



Fellowship of First Fleeters

Hunter Valley Chapter

"To live on in the hearts and minds of Descendants is never to die."

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The Coal River Bulletin

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All members & friends of the Hunter Chapter are cordially invited to two important celebrations in the coming months:

- 1. Each year we recognise the sailing of the First Fleet from Portsmouth Harbour on the 13th May 1787 at 4.00 am.**

This is your invitation to join other members and friends of the Hunter Chapter of the Fellowship of First Fleeters for a celebratory lunch on **Friday 11th May, 2012** at **Kotara Bowling Club** -12 noon for 12.30pm.

Please contact Yvonne for bookings on 4957 4758.



2. "It's Our Fifth Birthday"

Come and join in the celebration for our Chapter's 5th Birthday!

When: Monday, 18th June 2012

Where: Senior Citizens Centre at 153 Bruncker Rd. Adamstown

Time: 10 am for 10.30 am
Tea and coffee available on arrival

Special Guest Speaker: Gionni Di Gravio
Well known Archivist
University of Newcastle

Cost: \$5 pp

Please bring a small plate of finger food to share for lunch.

Looking forward to seeing you all there !!



**Guest Speaker
at our meeting on
the 16th April was
Suzanne Martin.**

By profession Suzanne is a Physiotherapist, but is also an enthusiastic Historian.

Suzanne briefly outlined the life of **Governor Lachlan Macquarie** and then, as requested, spoke of his influence on early Newcastle and the Hunter Valley.



A very brief synopsis of his life:

- Born: Island of Ulva, Scotland 1st January, 1762.
- Joined the Army at 14 years of age.
- First posting: Halifax, Canada.
- 1807 Married 2nd wife Elizabeth Campbell.
- 1809 replaced controversial Governor of NSW, William Bligh.
- 1822 Returned to England – to his property on the Isle of Mull.
- 1824 Died London aged 63 while defending the critical report of John Bigge in relation to his Governorship of NSW.
- Buried in the family Mausoleum on the Island of Mull with wife Elizabeth and son Lachlan. Maintained by the Australian National Trust.

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Lachlan Macquarie was Commander and Governor of NSW from 1810-1821 and during this period made three visits to Newcastle:

January 1812
July/August 1818
November 1821

1812: Governor Lachlan Macquarie visited Newcastle and travelled about 30km up the Hunter River. After returning to Sydney he permitted four men to take up small farms on the fertile Paterson's Plains as a reward for procuring a special order of cedar logs.

1818: This longest visit was when Captain James Wallace was commandant at Newcastle. Together they travelled widely, exploring the 3 branches of the Hunter River (now the Hunter, Williams and Patterson Rivers). Fertile land up-river was named Wallis Plains (now Maitland) and interestingly Raymond Terrace was so named even then.

On the 2nd August 1818 Macquarie attended the first church service in the newly built Newcastle Christ Church. Divine service was led by the Rev. Cowper and 500-600 were in attendance. Ten couples were married and there were 30 christenings performed. Suzanne had a copy of the page, hand written by Rev. Cowper, of all the convicts married in this first church service.

A major event during this visit was the laying of the foundation stone of what was to become the **Macquarie Pier**, joining Nobby's island to the mainland thus ensuring safe passage for vessels entering Newcastle Harbour.

Also during this visit the Surveyor James Meehan, who had accompanied Macquarie, set out the streets of Newcastle.

Macquarie had a good relationship with the local aborigines and the chief of the tribe, *Booragong*, organised a **corroboree** of forty men, women & children in Macquarie's honour.

1821: This last visit was while Major James Morisset was the Commandant of Newcastle. Macquarie inspected the progress of the Macquarie Pier and the newly built windmills for grinding wheat (one of which was situated where the obelisk now stands).



The Macquarie Pier was completed 1846

During his Governorship Lachlan Macquarie successfully opened up the interior of NSW and completed 250 buildings, roads and bridges - an amazing contribution to the new Colony. He is attributed with being the first to see the possibilities beyond the limits of a penal settlement - he is deservedly known as:

“The Father of Australia”

Caring for the World in Newcastle

What a lively and informative morning for us all on March 19th. Our outing to the Mission to Seafarers (just across the street from Newcastle Harbour in Wickham) was an eye opener for most of us. I'm sure all in attendance, including several new faces who we were so pleased to meet, were impressed by the services the Mission offered.



On arrival we enjoyed morning tea then Chaplain of the Mission, Father Garry Dodd, outlined the services which are available to all seamen who enter the Port of Newcastle. Currently there are at least 40,000 men and women who annually bring cargo to the Port and take cargo from here on to other countries and this number is expected to triple as the Port expands rapidly over the next few years.



The Mission provides seafarers with free services such as:

Transport needs, internet access to keep in touch with loved ones, money changing, clothing, books, magazines, entertainment, pastoral care, shopping advice, snacks, hospital and ship visits and other services as needed.

Their symbol "The Flying Angel" is recognised worldwide by seamen.

Father Garry is tireless in his work and praises his band of volunteers who he feels are the real heroes of the Mission as they do their best to ensure the seafarers feel as comfortable as possible, as if they are in a 'friendly home' as special guests. The volunteers give generously of their time serving tea and coffee, 'chauffeuring' when needed, becoming tourist guides, cooks, entertainers and importantly - caring listeners.

Thank you Father Garry !



Recreation room



Free Internet access



Afterwards 20 of us enjoyed lunch together at the nearby Albion Hotel.



Thank you to John and Beth Brooker for organising this outing!

Why let the truth stand in the way of a good story ??

(Our friends at the Southern Highlands Chapter may also be interested in this story as they had included this very saying in their last Newsletter!)

At the meeting in February our member June Paul passed on another Naval saying to add to those I had included in our January Newsletter:

“It’s so cold it would freeze the balls off a brass monkey”

This saying had been explained to her at the museum on Norfolk Island in 2001 where June took this photo:



It was explained to June that sailing ships used cannons for defence and in the old days the brass plate beneath the cannon balls was called a brass monkey. During extreme cold weather the ‘monkey’ would contract causing the balls to fall off.

However, most historians and etymologists consider this story to be an **urban legend** and it has been discredited by the U.S. Department of the Navy as follows:

- ** This method of storage of cannonballs (“round shot”) is simply false as shot was not kept on deck continuously on the off-chance the ship might go into battle. Indeed decks were kept as clear as possible and such a method of storage would result in shot rolling around on deck and causing a hazard in high seas. Shot was stored on the gun or spar decks in shot racks.
- ** Shot was not left exposed to the elements where it could rust. Rust could lead to the ball not firing true or jamming in the barrel and exploding the gun.
- ** Also the physics does not stand up to scrutiny. The changes in both balls and plate over the range of temperatures involved would not be particularly large. The effect claimed may be possible to reproduce in laboratory conditions with objects engineered to a high precision for this purpose, but it is most unlikely it would ever have occurred in real life aboard a ship.



Your Editor, Judy Aubin



Many Happy returns to:

Bruce Donaldson	5 th May	Philip Alexander	6 th June
Pat Meredith	7 th May	Fletcher Pacey	10 th June
Phillippa Gowen	9 th May	June Paul	14 th June
Phil Aubin	17 th May	Yvonne Bullock	19 th June
Eric Trigg	20 th May	Bill Valent	24 th June
Margaret Moulston	27 th May	Gai Hudson	28 th June

Remember: Birthdays are good for you – the more you have, the longer you live!!