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

Vol. 9 No. 6  
July 1978

### From the President

Firstly I sincerely thank Mrs Joan Ross for filling in for me last month, when, like many other Members, I was confined to bed with a most disagreeable virus.

The highlight of this last month was our Lecture Night. At the invitation of the President of the Society of Australian Genealogists, Mr Johnson, this lecture was held at Richmond Villa. What a delightful building this is, and so sympathetically restored. When one realises at one stage there was a suggestion to demolish it, it becomes so much more apparent these delightful old buildings can be moved and put to many more years of usefulness. Whilst it was an exceptionally cold winter night, it was most encouraging to have so many Members present -- the reading room was full.

Beryl Lewis.

### ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday 20th September 1978 at 7.30 pm

### Assembly Building

Nominations to be in office by 20th August 1978

### June Lecture Evening

Because of illness the lecturer for our June meeting, Mrs Valmai Phillips, could not attend.

At very short notice Mr Vaughan Evans kindly came and presented a talk about early shipping in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He brought very interesting slides, which enhanced the topic.

We were very grateful to Mr Evans for coming and giving us his valuable time.

Sally Kalina.

### Membership Committee

We welcome the following Members into the Fellowship:

Miss Joanne Lindley, Doncaster, Victoria. (Nathaniel Lucas and Olivia Gascoigne)  
Mr Vincent Lukaitis, East Kew, Victoria. (Nathaniel Lucas and Olivia Gascoigne)  
Mrs Catherine Larking, Highett, Victoria. (Nathaniel Lucas and Olivia Gascoigne)  
Miss Charlotte Peters, Glen Iris, Victoria. (Matthew Everingham)

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## Membership Committee (Continued)

Mrs Mary Kroehnert, Casula, NSW. (Nathaniel Lucas and Olivia Gascoigne)  
Mr Paul Baker, Boggabri, NSW. (Frederick Meredith)  
Mrs Martha Blackwell, Kahibah, NSW. (Samuel Pigott)  
Mrs Daphna Allington, Kahibah, NSW. (Samuel Pigott)  
Mrs Sharon Lamb, Miss Michelle Lamb and Craig Robert Lamb, Seven Hills, NSW. (Henry Kable and Susannah Holmes)

Members will be pleased to hear that the book about the Tunks family, "Memorial to a Marine", by Joyce C. Cowell, has been accorded recognition by the National Library of Australia, having been given an I.S.B.N. number.

Mary Bailey. Naida Jackson.

## The Historical Records of NSW

(From Stephen Lansdown, Managing Director, Lansdown Slattery & Co)

For many years now, historians throughout Australia have patiently awaited a reprint of the monumental Historical Records of NSW, and it is with great pleasure that Anthony Slattery and myself are able to announce the republication of this invaluable reference source.

Many historians, however, may well not become aware of this great publishing event, and I am therefore hopeful that you may care to make some small mention of our activities in your next newsletter. May I assure you of our appreciation in anticipation of your kind assistance.

Editor's note: In a brochure enclosed with his letter, it is said that the first of nine volumes of the Historical Records of NSW was published by the State Government in 1892, and for over 85 years the completed series has remained as the standard reference source for historians and students interested in the discovery, settlement and exploration of the foundation colony of Australia. In addition to a complete record of Lieut. Cook's discovery of Australia, the Historical Records contains all the colony's official correspondence and documents of any consequence relevant to the period 1783, when settlement was first considered, to 1811. The series has been long out of print and only available as a rare collector's item.

Inquiries could be directed to Lansdown Slattery & Co, First Floor, 2 Park Street, Mona Vale, NSW 2103. (Telephone 99 3098). There are selected booksellers in each State capital and in Canberra who will be handling the volumes.

## John Harris and Mary Green

There was an inquiry in the November 1977 Newsletter about John Harris and Mary Green. The following information was supplied by Mr A. Nathan-Myers, of Toowoomba, Q. (Henry Kable and Susannah Holmes):

John Harris was convicted at Old Bailey in 1783 for stealing 8 silver spoons valued £3, the goods of Peter Livies. He was one of a small number of Jews, estimated at between eight and 12, on the First Fleet, in which he travelled in the Scarborough.

It was at his suggestion that the first police force -- the "Night Watch" -- was formed in 1789. He was pardoned in 1794 and had a rather chequered career as policeman, trader and innkeeper until he left for England following disagreement with Governor King in 1801. He had a son and two daughters by a convict woman -- name not known to me -- and he son returned to England with him.

Of the two daughters, Elizabeth married (1) Walter Lang and (2) Joseph Underwood; Hannah married Thomas Ritchie, later of Launceston.

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# F.F.F. NEWSLETTER

## John Harris and Mary Green (Continued)

The son (name unknown to me) returned to Australia in 1833, and his son (John's grandson), George Harris, of "Newstead House", Brisbane, merchant and ship-owner, was a member of Queensland's first Legislative Council in 1860. George's daughter, Evelyn Jane, married grazier R. G. Casey (the elder) and her son, Richard Gardiner Casey, later Lord Casey and a future Governor-General of Australia, was born at Newstead House in 1890. So John Harris was the great-great-grandfather of one of Australia's most illustrious sons!

