



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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General Meeting held on Monday 16th February, 2015

At our first meeting for 2015 President Jane had the pleasure of welcoming our FFF President, Ian Palmer, who travelled from Sydney to make a special presentation to our members Phil Alexander and John Risby. Unfortunately Phil Alexander wasn't able to be present today but Ian explained that a First Fleet Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Phil for his outstanding contribution over many years to the Indexing of 46-47 years worth of publications of the First Fleet magazine now known as "Founders". There is now an index sorted by name and separately by place. These are available at First Fleet House but eventually they will be digitised and placed on the net. This was a painstaking task but a greatly appreciated one – well done Phil !

**Ian Palmer then, on behalf of us all, congratulated
John Risby on his 90th birthday!**

John put down his longevity to being active all his life as well as being "well managed" at home – the genes of his First Fleet ancestor were probably not a factor as F.F. Edward Risby (and most of his descendants) didn't quite make three score years and ten!



Happy 90th John - enjoy your family celebrations!



John with wife Dorothy and President Ian Palmer

Jane also welcomed several new faces to our Chapter: Barbara brown (Peter Hibbs), Jenny Cridland (John Small), Janelle Kemp (Richard Partridge, Mary Greenwood) and Ian Smith (Anne Forbes, Robert Forrester, Edward Miles).

Our Guest speaker today was our President, Jane van Woerkom, who introduced us to her First Fleet ancestors Henry Kable and Susannah Holmes. Jane acknowledged the book *"Damned Rascals"* by Paul Kable OAM and June Whittaker - a well researched account of Henry & Susannah's history. Jane has also written a family history book *"An Aussie Family Yarn"* and has donated copies to our Library.



Unlike some other stories of First Fleeters, Henry and Susannah both have records of their ancestors in England, and most unusually, their relationship began in England well before they sailed with the First Fleet.

Both Henry and Susannah were indicted for theft of goods over the value of £20 and so mandatorily were condemned to hang but were granted a reprieve and their sentence commuted to transportation. After their trials both were incarcerated in Norwich Castle prison where they met in the communal felon's yard and formed a relationship. During this time they sought, on several occasions, permission to marry. This was refused on the grounds that they were felons and therefore had relinquished all rights. In spite of these refusals Henry and Susannah's relationship resulted in Susannah bearing Henry's child (Henry Jnr) in 1786. When a decision was made to establish a new penal colony at Botany Bay, Susannah Holmes was one of the prisoners nominated and transferred to the waiting prison hulks, but Henry was not and this created great distress for the couple. On arrival at the hulk Susannah experienced further distress when baby Henry was refused permission to board as the ship's master had no orders to admit her baby.

Faced with the responsibility of caring for the baby, the gaol's turnkey, Simpson, took it upon himself to seek permission for baby Henry to be reunited with Susannah. He set out from Plymouth, with baby Henry, to travel to London to make a direct approach to Lord Sydney who was directly responsible for the organisation and preparation of the First Fleet of ships to travel to Botany Bay. The long plea process attracted much publicity and eventually the Sheriff of Norfolk was directed to transfer Henry Snr from the gaol to the hulk & for the baby to be re-united with his parents. This publicity also resulted in support for the couple from local citizens and £20 was collected to purchase goods for the family to be used in the new colony.



Henry, Susannah and baby Henry embarked the *"Friendship"* on 11th March 1787, leaving Portsmouth on the 13th May 1787, for Botany Bay. Once in the new colony Henry and Susannah, who were still serving their sentences, were among those married in the first ceremony in the colony conducted on the 10th February 1788 by Rev. Richard Johnson. Already having their son Henry Jnr. they became what some have termed "the first family of the Colony." Together they produced 11 children, 10 being first generation "Australians".

Possibly the most socially and culturally significant contribution of Henry and Susannah to the developing colony of New South Wales relates to events that occurred 6 months after their arrival. In July 1788 they became litigants in the first legal case of the Colony when the property (including goods and money) gathered for them prior to leaving England could not be found on arrival in Botany Bay. The property had been entrusted to the stores of the *"Alexander"* and thereby the ship's Captain. Attempts to locate the property were unsuccessful. General reports indicated that Captain Duncan Sinclair who had kept their property had boasted that because Henry & Susannah were felons they could not sue him for its loss.

On advice from the Judge Advocate of the colony, David Collins, the case was raised and several depositions of the whereabouts of the property at various stages of the First Fleet voyage were taken and several witnesses were called to give evidence. Eventually Henry and Susannah were successful in their claim against Duncan Sinclair and were awarded £15 in damages.

