

F.F.F.

NEWSLETTER

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Vol. 12 No. 6
July 1981

From the President

In order to allow Dr David Armstrong's address to be printed in full (in one edition) other items in this month's Newsletter have been kept to a minimum.

Members may be interested to know that a segment for the ABC programme "Four Corners" was filmed by a group of First Fleeters during June. It is anticipated that this programme will go to air in late July or early August. Watch for it!

I draw your attention to the Annual General Meeting notice elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Also the latest First Fleet Journal (previously unpublished), that of Ralph Clark, is available, in limited number, to Members (at a discount) from our Office.

Beryl Lewis.

Change of Lecturer for August Meeting

The August Lecture, on 19th August, will be given by Mr Keith Thompson, children's author and a First Fleeter, under the title "Sketching for Children from the Cities to the Outback". Mr Thompson, who gave a previous lecture some three years ago, has a new children's TV programme on Bible Studies starting within the next few weeks. The Lecture originally announced for the August meeting was "The James Craig", to be given by a marine consultant, Mr J. E. Toghill. Mr Toghill will be away from Sydney on the Lecture date.

The July Lecture, on 15th July, will be as announced -- Sister Catherine O'Carrigan, resident historian for St Vincent's Hospital, on "Some Nineteenth Century Australian-born Medical Men".

Mrs Kalina's report on the June Lecture has been held over to the next Newsletter.

Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday 16th September 1981.

Time: 7.30 pm.

Venue: 4th Floor Assembly Building, Jamison Street.

Nominations must be in our Office (Room 312, 3rd Floor, Assembly Building) not later than 19th August 1981.

Notices of Motion must be in our Office not later than 1st August 1981.

Membership Report -- July 1981

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new Members of the Fellowship of First Fleeters:--

NAME	SUBURB/TOWN	ANCESTORS	TYPE
Mr. Kelvyn F. ALEXANDER	Hebersham	John Palmer	Full
Mrs Alice J. ALLSOPP	East Bentleigh, Vic.	William Tunks + Hugh Hughes	Senior
Mrs Leonie BODELL	Sans Souci	Thomas Arndell + Ann Forbes	Full
Mrs Colleen M. CHIFFINS	Bowen, Q.	Henry Kable - Susannah Holmes	Full
Mrs Essie M. NANN	Sans Souci	Thomas Arndell + Ann Forbes	Full
Mrs Dulcie I. PALMER	Lithgow	J. McManus - Jane Poole + J. Bradley	Full
Mrs Eileen D. SMYTH	Granite Rock, Vic.	John Shortland	Full
Mrs Olga J. Stapleton	Concord	John Shortland Snr. Eleanor Frazer	Full
Mrs Julie M. STANLEY	Flemington, Vic.	Henry Kable - Susannah Holmes	Full
Mrs Joyce M. Alexander	(wife of Kelvyn Alexander)		Spouse Associate

In the June Newsletter list Mrs Lillian Carr's second F.F. ancestor, Ann Forbes, was omitted. Sorry, Mrs Carr.

Membership Committee.

Publications and Souvenirs Available

Journals (4 editions only), 50c each plus postage. Four sets, postage 80c in New South Wales, 90c interstate.
First Fleet Book, \$4-50 (posted \$5).
Compiling Your Family History, \$3 (postage 50c).
First Fleet Lists, \$2 each (50c postage).
The Journal of Philip Gidley King: Lieutenant R.N. 1787-1790. (one copy only available)
The Mills Brothers of Port Fairy. (two copies only)
Teaspoons, sugar spoons, cake forks, \$2 each.
Tea caddy spoons, key rings, \$2-50 each.
Car stickers, 75c each.

Elizabeth or Mary McNamar(r)a

Has anyone any information on Elizabeth or Mary McNamar(r)a, born in Sydney about 1808/9? Please reply direct to Mr Dennis Clark, 112 Tamar Street, Ballina, N.S.W. 2478.

