels of food loaded for the longer voyages, something a boy with an empty stomach wouldn't overlook. The certainty of having three square meals a day as a sailor, was a big draw for the majority of the poor and hungry.

For Peter to be a runaway from home, on this publicised and prestigious journey, would be very unlikely. Minors needed permission from a parent or guardian to work on a navy ship. The fact that Peter later called his eldest son after his father, seems to indicate that he had at least a civil relationship with him. Also Peter's son called a daughter after his mother and a son after Peter's grandfather.

There was no great shortage of crew in 1768, as there was no significant wars with major powers at the time. So Peter must have been at least capable.

To have been a stowaway on the *Endeavour* is also possible, but unlikely, as the *Endeavour* did not stop in Ramsgate or Swanage; however, it was moored in the Downs, 14 kilometres from Ramsgate.

So if Peter did not go to sea because he was forced into it, then he had gone more or less out of free will. Most likely he or his family had or made connections with sailors or officers who would put in a good word for them with a captain. Some ex-sailors might have settled in the small sea town, family members might have been at sea. But it also could have been that his parents were not in favour for him to find a life at sea, especially on such a dangerous journey into the unknown. Does a parent want to worry continuously? Maybe they had to give in on Peter's request.

**The third part of this article by Hendrika Johnson will continue in the next issue, where the focus will be on the evidence from the *Endeavour* diaries.**

## BOOK REVIEW: A CONCISE HISTORY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Historians, when they focus on an event, an area or a period certainly know how to delve into their topic with great gusto and a strong sense of showing they know their stuff. Most of us in our research into our family's history have made use of that knowledge in our quest to explore the detail and make sure of the facts.

We are keen to gather the trivia of our ancestors' lives and then pass what we feel is important on to the younger generations so they can marvel at their heritage. Many of the books reviewed on this page over recent years have been eminently successful in bringing to life bygone times and personalities.

This book, *A Concise History of New South Wales*, written by Macquarie University academic **Professor John S Croucher**, and published last year, is very different. Here is not the fine detail but rather a broad overview of the state's story. The treatment over the first three chapters is largely chronological, taking the reader on a whirlwind tour of 65 000 years of continuing history of first peoples, through the early British period dominated by convict arrivals, and then on to non-indigenous colonisation and settlement. This approach takes us right through to the present day.

This wide sweep is possibly what many of us need when sharing with our children and grandchildren their family's connection with the olden days, helping them develop their own sense of belonging. They, and indeed we ourselves, need reminding to

keep our eyes on the big picture.

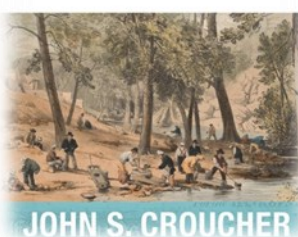
In the chapters that follow, as **Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC** says in her congratulatory Foreword, the author 'recounts the waves of migration that follow the penal settlement, describing the physical aspects of some of the cities and towns and the development of transport, manufacturing and industry that followed. Professor Croucher covers the social and intellectual development of the state in areas such as entertainment, sports, the arts, education, science and religion.'

Worthy of note is the author's cultural inclusiveness as he weaves Indigenous themes into the whole story. First peoples are writ large as each topic unfolds and we get to know by name and Country heritage which part of the state each of the clans and nations called their own and continue to do so.

Yes, as indicated by the title, the history is concise and, for that purpose it would seem, the reader is not sidetracked by numbered reference notes that might impede the flow. The

forty pages of Bibliography and Chapter-based Reference Notes point to further exploratory study for those interested, and the many cameos of significant historical personalities (often not known by this reviewer) can be found via ten pages of Index.

The book is advertised for sale for about \$30.00 by online retailers and bookshops and is widely available. **WJF**



