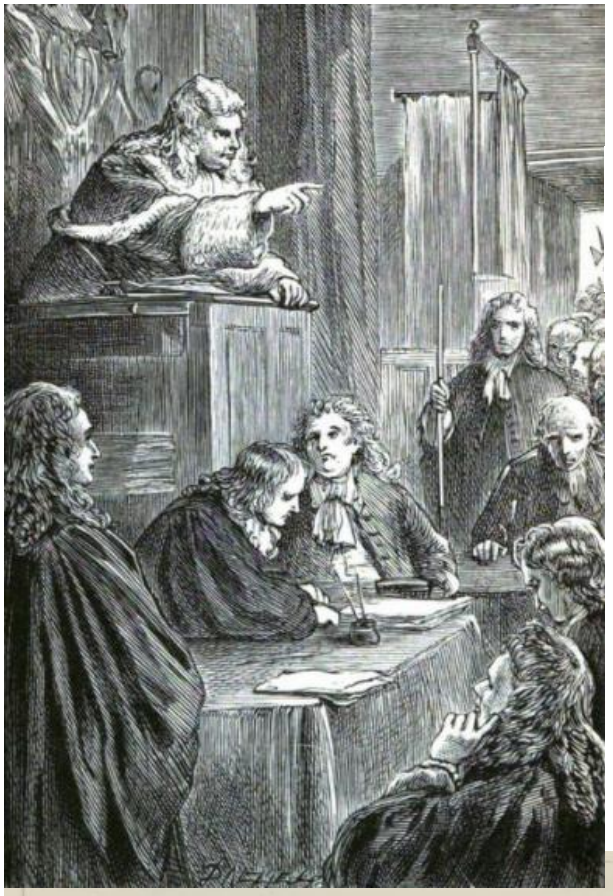


GUILTY !

TRANSPORTATION !

Clifford Trethewey

The Story of a First Fleeter

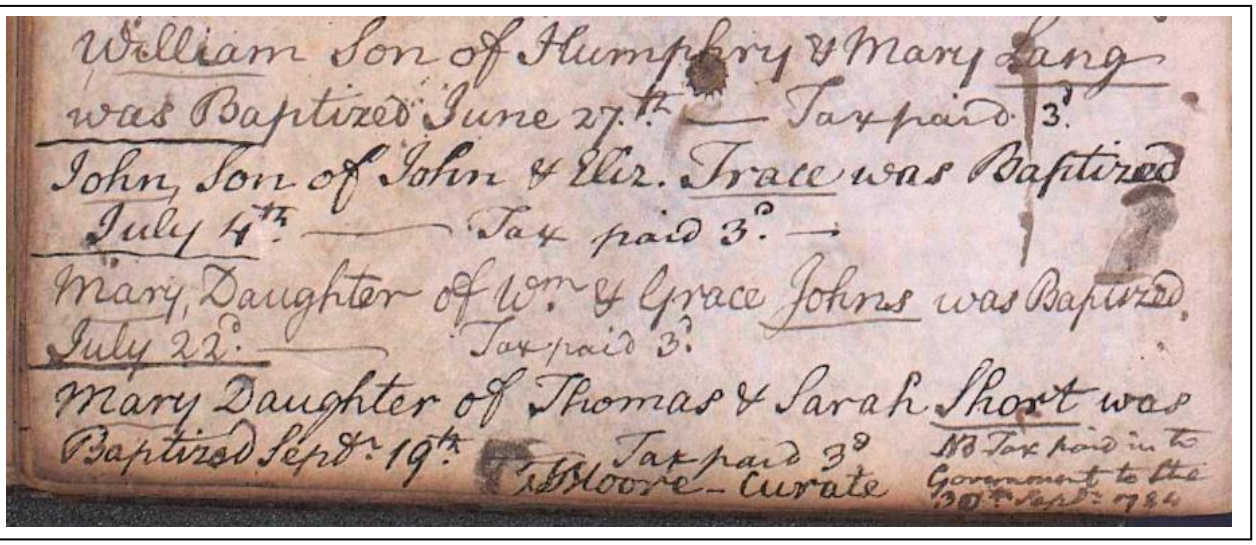
A Tale of Two Devon Parishes

All family history research is a backward process from one generation to the previous generation and it is not difficult today with the basic computer tools available. It was not quite the same when I started to delve into my grandmother's family in the early 1980s. She was Florence Beatrice TRACEY and her father was John Henry TRACEY and their stories were easily assembled from living memory.
It was then that the real investigation began and this led back to a village on the fringe of Plymouth - Tamerton Foliot and the birth of John Henry Tracey which my mother didn't seem to know. It was now that the censuses came into their own and laborious searches of film reels uncovered two more generations who lived in the village, but the earlier generations were not called Tracey. It was TRACE and the oldest of those was John TRACE born sometime in the 1780s.

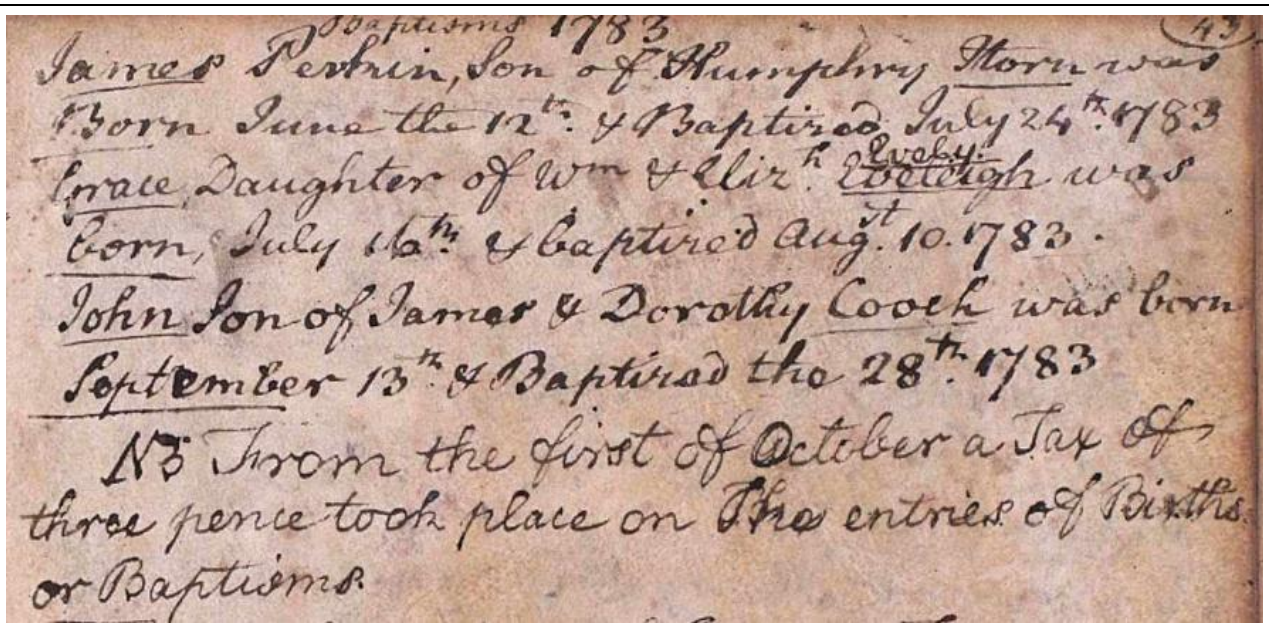
John TRACE was visible in the 1841 census but not present in the 1851 census and his wife, Elizabeth was a widow. Her husband had died less than six weeks before the census would have captured him and revealed where he had been born. So for 40 years I have had no idea where he had come from.

It was a cold and rainy day on the last day of September 2021 and I was tinkering with modern technology, filling odd gaps in my knowledge and I picked up my book about the TRACEY Family I have called A WELL TRODDEN PATH. I looked at John again and wondered if there was anything out in the ether that I hadn't seen, so I put his name into the search box of my software application and to my astonishment I had only ONE result for JOHN TRACE in the whole of Devon born in the 1780s.

To my delight I was able to look at the Parish Register and was even more surprised to find it well written and easily legible and John was baptised on the 4th July 1784 to John Trace and Elizabeth in a parish I had never heard of in Devon – Langtree.


William Son of Humphry & Mary Lang
was Baptized June 27th — Tax paid 3d
John Son of John & Eliz. Trace was Baptized
July 4th — Tax paid 3d
Mary Daughter of Wm & Grace Johns was Baptized
July 22d — Tax paid 3d
Mary Daughter of Thomas & Sarah Short was
Baptized Sept 19th — Tax paid 3d — Moore Curate
NB Tax paid in to Government to the 30th Sept 1784

Every entry had paid 3d in tax, something I had never seen before in a parish register, so I had to know what this tax was all about. It was the Stamp Duty Act 1783 which charged 3d for every life event recorded in a Parish Register whether it was a Birth, Marriage or a Burial and the incumbent was authorised to retain 10% for his trouble. The Act was intended to raise money for the American War of Independence, but it was vehemently resented even among clergymen and it was repealed in 1794 after a large number of 3ds had been paid.



Baptisms 1783 43

James Perkin, Son of Humphry Horn was Born June the 12th: & Baptized July 24th 1783

Grace, Daughter of Wm & Elizth Everly Eveleigh was Born, July 16th & Baptized Augt 10. 1783.

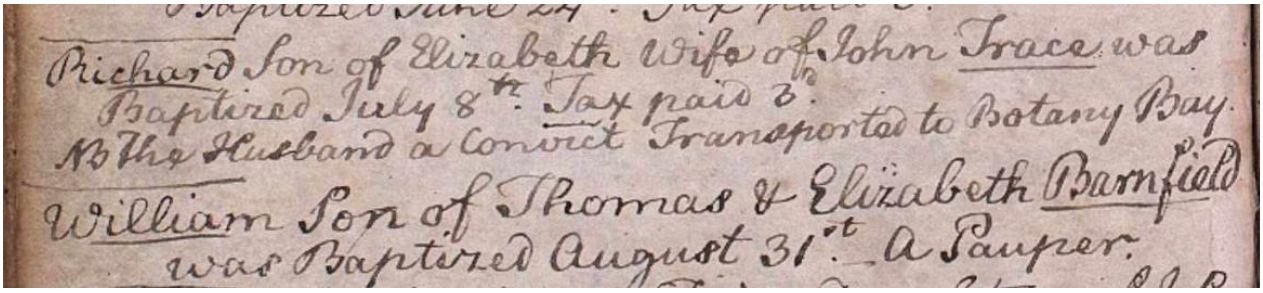
John Son of James & Dorothy Cooch was born September 13th & Baptized the 28th 1783

NB From the first of October a Tax of three pence took place on The entries of Births or Baptisms

The Rev. Thomas Moore, Curate of Langtree seems to have been a good administrator and two pages before John Trace's baptism this note appears on the page. However with a register at my fingertips it made sense to digitally turn the pages and see if there were any other children baptised to John and Elizabeth Trace, but not before I had uncovered the location of this previously unknown parish. This is the description found for the parish on GENUKI website

"LANGTREE is a considerable village, 3½ miles S.W. of Great Torrington, and has in its parish 911 souls, and 4028 acres of land, including the hamlets of Stowford *and* Week. *The Trustees of the late Lord Rolle own most of the soil, and are lords of the manors of Langtree and Stowford, and patrons of the rectory.*

My next thought was – which way do I go? Forwards or backwards. I chose forward and this is what I found.



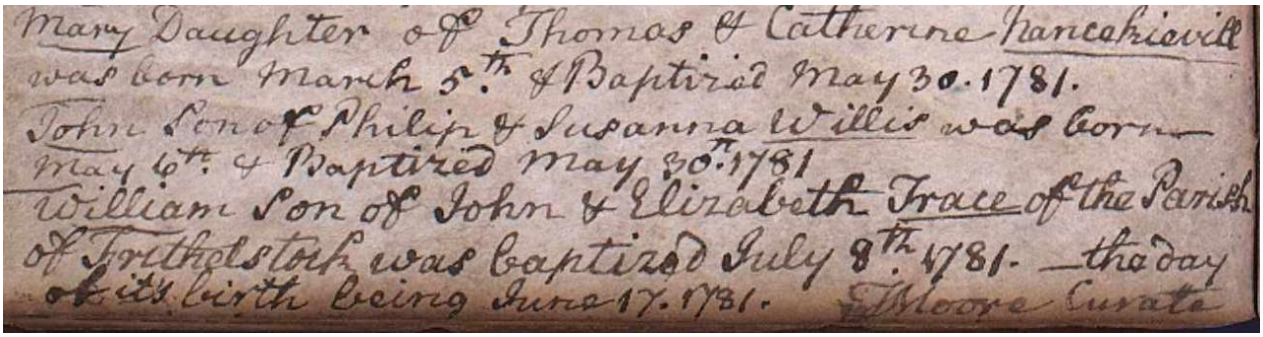
Richard Son of Elizabeth Wife of John Trace was Baptized July 8th Tax paid 3d

NB the Husband a Convict Transported to Botany Bay.

William Son of Thomas & Elizabeth Barnfield was Baptized August 31st A Pauper.

John TRACE had been transported to Botany Bay before the 8th July 1787. I couldn't believe my eyes. Transported from a tiny rural village like Langtree? One thing was certain. There would be no more children in this family, so I had to search backwards to complete the picture.

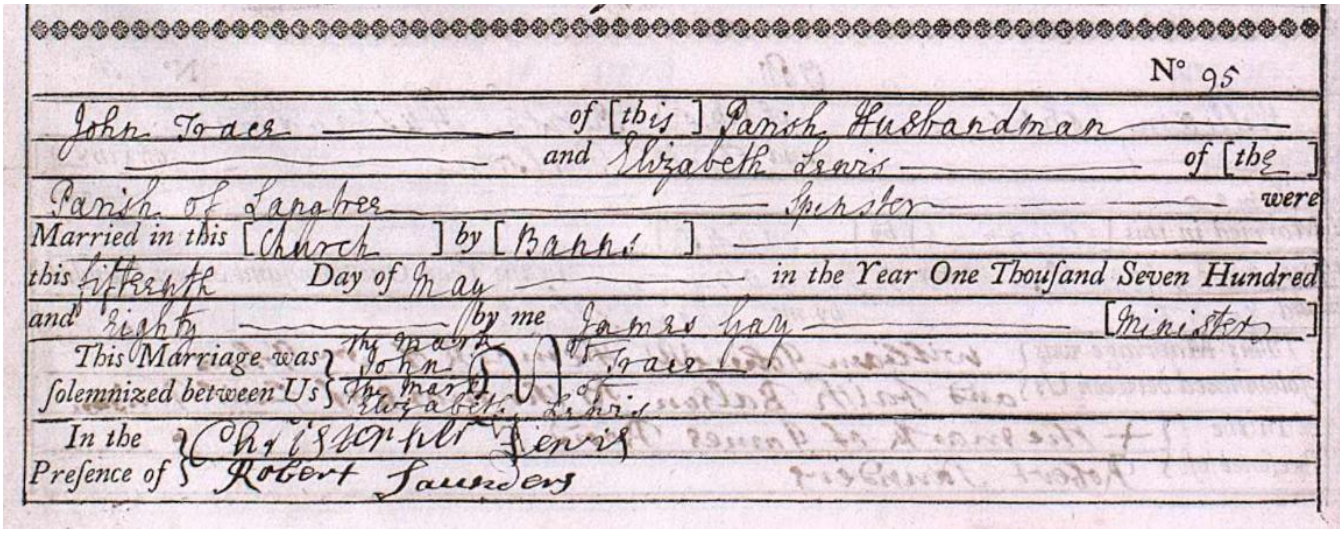
In 1781 there was a baptism with even more information. William was born on the 17th June 1781 in the parish of Frithelstock where his parents John and Elizabeth TRACE lived. They brought him for baptism to Langtree on the 8th July 1781 in the time before there was a threepenny tax and their entry was the last one on that page below.



Mary Daughter of Thomas & Catherine Lancashire was born March 5th & Baptized May 30. 1781.
John Son of Philip & Susanna Willis was born May 6th & Baptized May 30th 1781
William Son of John & Elizabeth Trace of the Parish of Frithelstock was baptized July 8th 1781. the day of his birth being June 17. 1781. E. Moore Curate

Somehow I felt that William was their first son in spite of not following the usual practise of naming him after his father, so I decided to look for a marriage.

This was a gamble in the 18th century as often the same registers were used, but I now had a different parish whose registers may not have survived. Fortunately my fears were unjustified and a Marriage Register for Frithelstock was available to be seen. It shows that John TRACE was 'of this Parish' and Elizabeth LEWIS came from Langtree. We also learn that John was a husbandman or a man who looked after the cows, rather than just a labourer. The wedding took place on the 15th May 1780 and both could only make their marks. However one of the witnesses was also Elizabeth LEWIS and she could almost write. Was this her mother or another relative? However, it can be seen that at first they lived in Frithelstock before moving to Langtree by 1784.



N° 95

John Trace of [this] Parish Husbandman and Elizabeth Lewis of [the] Parish of Langtree Spinster were Married in this [Church] by [Banns] this fifteenth Day of May in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty by me James Gay [Minister]
This Marriage was solemnized between Us { The mark of John Trace / The mark of Elizabeth Lewis }
In the Presence of { Christopher Lewis / Robert Saunders }

FRITHELSTOCK, a village and parish 2 miles W. of Great Torrington, comprises 705 souls and 2380 acres of land, including the hamlets of *Frithelstock Stone*, and *Milford*. There was a small *Priory* of Austin Canons here, founded by Sir Roger Beauchamp, in the reign of Henry III. ... The estate now belongs to Lord Clinton, but the Rev. P. Thomas is lord of the manor, and Mrs. Stevens, and a few smaller owners, have estates in the parish. The *Church* (St. Mary and St. Gregory,) is an ancient structure, and the living is a *perpetual curacy*, in the patronage of Mrs. P. Johns, and incumbency of the Rev. G.W.T. Carwithen, M.A. Part of the Priory church, with lancet shaped windows, still remains." [From White's *Devonshire Directory* (1850)] – *Taken from Genuki*

All Saints Church, Langtree Devon (above) in which the Living was a Rectory valued at £348 per annum.
Frithelstock, Devon (below) in which the Living was a Vicarage valued at £116 per annum.
The Augustinian Priory was founded by Sir Roger Beauchamp in the reign of Henry III.

It was a summer's day in Langtree in 1785 and a very simple rural scene is quite easily reconstructed in the mind's eye as John Pidlar wandered around the village looking for one of his ewes. He only had a small number, but one had gone missing. Perhaps someone had taken it, but more likely it had just wandered off. It was then that he met someone from the village, who answered Pidlar's enquiry by suggesting that he might have seen someone driving a sheep. He wasn't sure who it was, but he went in that direction. So, John Pidlar thought it was time to tell the Parish Constable.

There were barely any cottages in the direction that had been indicated by the very vague witness, but they would call at each one. John Trace lived in one of those cottages and he was surprised that his visitors should question him so belligerently. There was no lost ewe on his patch, but the mutton that was being salted attracted attention. It was rather a lot.[1]

Where did you get this mutton? the constable asked.
John Tracey would not answer.
Are you sure that this is not Pidlar's ewe? The constable persisted.
Of course not. If it was, then where is the fleece and the rest of the animal?
There was no sign of anything that could be used in evidence except the mutton.

The constable was not satisfied.
You will come with me while I send for the magistrate.
John Trace had no choice and his day came to a miserable end in the local lock-up.

The Rolle Family owned all the land for miles around. In fact they had the largest estate in Devon (55,000 acres in the 1873 Land Returns) more than twice as much as the Duke of Bedford. The family seat was at Stevenstone, just to the south of Great Torrington, where they had lived since about 1524, so it was inevitable that the Justices of the Peace for the area would be found from within the family. The parish constable sent word to Henry Stevens at his home at Smithyham Manor, about 2½ miles to the east of Langtree and he replied that he would hear the complaint at the *Green Dragon* in Langtree on the following day.