Annual Ward Havard Memorial Lecture

The President and Members of the Fellowship have been invited to attend the Annual Ward Havard Memorial Lecture, to be held at 2 pm on Saturday 8th August 1981 in St Luke's Church Hall, Northumberland Street, Liverpool. The Lecture will be given by Mr Vaughan Evan, his subject "Colonial Shipping". RSVP 3rd August to the General Secretary, the City of Liverpool and District Historical Society, P.O. Box 90, Liverpool 2170.

Coming Events

July 15: Lecture, Sister Catherine O'Carrigan, "Some Nineteenth Century Australian-born Medical Men".
Aug. 8: Annual Ward Havard Memorial Lecture (see above).
Aug. 19: Lecture, Keith Thompson, "Sketching for Children from the Cities to the Outback".
Sept. 16: Annual General Meeting, Fellowship of First Fleeters.

Transcript of an address by

Dr. David Armstrong, General Manager of The Australian Bicentennial Authority, to the Fellowship of First Fleeters, Wentworth Hotel, Sydney, 26th January, 1981.

Madam Chairman, Mister Toastmaster, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen; I deem it a great privilege that I have been asked to give the address at this Australia Day dinner.

The Toastmaster has said that my first degree was in Australian history. I recall going back in my third year of University study to my small home town, Bingara in northern N.S.W., and the headmaster greeting me in the main street and saying "How are you getting on at University?" and I said "Fairly well"; "And what are you studying?". This was 1960 and I said "I'm majoring in Australian history". He said "Australian history? My God, what will they think of next!"

I think that we have made some progress since then but it is still a regrettable fact that many children in Australian Schools can still go through primary and secondary education and not be touched by the fascinating and exciting history of this country. One of the principal roles of The Australian Bicentennial Authority is to co-operate with other groups to redress that lamentable situation.

Today is, as your President has reminded us, the 193rd anniversary of the day on which 11 small English sailing ships with their cargo of about 1500 people dropped anchor at Port Jackson after a voyage lasting about eight months which had brought them from the other side of the world; the 193rd anniversary of the founding of this country as we know it today.

The preparation of this talk has given me a chance to brush up on a few facts. I have followed several highways and byways in the process. One was to look back at how this country came to be known as "Australia". We can of course trace that name back almost 2,000 years to the great Alexandrian geographer, Ptolemy, who saw the earth as a sphere. He speculated that past Asia there lies a great land mass which he labelled "Terra Australia Incognita" - the Unknown South Land. Dutch sailors in the early 17th century bumped into the west coast of Terra Australis and named it New Holland. In 1642 Abel Tasman named Van Dieman's Land and a century or so afterwards James Cook claimed the eastern portion of the mainland for England and named it New South Wales. So the continent, Terra Australis, consisting of a western portion called New Holland, an eastern part called New South Wales, and an island called Van Dieman's Land,

It was Matthew Flinders, after his voyage between 1801 and 1803, who first suggested that the name "Australia" should be used. A decade or so later people both in New South Wales and England began to recognise that the land could no longer be dismissed merely as a penal station but that it was becoming a prosperous community in its own right. There was also a growing clamour from emancipated convicts to have their rights recognized and many believed that a fresh name would create a sense of identity and help erase some of the convict stain. Governor Macquarie was one of the earliest supporters of the name "Australia". In 1817 he formally adopted the new name and by the middle of the century it was in common usage both here and in England. But it described, at that time a continent, not a nation. Throughout the Nineteenth Century the Australian Colonies were busily separating, one from another. It was not until the first day of this century that the federation was born and the name "Australia" described a continent and a nation.

An interesting side-line to all this, is that in 1867 Henry Parkes, who was then the Premier of this State of New South Wales, in preparation for the centennial celebrations, that were to occur

the following year, introduced into the Parliament of this Colony (and our friends from Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and elsewhere will be interested in this) a bill to change the name of New South Wales to "Australia". Parkes argued that the people of New South Wales were the original Australians who had done all the pioneering work; the other colonies he said were "mere off-shoots". The bill, of course, passed by a large majority but was never proclaimed. There was such a hullabaloo in the other Colonies that the then Governor, Lord Carrington, was forced to go to Parkes and to prevail upon him to drop the idea and Parkes did this only after he was offered a knighthood.

