

F.F.F.**NEWSLETTER**

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

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From the President

Whilst writing this I am 18,000ft. above the Pacific, regretfully returning from Norfolk Island, where I took part in the celebrations for Bounty Day, and will tell you more about this inspiring experience next month.

During May I visited and addressed the Brighton-le-Sands View Club at the Millers Hotel, Sans Souci, and Randwick View Club at Coogee Legion Club. I also addressed Beta Sigma Phi, Menai Group, at Panania on the evening of 23rd May. These are a delightful group of ladies, particularly interested and welcoming. These addresses are certainly bringing the Fellowship and its activities to the notice of a great number of people.

On Saturday 12th May a very happy group went on an inspection tour of Fort Denison. For those who had not been previously, it was a real revelation, both architecturally and historically. Further visits can be arranged if sufficient Members show an interest.

I felt very honoured to be invited to chair a Seminar on 19th May for the Society of Archivists Congress at Sydney University in both my roles -- that of President of the Fellowship of First Fleeters and Councillor of the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations (AFFHO).

Unfortunately I missed the last Executive Meeting and the Lecture. I thank my Vice-Presidents Mr Roy Kable and Mr Ted Linn for so readily stepping in for me. I was sorry to miss Dr Peter Reynolds, as his lectures are always well worth listening to. But hopefully I will be at the next Lecture in June.

Members will be interested to know that our Office has had a "face lift". The carpet and extra desk and chairs were sadly needed. They make it much more pleasant for our volunteer ladies to work and also create a better impression on the many visitors we have making inquiries.

I'm sorry this report is so short, but I'll certainly make up for it next month.

Beryl Lewis.

May Lecture Evening

The title for our May Lecture Evening was "Horbury Hunt, Architect Extraordinary", the speaker being Dr Peter Reynolds, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Architecture, University of New South Wales.

Dr Reynolds is no stranger to our Fellowship -- he has been our guest speaker on several occasions. Each time it has been a rewarding and entertaining lecture.

May's Lecture Night was one of his best, the subject (a pet one of his) being interesting and lively. Using no notes, Dr Reynolds gave a lecture which was colourful and spontaneous. The slides were beautiful, depicting the lovely and unique old homes and churches from the Hunter River to New England (N.S.W.).

(Continued on next page)

May Lecture Evening (Continued)

Horbury Hunt was the first of three American architects who came to Sydney. We know little of his early years, though we know he was greatly impressed with English architecture as he had visited England as a child in 1850. He trained in Boston, U.S.A., and visited Sydney at the start of the American Civil War. He met Barnett, the Colonial Architect for the colony, and he later obtained a position with Edmund Blacket (for the period 1863-1869). He left Blacket and started on his own career.

A difficult man to work with at the best of times, he was sacked from his position when building the Newcastle Cathedral. The building was half finished at the time.

Hunt built many fine churches and buildings from the Hunter River to New England. In Armidale in 1872 he built the Church of England Cathedral, Bishop James Francis Turner giving him a free hand.

The New England University's Administration Building he built, which matched an English gentleman's residence and was owned originally by the White family.

Hunt had a unique style and he was never afraid to attempt the near impossible. Some of his buildings were like the ones from the East Coast of America, while others were on a grand and Gothic style. He built the cricket pavilion for Cranbrook School, his own home being Cranbrook Cottage. He built many schools, even a butcher's shop. The grand old home "Tivoli", now Kambala Girls School, was his, and his last and greatest triumph was the beautiful chapel in the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Rose Bay (1890).

In 1904 Horbury Hunt died in the paupers ward at St Vincent's Hospital. He died without children to follow in his work. A sad end for a famous man, often called eccentric and irascible but always brilliant.

Thank you, Dr Reynolds, for giving us an insight into a most interesting character.

Sally Kalina.