GREEN DRAGON

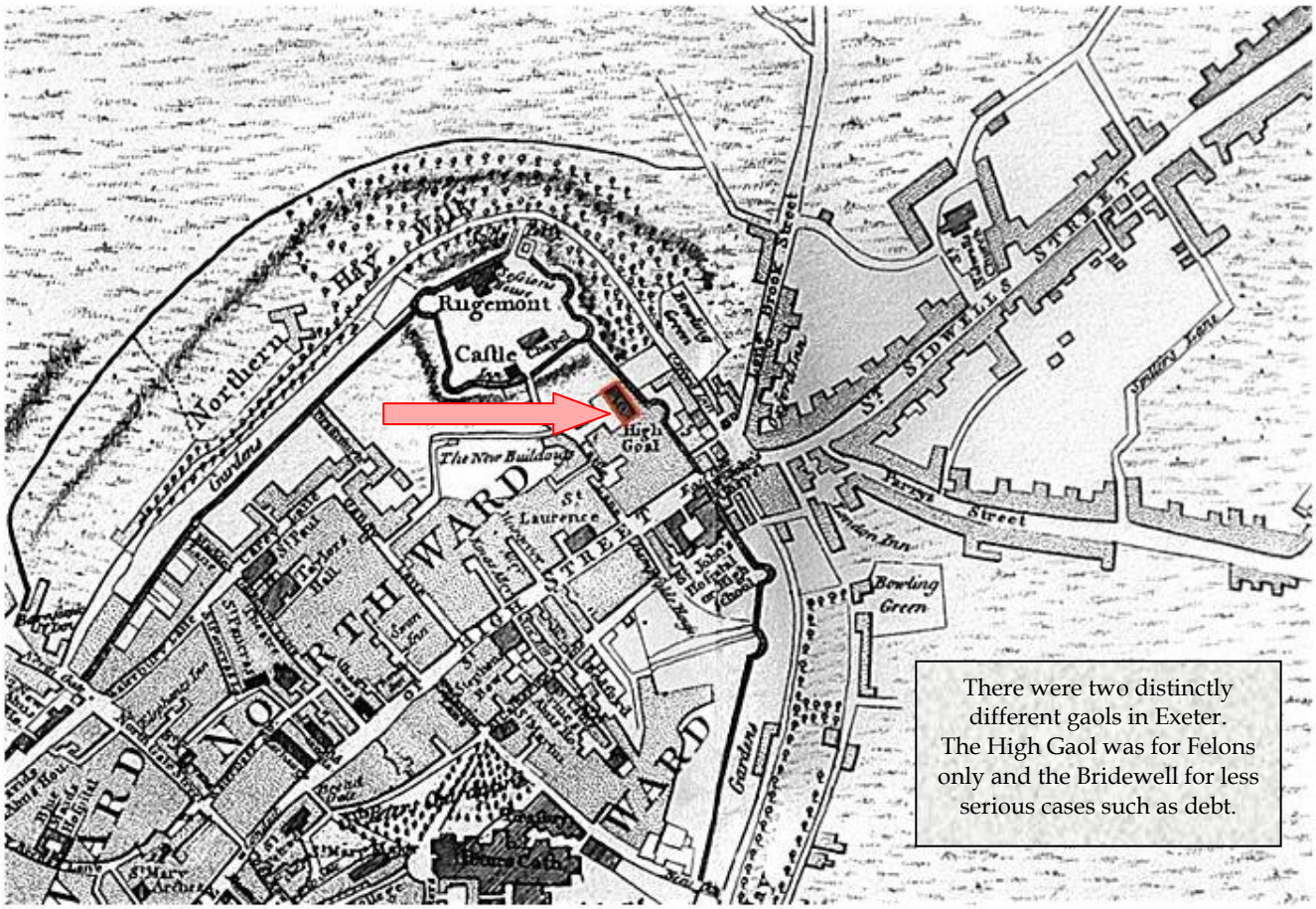
Henry was the eldest child of Henry Stevens[2] and Christiana Maria Rolle and he had been baptised at Frithelstock on the 31st July 1839, making him 46 years old in 1785. These were the days before the existence of magistrates' courts and police forces so it was customary to convene 'official' business in the local hostelry.

As a Justice of the Peace Henry Stevens was only required to hear the complaint that was brought before him and depending on the nature of the complaint he had a great deal of discretion in how he should proceed. In this case he favoured the complainant and as such John Trace had committed a felony and that meant a full hearing in a jury court. It was Tuesday 6th September

[1] The typical weight of full grown adult varies from 120 to 180 lbs – a fleece is no more than 8 lbs
[2] The spelling used in all four baptisms found in the Frithelstock Register

1785 and Henry Stevens committed John Trace to appear at the next Quarter Sessions in Exeter. John Trace was now a felon and as such he was a prisoner. He would not be going home to his wife who was pregnant with a child to add to her other two boys. Tracey would have been in chains, fettered at his wrists and ankles. How he was moved to Exeter Gaol is not clear. The most direct route from Torrington was through Beaford, Winkleigh, Copplestone and Crediton and it was 35 miles. It was a long way to walk in chains, so there must have been a cart.

The next session of the court was not until January 1786 and known as the Epiphany Sessions and John Trace would have to bide his time in Exeter Gaol. He was not the first to arrive. Nine others had been committed before him and three of those were women. Mary Buckpitt had committed murder but, the longest serving was John Anderson who had been sent down on the 22nd July. On the 15th November William Brooks arrived from Trace's locality as Henry Stephens[3] had committed him for burglary, a much more serious felony than stealing food. There were only four males of that name baptised in the Hundred of Shebbear in which Henry Stevens operated. Two were likely to have been too young for burglary at 12 and 13 in 1785 and a third was 48 and lived in Northam to the north of Bideford. However, on the basis of age and parish, it was possibly William Brooks the son of Thomas and Mary Brooks of Awlington who was baptised in 1767 and Awlington was about 7 miles north west of Langtree.



There were two distinctly different gaols in Exeter. The High Gaol was for Felons only and the Bridewell for less serious cases such as debt.

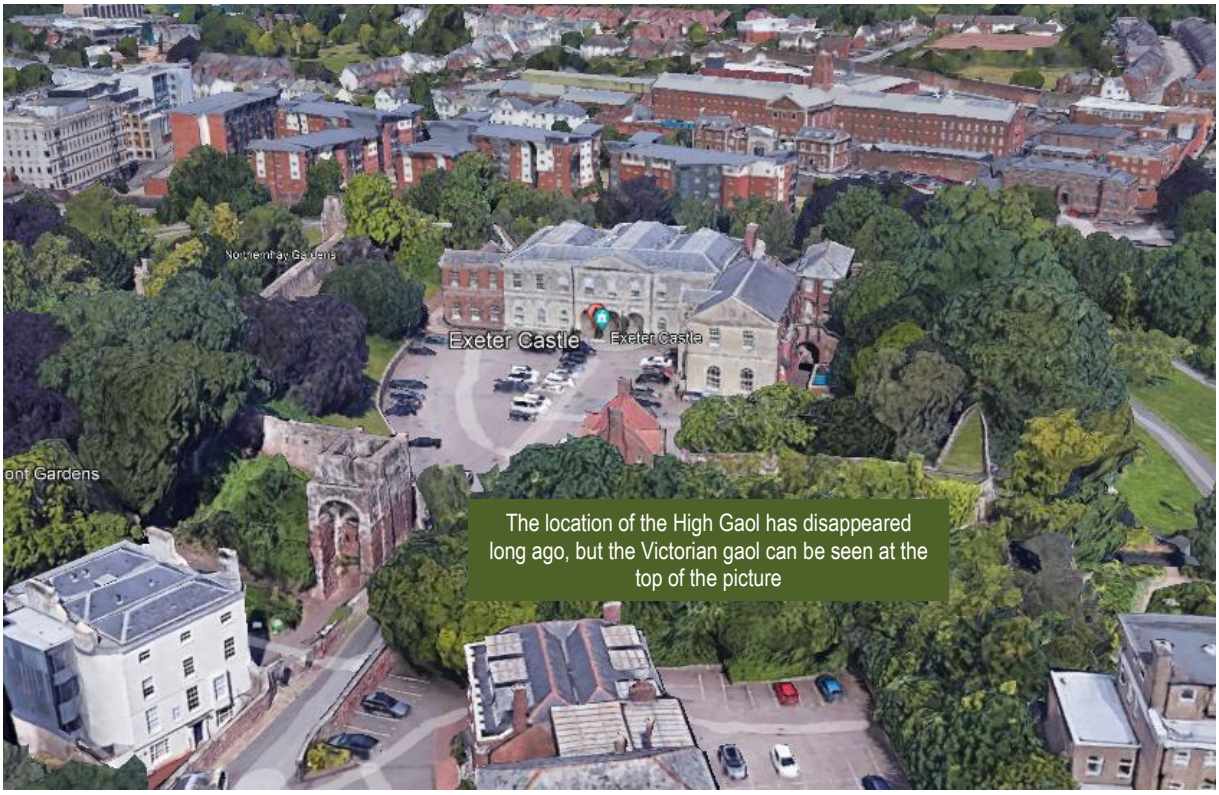
[3] This was the spelling used in a transcript of the Devon Gaol Calendar in the National Archive

Curiously, and with a touch of irony, the role of Keeper of the County Gaol in Devon was vested in the Lord of the Manor of Bradninch who also had to recruit the gaoler or 'janitor.' In 1786 that Keeper was none other than John Rolle who was coincidentally released from that responsibility after more than 600 years in 1787 by an Act of Parliament.[4]

There is a document among Court Records in the Devon Record Office called a Gaol Calendar which lists those prisoners who were moved from the gaol to the court at each session of the court and the document critical to this story is the one relating to the Epiphany Quarter Sessions 1786.[5] The list totals 39 prisoners and gives the dates they were committed to gaol for trial and the name of the JP committing them. It also gives the charge, which in 12 cases, including John Trace, it was simply 'felony,' but in all the others it was more specific. There were two murders and a stabbing; a number of burglaries and house breaking and several thefts of animals.

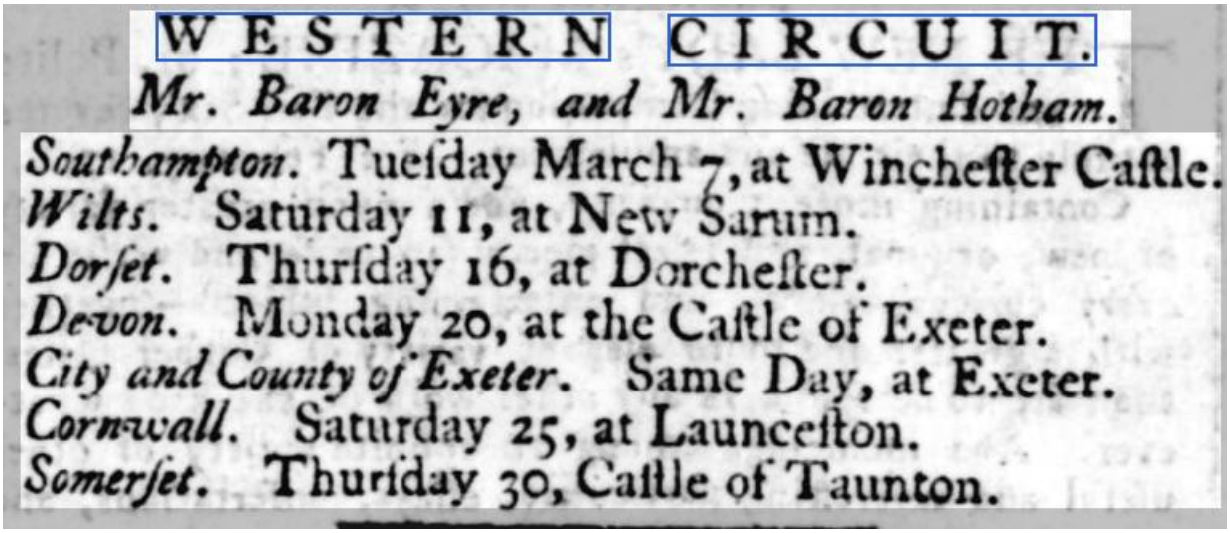
A felony was the most serious offence grouped under five headings,[6] but because they were the most serious, then the offender could expect a very serious punishment. John Trace must have been terrified by the situation in which he had found himself. He was accused of stealing a ewe, and sheep stealing could be punished by hanging. The aristocracy and the landed gentry were in general harsh in their attitude towards the theft of property and animals. Their objective in their punishments was deterrence, yet John Trace faced his punishment not knowing that the trend was softening as the century drifted towards its conclusion.

The Epiphany Quarter Sessions were held on the 6th January 1786 and their purpose was to hear crimes that could not be summarily dealt with by the Justices



[4] Public Act 1787 – 27 George III
[5] Court Records QS32-73
[6] The categories of felony were Murder; Wounding; Arson; Rape & Robbery

of the Peace. Up to three JPs sat with a jury, but they did not have jurisdiction to sentence those cases that attracted the most serious punishment. John Trace's crime fell into that category and his appearance before them is only known because his name is on the gaol calendar. It was decided at the Quarter Sessions that John Trace would stand trial at the Lent Assizes which meant two more miserable months in the overcrowded and filthy High Gaol, with very little to eat.



WESTERN CIRCUIT.

Mr. Baron Eyre, and Mr. Baron Hotham.

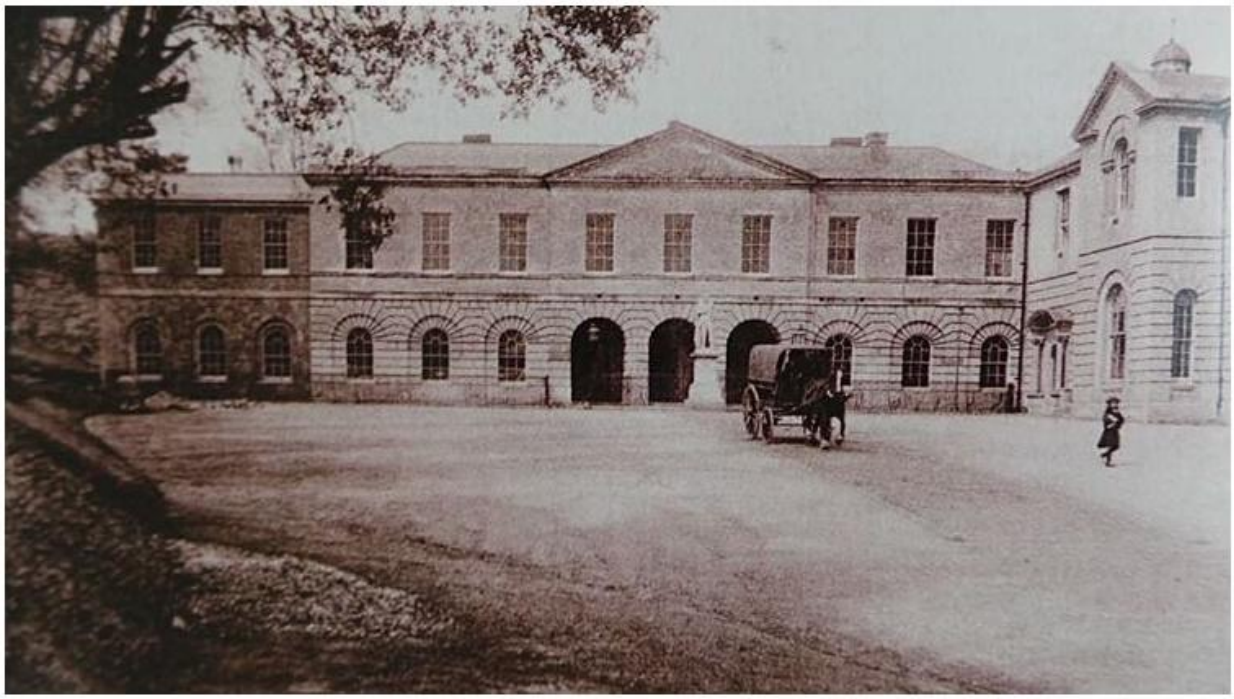
Southampton. Tueſday March 7, at Wincheſter Caſtle.
Wilts. Saturday 11, at New Sarum.
Dorſet. Thurſday 16, at Dorcheſter.
Devon. Monday 20, at the Caſtle of Exeter.
City and County of Exeter. Same Day, at Exeter.
Cornwall. Saturday 25, at Launceſton.
Somerſet. Thurſday 30, Caſtle of Taunton.

The Reading Mercury 27 February 1786

The following paragraph was taken from the official website of today's Western Circuit and is an indication of the divide between the two worlds of the landed gentry and the 'common folk.'

> When the assize judges arrived they were met by the High Sheriff in state and conducted to the cathedral for divine service, including the assize sermon preached by the High Sheriff's chaplain. Then they went to court to open the Commission, a formal document from the King to his "right trusty and well beloved" judge instructing him to hold the court, and finally to the Judges Lodgings. The courts opened for business the following morning.

The court house buildings were only twelve years old when John Tracey was taken



The Assize Courts in the 19th Century

inside to hear his case heard. He would not have seen this view as he was taken from the High Gaol to the cells beneath the court rooms. His mind must have been in turmoil as he was pushed and shoved towards the dock with his wrists and ankles still chained to face the formidable judge in ermine robes in front of him.

Judge Sir James Ayers 1734 – 1799 – Left
Judge Sir Beaumont Hotham 1737 – 1814 – Right
Both men were Barons of the Treasury

There were two courts in Rougemont Castle and the photograph above courtesy of Alamy shows Court No.2 with the Judge's chair in the corner bottom right and the dock directly in front of him. It has not been said, but I would surmise that both courts were used as all the cases had to be heard and settled before lunch as the Judges were required to sit in the Guildhall at the City Assizes during the afternoon

These were separate from the County Assizes, so it was a full day for all the dignitaries in their foppish regalia. The High Sheriff was expected to be present throughout the proceedings and he was the only man allowed to wear a sword. He was elected to the office each year and for 1786 it was Alexander Hamilton of Topsham, but Henry Stephens of Little Torrington occupied the position in 1770.

What Happened Next?

John Tracey was found guilty of stealing the mutton, but he was cleared of stealing the ewe, no doubt to the indignation of John Pidlar. His sentence was considered lenient at the time, but John Trace's world had collapsed. As he was hustled down the narrow stairs to the cells, he could be sure that he would not see the rolling fields of North Devon again. Neither would he see his wife, Elizabeth and their children. He would see only the inside of a filthy prison cell, with its dishevelled and rowdy inmates before being transferred by wagon to Plymouth Dock and its prison hulk, DUNKIRK[7] (front cover picture), to await his transportation.

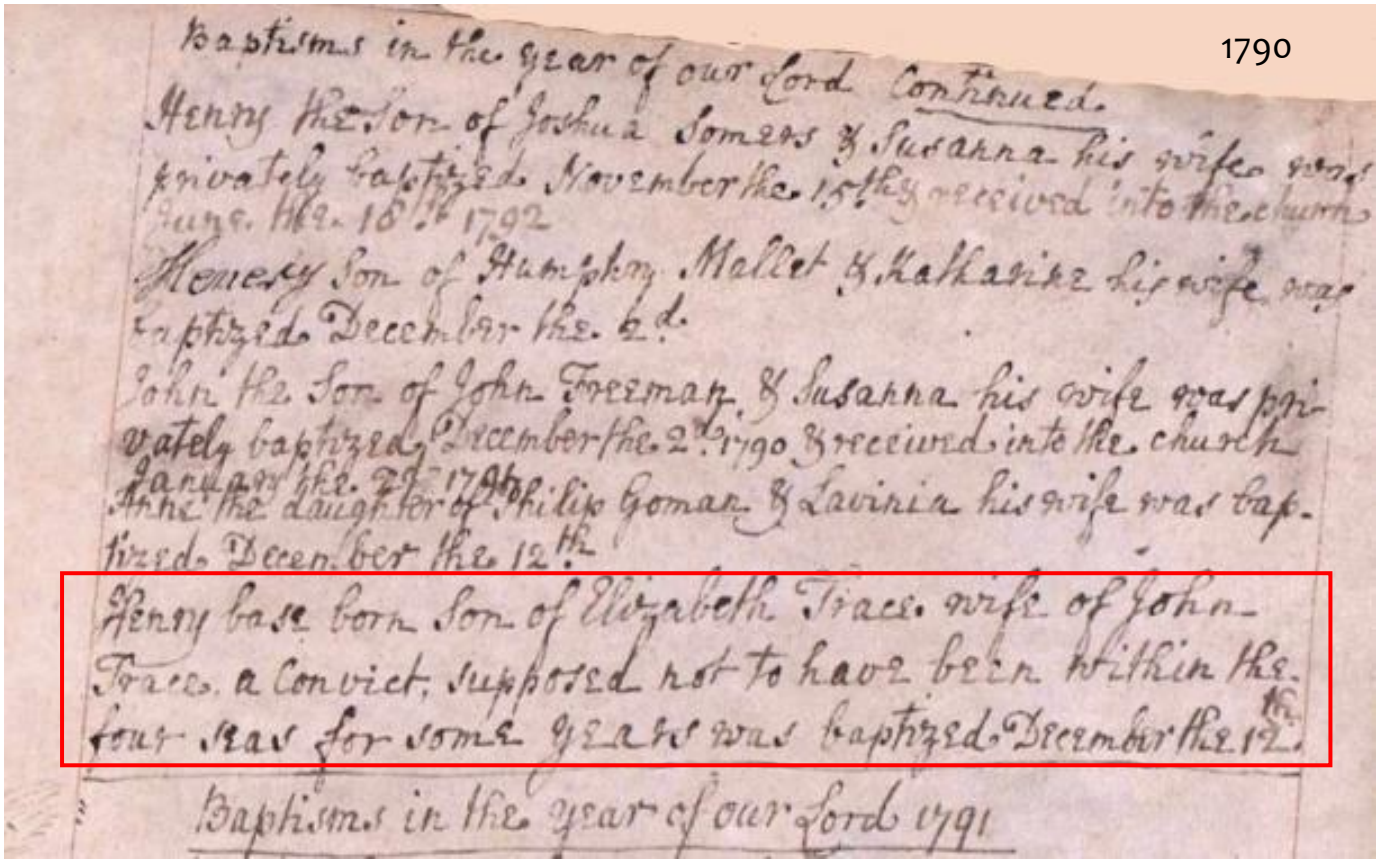
However there are two aspects to these circumstances that are not easy to explain and the first of these was the baptism of Elizabeth's third son, Richard. As has already been said he was baptised on the 8th July 1787 – EXACTLY eight weeks AFTER John had sailed on the First Feet and 110 days after his sentence.
What is NOT known is the birth date of Richard.

John Trace had been committed for trial on the 6th September 1785 and it is my understanding that he would have been a prisoner from that day onwards, but that was 18 MONTHS before his trial at the Assizes. Elizabeth must have been pregnant at the date of his committal and as a consequence, Richard would have been born in April 1786 at the latest. Elizabeth appears to have delayed his baptism by 15 months or more and that was unusual at the time. It has to be remembered that her life in the parish would have been a nightmare as she would have been shunned by most villagers whilst at the same time not able to leave unless she could support herself in another parish. She could not remarry, as a widow could have done, as everyone knew that her husband was still alive..... I wonder.....