## CHAPTER OFFICE BEARERS 2021-2022

NAME	PRESIDENT	VICE PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER
ALBURY-WODONGA DISTRICT	Paul Gooding #8089	Michael Ronald #8037	Mary Chalmers-Borella #8034.1	Mary Chalmers-Borella #8034.1
ARTHUR PHILLIP	Roderick White #6815		Judith O'Shea #8563	James Kemsley #7895
BOTANY BAY	Kevin Snowball #1251.1	Elaine Snowball #1251	Carol Macklin #8865	Margaret Binder #6607
CANBERRA	Toni Pike #6981		Geoff Lamb #7279	Helen Mattick #6077.1
CENTRAL COAST	Gavin Plunkett #8617	Pauline Hoggett #8627	Jon Fearon #7141	Margaret Black #8544
DERWENT	Dianne Snowden #2862	Ruth Binny #8457	Paul Dobber #8462.1	Greg Bell #8277
EASTERN FARMS	Frank Olivier #8402.1	Judith Newell #7599	Jennifer Follers #7889	Rob Shipton #7981
HAWKESBURY NEPEAN	(Act.) Pamela Hempel #6740		William Hempel #6740.1	Theresa Ewan #8486
HUNTER VALLEY	(Act.) Terry Musgrave #8219	(Act.) George Pinkerton #7903.1	Kerry Neinert #8578	Philip Aubin #5685
MID NORTH COAST			Heather Bath #8480	Margaret Pople #8517
MORETON	Brian Russell #2956.1	Julie Webb #7007	Jan Grant #8997.1	Barry Lack #8001
NORTH COAST	Pat Davis #7397.1	Margaret Bass #7374	Robyn Condliffe #6598	Graeme Hays #8815
NORTHERN RIVERS	Karin Brown #7962		Roderick Jordan #8469.1	Christine Jordan #8469
NORTH WEST	Jennifer Porter #7416	Sybil Small #218.1 Harold McLean #7439	Janet McLean #7439.1	Colin Worrall #42
PORT PHILLIP	Chris Norton #9095		Geoff Rundell #9001	Susan Thwaites #7514
SOUTH COAST	KerrieAnne Christian #4858	Fae McGregor #7161	Robert Ratcliffe #7628	Anne Mobbs #F147
SWAN RIVER	Bill Cutler #8024	Judy Bercene #8299	Toni Mahony #5525	Lynton Symington #7947

# OUR CHAPTERS IN ACTION

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

**Venue:** usually at Albury Library/Museum, Kiewa St. Albury, (**Covid conditions apply**), monthly meetings, third Saturday at 10:00 for 10.30 am. **Next Meetings and Events:** Hoping for face to face meetings in October and November and a Christmas function in December. **Contact:** Mary Chalmers-Borella 6025 3283

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

**Venue:** Meeting Room, Old Gordon Public School. 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon – monthly meetings, third Friday at 10.30 . **Next Meetings:** 15 October: No speaker. *Morning Tea for Phillip's birthday*; 19 November: Paul Ashton, *Planning Sydney Since 1788*; 17 December: General meeting followed by *Christmas Party* **Contact:** Judith O'Shea 9797 0240

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

**Venue:** Our Lady of Fatima Church, 825 Forest Rd, Peakhurst. Bi-monthly on third Tuesday 10.30am. **Next Meetings:** 19 October **Cancelled**; 16 November: *TBA*; 21 December: *TBA*. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Carol Macklin 0415376434

## CANBERRA – ACT, Queanbeyan and surrounds.

**Venue:** Various locations in Canberra. **Next Event:** Sadly, due to lockdown, the much anticipated annual lunch had to be cancelled. Please contact Toni for news of further events this quarter. **Contact:** Toni Pike 041 041 2778

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

**Venue:** Point Clare Community Hall, – meet monthly, second Saturday at 10 am for 10.30. **Next Meeting:** 9 October: **Meeting unlikely due to ongoing restrictions.** (Park gathering may be possible.) 13 November: Jon Fearon, *The Sealbys of Saratoga*; **Next Event:** 11 December: Christmas Lunch, venue TBA. **Contact:** Jon Fearon 43116254

## DERWENT - Southern Tasmania

**Venue:** Bi-monthly, 11am, first Saturday at Old Orphan School, St John's Precinct, Newtown. Tasmania, **Next Meeting:** 2 October: Speaker TBA. **Next Event:** 4 December (Venue TBA): Christmas BBQ Lunch. **Contact:** Paul Dobber 0401566080

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

**Venue:** The Hall at Brush Farm House, 19 Lawson St. Eastwood – monthly meetings, first Saturday from 10am **Next Meetings:** 2 October: **Meeting cancelled**; Please note that members will be advised if our meetings on 6 November and 4 December will be able to go ahead. Covid restrictions apply at Brush Farm House. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Jennifer Follers 97991161

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

**Venue:** Windsor Library, Penrith Library and Springwood. Presbyterian Church –Bi-monthly, third Saturday, 11 am. **Next Meetings:** 16 October, **Springwood meeting Cancelled**; **Next Event:** 18 December, 11 am at Stan Stevens Room, Hawkesbury Central Library. Christmas Lunch **Contact:** William Hempel 0410950101

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

**Venue:** Teralba Community Hall Supper Room. 15 Anzac Pde Teralba—bi-monthly meetings, usually third Monday from 10am-12.30pm. **Next Meeting:** 18 October: Speaker, *TBA*. **This meeting may be cancelled due to Council restrictions.** **Next Event:** *TBA*. **Contact:** Kerry Neinert 49615083.