One of the interesting things that came out of all of this was that there was correspondence in the Sydney Morning Herald about other names that might be used if New South Wales could not be called Australia. One that caught my attention was "Convictoria".

This evening, Madam President, we commemorate Australia Day. It may surprise you to learn, as it did me, that it was not until 1945 that all the States in the Commonwealth agreed to celebrate the 26th January as Australia Day. Some states in the Commonwealth celebrated Australia Day or Foundation Day before then, but it wasn't until 1945 that we all agreed to celebrate it as Australia Day.

26th January was first proclaimed a public holiday, again by Governor Macquarie, in 1818 - the 30th anniversary of the founding of the colony of New South Wales. But through the 19th Century it was celebrated only in New South Wales. The other Colonies recognised only their own Foundation Days or Separation Days. This led the Sydney Morning Herald in 1879 to say "The time may come perhaps when 26th January will be a festive day throughout the Australian continent because it marks the starting point of Australian history. At present the younger Colonies celebrate respectively their anniversaries of separation. But if confederation should ever be accomplished and the now separate members of the groups united under a common government and a common name, Separation Days will be forgotten. The days in fact, ^{which} will be celebrated will be those in which national life began and national unity, for a while broken, restored".

In New South Wales, the 26th January was usually celebrated with a regatta and an Anniversary Dinner attended by the native-born who usually were anti-British promoters of the emancipist cause. We are told the fare of the early Dinners was usually roast beef and plum pudding and "copious quantities of alcohol to accompany the toasts" and this mercifully still features at these Dinners today.

The Anniversary Regatta regretfully tended to be marred by accidents. In 1892 a steamer blew-up outside The Heads and in 1864 an Irishman, no known relative of mine, stepped in front of the finishing gun at a critical moment.

Until recently, and to some degree even now, Australia Day is greeted by some sections of the population with indifference. This is, of course, regrettable and I think there are several reasons for it. If we are to work together for a proper commemoration of this event which is the central aim of the Fellowship and the Bicentennial Authority we must be aware of these.

The first is that most Australians regrettably don't know what the 26th January commemorates. We had a survey last year which shows that less than 5% of the Australian population know that we were having a special year in 1988 and I think there would be very few more people who would be aware of the special nature of the 26th January. This is due, I suspect, to the fact that the teaching of Australian History and Australian Studies in many Australian schools leaves much to be desired.

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I think the other thing we could work for would be to make Australia Day fall on the day on which it occurs, whether it is a Monday or any other.

Fortunately, under the leadership of your Fellowship, Australians, who are descendants of those who came on the First Fleet, are now proud of that fact and of the achievements that have been made in the last 200 years. But a section of the Leader written in the Bulletin in 1888 [which in those days was a radical journal] caught my attention and I thought I should amuse you by quoting from it. The Bulletin says, "Far back in the dim past a band of Government explorers gave to the world a new continent. (They are not talking here about the arrival of the First Fleet). Their history supplies more than one date which might fittingly have been chosen for the starting point of Australian history yet the one among all others which has been fixed upon as the native day of Australia is that which commemorates the shame and degradation and reminds the world most emphatically of the hideous uncleanness from which she sprung, [it gets even better]. The day which gave to the New World her first gaol and her first gallows, the day when the festering violence of England was first cast ashore to putrify along the coast of New South Wales; the day which inaugurated a reign of slavery and loathsomeness of moral leprosy is the occasion upon which we are called upon to rejoice with exceeding great joy". I thought you would be amused by that!

In 1968 the Sydney Committee reported as follows: "Australia Day is still not regarded as day of great national importance. It may never become so but it should be of great importance to this City - the birthplace of the nation. Proposals are being investigated to alter the celebrations and make them attractive to the public".