However, nothing is more extraordinary than the vagaries of human nature and we are now nearly 250 years removed from the thinking of the day. It would make a fascinating sociological study to assess the reaction of those 18th century parishioners to the transportation of one of their own. Would there have been any sympathy or empathy for Elizabeth's predicament; and what of her family? Little is known about them. Even John Pidlar would have to live his daily life knowing that the man he accused had been found not guilty of stealing his ewe. The mutton he had in his kitchen was to feed his family through the winter. Thirty pounds was barely one quarter of a sheep, it wasn't a lot. Any man would have done the same for his family had he been offered meat without any questions being asked.

John Trace had now disappeared from their lives, but his name would live on in the gossip of the villagers. So what could Elizabeth do? She could not marry. She could not work with three young boys, but she would have to do something and the only place to seek help was from relatives. Her husband's father William was already dead (1780), but someone obviously offered to help to support her as she moved from her own village of Langtree to her husband's village of Frithelstock and the evidence for it was a shock.

[7] Built 1754 at Woolwich as a Fourth-Rate ship-of-the-line and converted for Plymouth Dock in 1782


1790
Baptisms in the year of our Lord Continued.
Henry the Son of Joshua Somers & Susanna his wife was
privately baptized November the 15th & received into the Church
June the 18th 1792
Henery Son of Humphry Mallet & Katharine his wife was
baptized December the 6th
John the Son of John Freeman & Susanna his wife was pri-
vately baptized December the 2d 1790 & received into the Church
January the 23d 1791
Anne the daughter of Philip Goman & Lavinia his wife was bap-
tized December the 12th
Henry base born Son of Elizabeth Trace wife of John
Trace a Convict, supposed not to have been within the
four seas for some years was baptized December the 12th
Baptisms in the year of our Lord 1791

I have seen hundreds of entries of baptisms of a 'base child' and I do not recall any additional comment by the officiating minister, but illegitimate children were always a problem for the parish. At this date Elizabeth would have fallen foul of the need to declare the name of the father[8] and the parish officers could have applied significant pressure on the couple to marry, but they could not do that in Elizabeth's case as she was already married. With three small boys, she was always at risk of being a charge on the parish, but there was an alternative. Its officers could have obtained a sum of money from the father known as a Bond of Indemnification. This could have been a lump sum or money spread over a prescribed period for the upkeep of the child. That may have been the reason for the insertion in the baptism register by the Curate James Gay, to remind others, in years to come, of Elizabeth's circumstances if she should come seeking financial support from the parish. But the question remains – why had Elizabeth resorted to this behaviour and was Richard really a child of her husband John?

It also has to be remembered that at this time the Settlement Act of 1662 was still in force that prevented people from casually moving from one parish to another without means of support and Elizabeth had done that in moving from her parish of Langtree to her husband's parish of Frithelstock.

So looking back from 2021 to a time beyond our comprehension, I can only say that the existence of my Grandmother Florence TRACEY was the result of one man's determination to rid himself of his past and his family. When Elizabeth Trace's second son John Trace decided to leave the shame and ignominy of a rural parish, he hoped to begin anew where no one would know him and would not ask any sensitive questions. The place he chose was Tamerton Foliot and he almost succeeded in keeping his past a secret – until that rainy day in September 2021.

[8] Bastardy Act 1732/33

Transportation

Transportation overseas as the punishment for many criminal offences, next in severity to the death sentence, was first introduced into English law by the Elizabethan Act of 1597 '*For the punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars* – to be banished out of this Realm and all other Dominions thereof —'. Further Acts were passed in 1664, 1666 and 1718, authorising the transportation of felons to America. For almost two centuries male and female convicts were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to Virginia, Jamaica, Barbados and other places under British dominion.

With the American revolt and subsequent Declaration of Independence in 1776, transportation fell, for some time, into disuse. Many criminals who would formerly have been transported were instead employed at hard labour in their native land under the terms of an Act passed in 1776. The prisons became overcrowded and prison hulks (disused warships moored in the Thames at Woolwich, and at Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth) were used to house those convicts who had been given a sentence of transportation. The conditions for the prisoners became worse and worse, and as an alternative the government considered transporting convicts to Gibraltar or Africa. Gibraltar was, however, found unsuitable and the Admiralty sent the sloop *Nautilus* to explore the west coast of Africa. Africa, too, was considered unsuitable for a penal colony, although there is evidence to show that a small number of convicts were in fact sent there – twenty-two convicts were transported in the *Recovery* to Cape Coast Castle in 1785.

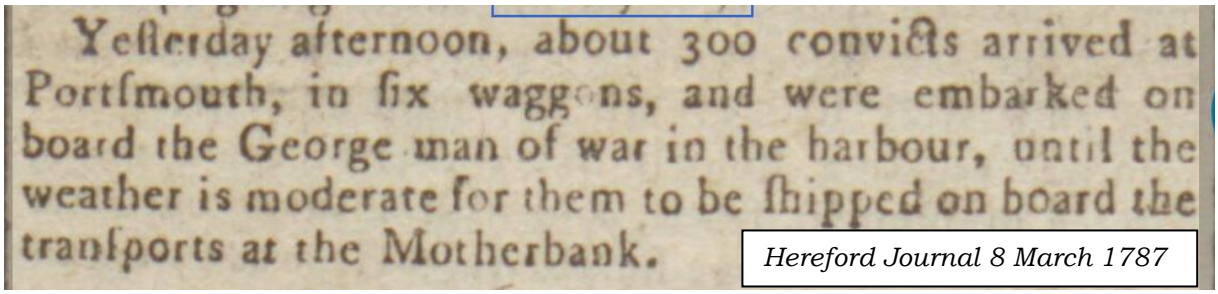
Eight years after transportation to America had ended it was felt that the large numbers of criminals given this punishment and held on board prison hulks could be more usefully employed in Britain's proposed settlement in the southern hemisphere. In 1784 another Act was passed, which, although it did not specifically mention New South Wales as a destination for transportees, ordered that transportation should resume as a regular procedure. This, the Act stated, would relieve the pressure that had built up in the gaols and prison hulks.

The use of cast-off naval warships as prison hulks came into being with the Act of 1776, but although initially considered to be adequate because of the large crews they used in service, they were very limiting in their use as prisons as there was only one at each naval port together with another on the Thames at Woolwich and the largest of them only accommodated 400 prisoners.

Prisoners kept in the hulks were set to hard labour in dockyards or on the banks of rivers. Those on the Thames were put to work improving the navigability of the river by removing gravel and soil from its shores. This work was backbreaking, exhausting and very public; Convict chain gangs provided a moral spectacle and example for all who saw them. The rations provided by the contractors were inadequate, in that they did not provide the convicts with the energy or nutrition required to perform such arduous work. This was done on purpose – the parliamentary act authorising the use of hulks stipulated that convicts were to be fed little other than bread, "any coarse or inferior food", water and small beer. Convicts frequently went hungry and often became malnourished. This was exacerbated by the fact that there were no charitable food handouts available to convicts on the hulks, as there were in conventional gaols. In fact, visiting was extremely limited for fear that tools could be smuggled aboard that could be used to escape.

The Voyage Begins

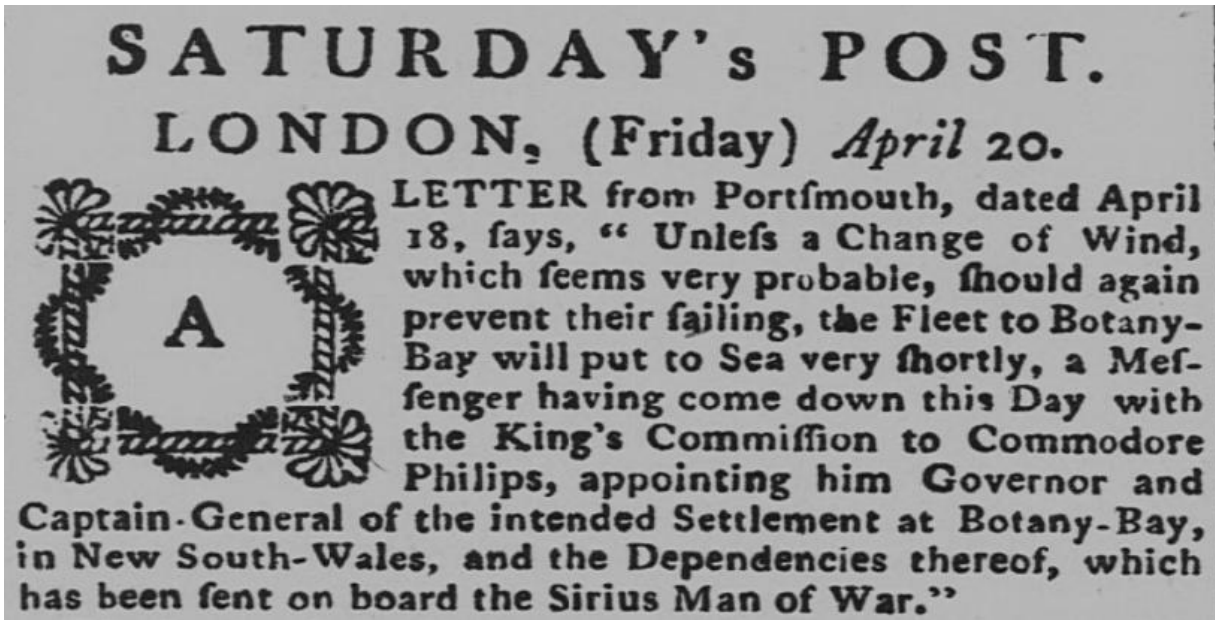
Following this basic introduction it became obvious that the assembly and departure of the fleet was reported in local newspapers around the country and I have selected three for their contemporary detail.



Yeſterday afternoon, about 300 convicts arrived at Portſmouth, in ſix waggons, and were embarked on board the George man of war in the harbour, until the weather is moderate for them to be ſhipped on board the tranſports at the Motherbank.

Hereford Journal 8 March 1787

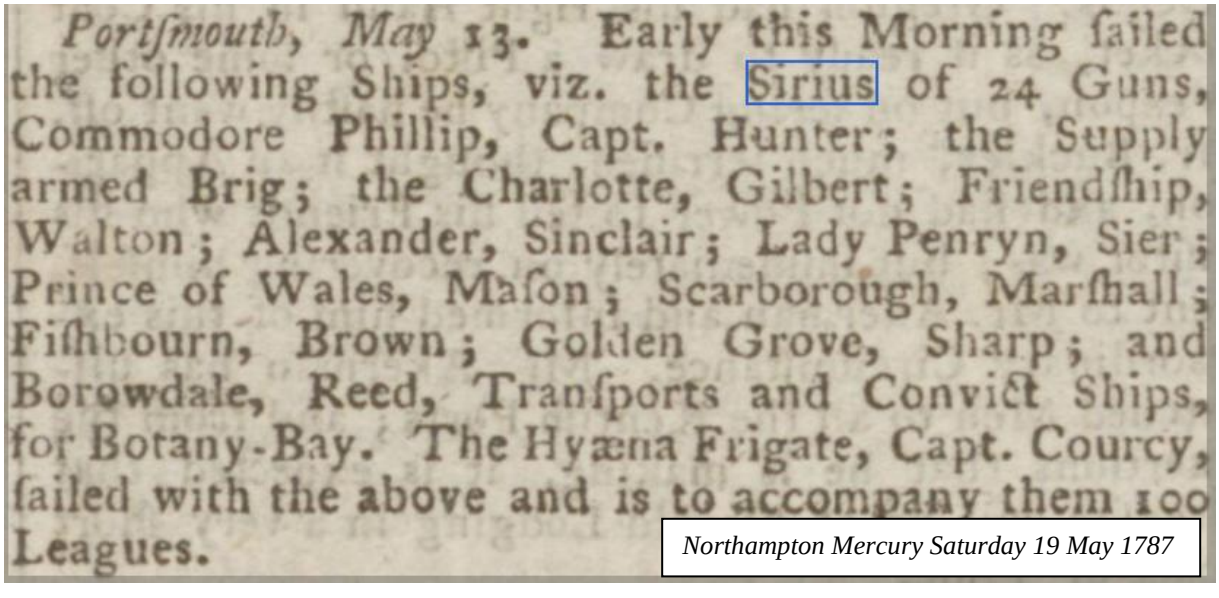
Derby Mercury 26 April 1787



SATURDAY's POST.

LONDON, (Friday) *April* 20.

A LETTER from Portſmouth, dated April 18, ſays, " Unleſs a Change of Wind, which ſeems very probable, ſhould again prevent their ſailing, the Fleet to Botany-Bay will put to Sea very ſhortly, a Meſſenger having come down this Day with the King's Commiſſion to Commodore Philips, appointing him Governor and Captain-General of the intended Settlement at Botany-Bay, in New South-Wales, and the Dependencies thereof, which has been ſent on board the Sirius Man of War."



Portſmouth, May 13. Early this Morning ſailed the following Ships, viz. the Sirius of 24 Guns, Commodore Phillip, Capt. Hunter; the Supply armed Brig; the Charlotte, Gilbert; Friendſhip, Walton; Alexander, Sinclair; Lady Penryn, Sier; Prince of Wales, Maſon; Scarborough, Marſhall; Fiſhbourn, Brown; Golden Grove, Sharp; and Borowdale, Reed, Tranſports and Convict Ships, for Botany-Bay. The Hyæna Frigate, Capt. Courcy, ſailed with the above and is to accompany them 100 Leagues.

Northampton Mercury Saturday 19 May 1787

The following list was published in the account of the voyage written by David Collins who was himself a part of the 'experiment.' The fleet began to assemble at Motherbank between Cowes and Ryde from the 16th March. This shoal of shallow water came to be used in 1780 to quarantine incoming vessels and it would seem that the convict ships fell into this category. The *Alexander* and the *Charlotte* had brought convicts from the *Dunkirk* prison hulk in Plymouth Dock and marines from East Stonehouse, but sources are muddled on this point. One otherwise reliable source states that the *Dunkirk* was not at Plymouth, but Portsmouth and used for female prisoners only and yet another source states that it was illegal to accommodate females in prison hulks. I have opted for Plymouth in line with *Charlotte's* orders.

The transports were of the following tonnage, and had on board the under mentioned number of convicts, and other persons, civil and military, viz

The *Alexander*, of 453 tons, Master Duncan Sinclair had on board 192 male convicts; 2 lieutenants, 2 sergeants, 2 corporals, 1 drummer, and 29 privates, with 1 assistant surgeon to the colony.

The *Scarborough*, of 418 tons, Master John Marshall had on board 205 male convicts; 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 sergeants, 2 corporals, 1 drummer, and 26 privates, with 1 assistant surgeon to the colony.

The *Charlotte*, of 346 tons, Master Thomas Gilbert had on board 89 male and 20 female convicts; 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 sergeants, 3 corporals, 1 drummer, and 35 privates, with the principal surgeon of the colony.

The *Lady Penrhyn*, of 338 tons, Master William Sever had on board 101 female convicts; 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, and 3 privates, with a person acting as a surgeon's mate.

The *Prince of Wales*, of 334 tons, Master John Mason had on board 2 male and 50 female convicts; 2 lieutenants, 3 sergeants, 2 corporals, 1 drummer, and 24 privates, with the surveyor-general of the colony.

The *Friendship*, of 228 tons, Master Francis Walton had on board 76 male and 21 female convicts; 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 sergeants, 3 corporals, 1 drummer, and 36 privates, with 1 assistant surgeon to the colony. There were on board, beside these, 28 women, 8 male and 6 female children, belonging to the soldiers of the detachment, together with 6 male and 7 female children belonging to the convicts. This vessel was unusually known as a snow. It had a small mast immediately behind the lower main mast which carried a spanker – a triangular sail fitted fore and aft.

The *Fishbourn* store-ship was of 378 tons; the *Borrowdale* of 272 tons; and the *Golden Grove* of 331 tons. On board this last ship was embarked the chaplain of the colony, with his wife and a servant.
Not only these as store-ships, but the men of war and transports, were stored in every part with provisions, implements of agriculture, camp equipage, clothing for the convicts, baggage, etc.

On board of the *Sirius* were taken, as supernumeraries, the major commandant of the corps of marines embarked in the transports*, the adjutant and quarter-master, the judge-advocate of the settlement, and the commissary; with 1 sergeant, 3 drummers, 7 privates, 4 women, and a few artificers.
[* This officer was also lieutenant-governor of the colony.]

The *Supply* brigantine of 170 tons Lieutenant Henry Ball was not included in Collins' list

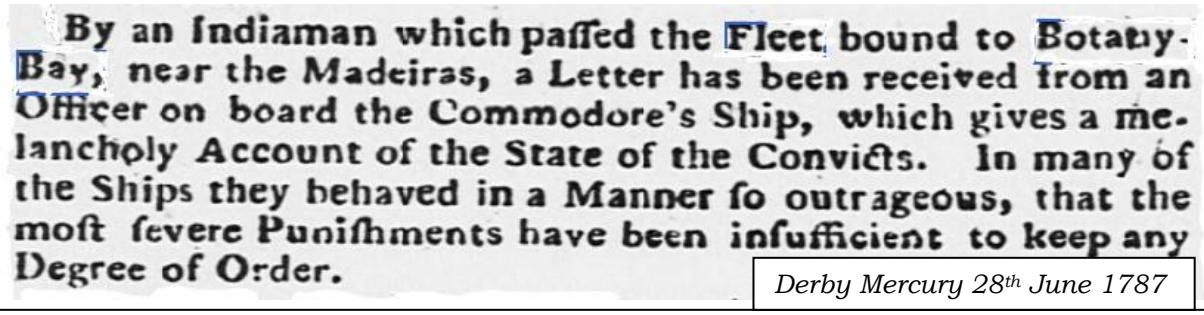
The Australian marine artist Frank Allen has captured the CHARLOTTE at rest in Portsmouth under the stern of the LADY PENRYHN. SIRIUS is a fine sight under full sail below.

The ships got under way on Saturday 12th May, but the wind proved to be unreliable and they got no further than Spithead before dropping anchor for the night. At dawn the next morning, Sunday 13th May 1787, the fleet weighed anchor and ran before a fresh breeze, passing the Needles without incident. It didn't take long to discover that two of the ships were 'heavy sailors' in the vernacular of that day and *Charlotte* and *Lady Penrhyn* could not keep up with the rest. This is a nightmare for any 'admiral' commanding a fleet and Commodore Phillip had to give instructions that they were not to separate at any cost, even by night. They also discovered that they had left behind the Provost Marshal (*Prince of Wales*), the 3rd Mate of the *Charlotte* and five men from the *Fishbourn*

The departing convicts fretted over '*the impracticability of returning home, the dread of a sickly passage, and the fearful prospect of a distant and barbarous country,'* wrote Lt. Watkin Tench, on the *Charlotte*. They were unwilling participants in this colonial enterprise and it is not surprising that it took only a week before the first plan for a mutiny was discovered on the *Scarborough.*

At 6 in the morning of the 3rd June the island of Tenerife was sighted and the fleet came to anchor in the road of Santa Cruz by 7 o'clock that same evening. In the evening of the 8th June, convict John Powers on the *Alexander* noticed an unattended small boat alongside with its oars. It was too good to miss. He was recaptured next day by *Alexander's* marines and clapped in irons for his trouble.

First News of the Fleet


By an Indiaman which paſſed the Fleet bound to Botany-Bay, near the Madeiras, a Letter has been received from an Officer on board the Commodore's Ship, which gives a melancholy Account of the State of the Convicts. In many of the Ships they behaved in a Manner ſo outrageous, that the moſt ſevere Puniſhments have been inſufficient to keep any Degree of Order.

Derby Mercury 28th June 1787

On the 18th June the SUPPLY sighted the first of the Cape Verde Islands and Commodore Phillip declared his intention to lay over for a short while to restock with fresh food and water. At noon the following day they were skirting the south end of St. Iago in sight of the harbour when the fleet was suddenly taken aback by very fickle winds and they could soon see from the colours on the fort that the wind was on shore. This would have made anchoring hazardous and Phillip abandoned the plan to avoid any possibility of an accident delaying the passage.

On the 14th July the Fleet crossed the Equator at longitude 26˚E and all those who had never heard of such a thing were compelled to submit to its *'ridiculous ceremony.'* From this time on the weather was very pleasant as they kept a good look out for Ascension Island. David Collins[9] wrote that *the island was not very well known or described and on some charts it is nearly in the track which we were to cross, but it was not seen by any of the ships in the Fleet.* This indicates a lack of knowledge that is quite surprising as its location approximates to 8˚S, 14˚W and as they had crossed the Equator at 26˚W then they were over 600 miles[10] to the west of its position.

During the passage across the Atlantic to the Americas the Fleet suffered two accidents when a seaman from the ALEXANDER fell overboard and could not be rescued and a female convict on the PRINCE of WALES was seriously injured by a ship's boat. The violent motion of the ship caused the boat to fall from its boom and it fell on the unfortunate woman crushing the vertebrae in her neck and spine. There was nothing the surgeon could do for her.

On Thursday 2nd August, the coast of South America was in sight. Collins noted, *our time piece had given us notice when to look out for it and the land was made precisely at the hour in which it had taught us to expect it.*

It was the evening of the 4th August when they anchored among the islands at the entrance to the harbour of Rio de Janeiro.

