



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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Newsletter No: 32

June 2013

June 2013 marked the 6th Anniversary of the re-establishment of our Hunter Valley Chapter of First Fleeters. Six years ago a small group gathered under the guidance of John & Beth Brooker and, as the saying goes, 'a lot of water has flowed under the bridge' since then and we have gone from strength to strength. We have been privileged to hear from wonderful guest speakers at our bi-monthly meetings. They have shared their knowledge on a wide range of topics and in the months between meetings we have experienced great outings both within and without our region. Our meeting on the 17th June was no exception.



Our Guest Speaker, Terry Maher, spoke on the history of his property at East Maitland, *Rathluba*. We were looking forward to hearing from Terry as Rathluba was the farm where First Fleeter Joseph Trimby worked and which adjoins the Historic Glebe burial ground where a First Fleet memorial plaque for Joseph Trimby was placed late last year - a highlight for the area and for our Chapter. Terry also gave us an insight into the beginnings of settlement in the surrounding areas – always so interesting.

In the early days of settlement the property of Rathluba had several owners but in Joseph Trimby's time was occupied by Captain Allman of the 48th Regiment of Foot. However, this hidden gem of 500 acres has now been in Terry's family for over 100 years.

It's hard to realise that it was 70 to 80 miles by river from Newcastle to Maitland in those early days. Progress marches on and much of the area is currently being re-zoned for residential use.

We were delighted to hear more from Terry of the historic East Maitland and Maitland areas - to have so much history on our doorstep is amazing. It was also a delight to welcome new faces to the meeting, as well as visitors from the Arthur Phillip Chapter who were present, not only to hear Terry's presentation, but to view our Hunter Valley Chapter First Fleet banners!

We also welcome two new members to our Chapter: Carl Rose and Kevin Tibby.



Our next outing on July 16th will be another opportunity to learn more of the history of Maitland as we visit **St. Mary's Church** and the historic Victorian **Grossman House** with its many collections. Those travelling by train leave Waratah Station at 9.51am arriving at Maitland station at 10.22 am. Time for a quick coffee at Michelle's at own expense where those travelling by car can join the group. It is a short walk to St. Mary's before continuing to Grossman House. Lunch included and will be served at 12.30pm. Cost \$17 pp

Best wishes to those celebrating a birthday in June and July:



June:

Phil Alexander, Yvonne Bullock, June Paul Gai Hudson, Bill Valent, Fletcher Pacey and Robyn Grant.

July:

Beth Brooker, George Pinkerton, Barry Martin, Dom Swinkles, Judith Sphiros, Tony Huntley, and Elizabeth Guilford.

➡ Our Chapter is growing fast and to help with ongoing expenses it was agreed at the last meeting that meeting minutes will be sent out on Email only, but several copies will be placed on the front table to be read prior to the start of the next meeting.



If you still wish to receive a copy of the minutes by mail you can choose to supply the Secretary with some stamped self-addressed envelopes.

***** Of course this does not apply to our Newsletters which will be sent out both by Email and by Australia post as usual.**

How's this for a First Fleet Connection?

The number of those who came on that first voyage to NSW is not that great (1500 odd). No doubt most could have met somewhere in those early days - either on the voyage, in Port Jackson or later on Norfolk Island or in another of the early settlements.

Dom Swinkles' family research blew me away!

This shows his wife Wendy's First Fleeter, Jane Poole, has a connection to my First Fleeter, Ann Forbes, as follows:

Ann Forbes is Dom Swinkles' wife's fourth great aunt's husband's mother's ex-partner's son's wife's mother!

So the question is: *Are we all 'loosely connected' in some fashion?*

Your invitation
to the next meeting of the
Hunter valley Chapter
of the
Fellowship of First Fleeters.

*Annual General Meeting
to be followed by a
Soup & Damper Luncheon*



WHEN: Monday 12th August, 2013

(Please note this is a week earlier than usual so Head Office can complete audits etc. for the end of the financial year.)

WHERE: Adamstown Senior Citizens
153 Bruncker Rd. Adamstown

TIME: 10 am for 10.30 am
(Tea and coffee on arrival)

GUEST SPEAKER:

Phil Aubin will show a DVD on the search for the wreck of the First Fleet flagship "Sirius" which sank on the reef off Norfolk Island in 1794.

An added bonus for those interested in philately: Phil will also have on display some of his collection relevant to First Fleet history.

Nomination forms for office bearers for 2013/14 will be available on the day or available by contacting Secretary Yvonne.