The consequence of this legal case was to prove monumental to the formation of the social and cultural identity of modern Australia. Professor David Neale, wrote about this case in his work *"The Rule of Law in a Penal Colony"* and stated that Henry and Susannah's "use of the rule of law transformed New South Wales from a penal settlement to a free society" (Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 1995-96).

To this day there remains the general and well accepted attitude that Australian society is based on the belief of a “fair go for all.”

By 1789 Henry was appointed to the role of nightwatchman protecting the Governor’s food garden. By 1792 he was appointed overseer of women and soon afterwards, made a constable. He became Chief Constable in 1794, retaining this position until 1802, at which time he was dismissed by Governor Bligh for misbehaviour including “illegally, buying / importing pigs from visiting ships.”

Henry was able to commence farming in 1792 when he received his first land grant of 30 acres at Petersham. This was soon followed in 1795/6 by grants amounting to 115 acres. As well in 1802 he owned 205 acres through purchase. In 1809 he was granted 84.5 rods on High Street (Sgt Major’s Row) and between 1803 and 1810 he was granted almost 600 acres in the areas of Minto and Airds where one property was named “Holmes Farm.” By 1809 his acreage in the Hawkesbury had swelled and after the devastating floods from 1806/9, he acquired a number of small allotments that were transferred to him as payment of debts. In 1823 he was granted 100 acres at Bathurst for his son to farm which was known as “Gormans Hill”.

Concurrent to Henry’s farming ventures, was his involvement in a syndicate to build shipping vessels. Henry’s shipping business activities became his mainstay and included, from the early 1800’s, involvement in the sealing trade as well as international trading. His shipping interests also included sole ownership of several ships and with his partners Simeon Lord and James Underwood had eventually up to 20 ships which travelled to China, India and Oceania.

By 1797, Henry had been granted one of the first early licences to operate an Inn. He named this Inn “The Ramping Horse” and it operated in premises which were adjacent to his house and the gaol at which he was the Chief Constable. This liquor licence was followed by a licence to operate the first stage coach service in the colony that operated between the Hawkesbury and Sydney Cove. Henry also operated one the first Mills described in the Sydney Gazette as “an excellent post mill, the first that had been erected in this settlement.” The location of the mill has been identified as standing where Governor Bourke’s statue currently stands in front of the State Library of NSW.

By 1811 Henry’s extensive referral to the “rule of law” had left him with many legal issues surrounding business dealings. One major action saw a finding against him amounting to £12,000. Some suggested that as a consequence of this legal case in 1809, Henry Snr divested himself of his business interests, leaving son Henry Jnr. responsible and he eventually moved most of the family to Windsor where he had property holdings. Others suggest that the murder of his son, James aged 15, in 1809 (by pirates in the Malay straits) was devastating and also a trigger for changes in his life.

The family lived for many years on the Balmain estate leased from William Balmain and near to McGraths Hill at South Creek, Windsor. Susannah survived another 14 years, passing away in 1825 aged 62. Following Susannah’s death Henry moved to his property at Pitt Town. Henry continued to make his mark in the colony with a street in Windsor named after him - he was a member of the Windsor Benevolent Society and the Windsor Bible Association. After a remarkable life Henry died on 16th March 1846 at Windsor aged 84. Henry and Susannah are buried in the grounds of St Matthew's Church, Windsor in a marked family crypt.



Our thanks to Jane for sharing this most interesting insight into the lives of her two First Fleeters.

Outing 23rd March 2015

“Where Convicts Lie”

Yvonne and Terry Musgrave (with some input from other members) have put together a most interesting day for us in the Hawkesbury area including visiting First Fleet graves of our own members and the family property of Terry’s pioneer family.

This will be a car pooling excursion with two meeting places: 8am at the Adamstown Senior Citizens Hall and then 9am meeting up with the second group waiting at the Caltex rest stop on the M1. Heading down the M1 the next stop will be at Thompsons Corner, for a quick BYO cuppa and comfort stop.

We will continue to St. Matthews Church, cnr Moses & Greenaway Cr. Windsor where 12 First Fleeters are buried. It is planned to leave there at 11:45am for the 10 minute drive to St. Johns at Wilberforce with the graves of 3 more First Fleeters - Cnr Copeland and Duke Road. St. Johns Church was designed by William Blackett and those who visited Tocal will remember the beautiful barn there designed by him.

Another 10 minute drive brings us to the beautiful Ebenezer Church where the ladies are providing us with a 2 course lunch at 1pm.