Rio de Janeiro

On 5th August 1787, while CHARLOTTE was at anchor, it was discovered that a coin counterfeiting 'business' had been going on below its decks. Convict Thomas Barrett, assisted by two other convicts, had been *'with great ingenuity' manufacturing quarter dollars out of 'old buckles* [and] *buttons belonging to the marines, and pewter spoons',* according to Surgeon General John White's account (published 1790).

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[9] Collins was the senior Royal Marine Officer in the Fleet, but he had been appointed Advocate General to the Colony

[10] 1˚ of longitude is 54.6 miles

White rated their skill highly, and believed that if only the men had better metal to work with, the coins *'would have passed undetected'*. Despite an extensive search, their coining equipment could not be found and White was at a loss to understand how they managed to work undiscovered, since *'a centinel* (sic) *was constantly placed over their hatchway' and hardly ten minutes ever elapsed, without an officer of some sort going down among them'*. This came to light when one of the convicts attempted to pass one of the coins to a boat that had brought goods for sale alongside. Sources vary concerning the identity of the ring leader, Thomas Barrett, but there is little doubt that he was a hardened criminal and a convict of that name was the first man hanged in the colony in New South Wales.

On Saturday 1st September, Commodore Phillip instructed his Masters of his intention to sail on the Monday morning and a ship's officer was sent ashore to inform the viceroy of his intention to salute the forts. The Commodore was held in high regard by the Portuguese due to an unusual period in which he had commanded a Portuguese man-o-war.

During their stay in the port the convicts had benefited from a good ration of rice. meat and vegetables to which had been added large quantities of oranges, to guard against any possibility of scurvy, supplemented with bananas. It was considered a pity that they had not been there at a different season when pineapples and other local fruit would have been plentiful, but the resourceful market in the palace square had never left them lacking for anything.

On Monday morning there was no wind and all idea of sailing had to be abandoned, but at daybreak on the following day the Harbour master came on board SIRIUS to pilot the vessel over the bar under a light land breeze and the SUPPLY followed her with the convoy. When SIRIUS was abreast of the fort at Santa Cruz she was saluted by a 21-gun salute which was returned by the SIRIUS. Shortly afterwards the Harbourmaster left the ship taking its Master, Mr. Morton with him. He had been suffering from ill-health and was returning to England taking a bulging dispatch case full of letters with him.

A modern calculator of distances between ports states that it is 3882 nautical miles from Rio to Cape Town. To a modern ship at a steady 10 knots that is 16 days, but 15 days out from Rio the Fleet was struggling. The wind was fresh and frequently blew in squalls and during one of these squalls the CHARLOTTE suddenly hove-to. **Man overboard!** There was nothing that could be done and another convict would not see Botany Bay.

At 1 o'clock in the morning of the 23rd September the bad tempered weather turned to a full gale accompanied by enormous seas. An officer on the SIRIUS commented that they had the satisfaction of watching *the convoy getting on very well although some of them rolled prodigiously.* The gale blew for five days before moderating for a few hours and shifting to the SE when it resumed its exertions with full force and a great deal of rain. It was Sunday 30th September before something resembling calm returned to life on board the convoy and clear weather allowed sightings to give them some idea where they were.

On the 4th October – 29 days out - Commodore Phillip was informed that upwards of 30 convicts on the CHARLOTTE were ill and some of them were feared to be dangerously ill. Two days later, four seamen on the ALEXANDER were discovered plotting to release convicts when they reached Cape Town and they had given them

tools to break into the forward hold and steal provisions. The four seamen were sent to the SIRIUS, but were not detained.
The following morning was a beautiful sunlit morning and enabled accurate readings to be taken to determine their position. They were found to be at longitude 15˚35'E which meant that they were approaching Cape Town, but still had 150 miles ahead of them. At about 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the 13th October the Harbourmaster boarded the SIRIUS and brought her to anchor in Table Bay with the Fleet doing the same before dark. Collins wrote that *they were grateful to have crossed the ocean without accident or separation in the very short space of 5 weeks and 4 days,* which in reality is little more than walking speed.

Cape Town

One of Commodore Phillip's first actions on arrival at any port was to make contact with its Governor and this was followed by the requisition for all the stores that they would need to replenish their own depleted supplies and extra items for the new colony ahead of them. It came as a shock to discover that Cape Town had been suffering a famine of its own making. The crops had not failed, but their management had caused a calamity. As a consequence the Governor's hands were tied and the Fleet could be given nothing until it had been put before the Council.

Whilst everyone in the Fleet fretted impatiently, it was ten days before Phillip was informed that they had agreed to his request, but there was a gang of men among the Fleet who did not idle away their time. The carpenters were busy constructing pens for the reception of the animals for the new colony and this task took much longer than the decision to allow their supply. It was the 8th November before the animals were embarked upon their allocated ships. The SIRIUS took the bulls and cows, LADY PENRHYN took the horses, whilst the sheep, goats and pigs were divided between the FRIENDSHIP and the FISHBOURN.

The following day the Fleet completed filling every conceivable receptacle with water and embarked all the corn and hay for the stock whilst the ships were readied for sea. It was imperative now that no time should be wasted with the animals consuming prodigious quantities of water and hay. As Collins put it – *nothing remained that need detain the convoy longer in port.*

At this point it is worth noting that news of their stay in Cape Town took over four months to reach the English newspapers. During February 1788 the *Hampshire Chronicle* published a long letter which they praised for its detail and authority coming from 'An Officer of Verity' and written in Table Bay. Some of its highlights are reproduced below;

> We left Rio Janerio on the 4th August and nothing happened until the 19th when a convict fell overboard from the CHARLOTTE and despite every effort to save him, he drowned. From the 25th August we had bad weather and on the 3rd September a plan for a mutiny was uncovered among the seamen of 'our ship' (unknown). At this time the CHAROTTE had 30 sick but the weather improved and so did the sick. The females among the ships had increased the company by seven souls and our Doctor baptised them on the different ships and we celebrated with an increased ration of grog.
>
> On the 7th October the crew of the ALEXANDER mutinied, taking advantage that the majority of marines on the ship were sick. It was successfully put down and four leaders put in irons and sent to the SIRIUS. On the 12th October to our great joy we made Table Bay, but our satisfaction was allayed when the Second Mate of the FRIENDSHIP fell overboard and perished.

On the 1st November a woman convict on the LADY PENRHYN fell overboard but was saved by 'our boat.' On the 10th November the Masters were given orders of the Commodore's intention to sail on the following day.

We have plentiful provision of livestock for the new settlement – 3 bulls, 10 cows; 3 horses, 12 mares; 120 rams and ewes; 4 billy, 20 nanny goats; 80 dozen fowls; 20 dozen ducks; 6 dozen geese and 4 dozen turkeys.

While in Table Bay every person has been allowed 1½lbs of meat; 1½lbs of bread and 1 gallon of beer per day.

The only place proposed to stop between here and Botany Bay is Desolation Island so called because it has no vegetation, but at its centre is a lake of pure fresh water.

The provision made by government has filled the hearts of the new settlers with gratitude and reconciled them to their fate.

In spite of the trusted 'verity' of this officer's letter, the figures quoted by Collins vary considerably from his. Collins quoted 1 bull and 1 bull calf with 7 cows; a stallion, 3 mares and 3 colts, as for the smaller animals Collins simply said that they took as many as could be comfortably accommodated. (44 sheep & 32 hogs).

On the evening of Sunday 11th November the SIRIUS unmoored and the Masters were given instructions to put to sea the following morning, but when that came, the wind was against them. Frustrated, SIRIUS put all its boats back in the water and sent them ashore with the order that – *for the preservation of the stock, no vessel that can hold water should be taken to sea empty.*

At ten minutes before 2 o'clock on the afternoon of Monday 12th November the whole Fleet set sail with a fresh south easterly wind beginning to blow. There was 6830 nautical miles in front of them and at a generous 5 knots that was 57 days at sea – 8 weeks – could the animals survive?

Crossing the Southern Ocean

There was no landfall between the Fleet and its destination. Unlike the northern latitude which crosses North America, Turkey, Russia and China, latitude 40˚S is only land borne for a very short distance across southern Argentina. The Southern Ocean has nothing to curb the wild excesses of the Roaring Forties and many a sailing ship his disappeared in its attempt to cross it. But this was the 18th century, few ships had sailed these waters and navigation was still rudimentary, while Commodore Phillip was leading a Fleet of ships of barely a few hundred tons each with diverse sailing capabilities. The prevailing wind was predominantly from the west. It was a constant wind with more force than northern mariners were used to, so it was a daunting prospect that lay ahead of them.

Two weeks out from Cape Town Phillip decided to split the Fleet. He had possibly tired of proceeding at the pace of the slowest ship, although that is not intimated. Phillip decided to transfer to the SUPPLY, which was the fastest ship in the Fleet and take with him SCARBOROUGH, FRIENDSHIP and ALEXANDER which were the best sailors and together carried the majority of male convicts. As a consequence, the commanding officer of the marine guard, Major Ross transferred to the SCARBOROUGH taking his adjutant and quartermaster with him.

Phillip's declared intention on arrival was to locate the desired site and to prepare for the arrival of the rest of the Fleet. To this end he also took with him men who would be useful in preparing the camp: carpenters, blacksmiths and sawyers, but there were officers among those who remained who doubted the decision. Lt Philip Gidley King of the SIRIUS wrote sceptically of Phillip's plan in his journal: *'the governor flatters himself that he shall arrive at the place of our destination* (Botany

Bay) *a fortnight before the Transports in which time he will be able to make his observations on the place whether it is a proper spot for the settlement'.*

Another man who remained behind on board the SIRIUS was David Collins so we retain the benefit of his narrative as they proceeded with the CHARLOTTE and the others. The Fleet parted company on the 25th November 1787 leaving Captain Hunter on the SIRIUS to set a south easterly course with a fresh west north westerly breeze behind them.

On Monday 17th December SIRIUS sent a boat over to the FISHBOURN to check on the state of the stock, but returned with the concerning news that a number of sheep and eight pigs were dead. They were now below the 40˚S latitude as Christmas Day approached. They had maintained a steady course of ESE for days and inevitably were encroaching farther and farther to the south. When Christmas Day dawned they found that they were at 42˚10'S and Collins writes; *We complied, as far as was in our power, with the good old English custom, and partook of a better dinner this day than usual; but the weather was too rough to admit of much social enjoyment.*

On the 28th December they started to notice seaweed drifting past the ships, a sure sign that land was somewhere in the vicinity. The next day their position at noon was calculated to be 43˚35'S and there was no further need to make distance southwards. When all their calculations were complete they discovered that they had travelled 182 miles since noon the previous day and that was the longest single day's progress since they had left England.

The New Year 1788 opened with a violent northerly gale that continued all day, but once it had moderated, levels of expectancy began to rise in every soul on board the ships. At noon on the 4th January preparations began in earnest as her mooring cables were checked and her guns thoroughly prepared to signal their arrival.

They didn't have long to wait. At five minutes past two on the afternoon of Monday 7th January 1788 the lookout at the mast head of the SIRIUS shouted 'Land-Ho!' as the two rocks that had been named Mewstone and Swilly hove into view.[11] The Fleet was soon following the shore in smooth water with New Holland being just 3 miles distant on their port beam. Collins was impressed with the navigation. He wrote, *nothing could more strongly prove the excellence of our lunar observations, than the accuracy with which we made land on the long voyage from the Cape of Good Hope. There was not a league difference between our expectation and the seeing of it.*

For weeks now they had been living in a world of tense expectancy and now that they had arrived, the relief was palpable as the writer's quill began to record his memories of the voyage. It was a world full of wonderment like the beautiful *aurora australis* seen on the night of the 5th January and the strange luminous phenomenon of lights floating on the surface of the water. Scarcely a day had passed without

[11] These had been named Captain Furneaux who lived at Swilly in Plymouth

the company of different varieties of birds and they had met with many whales, but the end of the voyage could not come soon enough as the hay for the horses was about to run out.

Whilst Collins was immersed in his reverie they were still within sight of the rocks and the wind shifted around to the NE which would drive them on shore. Action was needed immediately to avoid the Swilly Rock and its fearsome neighbour, a perpendicular rock that lay 3 miles to its east appropriately named – Eddystone.
The weather now took on a strange form of inconsistency and on the night of the 9th January the GOLDEN GROVE shipped a sea, which stove in all her cabin windows: it was nearly calm at the time, with a confused heavy swell and as more ships began to frequent this coast, this same phenomenon afflicted other ships almost in the same location.

At 2 in the afternoon of the following day, a sudden, unexpected squall laid the SIRIUS almost on her starboard side whilst shredding some of the sails on the transports. Progress along the coast became very slow and it was not until the 19th January that they recognised the point of land named Red Point by Captain Cook and by the evening they were within sight of the entrance into Botany Bay. The last paragraph in Collins's account of the voyage said this;
When the morning came we found the fleet had been carried by a current to the southward as far as a clump of trees which had the preceding day obtained, from some resemblance in the appearance, the name of Post-down Clump; but with the assistance of a fine breeze we soon regained what we had lost in the night; and at ten minutes before eight in the morning the Sirius came to an anchor in Botany Bay. The transports were all safe in by nine o'clock.

The date was now the 20th January 1788. It was a Sunday and when the SIRIUS entered the bay they were delighted to see the other ships were there and Captain Hunter was informed that the SUPPLY had only arrived two days previously. Lt. Shortland had brought in the transports on the previous day, but Commodore Phillip already had his doubts about the location.

Botany Bay with SIRUIS nearest and SUPPLY behind her.

A Change of Plan

At journey's end, after eight months and one week,[12] the successful arrival of the First Fleet in Botany Bay was a cause for celebration. The officers were quite honest in saying that *it was a voyage which the mind dared not contemplate*. They had travelled 15,063 miles[13] without accident in a Fleet of eleven vessels, nine of which were merchantmen that had never before sailed in that barely known ocean. They had a cargo of convicts who were embarked in a very sickly state, yet they had only lost 32 people since leaving England some of whom were not convicts.[14]

Although Governor Phillip had only been there two days he had not seen any favourable location. The area best suited to cultivation had water that was draining from a swamp and the ground was too confined, whilst the bay itself was open to the SE and not a safe haven for anchoring vessels.

Arthur Phillip wasted no more time on it. He gave instructions that Lt. King of the SIRIUS should continue to explore Botany Bay whilst he took a party in three ships' boats northward to explore Port Jackson and Broken Bay, both of which had been noted on Cook's exploration. If these should prove unsuitable, then Botany Bay it had to be, so he ordered that preparations should be made for landing everyone on his return. A camp site had to be cleared that would accommodate the convicts and their marine guard.

It was Monday 21st January – the day after the SIRIUS had arrived with her fleet – Captain Hunter and his Master, Captain Collins and a Lieutenant, with a small party of marines set off in mild weather with a gentle swell and they soon attracted the attentions of the natives who followed their progress along the coast.

As they drew near to Port Jackson the coast became unattractive, even intimidating. Phillip was preparing himself for disappointment, but as soon as they gained the confines of the Bay, Phillip found a place he later described as a place '*without exception, it is the finest and most extensive harbour in the universe*. In one of the coves of this harbour Phillip found exactly what he was looking for and his mind was made up. As they left Port Jackson on the 23rd January, their every move had been watched by several small groups of natives.

On his return to Botany Bay, Lt King reported to the Governor that he had seen nothing that would change the Governor's decision and instructions were given for the Fleet to move to Port Jackson on the following morning. A saw pit had been dug which had to be abandoned, but that was no great loss. The decision to move was enthusiastically applauded.

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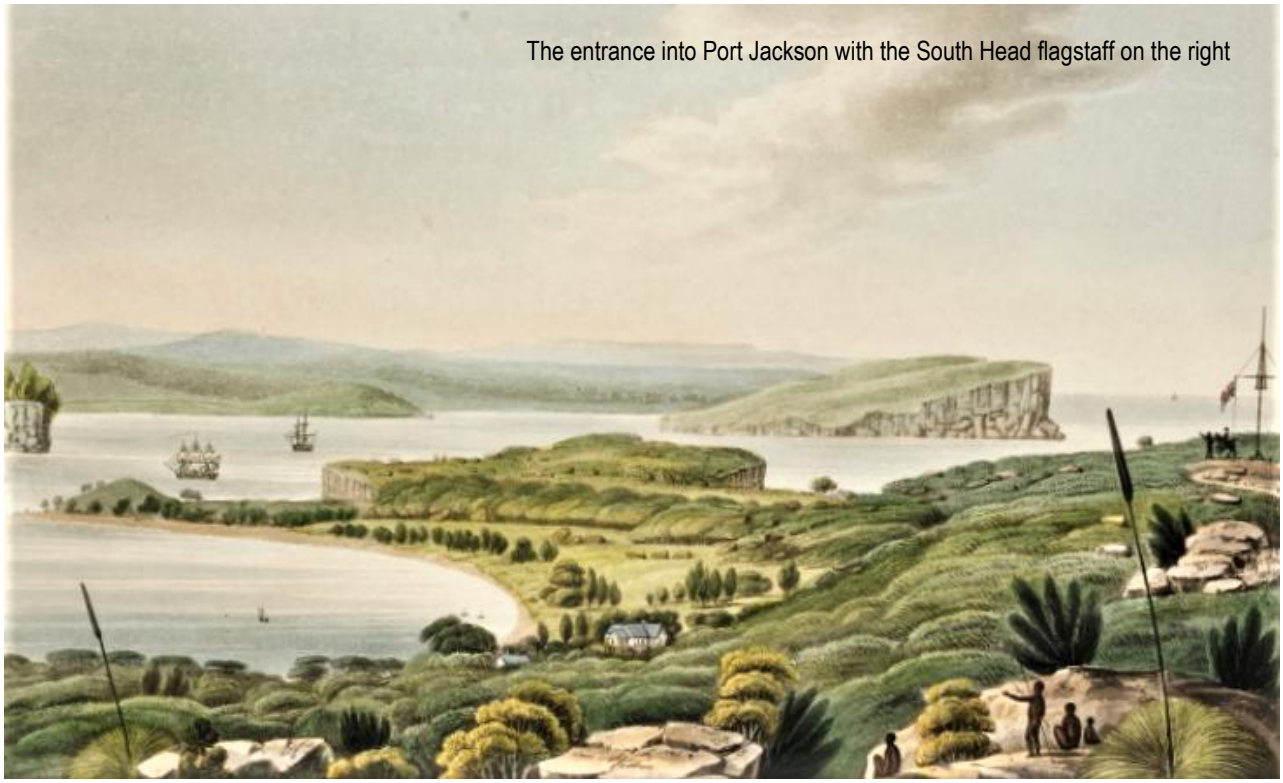
[12] Watkins Tench states 36 weeks to the day from Portsmouth

[13] The Charlotte Medal records 13106 miles.

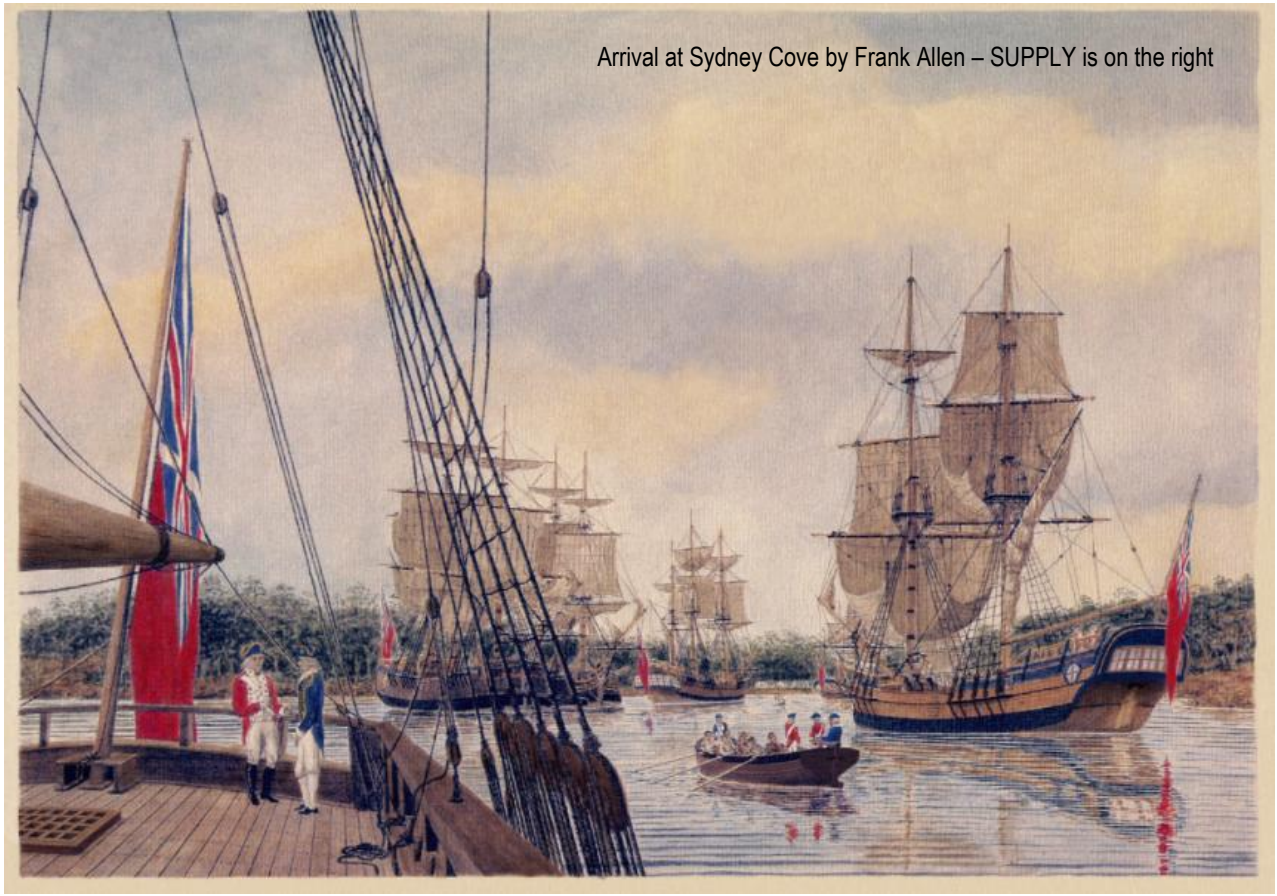
[14] Watkin Tench states 1 marine from 212 and 24 convicts from 775 were lost on passage.