Now of course 1968 was a key year from your point of view. It was the first year of your Fellowship and my research shows that your Fellowship put forward a submission to the Sydney Committee that year on ways in which Australia Day might more appropriately be celebrated. I think it is fair to say that the Sydney Committee and afterwards the Australia Day Council and now The National Australia Day Council have picked up many of the ideas that this Fellowship suggested then. Historical re-enactments, re-unions, activities for young people and Church services are some of the examples which came from your submission of that time. I think that these forces just mentioned and others, including the fact that in seven years we celebrate the bicentennial of European settlement in Australia, all are converging to ensure that Australia Day will become more central to the lives of Australians in the future than it has been in the past and that awareness and pride in Australia will follow from that.

The bi-centenary in 1988 presents all of us with a unique, once in a lifetime opportunity to celebrate Australia - and I mean celebration in a theological sense. That is, remembering things past, re-affirming the best values in our society and re-dedicating ourselves to the immense task of solving the problems that still confront us as a people - racism, philistinism, materialism, lack of national pride, widespread inequalities of opportunity, desecrated historical sites, polluted streams, ignorance of our collective task. The list is a long one. But if we have the imagination and determination we will be able to see the need to utilise the bi-centenary not only as a birthday party, a chance for fun and games, but for these things and for more - for nothing less than a massive national programme of social and community development; a chance to complete unfinished business; to improve the quality of life for all Australians. And if we accept this challenge one of the spin-offs will be a new pride in Australia and in being Australians.

The Australian Bicentennial Authority, of which I have the honour to be Chief Executive, was established as an independent Company last year, for the purpose of co-ordinating the celebrations in 1988. The Board of Directors, under the Chairmanship of Mr. John Reid, who is a leading Australian businessman, has been appointed by the Commonwealth Government, the State Governments and Northern Territory Administration. The Board has the support of all political parties and is accountable through the various Governments to the Australian people as a whole. While plans for the celebrations are by no means yet finalised, principles are beginning clearly to emerge from discussions we are having with representative individuals and groups right across the country.

There is, for example, a widespread view in the community, with which we concur, that ideas for the celebrations should be generated at local community level rather than handed down from on high. In order to ensure that this occurs, the authority is proceeding as quickly as prudence permits to establish a vast network of advisory groups and citizens' committees at the State, and Local levels to plan the programme for 1988. The role of the Authority itself will be confined largely to proposing themes, exercising overall financial control, and acting as a catalyst, a community resource and an information clearing-house.

I mentioned the question of a theme for the celebrations; Earlier this year, we convened meetings of groups of talented and creative Australians to discuss the question of a theme. Ita Buttrose, Bob Hawke, Harry Butler, David Williamson and Professor Gus Nossal were some of those who attended those early meetings and it emerged that the theme must be a broad one and large enough to define and embrace the immense range of activity that will occur during the bicentennial and that it should capture what might become known as the "Spirit of '88". It is felt that the "Spirit of '88" should speak fundamentally to relationships between black and white Australians; between one ethnic group and another; between city and country; between one state and another; between man and woman, and the environment; between Australia and our neighbours (particularly the developing countries of S.E. Asia). Since the theme must speak to relationships, we have decided that it should be simply "Living Together". And would you believe that the theme has already been criticised by those who argue that is an attack on family life: People, they say, should not be living together; they should get married!

Second, Madam President, Australians feel very strongly that the programme of celebrations should be comprehensive. It must contain something for everybody and especially for young people. Some Australians would want to see the bicentenary vastly in terms of fun and games, family reunions and fireworks displays, rather than for an opportunity for community development and that's O.K. Nevertheless, there is a widespread view that the underlying purpose of the Bicentenary should be serious and broadly educational and cultural in nature. For the bicentenary offers us a unique opportunity to learn more about ourselves as a people - about our roots, our heritage, about Australia to-day, particularly about the many different groups that now constitute our National community and about our objectives and aspirations as a people - the legacy that we wish to leave for our children.