After lunch we visit the pioneer cemetery at Sackville Reach with another FF grave – then we head to Terry Musgrave’s family property “Peacocks”. Here we will meet his cousins, Lloyd & June, who still run the commercial orchard and who are kindly making us welcome to view the exterior of this Historical mid-1800 home where several First Fleeters lived. This home is Heritage listed but is in disrepair as it is beyond reasonable restoration costs.

We will head home via Wisemans Ferry to stop at the St. Alban’s Settlers Cemetery with another First Fleet grave.

Lunch at Ebenezer is \$13.50. March 17th is the cut off date to either deposit this into our bank account at the Newcastle Permanent Fellowship of First Fleeter Hunter Valley Chapter – 982 985 602 BSB650 300, or post a cheque to Treasurer Helen Pacey.

For further information about the itinerary contact Yvonne or for drivers info contact Terry 49436932 or Phil 49543563.

Outing 13th May

A music and heritage tour of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music celebrating the sailing of the First Fleet.

Details in next Newsletter.



St. Patrick’s Day –17th March Some Irish proverbs and blessings

May those who love us, love us.
And for those who don’t love us, may God turn their hearts.
And if he cannot turn their hearts,
may He turn their ankles,
So we may know them by their limping.

May your troubles be as few and as far apart
as my grandmother’s teeth.

May you get all your wishes but one, so you
always have something to strive for.

Both your friend and your enemy both think
you will never die.

The longest road out is the shortest road
home.

Blessed are those who can laugh at
themselves for they will never cease to be
amused.



March

3 rd Jan Halson	4 th Neridah Kentwell
6 th Margaret Annan	12 th Irma Foster
13 th Verna Lumby	19 th Carole Almond
16 th Johan van Woerkom	

April

9 th Bob Walker	9 th Nola Field
10 th Carolyn Watson	10 th Dianne Stepa
13 th Barry Chaff	16 th Isabella Pacey
19 th Pam Welham	19 th Brent Knowles
30 th Sister Andrea Myers	

ANZAC CENTENARY

Commemorations for the 100th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli, where the ANZAC tradition began, are well underway. This was the first major military action fought by Australian & New Zealand forces during WW1.

It is reported that there were half a million casualties during the campaign which included over 100,000 allies and 56-68,000 Turkish soldiers paying the supreme sacrifice.



Photo taken on 25th April 1915

There are 31 War Cemeteries at Gallipoli with a number of Memorials to the missing while there are 22,000 graves, only 9,000 are identified with grave markers.

Nine Australian Servicemen were awarded the Victoria Cross during this campaign which is the highest military decoration awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy".



Lance Corporal
Albert Jacka VC
19 May 1915 Courtney's Post



Lieutenant
Leonard Keysor VC
7 August 1915 Lone Pine



Major
Frederick Tubb VC
9 August 1915 Lone Pine



Corporal
Alexander Burton VC
9 August 1915 Lone Pine



Corporal
William Dunstan VC
9 August 1915 Lone Pine



Lieutenant
John Hamilton VC
9 August 1915 Lone Pine



Lieutenant Colonel
William Symons VC
9 August 1915 Lone Pine



Captain
Alfred Shout VC
9 August 1915 Lone Pine



Second Lieutenant
Hugo Throssell VC
29/30 August 1915 Hill 60

Some of our members have relatives who served at Gallipoli and their stories will be included in our next Newsletter.



You are cordially invited to our next meeting on

Monday 20th April, 2015

WHERE: Senior Citizens Hall, Bruncker Rd. Adamstown

TIME: 10 am for 10:30 am. Tea/coffee on arrival

GUEST SPEAKER: Brian Boughton from Morpeth

TOPIC: "Centenary of Anzac & Hunter Valley School children
Visit to Gallipoli."

Brian will explain what has been involved in the organisation of
taking a contingent of Hunter Valley's school children
to visit Gallipoli in 2015.

Also what we can expect to see on our TV of their performances
on Anzac Day

Cost: \$5.00 pp

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

Kitchen Roster:

Morning tea: Terry Musgrave, Dom Swinkels

Lunch: Carolyn Watson



Vale Ray Meredith



*It is with great sadness that we note the passing of our
dear member, Ray Meredith aged 89 years.*

*Many years ago Ray established the first Hunter Valley Chapter
of the Fellowship of First Fleeters. It was a great disappointment when
this Chapter folded some years later but Ray was delighted when our
second Chapter was created and it grew from strength to strength
with members from all around Newcastle, Maitland and beyond.*

*Ray, with his wife Pat, was always a great supporter of our activities
and also a leading light in the event of the Joseph Trimby dedication
at the old Glebe cemetery, a project that he worked on for over 10 years.*

He will be greatly missed and we were so lucky to have known him.