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

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

## MORETON – South East Queensland.

**Venue:** St. Augustine's Anglican Church Hall, Hamilton – bi-monthly meetings, at 10 am on an available 2nd Saturday. **Covid-19 restrictions will be strictly monitored and implemented.** **Next Meetings:** 9 October: Don Cornford, *Three Convicts*. **Next Events:** 11 December: Christmas Lunch at Alderley Arms Hotel. **Contact:** Jan Grant 0754911891

## NORTH COAST – Nambucca Heads, Dorrigo, Boambee, Coffs Harbour to McLean.

**Venue:** Either Mylestom Hall or Coramba Hall, or at members' homes, Bi-monthly, usually first Sunday at 10.30am. **Next Meetings:** 3 October: At Pat and Darrell Davis's home., *Gulmarrad*, Speaker *TBA*. **Next Event:** 4 December: Christmas Lunch at Golden Dog Hotel, Glenreagh, and Afternoon Tea at Bases, Nana Glen. **Contact:** Robyn Condliffe 66533615

## NORTH WEST – Tamworth and surrounds.

**Venue:** Various locations – bi-monthly meetings, usually first Saturday at 1.30pm **Next Meetings:** at Calala Cottage Tamworth, 9 October AGM followed by regular meeting. **Next Event:** 4 December, Venue to be advised, Christmas Lunch. **Contact:** Janet McLean 0438465529

## NORTHERN RIVERS – Lismore and surrounds.

**Venue:** Ballina Cherry Street Sports and Bowling Club - bi-monthly meetings, fourth Sunday at 11.30am followed by lunch; **Next Meetings:** **Contact:** Roddy Jordan 6687 5339

## PORT PHILLIP—Melbourne and Regional Victoria.

**Venue:** Various; quarterly meetings, third Saturday, times vary. **Next Meeting:** . (**Covid-19 restrictions willing**) **Contact:** Geoff Rundell 0429528502

## SOUTH COAST – Engadine to Burrill Lake.

**Venue:** Café Function Room at St Luke's Anglican Church, Moomba St, Dapto – monthly except. Jan, May and Dec. – first Tuesday at 10am - 1pm. **Next Meetings** 5 October: With lockdown still in force this meeting may be held by Zoom, without a guest speaker; 2 November: *May be just a chat and catch-up*. **Next Event:** 7 December: Chapter Christmas Lunch. **Contact:** Rob Ratcliffe 42321842

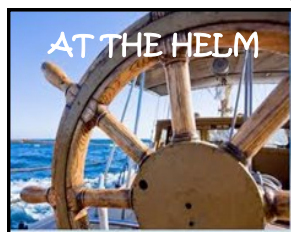
## SWAN RIVER – Perth, Fremantle and surrounds.

**Venue:** 16 Inwood Place Murdoch, bi-monthly, usually first Saturday, at 2pm. **Next Meetings:** 2 October: General Meeting; 4 December: General Meeting followed by Christmas Function. **Next Event:** **Contact:** Toni Mahony 0892717630

**PLEASE NOTE: Some of the events on this page may be deferred or cancelled. Please check with your listed contact.**

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Closing date for this page for the next issue is 22 November 2021**

*Karys Fearon*, Chapter Liaison Officer



## Donations received for House Upkeep

Chaff W; Chapter Northern Rivers; Clark J M; Diongwail G; Francis M L; Freeman J J; Grace P M; Grace W H; Hendrie D S; Jones R A; Jorgensen J K; Kable N; Kemsley J T; Knight M K; Leo R E; Little I E; Morgan D J; Small D; Small V M; Spurway N D; Tracey S; West L M; Williamson H T.

## DEATHS

### WILLIAM STANDLEY

**#7134 Valentine Sheila Littler OAM**, of Centenary Heights, Toowoomba, and formerly of Allora and Warwick, Queensland, died on 05.07.2021, aged 94. She joined the Fellowship in 2005 and is sadly missed by her family and her friends at Moreton Chapter.

### ASSOCIATE

**#7178.1 Lindsay W Causer**, of West Wollongong and formerly of Towradji, New South Wales, died on 10.07.2021, aged 100. He, together with his late wife **#Heather Causer** (FF Joseph Wright), joined the Fellowship in 2006 and they were both members of South Coast Chapter.

### RICHARD PARTRIDGE/MARY GREENWOOD

**#7639 William Henry Hancock**, of Port Macquarie, New South Wales, died on 23 July 2021, aged 78. Bill was very proud to be acknowledged as a First Fleeter and with his wife, **#7640 Jennifer** (FF William Hubbard), belonged to Mid North Coast Chapter.

### WILLIAM BOGGIS

**#7787 Malcolm F Thomson**, of Forster, New South Wales, died on 02.09.2021, aged 82. Malcolm will be much missed by his loving family and his friends at Mid North Coast Chapter. As its continuing founding President he died 'in office'. See Chapter tribute on Page 2.



