

Please address all correspondence to the Fellowship of First Fleeters, G.P.O.
Box 4441, Sydney 2001.

Vol. 9 No. 10
November 1978

From the President

We are now entering a very busy time of the year, and I do urge Members to come to the Special Meeting on Wednesday 13th December at 6.30 p.m. to be held in our office. This meeting is to organise all aspects of the Australia Day Celebrations. Arrangements are now complete for our Tenth Anniversary Dinner at the Wentworth Hotel. Do please book early; numbers are very strictly limited, and with the Christmas holidays intervening it does help the Committee (full details elsewhere in this issue). We will have an Exhibition at The Rocks on Sunday 28th January and Monday 29th January 1979, and our usual visit to Government House on the morning of Monday 29th January. Details at the Special Meeting.

On 24th October it was my privilege to attend the ceremony at the Cenotaph for United Nations Day. It was a very moving and colourful occasion. Since last reporting I have also been Guest Speaker at Beverley Hills and Bowral View Clubs. I feel these talks are certainly bringing the Fellowship before a very large number of people.

May I take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their help and co-operation during the year, and wish each and every member and their families a very happy Christmas and may the New Year bring you health, happiness and above all peace to the world.

Beryl Lewis.

A FEW IMPORTANT DETAILS TO NOTE.

AUSTRALIA DAY DINNER.

Date: 1 Saturday 27th January 1979 at 7 p.m.

Venue: Wentworth Hotel.

Price: \$13 each.

Tickets & Bookings: Phone 709 8974. Stamped addressed envelope and remittance to Beryl Lewis, 88 Avoca Street, Yagoona 2199.

CHRISTMAS "GET-TOGETHER"

Date: Friday 8th December 1978, at 6 p.m.

Venue: Argyle Tavern, The Rocks.

Price: \$8 each.

Bookings: Phone 709 8974.

AUSTRALIA DAY MEETING

Date: Wednesday 13th December 1978, at 6.30 p.m.

Venue: Room 312, Assembly Building (entrance Jamison Street).

Visitor from Canada

Mrs. Margaret Maxwell's son, Peter Sparke, of Calgary, Canada, has just spent a fortnight in Sydney with his mother. It is a pity Sydney didn't turn on better weather for him --- it rained nearly all the visit.

Membership Report

The Membership Committee has much pleasure in welcoming the following new Members to the Fellowship:

Mrs Joan Nohyba, Duncraig, W.A. (John Barrisford)
Mrs Kathleen Butler, Bankstown. (James Ruse)
Miss Justine Israel, Eastwood. (James Ruse)
Ashley C. Lucas and Miss Heidi S. Lucas, Campsie. (Nathaniel Lucas
Olivia Gascoigne)
Mrs Elaine D. R. Bennett, Northmead. (Philip Showing - Jane
Langley (Scriven))
Gooffrey S. Fletcher, Northmead. (Philip Showing - Jane Langley
(Scriven))
Selby L. Fletcher, Five Dock. (Philip Showing - Jane Langley
(Scriven))
Mrs Fay L. Davey, Crookwell. (John Small - Mary Parker)

Apologies to Mrs Gladys Giron, of Railton, Tasmania, for the wrong name being listed with Nathaniel Lucas in the last issue. It should have been Olivia Gascoigne,

Membership Committee,

Editor's note: The name Scriven should have been shown in parentheses after Philip Showing's name, not after Jane Langley's.

Thomas Eccles

Thomas Eccles arrived on the Scarborough after being convicted at the Surrey Summer Assizes at Guildford in 1782, before William, Earl of Mansfield, and Sir William Henry Ashurst,

His crime was that "on 6th day of May, about the hour of 12 in the night of the same day, the dwelling house of one Thomas Hind feloniously did break and enter, and -- one flitch of bacon of the value of 20s. and 2 half peck loaves of wheaten bread of the value of 2s. of the goods and chattels of the said Thos. Hind -- feloniously did steal."

Thomas was 43 years old when convicted, so was not a young man when he arrived with the First Fleet in 1788.

The first mention of him we find that on 21st October 1788 he was charged with being in liquor, contrary to orders, and carrying vegetables out of the garden he worked in. Prisoner said that Capt. Shea gave him a tumbler of rum and water for looking after his garden and also a slip from a plant. Eccles was found guilty and dismissed from the garden and sent to the brickfields.

It is recorded that Thomas Eccles went to Norfolk Island 22nd March 1789, and in Philip Gidley King's letters to Major Grose dated 20th July - 6th November 1794 reference is made to him stating that he had been of the utmost service at Norfolk Island and requesting a free pardon. A conditional pardon was granted.

On 14th July 1795 a reminder was sent for a free pardon. Finally, on 22nd February 1796 at Norfolk Island he received Emancipation. From 10th September 1796 Eccles received rations as a settler.

If you recall his sentence was for stealing a flitch of bacon, and now the humble pig appears to be his means of making a living in the infant colony. The records show these figures: 6th August 1796, Supplied Government with 281 lb. pork at Norfolk Island. Received rations as a settler from 10th September 1796. 17th November 1796, Supplied 990 lb. pork. 30th July 1796, Supplied 418 lb. pork.

We have no knowledge of any children of Thomas Eccles, but his wife, Elizabeth, is evidently buried in this same cemetery, according to files in the Mitchell Library, which state: Eccles, Elizabeth. Age

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Thomas Eccles (Continued)

105. Free Settler. Bur. July 27, 1835. Samuel Marsden. St John's, Parramatta.

Thomas Eccles died 1st April 1814, aged 96, and was buried in this plot 3rd April 1814.