Many thanks to members who have volunteered to make soup for us to enjoy. There is no need for others to bring a plate of finger food to share today – damper & sweets provided too! **Cost \$5**

Fellowship of First Fleet Luncheon, Pullman Hotel Sydney *11th May 2013*

This year, instead of the usual Australia Day event the Fellowship of First Fleeters celebrated "The Sailing of the First Fleet" with a Luncheon held at the Pullman Hotel on 11th May. Eight members of the Hunter Valley Chapter travelled to Sydney for this occasion.



The Patron of the Fellowship, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, sent her apology and although she was missed by all present we all enjoyed this very special Luncheon.

After drinks and a delicious three course meal we were entertained by Mr Paul Brunton senior curator of the Mitchell Library at the NSW State Library in Sydney.

Mr Brunton is blessed with a keen sense of humour and could only very briefly give us an insight to his fascinating life acquiring records from all over the world. These records helped write the history of Australia.

Much of his talk was dedicated to Captain James Cook, who set sail in HMB Endeavour in the year 1768 from Plymouth England, to record the Transit of Venus in Tahiti. From Tahiti he was instructed to travel south, he mapped New Zealand and then travelled west, when on 19th April 1770 he discovered the east coast of Australia and named it New South Wales. Previous to this Cook had joined the Navy and saw action in Canada where he surveyed the St Lawrence River and then mapped the coastline of Newfoundland.

After this very interesting talk the President of the Fellowship Mr Ian Palmer presented John Haxton and Ron Withington with a Certificate of Appreciation for their very fine work with the Fellowship; Ron as editor of the Founders magazine for many years and John for his work as former President and the being responsible for the formation of many new Chapters, our Hunter Valley Chapter included." **Many thanks to Yvonne for sending this report.**



A special date for your Diary :

Our October meeting is being held on Saturday 19th at 2.00 pm.

We know there are members who cannot attend our weekday meetings so this is your chance to come along! Guest Speaker at this meeting will be our member Lorraine Valent who will be introducing us to her First Fleet ancestors:

**Ann Smith who sailed on the *Charlotte* and
Patrick Burn who arrived aboard the *Friendship*.**

Your Editor, Judy Aubin

Our outing to *Tahlee*, Port Stephens began when the *FUN BUS*, with driver John, departed from the Senior Citizens Hall in Adamstown around 8.30am on Thursday the 30th May, 2013.

Heading north there was a short stop for morning tea at the Twelve Mile Creek rest area – we enjoyed the cuppa and cake – the stop also included an unplanned life experience!



We turned off the highway to Carrington and made our way to the harbour and Tahlee village where we were welcomed at the historical waterfront by our guide dressed in period costume. This set the tone for the day as we heard from Ruth about the three distinct phases of the settlement's history.



The earliest inhabitants were the Gringai tribes of aboriginal people.

The white man's arrival in the area had its beginnings when Britain wished to be able to source wool from a colony rather than from the war prone regions of France and Spain. A grant of a million acres of land in the colony of New South Wales was made to the Australian Agricultural Company. In 1824, after exploring the Hunter River and Soldiers Point, the harbour was crossed and it was decided that Tahlee and Carrington would be where the headquarters of the company would be established. There were many Commissioners involved in the Company - the first four have been remembered in the street names of Newcastle: Dawson Street, Parry Street, King Street and Layman Street. Tahlee ceased to be the home of the AA Company Commissioners in 1849 and was sold to a private owner and changed hands several times.

The third phase of Tahlee's history was in 1942 when it became headquarters for the Gospel Fishermen Mission. In 1998 the Mission's name changed to Gospel Service Ministries but a lot knew it as Tahlee Bible College. The Mission is run entirely by volunteers – they do a great job as it's a huge area with many buildings to maintain. We were then given a tour of the out buildings.



Tahlee House is a lovely historic building and furnished accordingly. The first Commissioner, Robert Dawson, began work on the house in the first year of settlement in 1826. It has seen many changes and renovations since the early days and is now a historical reminder of those times.



The quaint boat harbour was built originally by convict labour and has been restored quite recently by a local resident, David, who proudly showed us around the grounds describing the origin of the huge old trees some of which must have been planted in the early days. There were 12 full time gardeners then.

At 1pm we gathered in the Tahlee House ballroom and enjoyed a lovely 'baked dinner' for lunch, topped off with handmade cream horns!



We saw the complex on the most perfect autumn day – it was truly lovely. Many thanks to Helen for organising this day out - and for the trivia etc. on the bus to keep us entertained!