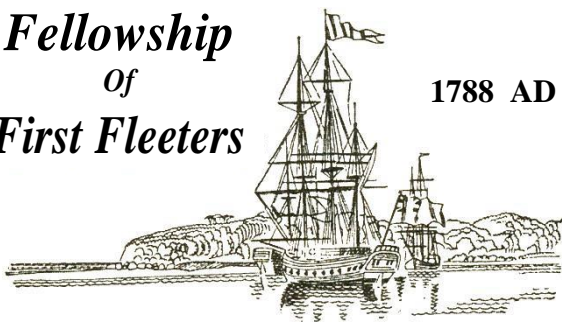


Fellowship of First Fleeters

1788 AD



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

THE FIRST FLEET STORY

In 1770 during the reign of George III, Captain James Cook in HM Bark *Endeavour* sailed up the east coast of Australia and landed at Botany Bay.

After receiving Cook's favourable report, the British Home Secretary Lord Sydney decided to send convicts to Botany Bay to relieve the overcrowded prison hulks and gaols in England. The establishment of a colony in the antipodes would also result in the expansion of the British Empire.

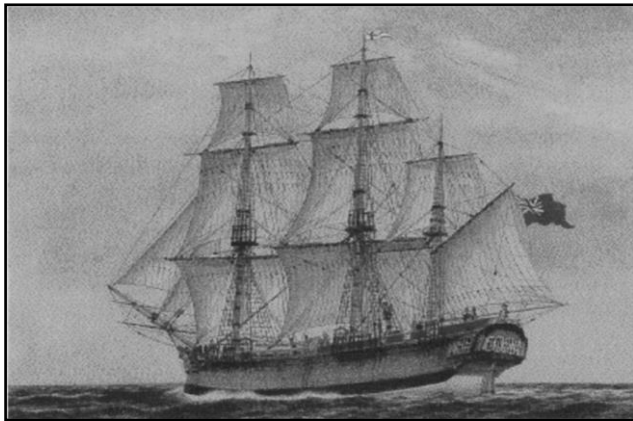
A fleet of 11 ships was assembled to carry approximately 1500 government officials, convicts, seamen, marines, and their wives and children to create a new British Colony on the other side of the world. Captain Arthur Phillip was chosen by Lord Sydney to lead this venture.



**Captain
Arthur Phillip**

THE SHIPS

The Fleet consisted of two naval ships, the flagship *HMS Sirius* and *HMS Supply*, three storeships *Fishburn*, *Golden Grove* and *Borrowdale*, and six convict transport ships, *Alexander*, *Charlotte*, *Friendship*, *Lady Penrhyn*, *Prince of Wales* and *Scarborough*.



HMS Sirius

THE JOURNEY

The fleet left Portsmouth on 13th May 1787. The ships watered and provisioned at Santa Cruz, Tenerife in the Canary Islands then sailed on to Rio de Janeiro and arrived on the 6th August. They took on rations and departed on 4th September for the next port of call, Cape Town, South Africa 3300 miles away. They arrived on the 14th October and took on livestock, water and supplies and departed on the 12th November for the last leg of their journey, **Botany Bay**, 6500 miles away.

All the ships had arrived safely in Botany Bay by the 20th January 1788. However, the bay was considered unsuitable and after exploration further up the coast, Arthur Phillip decided to move the fleet to Port Jackson. The fleet finally moored in Sydney Cove on 26th January 1788 after a voyage of eight months. The success of the voyage was to the great credit of Captain Arthur Phillip.

THE SETTLEMENT

Phillip had an inspired vision for the new Colony which was not always shared by the officers who had been appointed to assist him. However, due to his forbearing temperament and his firm hand the settlement became established. The first priority of constructing the necessary buildings involved most of the convicts. Some farming was carried out from the very early days but unfortunately the land around Sydney Cove was found to be poor and unsuitable for raising crops.

In the first months of the colony a shortage of food forced Governor Phillip to send Lieutenant Philip Gidley King on board the HMS *Supply* to Norfolk Island with an initial party of 7 marines and 15 convicts to set up farms to supply the colony with food.

During 1788 Phillip investigated several areas to find more suitable farming land. The Parramatta region with its good soil and proximity to water was suggested and on the 2nd November 1788 Governor Phillip, with a surveyor and a detachment of marines left Sydney Cove and made their way up the Parramatta River to what was called the Crescent and is now part of Parramatta Park. Tents were pitched and the best places to farm were determined. Teams of convicts followed, hoeing the land and clearing the trees to enable the growing of corn, wheat and barley.

It was not until 1792 with some 412 hectares under crop at Parramatta that the colony reached a self-sufficiency in grain. Most of the other needs of the colony still had to be brought in from overseas.

Phillip refused to tolerate ill treatment of the Natives. He was interested in their customs and way of life and wished to maintain friendly contact with them. Relations did later deteriorate but even after being wounded with a spear Phillip continued to promote harmony with them.

In December 1792 Phillip returned to England to seek medical attention. His work in establishing the colony of **NEW SOUTH WALES** has been widely commended. Governor Arthur Phillip displayed great fortitude and sense of duty, for which we should all be most grateful.

THE FELLOWSHIP

An important activity of the Fellowship is the location and identification of First Fleeter graves. A bronze plaque is attached to the tombstone (where possible) and an unveiling ceremony held.



Typical example of a brass plaque

A luncheon is held annually to mark Australia Day.

The Fellowship has established a number of Chapters throughout Australia with meetings and events to encourage an ongoing interest in Australian history.

Membership of a Chapter is available to bona fide Fellowship Members and Friends. Chapter news and activities are published in our bi-monthly magazine *Founders* and emailed or posted to Members and Friends.

**First Fleet House, 105 Cathedral St.
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is wholly owned by the Fellowship and contains an extensive library.

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