(Address given at unveiling of plaque at Thomas Eccles' grave, St John's Cemetery, Parramatta)

October and November Lectures

The October Lecture on 8th October was very well-timed. It was the birthday of Governor Phillip, and marked the 240th anniversary of his birth. Members of the First Fleeters that Wednesday made their annual pilgrimage to the Phillip Memorial in the Royal Botanic Garden. Vice President Mr Ted Linn laid a wreath.

That evening, to tie in with the occasion, Mr Robert Irving, Senior Lecturer for the School of Architecture at the University of New South Wales, gave a talk entitled "Phillip's Sydney." Mr Irving brought many beautiful slides of the colony's early artists that gave a wonderful atmosphere and showed the dream in Phillip's mind of his Sydney. Everyone enjoyed the lecture and would have liked to have listened all evening and discussed the well-chosen slides.

Mr Irving seemed to enjoy the evening as much as we did, and we thank him for coming and bringing all the equipment and projectors, and talking so graciously.

The November Lecture Evening was a popular one, with a well-known speaker, Dr Peter Reynolds, Lecturer on Architecture at the University of New South Wales. Dr Reynolds' topic was entitled, "Convicts, Soldiers, Architects; the Originators of Our Official Architecture."

His lecture was very informative, and he has a wealth of knowledge of early Sydney. The first architect of some sort was Henry Brewer, Clerk to Governor Phillip. He had a forbidding countenance and was an unhappy man — no wonder, perhaps, as he had to contend with lack of tools and poor timber.

He was followed by James Bloodworth, brickmaker, and at Brickfield Hill he made bricks with the help of convicts. The women collected oysters to be burned for lime. It was barely enough for his bricks, so he reverted to mud and water.

Dr. Reynolds told us of the many struggles of early builders and architects. He will be back in February to deliver a talk on early Bankstown, and we look forward to seeing him again.

Sally Kalina.

The Ballad of the First Fleet. 1788

By Howard Guinness. (The first verses appeared in the August, September and October Newsletters)

The Governor carried his burdens with courage,
And these were inclusive — the burdens of all,
The land with its harshness so easily betrayed them
(A bushfire, a drought or a southerly squall).
And men were despairing or drunk or rapacious,
So even his wine tasted bitter as gall!

He granted free land to the genuine settler,
Though much of the soil was not fertile or deep,
The labour was freely provided by convicts,
The farmer to find only clothing and keep.
Macarthur and others grabbed all that was going,
A landowner's power! A harvest to reap!

The life of a convict meant arduous labour,
From sunrise to sunset in shackles that galled,

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The Ballad of the First Fleet, 1788 (Continued)

To voice his resentment meant serious flogging,
And flios in the wounds where his body was hauled.
Attempted escape could bring death from a bullet,
Or back to his punishment callously hauled.

But serving a mas ter who reckoned on justice,
His labour would count at the end of the day,
A good reputation that steadily strengthened
Would gain him advancement and brighten his way.
His sentence was sometimes cut short or remitted,
He then enjoyed freedom to go or to stay.

Some took up their grants in the Hawkesbury Valley,
Where rich land awaited the resolute hand,
While others succeeded at law or in business
And architect Greenway was much in demand.
For Regency Bath was the home of his childhood,
And Windsor's fine church was the best in the land.

So loveliness, too, worked its magic upon them —
The sparkle of water on wide golden sands,
The blue open sky and the sunshine of winter,
The boats on the harbour, the eucalypt stand,
The view from the heads and the tall ships of England,
The dear ones returning, the touch of a hand.

The soldiers, of course, were the Governor's muscle,
In tunics of scarlet with musket and sword,
They backed his authority, kept law and order,
And guarded the cove so that peace was assured.
Their duties were light, but their leisure time heavy,
Then why not a grant with its ample reward?

(Editor's Note: It had been hoped to conclude this interesting narrative poem this year, but unfortunately it is not possible to finish the poem in this issue).

Early Encounters Between Europeans and Aborigines in N.S.W.

(A further instalment of Ena Harper's Papers on the subject. In the previous two instalments Sir Joseph Banks was quoted concerning the Aborigines' indifference to the coming of the "Endavour," while Sydney Parkinson, the natural history artist on board, was quoted as saying, "The natives were so abashed at first they took little notice of us.")

Is Parkinson's explanation satisfying? It seems to me that awe can hardly have been the reason for ignoring the ship, and this does not seem to be the reaction described in the passage quoted from Banks' Journal. No, the impression given by Banks is that the general feeling was one of apathy rather than awe.

I searched for an explanation that would satisfy my mind. One thought that occurred to me was that the Aborigines' minds were so steeped in fantasy by reason of their Dreantime legends that they regarded the outlandish ship as part of that dream world, and therefore to be accepted casually.

The objection to this is that the "Endeavour" was something outside the field of experience embraced by the totemic myths, something completely new. It had broken in on them from another world. I could not forget Banks' astonishment at their lack of interest. He did not indicate that they regarded the ship as "strange" or "monstrous."

(To be continued)

Coming Events

Dec. 8: Christmas "Get-Together," Argyle Tavern, 6 pm.

Dec. 13: Australia Day Meeting (to plan Australia Day Celebrations).
6.30 pm Room 312, Assenbly Building, York Street.

Jan. 27, 1979: Australia Day Dinner, Wentworth Hotel, 7 pm.

Jan. 28-29, 1979: Exhibition at The Rocks; visit to Govt. House (29th).