Membership Report

We have much pleasure in welcoming the following new Members to the Fellowship:

Mrs Cynthia E. Curry, Hornsby. (William Tunks)

Mrs Janette H. Grounds, Bilgola Plateau. (Hugh Hughes)

Mrs Barbara N. Coleman, Anthony and Aaron Coleman, Turranurra.
(John Nichols)

Mervyn S. Wearne, Brewarrina. (John Small - Mary Parker)

Kenneth J. Tunks, Bargo. (William Tunks)

Anthony R. Quinn, Erina Heights. (Matthew Everingham, Owen Cavanough-Margaret Darnell)

Mrs Ann Mitchison, Warrawee. (Matthew Everingham)

Membership Committee.

For Sale!

The Fellowship has for sale five stack chairs, with padded seats and backs in off-white Vinyl at \$5 each. A real bargain! These chairs may be inspected at our office, Room 312, 3rd Floor, Assembly Building, Margaret Street, between 10 am and 2 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays. Hurry! Hurry!

Returned from Dead Letter Office

The following letter has been returned from the Dead Letter Office: Addressed to Mr E. W. Chaseling, Sr, 25 Lewis Street, Balgowlah 2093. Can anyone please advise on the matter?

Illness of our "Printer"

Mrs Barbara Townsend (Philip Gidley King), Member of the Executive and the "printer" of this Newsletter, has been confined to bed ill. We wish her a speedy recovery.

200th Anniversary of Sunday Schools

The following letter has been received from Miss Robyn Hoskins, Children's and Youth Education Officer, Board of Education, Diocese of Sydney:

During 1980 the 200th Anniversary of Sunday Schools is being celebrated. I am writing on behalf of the Anglican Board of Education to inquire whether any of your Members would be interested in assisting us by compiling the history of the Sunday Schools in your area. We would really be thrilled to have interested people working alongside us at a local level and would warmly welcome any inquiries.

As part of the celebrations we are suggesting that Sunday School students research their local Sunday School history, and so thought it wise to give forewarning to each of the Historical Societies. They probably will be approaching people/groups for help later this year and throughout the first part of next year.

Thank you for your assistance in making this known to your Members.

(Address: Miss Robyn Hoskins, Children's and Youth Education Officer, Board of Education, Diocese of Sydney, P.O. Box A287, Sydney South 2000. Telephone 20642)

Greycliffe House

(From "Ports of New South Wales" Journal)

"My mother, aunts and uncles have told us much of this house, of which they were all very fond. They had a canoe and loved the swimming; I never remember hearing them mention sharks. It was lonely and difficult of access, but they nearly always had a house full, as Granny came from Scotland and there were continuous visitors with letters of introduction".

In this passage taken from the book "Some Houses and People of New South Wales", the writer, Nesta Griffiths, was referring to Greycliffe House, a large and romantic Gothic villa situated in Nielsen Park in the Sydney harbourside suburb of Vaucluse.

In keeping with a house of its style and vintage, Greycliffe boasts a ghost of its own -- albeit an anonymous one around whom no tales have been woven.

William Charles Wentworth, the father of the Australian Constitution, built Greycliffe on part of his 42½-hectare property at Vaucluse in the late 1840's. The house was originally intended as a wedding present for his daughter, Fanny Catherine Wentworth, but it appears that she left Sydney for England in 1850 and never actually lived at Greycliffe.

The history of the old mansion from the time of its construction to the latter part of the last century is rather vague. The few extant records indicate an almost total lack of occupancy by members of the Wentworth family.

From the 1850's until 1870 it was leased to Joseph Willis, Esq., of whom almost nothing is known.

In 1872, following the death of William Charles Wentworth, ownership of Greycliffe passed to his son, Fitzwilliam Wentworth, who immediately leased it to a Lady Martin, another occupant who seems to have made little impact so far as written records of the colony are concerned.

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

(Continuing Ena Harper's papers on the subject, reprinted by kind permission of Ashfield Historical Society and Ena Harper. The previous instalment described Cook's unsuccessful attempt to communicate with a group of Aborigines, who ran off after Cook had fired several shots at them)

So ended the first encounter between Europeans and Aborigines in New South Wales. The Aborigines had made it plain to the invaders that the products of an advanced society were valueless to them. This seems to tie in with their lack of interest in the Endeavour.