Those with whom we have talked have expressed the hope that way - and all approach will be adopted towards that significant element of the Bicentennial programme dealing with our history. Efforts to whitewash or romanticise our past should be positively discouraged. It is not suggested here that in 1988 we should engage in a national exercise in self flagellation. We have much of which to be proud as a people - six Nobel Laureates;

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internationally-recognised achievements in Sport, in the Arts, in Science and Technology; vast projects of National development; much innovative social legislation (subsequently copied by many other countries) and legions of sons and daughters who have died in defence of our freedom. We should take pride in these and such matters. But a mature people must also be capable of confronting shortcomings and failures in an effort to understand them and correct or overcome them. It is widely hoped by the people of this country that Bicentennial history projects (I speak of books, films, T.V. programmes, historic re-enactments) by telling it like it really was will facilitate such a confrontation with our shortcomings and failures and that as a result appropriate corrective or remedial action will occur at all levels.

Why is it, for example, that Australian citizenship is still so unattractive that one million persons living in this country who are technically eligible to become Australian citizens (including I regret to say 600,000 residents who are living in Australia and who were born in the U.K.) have not taken out Australian citizenship? What can we do to make Australian citizenship more attractive to these residents of Australia?

Finally, Madam President, those with whom we have talked have asked us to try to ensure the Bicentennial programme doesn't disappear into thin air at the end of 1988 - that residua~~is~~ remain to serve as enduring mementos of the Bicentenary. These could be physical reminders - such as clear streams, restored historic sites, redeveloped slums; parks, libraries or swimming pools; or they could be less tangible reminders, a new sense of national identity and purpose, a new national will, a new pride, a new understanding of the vastness of the land and the diversity of its peoples derived from a process of national discovery.

How many young Australians living in remote areas have never spent a holiday in the city? How many city children in turn believe that milk comes from cartons, not from cows? Wouldn't it be worthwhile if an existing national organisation or one created especially for the purpose resolved that its bicentennial project would be to create a nationwide network for thousands of city children to spend a holiday on a farm in 1988 and thousands of country children to be billeted with a city family, each group discovering how the other half lives? The costs would be minimal; the pay-off (in terms of increased knowledge and understanding between city and country, between one State and another) could be enormous.

There is fresh evidence in our mail bag every morning, Madam President, that Australians are very creative people and that many are beginning to think about and plan for the Bicentennial. Most of the suggestions I am pleased to say are potentially very exciting, although some are a bit way out. Let me tell you about one or two of those.

Somebody wrote the other day to say we should buy back the Sydney Harbour Bridge? Someone else wrote in and said it would be an excellent idea for me to get up on Ayres Rock and at midnight on 31st December 1987 conduct 15 million Australian voices singing "Happy Birthday to us". But we rejected this idea because Queensland would be one hour behind and furthermore such a cacophony would frighten hell out of the Indonesians!

There have been many other suggestions made by your President earlier. I think it would be interesting for you to know that the most frequent suggestions coming through relate to changing the national flag, developing a new national anthem and bringing about covenants and treaties between various groups in the Australian Community. Now the Authority is interested

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in providing a neutral platform for the discussion of these and other issues. The Authority itself however doesn't see its role as pushing one particular line or another. The Authority's role is a unifying one rather than divisive one. Nevertheless we think it is important to provide a neutral platform where people with ideas or concerns can have an opportunity to express themselves.

Because the Bicentennial programme will be determined largely at the local community level it is not yet possible precisely to define it. But it is obvious that each activity will slot into one of three boxes - those relating to our past, those to Australia today, and those to future possibilities. In each of those three boxes there might be five kinds of activity.

The first will relate to existing annual events - conferences, festivals, sporting events. Many national bodies, societies, sporting groups and other interested organisations are already planning to host international meetings and tournaments for performances in Australia in 1988. Such activities will generate significant international interest and participation on our Bicentennial programme and the spin-off for our Tourist Industry will be significant.

The second layer of activity will relate to bricks and mortar. We shall be encouraging every community in Australia, however small, to plan some worthwhile project related to its perceived needs that will serve as an enduring reminder of the Bicentennial for us and for future generations. Already some committees are well advanced in their planning for projects which will endure long beyond the Bicentennial. Animal sanctuaries, sporting complexes, extensions to local museums and wilderness parks are some of the projects that have been suggested already and these will stand in 100 years just as that magnificent recreation area Centennial Park in Sydney stands today as a memento of the Centenary in 1888.