Port Jackson and the New Colony at Sydney Cove



The entrance into Port Jackson with the South Head flagstaff on the right

It was about four miles from the harbour entrance that the SUPPLY with Governor Arthur Phillip on board, anchored in the mouth of the cove chosen for the settlement. All along the shoreline the trees grew to the water's edge. It was the evening of Friday 25th January 1788 and it was a very fine evening.



Arrival at Sydney Cove by Frank Allen – SUPPLY is on the right

It had been intended that the entire Fleet would move out of Botany Bay on the 25th January, but on that morning two strange sail were seen approaching, but the Governor was anxious to leave and had gone ahead leaving the SIRIUS to discover the identity of their unexpected visitors. It was the morning of the 26th, whilst Captain Hunter was preparing the Fleet for their departure, that two French ships entered Botany Bay on their own 'voyage of discovery.' The two commanders barely had time to exchange civilities and the French were left wondering why the English had quit the bay, when they were expecting to see a new town and a market.

It is noticeable that many, if not most of the paintings that portray these historic events have been created for artistic effect rather than for historic accuracy. The scene portrayed on this page is informal and does not represent the enactment when only the SUPPLY was present in the cove as Collins writes;

> In the evening of this day the whole of the party that came round in the *Supply* were assembled at the point where they had first landed in the morning, and on which a flag-staff had been purposely erected and an union jack displayed, when the marines fired several volleys; between which the governor and the officers who accompanied him drank the health of his Majesty and the Royal Family, and success to the new colony. The day, which had been uncommonly fine, concluded with the safe arrival of the *Sirius* and the convoy from Botany Bay--thus terminating the voyage with the same good fortune that had from its commencement been so conspicuously their friend and companion.

However, the artistic license which brings all the ships remarkably close together and in close proximity to the shore must enshrine that day of Saturday 26th January 1788 when an official end to the voyage was declared and the work on shore could begin. The formal declaration of the establishment of the colony would come later and John Trace would be there.

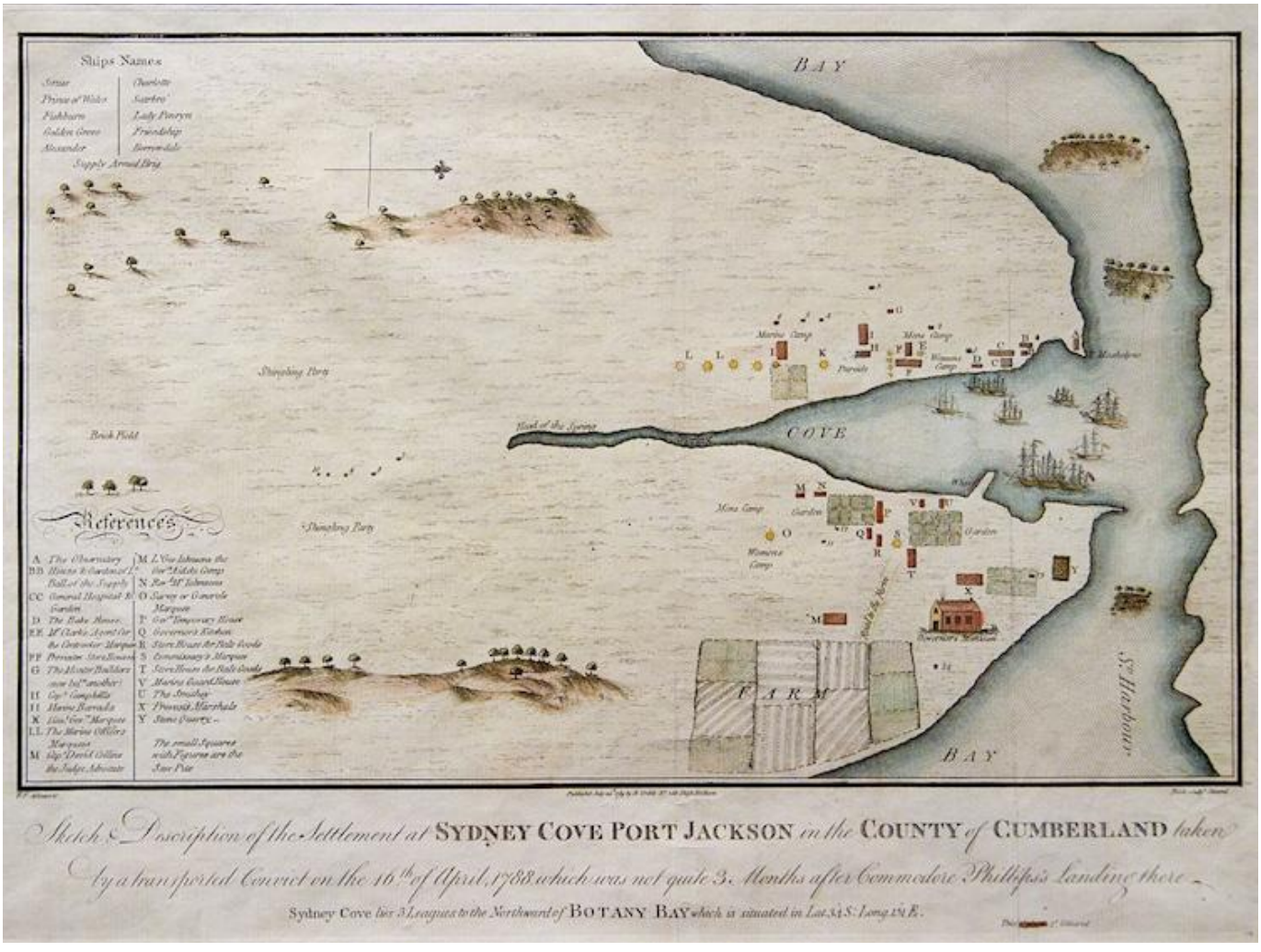
First Things First

It is understandable that the new Governor of the new territory was anxious to begin the gargantuan work without delay and in spite of it being Sunday the disembarkation of the marines and convicts began and continued until they were all on shore. It was said that every man stepped from the boat into a wood, so ground clearance was the first priority as the men were divided into working parties clearing space for the different encampments. The serenity of the spot which had been untouched since the birth of the world was a confusion of noise and clamour.

As soon as the ordered chaos of disembarkation had subsided, Captain Arthur Phillip was obliged to read publicly His Majesty's Commission which appointed him Captain-General and Governor of the territory of New South Wales. It had already been decided to name their landing place Sydney Cove in honour of Lord Sydney,[15] but he also carried letters with him that defined the limits of their territory that had never previously been seen. It extended from Cape York in the north to its southern extremity South Cape, and it extended inland westward as far as longitude 135˚E.

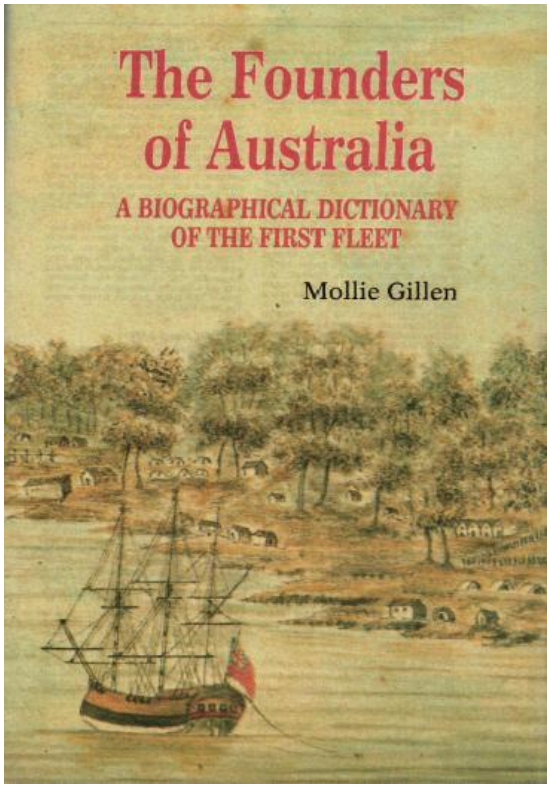
These very formal proceedings concluded with the Governor addressing the assembled convicts and he made it clear that he would encourage and reward good conduct, but that anyone continuing in their criminal habits would be given the punishment they deserved. The occasion was concluded by a formal inspection of the marine guard followed by a celebration dinner in the large tent that had been erected for the Governor. It was said that this took place on Thursday 7th February.

Accurate maps of the area had not yet been surveyed and drawn, but this is one of the earliest that had been drawn by a convict and dated the 16th April 1788.



The Founders of Australia

This story left John Trace on the prison ship DUNKIRK in Plymouth Dock and since then, there has been little mention of his name. On board the CHARLOTTE he would have seen or heard everything that happened. He had endured rough weather and interminable days at sea that seemed that they would never end, but that had now passed. The soil of New South Wales was beneath his feet. He was one of the Founders of Australia. John Trace's profile is not significant in the book of that name by Mollie Gillen which details everyone who was on that First Fleet. It describes his life in less than 400 words and says,



> John Trace was sentenced to seven years transportation at Exeter on the 20th March 1786 for stealing 30 pounds of mutton from persons unknown, but not guilty of the theft of a ewe sheep from a named owner. Sent to the Dunkirk Hulk aged 31, he was *tolerably decent and orderly* and delivered on the 11th March 1787 to the CHARLOTTE.
>
> At Port Jackson, he was accused on the 25th May 1788 of stealing some flour from his tent mate. Thomas Till, and received sentence the next day of 200 lashes and required also to repay the flour. He was ordered another 50 lashes on the 23rd January 1789 for selling a pair of shoes from Thomas Prior.
>
> On the 23rd August (1790) John TRACE married Mary ROSE, who sailed in the Second Fleet on the LADY JULIANA with her age given as 20 in 1789. Their only known child, George, was born on the 10th August 1796 and baptised at St. John's Parramatta.
>
> He was settled in mid-August 1792 and emancipated on the 3rd November, three months early, in order to become a settler. He received a 50-acre grant at Prospect and Governor Phillip asked for his wife's return from Norfolk Island, since Trace was now a settler. Mary Trace returned from Norfolk Island on the KITTY in March 1793. By mid-1800 he was off stores with one acre sown in wheat and three more ready for maize. His wife and child were still publicly victualled. Two years later Trace had cleared fifteen acres (one sown in wheat and four ready for maize) and he owned one hog. His wife and child were now both off stores.
>
> On the 2nd July 1801 he had assigned a 50-acre farm (formerly owned by John Limeburner) at Prospect, to John Worely to secure a debt of £13. In 1809 Trace sold 16 rods of land at the Brickfields for £5. Over the years his health failed and in 1814 he was on charity at Sydney (his wife mistakenly listed as Mary Lewis) and in 1819 he was recorded as an invalid. In 1822 the couple were still together at Sydney. He died on the 1st July 1823 his age being given as 82. His tombstone at the Sydney Burial Ground, Elizabeth Street recorded him as a 'faithful friend, a father dear and a loving husband.'

I will endeavour to explain every word of this exposition as I attempt to build upon John Trace's story, as a First Fleeter as Australians now call them, and that story resumes in February 1788.

The Foundation of the Settlement

The exact date that the proclamation was read by the Governor was not stated in the memoir, but it seems to be generally accepted that it was the 7th February. This makes sense as the female convicts remained on their respective ships until Wednesday 6th February, so the following day they would have joined with everyone else to hear the Governor reading his proclamation. At about the same time there was a muster of '*every person belonging to the settlement*' – 1030 persons.

A stock take of the surviving animals showed that there was 1 bull, 1 bull calf and 4 cows; 1 stallion, 3 mares and 3 colts and all of these were landed on the cove, but the scant pasture was soon gone and they were moved again to the head of an adjacent cove where ground had been cleared for them. John Trace was a husbandman, but the Governor had someone else earmarked for their care. The weather had been very close with heavy rain at times and much thunder and lightning, but it was an amazing coincidence that on the 6th February 6 sheep, 2 lambs and a pig were killed by lightning after they had been put under a large tree for safekeeping.

A large tent had been erected on the East side for the Governor, where there was also an encampment of convicts with their attendant marine guards, but the main body of the convicts were billeted on the West side. It was also here that the hospital was established and it was already beginning to fill with cases of scurvy and dysentery and several had died in addition to the nine that were reported 'missing' at the muster. The countryside around had been scoured for edible plants and wild celery, parsley and spinach were found growing in abundance.

However, their situation was not one in which everyone could be relied upon to pull together in a challenging environment to achieve a desired objective. They were all living in primitive conditions and to the vast majority thieving was a way of life. Sailors from the transports were smuggling spirits ashore under cover of darkness. Just four days after the grand proclamation, the Judge Advocate had to assemble his first court and try three convicts. One case was a drunken assault for which he received 150 lashes. The second, for stealing biscuits, was banished to solitary confinement on a small islet in the harbour with bread and water for a week and the third stole a plank, but he had the eye of the Governor and was forgiven.

Courts were no deterrent to these men and as time progressed and living conditions remained hard, the crimes escalated in number and in audacity. It was something the 'authorities' would just have to face and the Governor had been given complete freedom to operate the full panoply of the laws of England. During a later trial, one prisoner was pardoned on condition that he 'volunteered' to become the colony's executioner, whilst the Judge Advocate could exercise complete judicial authority over the marines.

Norfolk Island

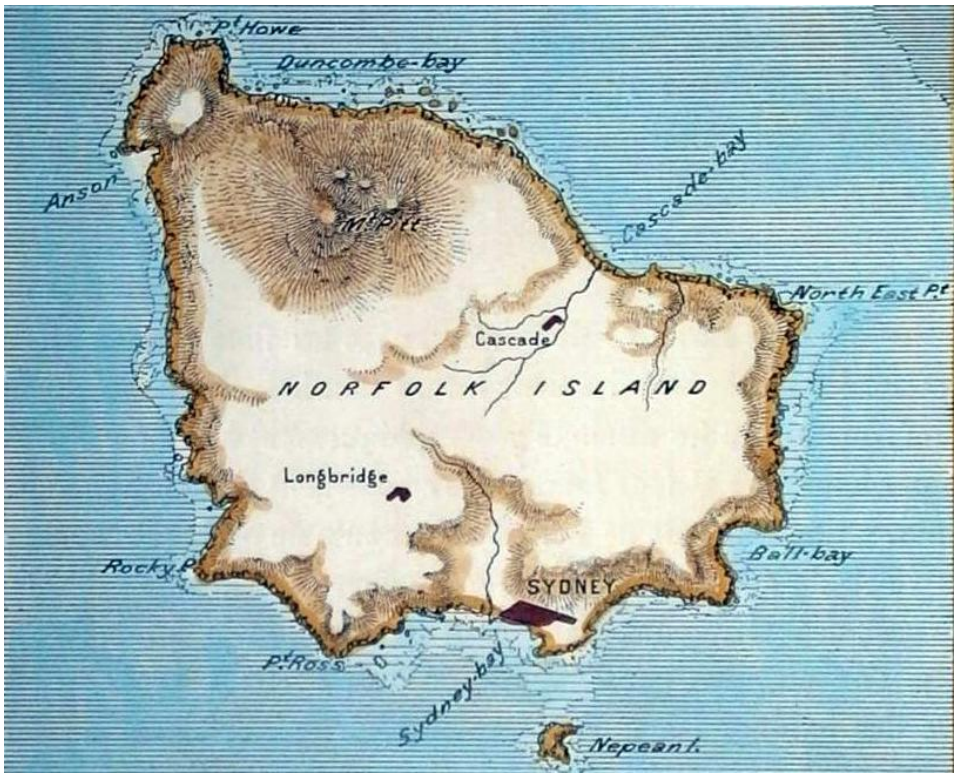
It seems very surprising if not a little foolish to embark on the establishment of a secondary penal settlement when the first one was barely a fortnight old, but that is what happened and there was a reason for it. On the 14th February the SUPPLY left Sydney Cove for Norfolk Island after Governor Phillip had invested Lt. Philip Gidley King as Superintendent and Commandant of the island and he was even sworn in as a Justice of the Peace to punish misdemeanours. He took with him a Surgeon' Mate and Petty Officer from the SIRIUS, 2 marines, 9 male and 6 female convicts, who had all volunteered.

This little party was to be landed with tents, agricultural tools, clothing for the convicts and supplies for six months, but it was 1000 miles to the NE of Port Jackson and they would be totally reliant upon themselves.

The first European to set eyes upon it was Captain James Cook who went ashore there on Tuesday 11th October 1774 and he was able to report to the Admiralty that the island supported a wild flax plant indigenous to New Zealand and a form of spruce pine also found there, that was exceptionally tall. The Royal Navy had relied on timber for its masts from New England which was about to be denied to them following the American War of Independence. Flax was also an essential commodity for rope and sail making which the Admiralty could only get from the Baltic Shores of Russia. With the onset of the Russo-Turkish war in 1787, Catherine the Great restricted the sale of both hemp and flax, so a decision was made in London to settle Norfolk Island in an attempt to create a flax manufactory which was considered to be an ideal occupation for convicts. Consequently the SUPPLY had been sent forward to take possession of the island for His Britannic Majesty.

It took 15 days for a voyage that should have been accomplished in 7 days sailing from Port Jackson as the SUPPLY arrived on the 29th February 1788, but they could not effect a landing due to the violence of the surf breaking on the reef that lay across the principal bay. Eventually a small gap in the reef as found sufficient to allow a small boat to pass through it, but its discovery was not made until a brave man was swept to his death. Once ashore they soon found that there was no land clear enough to pitch a tent and they lost their only nanny goat and a ewe.

Lt. King named the landing place Sydney Bay and installed Robert Watson as the island's harbour master when it was almost impossible to find a safe landing anywhere around the coast. The island is a very ragged square shape of 13½ square miles and it rises to 1047 feet in elevation, but it does not really have a safe haven and every landing was made with extreme difficulty. The bay was exposed to southerly winds and denied ships a safe anchorage, but the soil was soon found to be very fertile.



Map of Norfolk Island published 1889

By the time that SUPPLY heaved in her anchor for the return passage to the main colony, King had not discovered the flax that Cook had clearly suggested 'grew abundantly,' but the pines lived up to expectations with one measuring 9 feet in diameter and another on the ground measuring 182 feet long.

The First Year 1788

As a Marine officer it was not surprising that Lieutenant Watkin Tench was concerned with describing the embryonic legal system that was put together during their first full month on shore – February. He had every reason to watch and note the legal proceedings, as any form of discipline among the convicts was non-existent. He does concede, however, that their behaviour was better than expected, but lawlessness had to be deterred and prevented. It was not long in coming and the bait was the stores that had to be moved from the ships to makeshift warehouses. Pilfering on a grand scale was soon detected. Four convicts were caught and the trial, that Tench observed, condemned three of them to death and fourth to a whipping. When the verdict was laid before the Governor for his approval, he knew an example had to be made, but he was anxious to gain favour among the greater proportion of the convicts. He reprieved two of them to be banished to a place that had not been decided, but the third, Thomas Barrett, was unlucky. He was executed that same evening in front of the assembled convicts and the entire battalion of marines under arms. It was the 28th February 1788 and the following day two more convicts were caught for the same offence and condemned to death. The reality was that these men, with no future, didn't care about the law.

Thomas Barrett had travelled on the CHARLOTTE with John Trace and he had been convicted of theft and forgery. It was his story that was related earlier when he was discovered forging coins in Rio de Janeiro. Barrett fascinated the Surgeon General John White who also travelled on the CHARLOTTE and when they reached Botany Bay he commissioned Barrett to make him a commemorative medallion and he gave him a silver utensil from which to make it. Although known as the *Charlotte Medal,* it is not coin-sized. It is 74 mm in diameter – slightly under 3 inches and it resided in the White family until 1919 when it was sold. After passing through the collections of four private collectors it was bought by the Australian National Maritime Museum in 2008 for the staggering sum of $750,000

Watkin Tench had joined the marines at Plymouth in 1776 when he was 17 years old, but in 1786 he was on half pay when the Admiralty called for volunteers to form a convict guard detachment for 3-years service in Botany Bay. He was accepted in December 1786 and joined the CHARLOTTE in Plymouth during the following March carrying a contract from Debrett's of Piccadilly for an account of his experiences.