Members who live on **Queensland's Gold Coast**, or with relatives who do, may like to know that moves are afoot to establish a **new Chapter** in that part of Australia. Currently, all those on the FFF books who make the area their home are being contacted by the Chapter Establishment Officer, Paul Gooding. Contact him ([pdgooding@bigpond.com](mailto:pdgooding@bigpond.com)) for information.



The pandemic lockdown in Sydney has caused the closure of FF House for several months. The **Membership Team** has over **35 applications** awaiting processing once access to the House is restored. Founders is looking forward to once again head this page to **Welcome our New Members**.



Some time ago we mentioned an upcoming documentary series on SBS called Australia Uncovered. The sixth programme, **Our African Roots**, is due to be shown on Sunday evening, 17 October at 8.30 pm. We understand our First Fleeters with African-American heritage are to be featured.



One of the ways that members can keep abreast of the fine health of the Fellowship is to read the email-shared **Chapters' Newsletters**. Nationwide there are twelve such publications which, along with Chapter news, are full of interest with FF and other family histories, local studies and historical anecdotes. Contact the Secretaries to be added to their mailing lists.

## FROM THE MAIL BAG

### From **#8203 Robyn Fletcher**, ([robyn.fletcher@me.com](mailto:robyn.fletcher@me.com))

I am now a member of the Convict Connections interest group at the Genealogical Society of Qld.

I have a question about the story on page 8 title: "Was Peter Hibbs Really on the Endeavour - Part 1" [*Founders* 52.4.]. I quote: 'Six years and two children later in 1798, Peter is involved in completing the building of the first boat built on Norfolk Island, a one-masted 'cutter' sloop, called Norfolk, which he sailed as her master to Sydney.'

I want to know where the author of this story got their information i.e. the source about **Peter Hibbs** being involved in the building of this boat.

The reason I want to know is that I have surmised that maybe my ancestor/s may have also been involved. I have contacted the history centre at Norfolk Island to ask if there is a record as to who worked on building the Norfolk, but they did not have any documents with this information.

My ancestor is **Edward Risby** who also arrived as a convict on the *Sirius*. Edward was employed for a short time on repairs to the *Sirius* in Sydney before it left for Norfolk Island on that final and fatal trip. One of his sons (**Thomas Risby**) was a prominent boat builder in Van Diemen's Land in Hobart. Three of his son's also took up the boat building trade.

I have always wondered if they learnt their trade on Norfolk Island. As they were not supposed to build boats on the Island,

there were very few built. Where did they learn this trade? It would be great if any of the Risbys had a part in building the infamous "*Norfolk*".

If you can help me I would be very grateful.

**Robyn**

**Editor's response:** Your letter motivated some unofficial research and some suggestions. No doubt our readers and the author will have more, and they have your email address to reply directly.

It is quite understandable that no records exist of the work-force involved in **Lieutenant-Governor John Townson's** 1798 secret project to construct *Norfolk*. Young **Thomas Risby** would have been six years old that year and may well have been watching and learning from his father Edward if he was a member of the boat building crew. As the family were on the island for another ten years Thomas would have had plenty of opportunity to hone his skills in the trade and put them to good use in VDL. Perhaps Edward Risby family historians could help you.

If Peter Hibbs was involved in the finishing touches of the build and sailing *Norfolk* to Sydney before she was confiscated, he would have had to make a special trip back to Norfolk Island to do so. He had left the island in 1795. The contributor of the short story on the FFF website, (see *Ships-Sirius -Able Seamen*), the late **#6110 Betty Warn**, stated that Peter was at the build and sailed the cutter to Sydney but she cited no references.

## CHAPTER SECRETARIES

### ALBURY-WODONGA DIST.

Mary Chalmers-Borella  
02 6025 3283

### ARTHUR PHILLIP

Judith O'Shea 02 9797 0240

### BOTANY BAY

Carol Macklin 0415 376 434

### CANBERRA

Geoff Lamb 02 6231 5548

### CENTRAL COAST

Jon Fearon 02 4311 6254

### DERWENT

Paul Dobber 0401 566 080

### EASTERN FARMS

Jennifer Follers 02 9799 1161

### HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN

William Hempel 0410 950 101

### HUNTER VALLEY

Kerry Neinert 02 4961 5083

### MID NORTH COAST

Heather Bath 0427 018 566

### MORETON

Jan Grant 07 5491 1891

### NORTH COAST

Robyn Condliffe 02 6653 3615

### NORTHERN RIVERS

Roddy Jordan 02 6687 5339

### NORTH WEST

Janet McLean 0438 465 529

### PORT PHILLIP

Geoff Rundell 0429 528 502

### SOUTH COAST

Rob Ratcliffe 02 4232 1842

### SWAN RIVER

Toni Mahony 08 9271 7630