The third area of activity will be fun and games - beer and skittles, street parties, homecoming weeks, historic re-enactments, beard growing contests, activities that will give spice and jest to the celebrations. It is important, I suggest, that we do not take ourselves too seriously!

The fourth will be a limited number of spectacular national events, that will provide themes and focusses for the celebrations. For example, it is planned to open the new Parliament House in Canberra in 1988 and I would like to assure you that the 26th January 1988 is Sydney's day and if the Bicentennial Authority has anything to do with it the Parliament House in Canberra will be opened on another day. Premier Wran has suggested a date in February which seems to be very appropriate. Before I heard this suggestion I had my mind on the 9th May which is not only the anniversary of the opening of the First Parliament in Melbourne in 1901, but of the Parliament House in Canberra in 1927. It seems to me that the weather in Canberra in May is very pleasant and that this is an appropriate time to open Parliament House in 1988.

The Governments of this country have asked us to propose a focus for the Bicentennial that will generate and maintain national and international interest in the celebration throughout the year.

We have examined major national celebrations in many different countries including those recently in United States and Canada and we have recommended and the recommendations have been accepted that a world cultural exposition be held in Australia in 1988 to mark the Bicentennial of European settlement. That date has been pencilled in for Australia since 1974 at the

International Controlling Body in Paris, the Bureau of International Expositions. The Authority, with the assistance of all Governments, has undertaken feasibility studies over the last four months to decide where it should be held and as a result of these studies we have come to a conclusion that a world exposition that would bring the best of the culture of 35 to 40 countries in Australia in that year can be held in Australia in Sydney or in Melbourne - you need a certain population base to sustain required attendance figures and this precludes our other cities.

For several reasons we have recommended that the Federal Government negotiate with the New South Wales Government in the first instance. Firstly, Historical reasons - Australia as we know it started in this city; secondly, For weather reasons - we would run the Exposition between April and October and the weather in Sydney is better at that time than it is in Melbourne. Thirdly, the site in Sydney is pure magic - the disused railway goods yards at Darling Harbour. We could create an exhibition centre there, a permanent conference centre that would be left at the end of the day; we would clean up that blot on the escutcheon of this magnificent harbour. Finally and most tellingly more people would come to Sydney than to Melbourne. Over the six months period there would be 22 million clicks through the turnstiles in Sydney whereas only 17 million would go through the turnstiles in Melbourne. I understand that the Commonwealth Government and the Government of New South Wales are discussing not whether an exposition will be held in Australia in 1988 (that has been decided) but where will it be held and who will pay the piper. I understand that those decisions will be taken shortly. If the Exposition isn't held in Sydney it will be held in Melbourne and it is perhaps significant that one hundred years ago Melbourne, due to some instability in the Parkes Government here, which had earlier decided to hold an exposition here, the exposition was finally held in Melbourne. Let us hope there is not a repeat of that move. We think for many reasons that it is Sydney's turn this time.

Madam President, the fifth and undoubtedly the most important level of activity will be a broad educational and cultural programme designed to help us as Australians better to understand our origins, who we are now, and where we wish to go as a people. The model I have in mind here is the 1967 Canadian Centennial Celebrations.

It is not an exaggeration to say, and I had the privilege of being in Canada in that year, that Canada in 1967 came of age. Before then she lacked a national identity, self confidence and self respect. But what happened in 1967 was that Canada discovered itself. Not at the marvellous world exposition in Montreal, Expo. 67, which provided a necessary focus for the Celebrations, nor indeed in the beauty contests and fireworks displays that are inevitably and appropriately part of such celebrations. But in living rooms, in the streets, on trains and planes and in church halls where thousands indeed millions of Canadians, stimulated by the Exposition and the centennial celebrations, congregated and began asking themselves "What is Canada?" "What does it mean to be a Canadian?" In working towards answers to those questions Canadians discovered a national identity, a national purpose and a new pride. And that, simply put, Madam President, is our objective for the Australian Bicentenary - to strengthen our national unity, to bolster our national will, and to reinforce our national pride. Thank you.