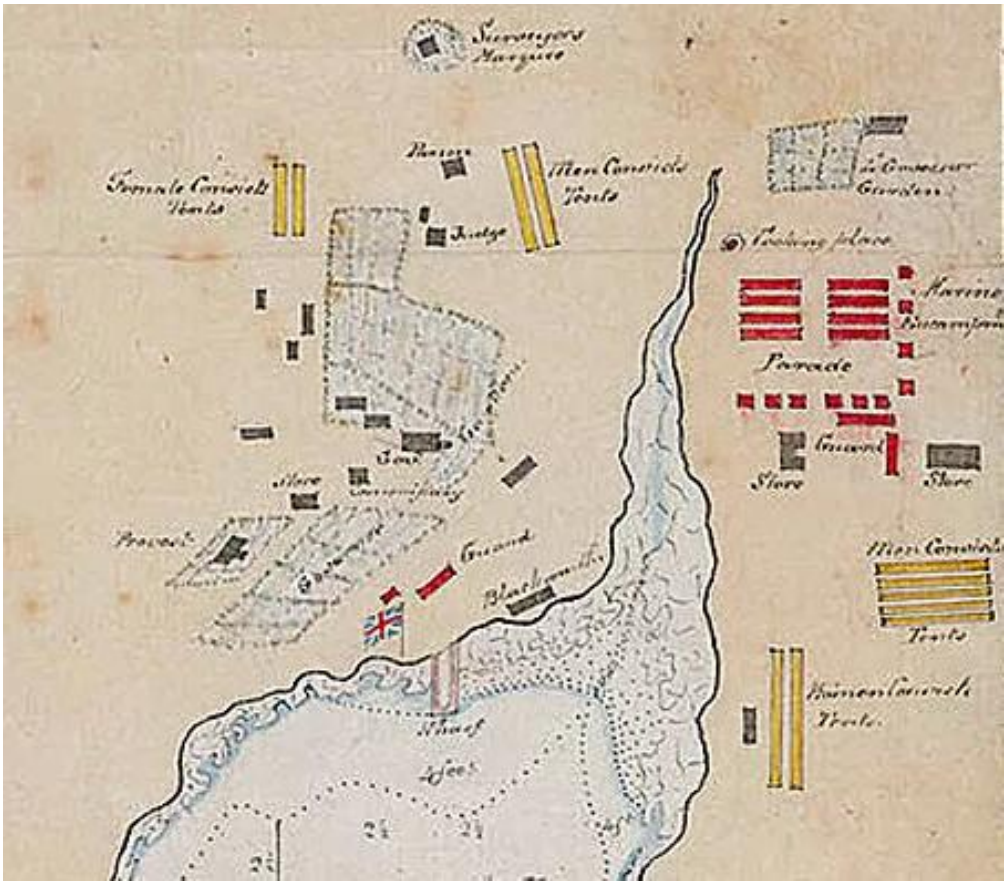
The short book entitled *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* that was written by Tench was the first book on the subject to be published in April 1789, but its content substantiated some of my own observations that will soon become apparent.

When the convicts were landed, they were organised into work gangs, but there was no one in a position to supervise them. Instead they selected one of their own from within the gang. Tench says that *it is regretted that the Government did not consider this matter before they left England and appoint proper overseers on a reasonable salary.* The size of the gangs is unknown, as is their deployment.

The gangs were expected to work from Monday to Saturday afternoon, but it soon became clear that a large number of convicts had no intention of working and excuses escalated beyond description. The women, for the most part, did nothing. A few scoured beaches for shells to burn for lime and some made pegs to secure wooden shingle tiles, but it was their choice and most chose to do nothing.

It came as some surprise to me to learn that every convict had been chosen for his employment and husbandmen and 'mechanics' were the two callings that were singled out, but when it came to brick makers, millers and boat builders they had none. John Trace was on that First Fleet simply because he was a husbandman, yet they had barely any animals for him and others to tend. It is also surprising that there was not a gang led by the Chaplain to build a church, as it had been considered imperative that the expedition should contain a Minister of the Church of England to conduct Divine Services, but there is no reference to any other activity especially as he was accompanied by his wife.

The looting of the stores that ended so harshly might suggest that storehouses were among the first buildings to be built, but that didn't seem to be the case. Tench said that *our provisions and stores lay under covers of wretched thatch exposed to every flash of lightning and spark of fire*. Yet nothing less than an observatory had begun before the Governor and Lt. Governor's houses had even been started. The Board of Longitude was more interested in a comet that was due to appear over their location in 1788 than they were in ensuring secure, watertight warehouses.
It was left entirely to the Governor's discretion to draw a plan for the township as he saw fit, The foundation for his house was begun during April and its foundation stone was laid on the 15th May with due ceremony and it was noted that the house would face the wide avenue designated as the Main Street of the new settlement.



As buildings of all sorts began to arise, a genuine concern was expressed about their vulnerability to fire and these were already

beginning to manifest themselves among the convicts' ramshackle huts. The Governor intervened and banned any form of chimney which invariably was the cause and there was a great anxiety that sparks would ignite the roof of the storehouse nearing completion during April.

They were reliant entirely upon the resources that they found around them. They had few among them who could identify any form of plant, for timber, medicine, food and such like. The predominant pine trees provided poor timber and were only suitable for roof shingles. They lamented the lack of any limestone, which they fully expected to find, as the local stone was found to be barely adequate. A source of clay was essential for brick making and they were very fortunate to find within their number someone who had performed that task. James Bloodworth had been sentenced for stealing two hens and a cock, but he proved indispensible when put in charge of a gang of men to search for that elusive clay. It was found about a mile from Sydney Cove at the end of Long Cove which was renamed Cockle Bay. Bloodworth found that the seam of clay, although narrow, ran up the hill, so they followed the seam, leaving spent land behind them as they went.

When the First Fleet arrived, SCARBOROUGH was carrying 5000 bricks as ballast, but it also had the wooden brick moulds. The brick making gang were soon producing 10,000 bricks per month, but in August 1788 their kiln was destroyed by torrential rain. It was then decided that the new kiln had to be capable of 30,000 bricks per month, but the clay deposits were not enough to support that number and eventually the spent land became known as Brickfield Hill which remains as a district of Sydney to this day.

During early May three of the convict transports were discharged from Government service and the CHARLOTTE, SCARBOROUGH and LADY PENRHYN left on successive days from the 5th May for China. I have gained the impression that the ships were considered to be the safest place for the stores they were carrying. Consequently it was the convict transports that were released first, as they carried the least.

Collins' account of this period is awash with tales of thieving and illness. Courts seemed to be in frequent session and punishments were extreme. John Trace was fortunate that he stole flour from his tent-mate in April and not the Government store otherwise this story would have been a hanging and not a flogging. The apparent obsession with stealing food is a little odd as every man was given the same ration regardless of status, marine and convict had exactly the same weekly allowance. However, it was common knowledge that their ration was gone within 3-4 days, presumably fuelling the need for theft. Part of the allowance was 8lbs of flour, but it has been said that many of the convicts had no idea what to do with it, the inference being that it was wasted.

As June approached they had to adjust to the thought that winter was fast approaching, but they had no real knowledge of the weather during the winter months beyond its likely temperature of 35˚F. There was a commonly shared anxiety that everyone should have had some form of substantial shelter, but that seemed to be no more than an aspiration. It was July when Tench wrote that every officer and every marine was still in his tent. He continues, *we were eager to escape from tents where only a fold of canvas can check the chilling winds from the south. We are not in a marquee pitched on an English lawn, but an encampment amid the rocks of a new country aggravated by bad diet and incessant toil.* It was rubbing salt into the wound with convicts already given a plot and told to build their own hut in their spare time. However, Tench does make the point that the settlement was remarkably healthy having lost only a sergeant and two marines and 54 convicts

since February. That said, the newly erected hospital was already a sanctuary for 150 inmates in varying forms of infirmity.

It was also in June that the settlement lost their entire complement of five black cows and a bull. Tench records the incident *with much regret*, but although he suggests negligence on the part of their keeper, their total disappearance, in spite of an extensive search over two days, generated a great deal of anger. Their keeper was well known for his habitual inattentiveness, yet nothing was done about it. Unfortunately for a convict called Corbett, he chose that moment to indulge his own disappearing act and inevitably he was linked with the 'theft' of the cattle. When he reappeared at the settlement on the 21st June, he was emaciated and starving and in no condition to stand trial. As Tench puts it, *following restorative treatments being administered*, he was sufficiently recovered to stand trial on the 24th June at which he was found guilty and condemned to death. Tench thought otherwise. He said that it was obvious that *he was in no shape concerned with having driven them off.* This wasn't justice, it was vengeance.

With the exception of the SIRIUS and the SUPPLY which were both ships of the Royal Navy, the remaining six ships of the fleet were intent on resuming their commercial activities, as Tench hurriedly concluded his first draft of his experiences. Four ships – ALEXANDER, PRINCE of WALES, FRIENDSHIP and BORROWDALE left for England on the 14th July carrying not only Watkin Tench's manuscript, but also a plea for the urgent supply of provisions for the colony for which they had a desperate need.

Tench's final chapter reflected on the flawed reasoning behind the Government's strategy for the settlement. His opening words are apologetic. He says that *without giving offence or incurring reproach*, he felt he had to air his opinion on the benefits to Great Britain that the settlement might bring. He says that *if it is only intended to a be receptacle for convicts, then it has no equal, but when it is viewed in a commercial light, then its insignificance would be striking.* He makes the point quite clearly that the continent was too remote to encourage free settlers. They would need to take everything they owned with them including clothes and furniture. In his opinion, the land was too poor to create self sufficiency quickly and they would be dependent on Government supplies for a decade. He also pointed out that a producer needed a market and there was no possibility of a market until the continent was sufficiently populated. As for the convicts, what was their future?

Tench admitted that he had no idea what the Governor had been told about the future of the convicts as their sentences ran out. Most of those who had arrived had been transported for seven years. Their time would expire in 1793, but what then? There was no known arrangement to send them home at Government expense. So in effect they had been transported for life, regardless of their sentence. However, it is easily detected that there was little sympathy for the convict's plight and they were not viewed as redeemable. It is also worth noting at this point that Collins as Advocate General sat as President of every court and he had already handed out more death sentences for stealing food than any other man in Christendom. It didn't seem to affect his conscience.

There was such heavy rain during the first two weeks of August that all work was suspended. The brick kiln was destroyed and the roads, such as they were, became impassable. It was the 14th August before work could begin again and it was easier to build new huts than to attempt to repair them. Work on the 'public buildings' resumed and these were the marine barracks, the hospital roof which was to use wooden shingles and the two Governors' houses.

As the winter turned to spring their isolation was now beginning to affect their minds. Tench writes *we had long begun to turn our eyes with impatience towards the sea cheered by the hope of seeing supplies from England approach*, but none came. It had been decided to send the SIRIUS to the Cape of Good Hope to purchase provisions for the garrison and the store ship GOLDEN GROVE was to sail for Norfolk Island and both ships left on the 2nd October. To make as much room as possible on the SIRIUS for provisions, eight of her guns were landed and formed into an embrasure behind an earthwork at the entrance into Sydney Cove, but her departure meant that rations for everyone in the colony were reduced.

GOLDEN GROVE embarked 21 male and 11 female convicts to bolster the population on an island that was proving to be far more productive than the land around Port Jackson. During a visit by the SUPPLY to Norfolk Island in August it had been learned that the flax plant had been discovered. It was there all the time, but the people did not know how to recognise it. Those in the colony with knowledge of flax soon confirmed that it was of a higher quality than anything previously seen and the timber on the island was excellent. Unfortunately five men had died, four of them on the reef as their boat was smashed to pieces, so with the GOLDEN GROVE at Norfolk Island and only the FISHBOURN and the SUPPLY in the harbour at Sydney Cove, the isolation of the 'settlers' intensified, but there was a glimmer of hope.

One of the topographical features missing from their environment which puzzled all the officers was the absence of a river. The reasoning was that inlets as large as the ones that surrounded them should have had a substantial water course feeding into them, but one could not be found. The head of the harbour was nine miles westward from the sea and the Governor had explored this far in April and had found the soil much more fertile than the sandy soil around Sydney Cove. As a consequence the Governor returned to this location in order to formally establish a settlement there on the 2nd November 1788. The spot was chosen by the Governor together with his surveyor-general, whilst two marine officers marked out the position for a redoubt. The location was named Rose Hill as a compliment to Mr. G. Rose, one of the secretaries to the Treasury.

Two days later, a party of ten convicts, who understood the process of cultivation, was sent up to begin clearing the ground which was a stiff claylike soil free from rock and covered by timber, but without the underwood. As November progressed the numbers of convicts grew and of necessity, so did the number of marines. This meant that the command was elevated to a Captain and not a subaltern, but he had to be invested with the civil power of a Justice of the Peace so that he had sufficient authority to inflict corporal punishment for idleness and pilfering.

When the GOLDEN GROVE returned from her mission to Norfolk Island on the 10th November, she brought with her a lower yard and a top-gallant mast for herself and FISHBOURN, thus proving the utility of the timber from the island that had been anticipated. On the 19th November 1788, these last two store ships, FISHBOURN and GOLDEN GROVE left for England by way of the Cape Horn. Tench writes, *there now remained with us only the SUPPLY and cut off as we are from the rest of civilisation their absence increased the effect of desolation.*

When John Trace was sentenced to his second flogging of 50 lashes on the 23rd January 1789 for selling a pair of shoes belonging to someone else, it begs the question – why did they need money and where was its source? This was exemplified in the death of a convict found dead in the woods during December as it was ascertained that he hadn't eaten for more than a week and had starved

himself to death. His colleagues affirmed that he was in the habit of selling his rations to save enough money to buy a passage home at the end of his sentence, but his foolhardy actions saved him the trouble. In John Trace's case it is noticeable that he was not charged with stealing the shoes, but selling them. I can only conclude that they were viewed as Government property issued to the convict from whom John had taken them. Yet in February 1789 the continued selling of clothes by the convicts led to an order being issued that the seller should have them back and allowed to keep the money that had been paid for them and receive no punishment for their sale. – How strange!

The Second Year 1789

New Year's Day was marked by a holiday with no one required to work, but it was also a time to reflect on their situation which revolved entirely around their ability to grow food. Their first year had got them nowhere and this was blamed on the infertile, sandy soil around their chosen settlement. It was calculated that only 250 people were available for cultivating the land, whilst another unstated number were employed on 'public works.' However, there were far too many who could not work due to age and infirmity and to them were added the military establishment, the females and the children, all dependent upon the public stores.

The establishment of a settlement at Rose Hill was now their primary prospect, but the convicts obstinately refused to exert themselves and expressed no interest in the result of their labour. They much preferred to wallow in complete idleness. It did not seem to occur to them that the end result would be an empty store house, which they mitigated by thieving from others.

When the colony was in such desperate need of an experienced agriculturalist, it seems astonishing that they had not brought anyone with them to fulfil this role and as far as I can make out, rather vague personages came to the fore. Collins writes that;

> A person of the name SMITH procured a passage on the LADY PENRYHN intending to offer his services to the colony having professed some agricultural knowledge. He was judged to be a discreet and prudent man and he was placed in the provision store as assistant to the Commissary at Rose Hill.

It would seem that he was eventually entrusted with the supervision of the convicts in clearing the land, but proved to be wanting in his ability to control them. It was the perfect situation for inventing endless, plausible excuses for absence and Smith was removed from his position. The person who succeeded him is also virtually anonymous, being described as *'the person who came out from England as a servant to the Governor.'* On his arrival he had charge of a small plot known as Farm Cove that was cleared to form the 'Governor's garden,' but that had soon proved to be a wasted effort and nothing more was done.

Another source describes the events of the 2nd November when Phillip had established the site at Rose Hill. This account suggests the founding of Establishment Farm when Phillip selected a convict to manage it called James Ruse, a Cornishman who was barely 30. The Governor had been impressed by his previous experience and that he was very empathetic to the desperate need to reap the first crop, yet his first corn harvest failed to make any flour. In spite of that setback, he saved enough seed for the crop of 1790 which was marginally more successful.

Towards the end of March, the heat of the summer months was on the wane, but there was no sense that the colony was moving forward in terms of its productivity. On the contrary, all the signs were that it wasn't. It was to his shame that Lt. Tench had to record that no less than six marines had been discovered involved in a long standing plot involving counterfeit keys that resulted in the continuous theft of food and spirits from the public stores which they were supposed to be protecting. They were found guilty at a criminal court composed entirely of their own officers[16] and they were all hanged by the public executioner a few days later.

Shortly afterwards there was cause for another anxiety when repeated accounts were brought into the colony of men frequently finding the bodies of 'Indians' whose corpses seemed to be covered in the pustules of smallpox. This was thought to be a European disease and no one could explain its appearance among the natives, as no Europeans had arrived since the French nearly 15 months previously, but if it was the smallpox then the colony did not suffer a single case among the British.

At sunset on the 6th May, depressed hearts were lifted by the arrival of the SIRIUS from Cape Town. She had been seven months away and Captain Hunter was overwhelmed by congratulations for bringing almost 57 tons of flour together with salt meat and other desperately needed provisions. It was only in the calmer, quieter conversations that they learnt that the SIRIUS had nearly been lost near Tasman's Head on the coast of Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania). She had suffered a great deal of damage, lost her figurehead and had been considerably weakened and it proved to be an ill-omen for the future.

It was, and still is customary among military establishments to celebrate their monarch's birthday and George III was no exception. The day in question was the 4th June and in an attempt to raise flagging spirits a concert was organised by the convicts and performed in front of the Governor and 60 guests. Watkin Tench was among them and marvelled at the attempt to create a theatre atmosphere in a mud-walled convict hut, so *It Ain't Half Hot Mum'* had very humble beginnings.

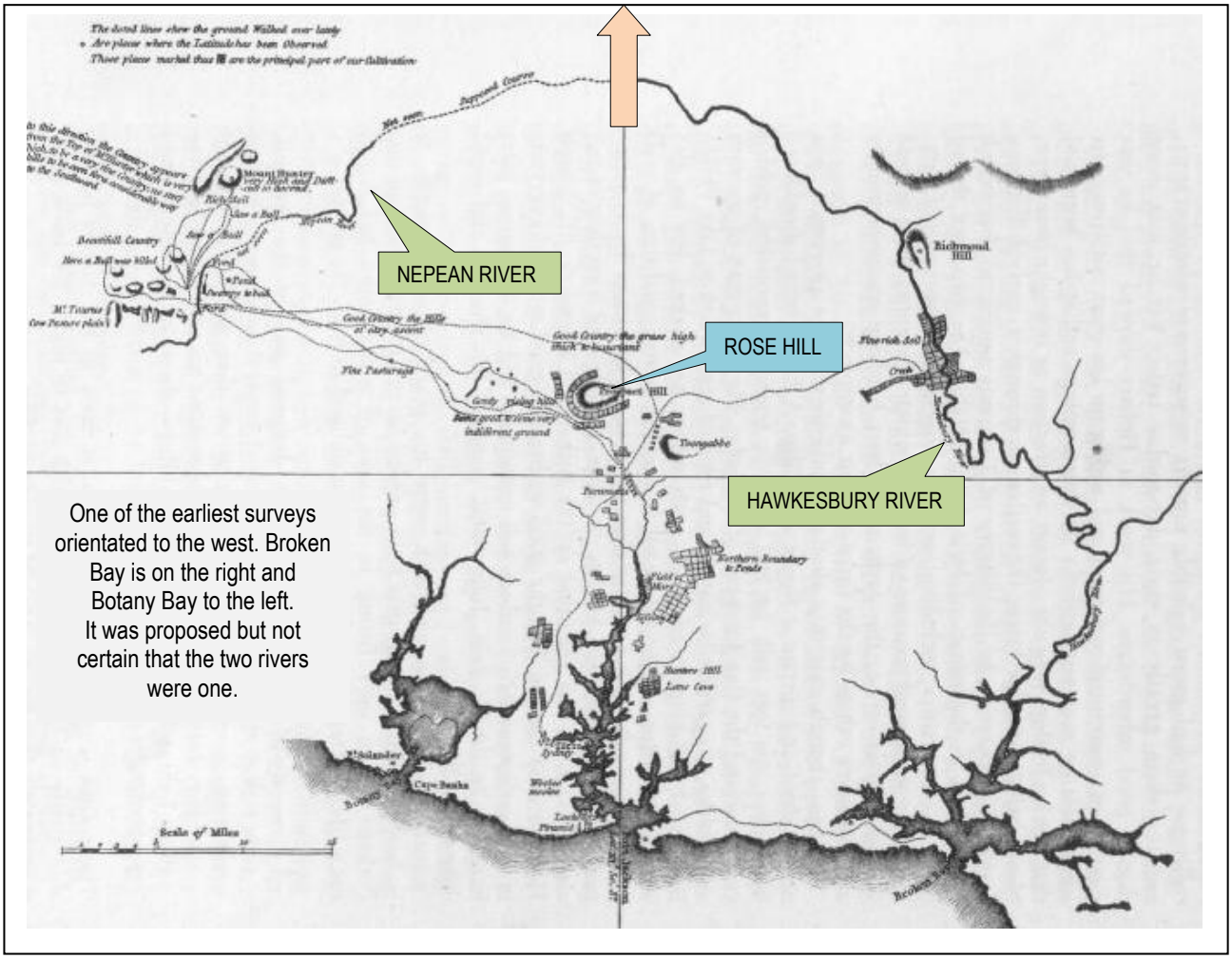
Two days later, the Governor led a large expedition in two boats to Broken Bay in yet another attempt at finding that elusive river. Lt. Tench expressed his disappointment that he would not be going with them. He had been given command of the new redoubt at Rose Hill and as a consequence he became familiar with the area and played a significant part in documenting the story of John Trace.