Banks tells in his Journal of leaving beads, ribands, cloths, etc., as presents in a hut where they found children hiding. He reports that they went back later and "in the house in which the children were yesterday was left every individual thing we had thrown to them".

Banks also calls the Aborigines "rank cowards" because of an incident in which one of the midshipmen when by himself met by accident a very old man and woman and some children.

"They showed signs of fear but did not attempt to run away. He had nothing about him to give to them but some parrots he had shot: these they refused, withdrawing themselves from his hand when he offered them in token either of extreme fear or disgust".

Banks says he went botanizing "quite void of fear" because the Aborigines just kept away.

Two other comments from Cook's Journal should be noted:

1. "During our stay in the harbour I caused the English colours to be displayed ashore every day, and an inscription to be cut out upon one of the trees".
2. Speaking of the Aborigines: "We could know very little of their customs as we were never able to form any connections with them".

Alone and Unarmed. The invaders followed the explorers. Governor Arthur Phillip arrived at Botany Bay on January 18, 1788, with the following instructions regarding the Aborigines:

"You are to endeavour by every possible means to open an intercourse with the natives, and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all our subjects to live in amity and kindness with them. And if any of our subjects shall wantonly destroy them or give any unnecessary interruption in the exercise of their several occupations it is our will and pleasure that you do cause such offenders to be brought to punishment according to the degree of the offence".

Phillip, accompanied by some of his officers, went to the north shore of Botany Bay at 3 pm about 45 minutes after the Supply entered the bay.

They saw a group of Aborigines and put the boat onshore near where two of their canoes were lying. Note carefully what took place. Lieut. Gidley King, in his Journal, describes what happened when they landed.

"They immediately got up and called to us in a menacing tone and at the same time brandishing their spears or lances. However, the Governor showed them beads and ordered a man to fasten them to the stern of the canoe. We then made signs that we wanted water, when they pointed round the point on which they stood and invited us to land there; on landing, they directed us by pointing to a very fine stream of fresh water. Governor then advanced toward them alone and unarmed, on which one of them advanced towards him but would not come near enough to receive the beads which the Governor held out for him, but seemed very desirous of having them and made signs for them to be lain on the ground, which was done. He (the native) came on with fear and trembling and took them up, and by degrees came so near as to receive looking glasses &c".

(Continued on next page)

"Early Encounters" (Continued)

The scene was totally different from the previous encounter between Captain James Cook and the Aborigines.

1. They responded to sign language and were friendly enough to show the strangers where they could find fresh water.
2. They accepted the useless gifts of the Englishmen.
3. They allowed them to land.

One can only ask, What caused the difference of attitude? There seems to be only one answer. It was the personality of Phillip himself which wrought the change.

In the biography Phillip of Australia M. Barnard Eldershaw makes this comment about him:

"In his personal relations with the black people Phillip was very happy. He showed and felt no fear of them. He treated them always as human beings endowed with reason and willing to respond to reason. He seems to have won the affection of those who came into personal contact with him. He respected them, and they in some subtle way were aware of it. The austere man who could not unbend to his officers was immediately on easy terms with the natives. He never delegated intercourse with them to others. He was always the first to lay down his arms and go among them. He laughed and talked by sign-language with them, was obviously pleased with his social success in that direction"

There seems no doubt then that this was the secret of the Aborigines' different reception to the landing party of Governor Phillip. It is the purpose of this study to discover what were the reactions of each race to the other as time went on.

Further Meetings with Aborigines. First the Aborigines were apparently surprised at the appearance of the Europeans. Lieut. King mentions this in the account mentioned before:

(The Aborigine) "seemed quite astonished at the figure we cut in being clothed. I think it is very easy to conceive the ridiculous figure we must appear to these poor creatures, who were perfectly naked".