Reference to John Harris can be seen in "Crimes of the First Fleet Convicts" (John Cobley); Australian Dictionary of Biography. The story of George Harris and his family is given in the booklet "Newstead House -- Brisbane's oldest surviving home".

While it would appear that the Harris family drifted from their old religion through mixed marriage, I feel that further information on John Harris could be obtained from the Australian Jewish Historical Society, more particularly as that prominent Jew, James Larra (2nd Fleet) was a relative of John Harris, and indeed was cared for by John's daughter Elizabeth in his last years.

Mary Green. Mary Green was convicted at the Old Bailey in 1787 for stealing goods to the value of 10s. 6d. from Hannah and Robert Corrack. She came out on the Prince of Wales.

The only reference I can find to her is in John Cobley's "Crimes of the First Fleet Convicts".

## Bus Picnic to Bowral and Berrima

A bus picnic to Bowral and Berrima has been arranged for Sunday 15th October this year. The coach leaves the Assembly Building in York Street, Sydney, at 8.30 am. An additional pick-up point will be Skelsey's, Hume Highway, Lansdowne. Cost is \$8 per person.

For bookings, please telephone Colleen Bernath on 764 4479 (evenings).

This promises to be a very interesting day, and we hope as many Members as possible will come along.

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

By Ena Harper. Reprinted by kind permission of Ashfield Historical Society and Ena Harper. This is the fourth instalment published)

In his journal Captain James Cook describes the Aborigines as "far from being disagreeable, the voices soft and tunable ... a timorous and inoffensive race, no ways inclinable to cruelty". Alan Moorehead makes the comment:

"If there was any fighting it was usually caused by some tribe trespassing upon the hunting grounds of another. However, hatreds did not last for very long, and after they had spent their anger in a furious skirmish peace was made and then both sides would usually make camp and carouse together".

One of the most important aspects of the Aboriginal philosophy and way of life was the belief in what is called "the eternal dream-time" by Professor Elkin. In this mythical far distant time lived the tribal heroes or ancestors, and they performed great deeds in this part of the country, the tribal home. This may be compared with the stories of Abraham and Moses as preserved by the Hebrews.

Spirit -- or life -- centres are usually situated along the routes followed by the heroes and ancestors. Here is the spirit home of the tribe, and the well-being and future of the tribe is only assured while they remain in this tribal territory. To leave is death or

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## Early Encounters Between Europeans and Aborigines (Continued)

deterioration in some. This is similar to the belief in the Promised Land of the Jews and the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The tribal heroes also initiated ritual which was carried out to ensure the well-being of the tribe. Once again this is like the Passover Feast of the Jews or certain Christian ritual such as the Eucharist, or Sacrament of the Last Supper. In other words, the myth is lived out and Professor Elkin makes this emphatic comment, "The myth is life-giving", because by this means present-day men are thus linked to the sacred past, the source of life.

He makes this interesting comment: "We may, of course, give explanations of the life-giving significance of these acted myths, which differ from those given by the Aborigines. We may claim that, while individual and social benefits are derived from the rites and while general well-being is established by them, the source of such virtue is not in the dream-time or the mythical age, but in the very nature of the ceremonies themselves. The contemplation in unison of symbols, myths and rites which are surrounded by a halo of sanctity, the sacred and tense atmosphere of the proceedings, and the great intensity of emotion reached by the singing, dancing and infliction of pain -- all contribute to an experience of exaltation, courage and well-being and also to an accession of strength arising from the experience of common purpose, action and feeling which characterizes all those taking part. All this is true and remains true whether we accept or reject the Aborigines' traditional interpretation that strength and life are derived from contact with the dream-time".

Linked with all this was the Aboriginal belief in totemism, the philosophy that man and natural species share a common life. The totem, which may be a kangaroo or a cockatoo, not only symbolises the common relationship of this particular human group but also acts as a guardian or helper, so they never injure it unless in dire distress. So the ritual for the increase of the species was not an attempt to control nature by magical means but a way of co-operating with nature.

It was also a door back into the eternal dream-time linking the past and the present to that time when there were no limitations of time and space. As well as the primary totem of the group there were subsidiary totems such as grasses, water, stones or stars. The belief was in a common life which man and nature shared, and the mutual dependence of one on the other. We could perhaps compare this with the oneness with nature experienced by European mystics and poets like William Wordsworth and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Directly connected with this mystic closeness to nature was the fact that the Aborigines had very few possessions. Usually they wore no clothing, had the flimsiest of dwellings, the most primitive weapons and boats and very few artifacts. This made a deep impression on the Europeans.

(To Be Continued)

## Death of John K. Lavett

The death occurred on 24th June, 1978, at Collaroy, of Mr John K. Lavett, founder and first President of the Fellowship of First Fleeters. Mr Lavett, who was 78, was a man of vision, in that he was instrumental in founding the Fellowship, and also in his work with Aid Retarded Persons. The Fellowship extends condolences to his family.

## Coming Events

August 9 (Wed., 8 pm, at No 1 Board Room, 4th Floor, Assembly Building)  
-- Mr Maurice Sullivan, lecture "Theatre in Sydney 1789 onwards".  
September 20 (Wed., 7.30 pm, No 1 Board Room): Annual Meeting.  
October 15 (Sunday, 8.30 am): Bus picnic to Bowral and Berrima.

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