A visit to Rose Hill in July found that their society had borne fruit even if their fields had not. Collins describes the settlement like this;

> The convicts were all found residing in very good huts under proper regulations and encouraged to work in the gardens which they had permission to cultivate during those hours which are not dedicated to public labour. A barrack for the soldiers was erected in the small redoubt in which stood the provision store. Some ground had been opened on the other side of the stream which ran into the creek, where a small house had been built for Superintendent Dodd. Everyone continued to be healthy and the pleasant climate rendered medicine of little use.

The disappointment that Tench expressed at not being on the Governor's expedition was soon appeased as he mounted his own expedition from the redoubt in Rose Hill on the 26th June and within 24 hours he had found a river, *as wide as the Thames at Putney*, he wrote, *flowing slowly towards the north.*

[16] To convene a Court Martial in a foreign land they needed a Warrant issued by the King which had been overlooked.



The Governor's expedition had also been successful and his party had penetrated about twenty miles before turning back. However, the desire to continue remained unquenched and he returned to the location within days and pushed further inland. His party accomplished nearly seventy miles before a significant waterfall barred their way, but their exploration had produced a very mixed opinion of the surrounding land. The Governor named the river Hawkesbury River and on hearing about Tench's discovery he named that watercourse the Nepean River. Tench noted that it was too easy to become addicted to the *'art of discovery,'* when they were in command of a settlement that was close to breakdown.

It was about this time that one of Tench's earlier musings came to fruition when several convicts began to claim that the terms of their sentence had expired and they demanded to be restored to the privileges of free men. Collins reveals that;

> Unfortunately due to some unaccountable oversight, the papers necessary to ascertain these particulars had been left by the Masters of the transports with their Owners in England instead of being brought out and deposited with the Colony. This made it impossible to admit or deny the truth of the convicts' assertions, so they were told to wait until they could be received from England.

That stance didn't go down too well with the convicts, knowing that there was no ship there waiting to return to England with their message. It would be more than twelve months before an answer could be expected and they were not amused at being told that they had to continue working for the public good in order to receive provisions from the store. Instead they demanded some form of indemnity for a gratuity for their work otherwise there would be no work. The response was immediate. No work – no food – it was an impasse entirely foreseen by Tench. One

of the convicts became '*disrespectful to the Lt. Governor'* and was given 600 lashes and clapped in irons for 6 months. It was a one-sided administration.

Nevertheless, the harshness of the authoritarian rule of law could not dissuade the 'settlers' from their continual, nightly thieving. They were starving and they would take their chance. Punishment meant nothing to them, but they had to be stopped, so in September it was decided to form a 'night watch.' The settlement was divided into four divisions and twelve trusted convicts were chosen to be divided among them, each trio with its leader. They were told to thoroughly acquaint themselves with everyone who lived on their patch, their habits and their contacts. The watch would begin and end with the evening and morning tattoo as every military command was done by drum beat and if they should find a marine or a sailor where he shouldn't be, he was to be reported.

It was emphasised that these especially selected men should not expect payment or any other form of gratuity, but if they acquitted themselves well and showed '*diligence and good behaviour, then the Governor would reward them.'* However, I can't help wondering that if this was deemed necessary then what were the marines doing? Surely, this was their function, but of course their traditional role was to protect the officers from the rabble. It was not to protect the 'lower classes' from themselves.

However, the pre-occupation with discovery and survey continued in September when Captain Hunter of the SIRIUS led a complete and detailed assessment of the coastline of Botany Bay. On its completion nine days later, they came to the unanimous conclusion that beyond Cook's accurate positioning of the bay, those who had described it had never seen it. In 30 miles of shoreline Hunter's party found fewer than 200 acres that could be cultivated and vindicated the Governor's decision to move to Port Jackson.

In December the enthusiasm for exploration continued at the Governor's request when a party of three led by Lt. Johnson of the marines embarked on a further investigation of the Nepean River. They found a ford and crossed it in the hope that they could continue westwards to a ridge of hills that had been named the Carmarthen Mountains. However they found the terrain such hard going that in three days they had barely travelled 15 miles. Having said that, the point at which they turned back was 54 miles in a straight line from the sea – the farthest westward anyone had yet penetrated.

As these explorations were being planned and digested, the Governor was forced to the conclusion during October that the rations had to be reduced once again. It was now 5lbs 5 ozs of flour, 3lbs 5 ozs of pork and 2 pints of peas. It was a considerable reduction, but to put it into perspective, a modern recipe would expect to use 9-11 ozs of flour for a decent 1lb loaf of bread, so their new allotment would still allow for 8 loaves to be baked with a little wastage, but the point was always the same. The exertions of hard, manual labour required good, regular meals, but the colony's surgeon seemed to have at least 100 sick and infirm in his hospital at any given time and not all of them were convicts.

Throughout 1789 Lt. Watkin Tench's second narrative has remained remarkably positive, but the opening paragraphs of 1790 revealed the depths to which their spirits had slumped as they passed the second anniversary of their arrival on these unexplored shores.

1790 and the Depths of Despair

Their situation was dire. It wasn't just that they had been cut off from all communications with England it was more about the want of supplies. The life saving voyage of the SIRIUS to Cape Town was now a distant memory. *Famine was approaching with gigantic strides,* Tench wrote, *as gloom and dejection overspreads every countenance.* Every reverberating boom, whether it was a distant thunder clap, or the distorted echo of a musket in the woods, was immediately taken as the cannon of an approaching ship announcing its arrival. Every week for eighteen months a small party of marines had marched to Botany Bay on the off chance that a ship had arrived and not known of their removal to Port Jackson, such was their desperation.

Captain Hunter took up this theme and suggested erecting a flagstaff on South Head[17] so that a flag could be hoisted when a sail was seen approaching over the horizon. His idea was a simple extension of the normal practise in his warship when every day from sunrise to sunset someone would sweep the horizon with a glass at intervals and raise the cry if anything was seen. His idea was pounced upon and every officer volunteered his time, but there were men enough from the SIRIUS that could conduct the task as they had always done. The initial enthusiasm lifted the spirits, but Tench was pragmatic enough to know what would happen when day after day nothing was seen. He wrote;

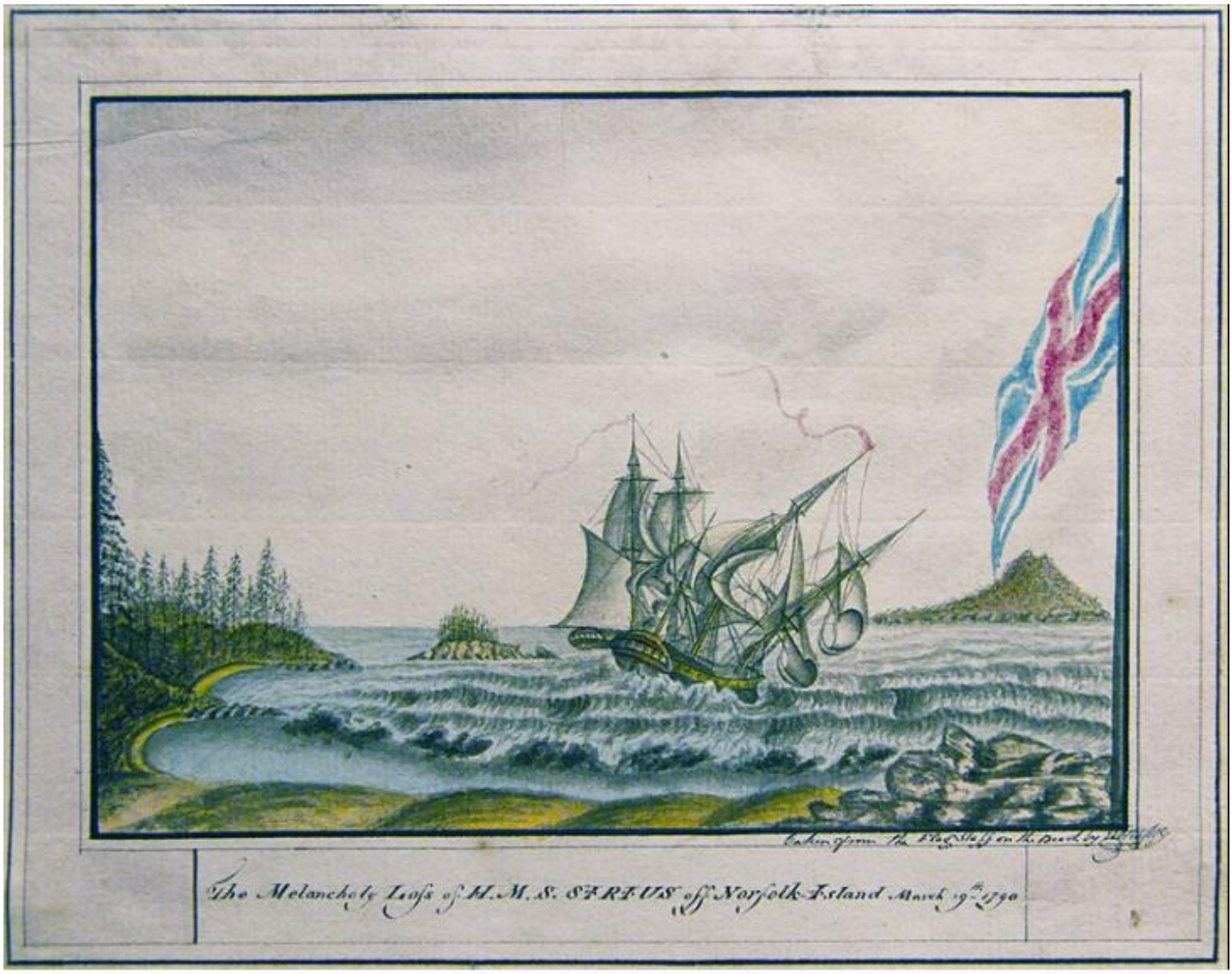
> To say that we were disappointed and shocked would very inadequately describe our sensations. The misery and horror of our situation cannot easily be imparted even by those who suffered it.

In February the Governor ordered Captain Hunter to prepare the SIRIUS for a voyage to China and rumours spread that on her departure the rations were going to be drastically cut. However, the plan suddenly changed and SIRIUS was ordered to consort with SUPPLY and embark a company of marines under Major Ross (the Lieutenant Governor) and convey them with 186 convicts to Norfolk Island. The reason was obvious. Someone else would now have to feed them. They sailed on the 6th March 1790. On the 27th March the Governor issued the following edict.

> The expected supply of provisions having not arrived makes it necessary to reduce the present ration and the Commissary is directed to issue from the 1st April the under mentioned allowance to every person in the settlement without distinction.
>
> 4 lbs flour - 2½ lbs salt pork - 1½ lbs rice each week

Four days later, while the settlement were still digesting the implications of the reduction, in spite of the large emigration of persons to Norfolk Island the cry – *Flag's Up!* – echoed around the huts. Surprisingly, as this was the very first time it had happened, there was no corresponding excitement. People simply said to each other, *SIRIUS and SUPPLY returning from Norfolk Island*. Tench went to the observatory to satisfy himself with the astronomical telescope, and then decided to beg a place in the Governor's boat rowing out to meet the arrival. As soon as they saw the boat rowing towards them from SUPPLY it was obvious that something was seriously wrong. The next few minutes changed doubt into certainty. The SIRIUS had been wrecked on the 19th March and was a total loss, fortunately without loss among her crew. At 6 o'clock that evening every officer, both civil and military was summoned to meet the Governor in council. Their situation was desperate. How long would their supplies last?

[17] See the water colour on Page 25



George Raper, who painted this picture of the shipwreck, was born in London in 1769 and in 1786 he joined the SIRIUS as a seaman, but on the outward journey to the new colony he was promoted to Midshipman based upon on his extraordinary, untrained ability to paint what he saw and his advancement was entirely due to Captain Hunter who was also a competent water colour artist. Raper documented flowers and animals as well as prospects all around Port Jackson. He sailed with the SIRIUS to Cape Town and his paintings of 'ice islands' are among the first ever made. He was with her when she was wrecked on Norfolk Island, but he saved his paint box and continued painting. This painting is now in the National Library of Australia in Sydney. The photo of the site is dated 1993.

The council meeting at the Governor's house heard that the salt meat would be gone by the 2nd July, the flour would last until the 20th August and it was a case of rice OR peas which would be gone by the 1st October. The unpalatable conclusion had to be that rations had to be reduced immediately. It was now 2 lbs of pork, 2½ lbs of flour and 2 lbs of rice OR 1 quart of peas and that was the entire ration for a week. It was suggested that the SUPPLY should be sent immediately to Batavia (modern Djakarta in Java) and all the colony's boats should be deployed to fishing. In addition to that, every marksman in the marines and those among the convicts were placed under a sergeant and directed to hunt through the woods in search of kangaroo. Anything else that moved would be considered a bonus. It was emphasised that everything caught belonged to the 'commissariat,' but there was a price to pay. Activity such as this could not be supported on the ration that had just been agreed, so a concession of a little extra meat and flour was granted to the hunters and the fishermen were allowed to keep 1 lb of fish for their breakfast.

On the 17th April the SUPPLY sailed for Batavia and a silent crowd gathered to watch her progress until her sails dipped below the horizon. They were now alone with all means of communication gone and Tench quotes Virgil's *Aeneid* when he writes; *Our frail state depends entirely upon you.* He consoled himself with his acquaintance of her commander, Captain Ball, whose zeal and seamanship was of the highest order and the human spirit had to find hope wherever it could.

It did not take long before the lack of rations affected the ability to work as both convicts and marines began pleading a loss of strength. Shortening the working hours was not good enough and the final solution was to allow every man to work as much as he felt able. The system of justice also fell into disarray, as pilfering continued and could not be stopped, but it was also felt that the perpetrators could not be punished when the Government had failed them and so this became a model for the breakdown in society often used in philosophical discussion to this day.

The Flag's Up !

Lieutenant Watkin Tench was sitting in his hut *musing our fate*, as he put it, when a commotion in the street outside drew his attention. On opening his door he saw women running up and down with their children, kissing and hugging one another and the reason was obvious. He continued;

> I ran to a hill where, with the assistance of a pocket glass, my hopes were realised. My next door neighbour, a brother officer, was with me and we could not speak. We wrung each other by the hand and our hearts were overflowing.

It was Thursday 3rd June 1790

The identity of the visitor was completely unknown as everyone with access to a boat wanted to be on the water to greet her. Tench begged a place in the Governor's boat and they watched a large ship, with English colours flying, work carefully between the headlands that formed the entrance into Port Jackson harbour. The weather was awful with wind and rain, but they were not satisfied until they had seen 'London' across her stern and barely minutes later were they on board the LADY JULIANA and learning all they were desperate to know.

The opening two pages of this chapter cannot hide Tench's excitement at being on board a new ship which was carrying not only desperately needed supplies, but new people carrying news of the outside world and letters from home. They were worse than children at Christmas, tearing open letters from their families and *they continued pouring a thousand questions on a breath,* as Tench described the scene.

Eventually the visitors gleaned that the LADY JULIANA had left England from Plymouth in July 1789, eleven months previously, carrying 225 female convicts who *had the misfortune to be condemned to exile* in the new settlement. They also learnt of the 'madness of King George' and his subsequent 'recovery,' but they also learnt of the French Revolution which Tench describes as *that wonderful and unexpected event that succeeded in amazing us.*

However, when they learnt of the disaster which had befallen the GUARDIAN, it relieved their growing, sub conscious belief that the Government had abandoned them to their fate. She had been fitted out especially for their exclusive use and was packed with stores and supplies, when she struck an 'ice-island' on her way to Port Jackson. She would have reached them in March and had she done so, her arrival would have prevented the loss of the SIRIUS.

On the following Sunday there was a full house at the Service of Thanksgiving at the church and revealed that the colony now had a solid building for religious purposes. The Rev. Richard Johnson preached a sermon that *was full of solemnity and thanksgiving* and afterwards all the officers were entertained to dinner by the Governor at which he revealed a surprise that had been brought from England in his dispatches.

It was a reminder that the marine corps that had accompanied the convicts were not a formal part of England's military establishment. They had volunteered for three years service and the conclusion of that period had already been exceeded. However, the King wished to reward their loyalty and service in this unusual undertaking and he was offering 150 acres to every married NCO and 100 acres to every unmarried NCO. To an unmarried marine it was 80 acres and 100 acres if he was married and every child of a married man should add a further 10 acres. In order to redeem this offer he had to wait until he was relieved of his duty and he had to promise to become a settler, but it didn't end there.

If he should be tempted to join the new corps named the New South Wales Corps, when it arrived he would receive a bounty of £3, but his land holding would be doubled. If continuing in service did not appeal to him, then His Majesty was pleased to feed and clothe him and his family from the public stores for one year.

This would have more than satisfied a considerable number who had expressed a wish to stay, but the emphasis was on settlement. Anyone who had seen enough of the country in its primeval wild state got nothing but a lift home.

Exactly two weeks later, whilst the residents were just become used to the comforting sight of ship resting in the cove, the shores of the harbour echoed once again to the excited cry – 'Flag's Up!' It was Sunday 20th June 1790 when Captain Maitland brought the JUSTINIAN into harbour exactly 5 months after leaving Falmouth. Tench wrote; *our rapture was doubled on finding that she was laden entirely with provisions for our use*. Maitland had used his initiative on the passage and had abandoned visits to Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town. Although this facilitated a fast passage the feat of endurance was astonishing and his crew had remained fit and healthy throughout the voyage.

So their nightmare was over. They had ships in the harbour, news from home, and warehouses packed with provisions. It was true they had a couple of hundred more convicts to feed who wouldn't be doing any work, but that was of little consequence on a winter's day that was as good as any English summer and they had just one week to enjoy it.

The Convict Ships of the Second Fleet Arrive

The First Fleet that left England in 1787 was a fleet destined to found a new colony for the British Empire and as a consequence an air of order and authority pervaded the entire enterprise. The Second Fleet was not a shadow of the first. It was three ships carrying 1000 convicts that England wanted to be rid of. The cost of the First Fleet was considered to be 'excessive' and as a consequence the Navy Board rejected the bid of its contractor, William Richards, for the Second Feet. This coincided with the resignation of Lord Sydney as Home Secretary and his successor, who was only 29, was keen to see significant cost cutting in the Department's activities. The new contract was signed with a firm of slave traders who agreed to abide by all the conditions of the Navy Board for a sum of £17-7s-6d for every convict carried. The result caused a furore of indignation.

NEPTUNE was a large 3-decked East Indiaman built at Deptford in 1780 and as such she carried the largest number of convicts – 421 male and 78 female. Captain Thomas Gilbert started the voyage on 17th November 1789, but at some point on passage he died and was replaced by the Mate. When she arrived at the Cape of Good Hope she embarked 12 Convicts from the 20 who had survived the loss of the GUARDIAN, whilst the remaining 8 were sent to SCARBOROUGH.

SCARBOROUGH was a 2-decked merchantman of unknown origin that had spent her life on the Baltic timber trade, but when she was entered into Lloyds register in 1783 she was recorded as 600 tons. Her master was John Marshall who had commanded her during her time with the First Fleet. She embarked 253 male prisoners and during February whilst on passage, the plot of a mutiny was discovered and the severe punishments inflicted soured the atmosphere on board.

SURPRIZE was the smallest of the three ships as a 3-decked merchant ship of 400 tons built in 1780. Her owners were the slave trading company, but she had spent her time under charter to the East India Company. Her master was Nicholas Anstis who had been the chief mate on the LADY PENRYHN in the First Fleet. She had embarked 254 male convicts, but she proved to be unsuitable for a long voyage. She was known as a 'wet ship' and took onboard a lot of water, even in moderate weather often leaving the convicts above waist deep making life utterly miserable.

All three ships left Portsmouth together on the 19th January for a direct passage to South Africa and they reached the Cape of Good Hope by the 13th April where they spent 16 days. At the end of the month they left together, but they soon hit very heavy weather and parted company with SURPRIZE. However, she came within sight of Port Jackson on the 23rd June only to be blown out to sea again. She finally dropped anchor on the 26th June to be followed two days later by NEPTUNE and SCARBOROUGH on the 28th June. It was then that the truth of the voyage was discovered as the residents temporarily forgot their own privations as they watched the disembarkation in disbelief.

NEPTUNE had lost 158 convicts (11 women); SCARBOROUGH 68 and SURPIZE 36, but those were not the ones that came ashore, let the Chaplain to the First Fleet the Rev. Richard Johnson describe the scene;

> *I beheld a sight truly shocking to the feelings of humanity, a great number of them laying, some half, others nearly quite naked, without either bed or bedding, unable to turn or help themselves. Spoke to them as I passed along, but the smell was so offensive that I could scarcely bear it…. The landing of these people was truly affecting and shocking; great numbers were not able to walk, nor to move hand or foot; such were*

slung over the ship side in the same manner as they would a cask, a box, or anything of that nature. Upon their being brought up to the open air some fainted, some died upon deck, and others in the boat before they reached the shore. When come on shore many were not able to walk, to stand, or stir themselves in the least, hence some were led by others. Some creeped upon their hands and knees, and some were carried upon the backs of others.

No less than 486 of the convicts were sick when they were landed, with scurvy being pre-eminent among them and 124 of them had to be taken to the colony's temporary hospital. In fact they were in such poor condition that they continued to die as recorded in this letter sent to the *Morning Chronicle* in London by an anonymous female convict who had arrived on the LADY JULIANA.