Two days later King describes what happened in a further meeting with the Aborigines. This is a lengthy description but is full of interest. Note once again that the marines had to fire on the natives, but Governor Phillip had no trouble in mixing with them.

"....we perceived a red fox dog and soon after discovered a number of the natives, who halloo'd and made signs for us to return to our boats. Having only three marines with me and Lieut. Dawes, I advanced before them unarmed, presenting some beads and ribands. Two of the natives advanced armed, but would not come close to me. I then dropped the beads and baize which I held out for them and retreated. They took it up and bound the baize around their head. They then, in a very vociferous manner, desired us to begone, and one of them threw a lance wide of us to show how far they could do execution. The distance it was thrown was, as near as I could guess, about forty yards, and when he took it out of the ground where it stuck it required an exertion to pull it out

"On descending the hill, they showed themselves on the top of it and were ten times more vociferous, and very soon after a lance was thrown amongst us, on which I ordered one of the marines to fire with powder only, when they ran off with great precipitation. I embarked and Governor Phillip joined me from the South side of the Bay where he had found the natives very sociable and friendly.

"We relanded on Lance Point and the same body of natives appeared brandishing their lances and defying us. However, we rowed close in
(Continued on next page)

"Early Encounters" (Continued)

shore and the Governor disembarked with some presents, which one of them came and received. Thus peace was re-established, much to the satisfaction of all parties".

Europeans and Aborigines then began to fraternize, and King gives an amusing account of what followed. Some of the actions are really strange and ironic in view of what happened later.

"They came around the boats and many little things were given them, but what they wanted most was the great coats and clothing but hats was more particularized by them, their admiration of which they expressed by very loud shouts, whenever one of us pulled our hats off. When they found us so very friendly, they ran up to the man who had thrown the lance and made very significant signs of their displeasure at his conduct by pointing all their lances at him and looking at us, intimating that they only waited our orders to kill him.

"However, we made signs for them to desist and made the culprit a present of some beads, etc. I gave two of them a glass of wine, which they had no sooner tasted than they spit it out".

This was the Aborigines' first reaction to liquor. It was a product of European culture for which they had to acquire a taste. At this point we can ask the question, "What did the Aborigines drink in their natural state?"

A sweet drink was made from lerp scales of native honey steeped in water in plentiful times. Flowers were sometimes added to give flavour, probably obtained mainly from the nectar. It was reported that in the north Pandanus nuts, crushed and steeped in water, were sometimes left to ferment. Abbie makes the comment that, if this were so, it was the only alcoholic drink known to the Aborigines, and its use must have been very restricted.

Understanding Each Other's Language. King tells of attempts made at understanding each other's language. Although Captain Cook had been unable to communicate with these people, we have now seen that these two races could and did make themselves understood to each other. As in other places that the British colonised, English became the spoken and written language. Remnants of the Aboriginal language were left in place-names scattered all over the continent, and a few Aboriginal words such as billabong, kangaroo, koala, wombat, diggeridoo and corroboree were absorbed into the English language. As Abbie says, "some progress was made in compiling a vocabulary" in the early days, and this can be verified by reading the Journals of some of the officers. However, as the tribes died out these words became relics of a dead language.

We can obtain a vivid picture of how the two races communicated in the beginning by further reading King's story.

"We asked them the name of a number of articles, which they told us and repeated our words, and had already learnt so much English as to express their wants for anything by putting their finger on it gently, looking me in the face and saying, 'No?'. I must do them the justice to say that I believe them to be conscientiously honest.

"When they found we were not disposed to part with any more things, they entered into conversation with us which was very fully interpreted by very plain signs".

(To Be Continued)

Coming Event

18th July (Wed.): "Rogues and Vagabonds" (Early to Present-day Theatre), by Thea Rowe (First Fleeter). Venue for lecture as usual - Fourth Floor Board Room, Assembly Building, York Street -- enter by Jamison Street. Time, 8 pm.