> Oh! If you had but seen the shocking sight of the poor creatures that came out in the three ships it would make your heart bleed they were almost dead, very few could stand, and they were obliged to fling them as you would goods, and hoist them out of the ships, they were so feeble; and they died ten or twelve a day when they first landed; but some of them are getting better … They were not so long as we were in coming here, but they were confined, and had bad victuals and stinking water. The Governor was very angry, and scolded the captains a great deal, and, I heard, intended to write to London about it, for I heard him say it was murdering them. It, to be sure, was a melancholy sight. What a difference between us and them.

London society was shocked by her description, but there was nothing to be done. Too much time had elapsed and there was no facility for a public prosecution. A private one was attempted, but failed and a fuller account of the scandal can be read at website 4 above. John Trace and Mary Rose may not have been there to see this scene for themselves, but counted themselves lucky that they had come when they did. Hunger was a very poor substitute for the suffering these poor devils had endured.

A Change in Circumstances

In June 1790 John Trace had been in the colony for almost two and half years and he was a few months over four years into his sentence. Throughout that time this story has been written in incredible detail by several educated officers who had been commissioned to write about their experiences by publishers in London. Those stories, as far as I can tell, are only wanting in one aspect and that is the detail of the daily activity of the convicts. At first it would have been concentrated around Sydney Cove clearing land and it is known that they were organised into gangs and some examples have been given. It is also obvious that the work was a progression, as one task was finished it was replaced by another. There seemed to be more expertise in building, than in farming and the word husbandry is used in a different context. It is not seen as the management of cattle as they had so few, but it is used more in the context of general labouring around the settlement. It is very clear that their aspiration towards food farming was more successful in the gardens. A sergeant of marines supplied the Master of the LADY JULIANA with potatoes and other vegetables for 2/6d per day and there were 36 people on board.
The first attempts at establishing a larger farm was almost the exact opposite, but it took two seasons to discover that their efforts were useless. The decision to move

out to Rose Hill was the inevitable consequence of that failure and I believe that shift in focus enveloped John Trace.

When the LADY JULIANA arrived, I would suggest that John was well established at Rose Hill which was a considerable distance from Sydney Cove, so he would not have been a part of the celebrations. Although it might be said that John Trace was little better than his fellow convicts having been given two floggings for theft, there is a little evidence to suggest that he was considered to be reliable, as we shall see. His meeting with Mary Rose must have come about when the new female convicts were spread around the colony for work and accommodation. Yet, I have seen no contemporary explanation concerning the work that the women were given beyond that of the repair of the male convicts' clothes and there are several references to their idleness and dependence on the food supplies.

However, John Trace must have met Mary Rose soon after her arrival in the settlement, but according to Nichol she was in the Governor's House all the time he was there (about 6 weeks) and every day he took her 'allowance' to her. An account of John and Mary's relationship appears in a book entitled *The Second Fleet* by Michael Flynn which elucidates those convicts who arrived on the Second Fleet from England, which although described as a fleet did not travel as one. All the ships departed on different dates in 1789 widely spaced, but they all arrived during the month of June 1790. Flynn writes;

On the 26 July 1790 Governor Phillip wrote to Banks;

I have received Rose. She is soon to be married and to one of the best men in this place

On the 23rd August she married First Fleet convict John Trace at St. John's Parramatta.

Governor Arthur Phillip was a friend of Joseph Banks and he had obviously sat down at his desk to continue a correspondence that had been seriously interrupted by their isolation. He was making up for lost time and anticipating the eventual departure of the LADY JULIANA, although when she sailed she headed for China.

JOSEPH BANKS 1743-1820

Joseph Banks was born into a family of wealthy landed gentry in Lincolnshire in 1743 and after studying at Oxford University he joined HMS NIGER as the ship's botanist on a voyage of exploration and surveying of Labrador and Newfoundland in 1766. Two years later he joined Captain Cook's first circumnavigation of the world in the ENDEAVOUR between 1768 and 1771. It was this exploration of the eastern coast of New South Wales that led to his advocacy that the country should be colonised. He had suggested that Botany Bay could become a place for the reception of convicts and for many years afterwards he advised the British Government on anything Australian.

In 1780 he was invited to become the President of the Royal Society and it was his involvement with the development of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew that made it the world's leading botanical garden. His

contribution to the scientific knowledge of the world's flora and fauna was legendary and it was against this background that Governor Phillip was exchanging letters about Mary Rose and her unnamed husband (John Trace). So, what was it about Mary Rose that had led to this exchange?

The Story of Mary Rose

In his book *The Second Fleet*. Michael Flynn describes the background to Mary's plight. He writes;

> Mary Rose, age given as 16, was sentenced to seven years transportation at the 10 March 1787 Lincoln Assizes, for the theft of clothing from Anne Westleby's house in St. John's Parish, Lincoln City. She had been committed to Lincoln Castle Gaol on the 22 February 1787 where she remained until April 1789 when she was sent to London for embarkation on the LADY JULIANA transport, her age being given as 20. In his memoir of 1822 the ship's steward, John Nichol (right), described Mary as *a timid modest girl who never joined in with the ribaldry of the rest and did not take up with any man on the voyage.* He wrote that she was a wealthy farmer's daughter who had been seduced by an officer and eloped with him. When the officer was ordered overseas, he left Mary with a landlady who falsely accused her of stealing in order to keep the money that had been advanced to her for the girl's board. Nichol wrote that having disgraced her family she did not attempt to seek their help, but after she had sailed *they discovered the fate of their lost and ruined Mary. By their exertions, the whole scene of the landlady's villainy was exposed and she stood in the pillory at Lincoln for her perjury.*

When clustering clouds deform the sky,
And winter reigns in all her pride,
When biting winds with keen-edge fly,
And stop the river's rippling tide;
O then, ye truly good and great,
Ye *Howards* of old Lincoln town,
O think upon the prison-grate,
Where Horror dwells with dismal frown.

To chace light slumber far away,
The pearly morn that shines so bright,
Did beam around a double ray,
Upon the sable breast of night:
'Twas then my wandering thoughts did bend,
To Lincoln prison,-dreary cell,
Where weeks and months, without a friend,
A ROSE, distress'd is forc'd to dwell.

Alas, poor girl, thy lot is hard,
On straw to rest, from year to year,
The cheerful sun from thee is barr'd,
Thy only solace is a tear,
Thy prison-seat, a cold, damp stone,
Thy dwelling-place, a murky cave;
Give me, kind fate, a better home,
That place of rest, - a silent grave.

According to Nichol, a pardon, clothing and an order for a passage home were waiting for Mary at Sydney Cove (which was clearly impossible and puts into doubt the accuracy of Nichol's memoir).

Mary is said to have been acquainted with Sara Whitlam (Nichol's chosen partner) before they were transported and Nichol states that he felt obliged to offer her his protection with Mary doing their washing and a few odd chores, but Nichol's account of Mary clearly mixes fact with romantic fiction and Nichol was not the only one to fall under her romantic spell. In December 1788 an anonymous poet was moved to publish verses on her plight (left).

The poem represents perhaps the most unusual petition for the release of a convict in the history of transportation. It may even have been penned by a friend or member of the household of Joseph Banks whose country home was at Revesby Abbey, near Boston

Lincolnshire. Letters found among the Banks papers provide an insight into the circumstances of Rose and her female convict contemporaries who were awaiting transportation in 1788-89. They also give a view of the workings of aristocratic patronage and the resistance to it from both local government and the legal system.

On the 28 December 1788, John Vanniel wrote to Joseph Banks that in compliance with his request he had called upon the Mayor of Lincoln who had accompanied him on a visit to Rose in the Lower Jail. He continued;

> *She is very willing to go anywhere sooner than remain in that horrid place. She has been held in the gaol since February 1787 for a very small offence and her prosecutor is a person of infamous character, so that her present sufferings are more than her crime deserves.*

She told Vanniel that she would be turning 21 in three months, on which she would be entitled to an income of £20 per annum.

On the 9 January 1789 J.T. Bell wrote from Lincoln to Banks respecting a letter Banks had sent to a Mr. Hutton on Rose's case. Bell had discussed the girl's position with the Mayor and some Gentlemen of the Corporation. He wrote that the cost of conveying a felon from Lincoln to Portsmouth was usually £10 or £12 adding that;

> *The poor girl, one would think, has been sufficiently punished for remaining in that dreadful hole for two years. And under that idea she might probably deserve Pardon if it could be obtained for her, but in that case, I very much fear whether she would not return to her evil practises again, for I understand she is a bad one. If there is the possibility of having her sent to Botany Bay for about the money I mention, I daresay the Mayor would be very ready to send her off, but he is fearful of drawing upon the City and inhabitants a vast expense and more than is usual in such cases. I some time since have twice applied to Mr. Cawthorne, one of our members, to request him to get an order for her removal and his answer to me was that there is no accommodation for female convicts. I have now before me a letter from Lord Sydney to that effect and that as soon as there was any accommodation for them, that I should have had an order for the removal of the girl in question in consequence of Mr. Cawthorne's application. As that is not the case I would submit to you whether I had not better apply again in some way.*

With his feathers only slightly ruffled by the suggestion that the imprisoned damsel might be a 'bad one,' Joseph Banks drafted a reply from his London address in Soho Square stating that;

> *I have no motive under Heaven in wishing the liberation of the girl in your gaol, but mere humanity and as I am informed that she is not as I had conceived, a general object of compassion, my warmth is much abated. The miserable state of your prison, however, induces me to wish to persist even though she does not deserve compassion on my account.*

He urged a fresh application to Cawthorne and offered to contribute towards the public expense involved in transporting Rose.

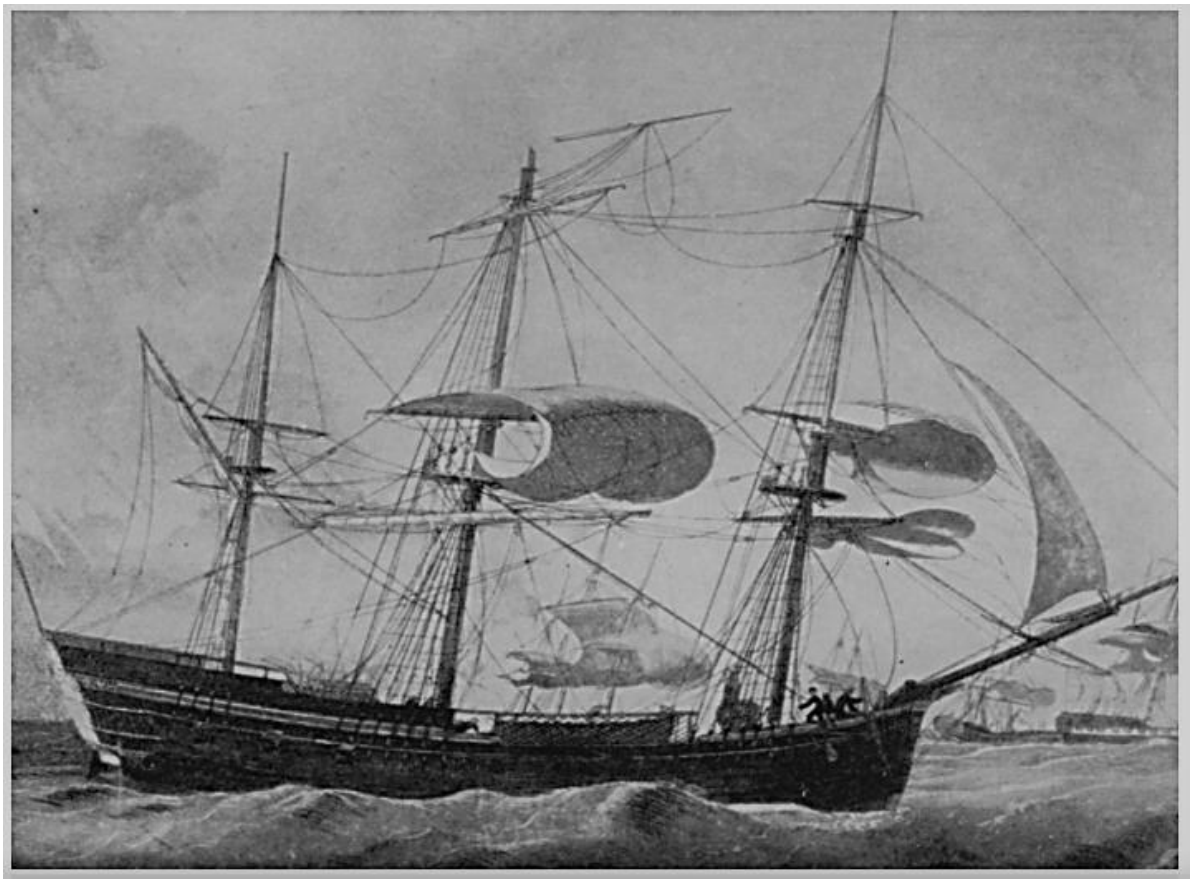
Bell wrote from Lincoln on the 25 February that;

> *The business is entirely settled.....the contracts are now in readiness and we only wait for an order from the Secretary of State to remove her hence on board the ship of which order I have expected to hear from Mr. Cawthorne every post for this fortnight past and I am rather surprised at his silence, but I presume that it may be owing to the present state of public affairs. Several letters have passed between Mr, Richards, the contractor and myself. I look upon it that nothing is now wanting for such an order. It is true that the expense will fall very heavy, but that cannot be avoided and it would be cruel to keep her here one moment longer than is absolutely necessary. The contractor is to be allowed £2-11s-0d for bed and necessities, which are to be the property of the convict when landed and I will endeavour to raise for her, by myself and friends, a trifle for pocket money.*

On the 1 April Bell wrote to Banks to inform him that the Order had arrived and he proposed sending Mary Rose off in a few days.

The Voyage on the LADY JULIANA

The marine historian Charles Bateson (1903-1974) has contributed more to our knowledge of the convict transportation system in his book *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* that was published in 1959, than any other single book. Unfortunately he coined the phrase that the LADY JULIANA was 'a floating brothel' which has subsequently been singled out to sensationalise and distort the circumstances in which everyone on board had found themselves.



It was February 1789 when the British Government chartered the LADY JULIANA to assist them in solving an acute problem - the transportation of a large number of female convicts to Botany Bay. On the 28th February she was ordered to Gallions Reach, just down river from Woolwich, to await the arrival of 108 women from Newgate Prison who were embarked during March 1789. However, the authorities were in no hurry and before she left the Reach on the 7th May more women had been taken on board from Newgate.

As the ship weighed anchor on the Thames with a passage half way around the world in front of her, it is worth saying that it was fortunate that the contractor was Mr Richards, for although the LADY JULIANA is included in the Second Fleet for reference, she was never a part of it. She sailed alone, months before the Second Fleet was assembled on the Thames under the notorious Slave Transport contractors Camden, Calvert & King and their fleet would fare badly by comparison.

The LADY JULIANA left the Downs off Deal on the 4th July and anchored at Spithead to embark 90 prisoners from a number of County gaols. Mary Rose came from

Lincoln Gaol and must have been among their number, although it was officially forbidden to accommodate women on prison hulks.

The voyage has been well documented in contemporary detail by the Steward of the LADY JULIANA, John Nichol and others together with a number of 20th century books, so I have sprinkled this text with website addresses that I can guarantee to my reader that they will add more detail and colour to my story

1 - The Voyage of the Lady Juliana
https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/lady_juliana

2 - The female convicts on board the Lady Juliana
https://www.hawkesbury.net.au/claimaconvict/shipDetails.php?shipId=9

3 - An Account of the Voyage using Contemporary Letters
https://www.freesettlerorfelon.com/convict_ship_lady_juliana_1790.htm

4 - The Voyage of the Second Fleet
https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/second_fleet

Whilst the ship was at Spithead John Nichol claimed that the authorities were emptying the gaols of England, but a number of the women, including a Mary Talbot and a Mary Burgess escaped from the ship with the help of their families. Although Mary Talbot was soon recaptured, Mary Burgess remained at large for three years, before she was spotted in Christchurch by a Bow Street Runner.

When the LADY JULIANA left Spithead she anchored in Plymouth Sound on the 21st July[18] for a final embarkation of prisoners and stores and when she left on the 29th July 1789 she was carrying 226 female convicts, the names of whom are listed at '2' above.

It was when the ship was well clear of the English Channel that the order was given that women should be released and allowed to fraternise with the crew and adopt a 'normal' daily life and for that situation the women had to be thankful to the three men who had been given charge of their care – the Master George Aitken; the Surgeon Richard Alley and the Government's Agent Lieutenant Thomas Edgar. These three men were attuned to the reality of their unusual situation and if they were to avoid trouble and illness they had to be proactive and discretionary. Rations were properly issued, the vessel kept clean and fumigated, the women were given free access to the deck, and supplies of fresh food were obtained at all the ports of call. They were even allowed to discard the convict dress and wear their own clothes. As a result deaths on board were few, in sharp contrast to the treatment meted out to the convicts on the Second Fleet, as we shall see.

The ship arrived at Santa Cruz in Tenerife for water on the 21st September and by that time almost every crew member had selected a wife, including Richard Alley, but the same could not be said of the women and among that small number who retained their dignity with their independence was Mary Rose. However, everyone is an individual and four women took advantage of the liberal regime on board and deserted the ship.

The next port of call was Rio de Janeiro where they stayed for almost seven weeks whilst repairs were carried out. It has to be remembered that the ship was only 400 tons and for a sailing ship she was very poor and each stop demanded the

[18] Sherborne Mercury 27 July 1789

rectification of a long list of defects, but it also gave those on board long periods of fresh food which was advantageous to everyone.

After zigzagging back across the Atlantic, she reached the Cape of Good Hope on the 1st March 1790 and it was from here that a little is learnt of the voyage in a letter written on the 29th March 1790 by Richard Alley to his political master in London, the Permanent Under Secretary at the Home Office, Evan Nepean. In it he writes that;

> Our passage from England has been very tedious. On our route, so far, we have lost five women and we have had seven births. At Present we are remarkably healthy. Tomorrow is fixed for our sailing from this place and I hope that we will meet better luck than did the GUARDIAN.

The GUARDIAN was a naval ship that had been adapted to carry mostly stores for the new colony and when she left the Cape of Good Hope she was filled with not only plants and foodstuffs, but also a menagerie of animals to replace the many that had already been lost in the alien environment of the new colony. Not long into her voyage, she collided with an iceberg on Christmas Eve and although she was very badly damaged, she did not sink. Somehow her commander, Lieutenant Riou and his crew, got her back to Cape Bay where she was beached, but the animals deserted her along with most of her crew, who were never seen again.

According to Nichol's memoir, part of the reason for delaying the departure of the LADY JULIANA was the need to pack flour from the wreck into casks so that they could carry it to Port Jackson where they were in dire need of it.

LADY JULIANA arrived at Port Jackson on the 6th June 1790 – 309 days after leaving Plymouth and recorded the slowest passage ever made by a convict ship. She was also the first ship to arrive in the colony since the First Fleet had arrived two years before and she found the colonists in a state of starvation. As word of her sighting got around, colonists began to gather to watch her arrival with eager anticipation. But few words can describe their deflation as they watched scores of women stepping ashore. One colonist remarked that *'they were all fresh, well looking women'* and they raised the proportion of women on the colony from 20% to 40% but another hard-bitten naval officer, Lt. Ralph Clark, had harsher words to describe the arrival. The LADY JULIANA's cargo may not have been to the liking of many of the colonists. They were starving and in dire need foodstuffs, but she carried newspapers and letters bringing the first news of Great Britain and Europe that anyone had seen in a very long time. They had been hungry for a long time; they would have to be patient for a little longer. The store ship JUSTINIAN arrived two weeks later, on the 20th June, with the desperately needed stores, yet there was one item on board that was essential, but could not be eaten. It was an entire hospital, dismantled into 650 separate pieces. Little did they realise that they were going to need it, when 486 convicts were landed sick from the three convict transports that arrived just a few days later and 124 of those died in the hospital that already existed. The new, pre-fabricated hospital was finished on the 7th July and three days later it was full.

John Trace Marries Mary Rose

When Governor Arthur Phillip first explored the inner reaches of the harbour he had named Port Jackson, he found what he thought was a river flowing into it. He navigated further inland to a point where there was a large curve in the river around a defensible hill. It was also the furthest navigable point inland, being 15

miles from the coast and it was also the point at which the fresh water met the tides of the sea below which irrigation would have been impossible. He named this area the Crescent and the hill eventually became known as Rose Hill, but as they listened to the speech of the native Aborigines it became clear that this insignificant river was known to them as Parramatta (the river of eels) and eventually Phillip adopted it as the name of the district,[19] although Tench never used it in his frequent visits to the area that by now boasted the redoubt for their protection.

Two years later, on the 9th April 1790, Philip Gidley King was staying there following the loss of his ship SIRIUS on Norfolk Island.[20] On that day he was visited by Governor Phillip and in the evening, after dinner, they decided to walk the 4 miles to Prospect Hill to view the place that had been chosen for the settlement of emancipated convicts. Afterwards Gidley wrote that it was *undulating grassland interspersed with magnificent trees and many kangaroos and emus.* There must have been a discussion about the looming inevitability of the completion of convict sentences, a subject that had already caused the Governor some concern. Emancipation was the reinstatement of civil and political equality on men and women who had had it taken from them for crimes against society. Very soon now they would no longer be considered to be a criminals, but citizens.

The arrival of the Second Fleet, proved to be a new start for the colony as their storehouses had been replenished and their population had dramatically increased, but they also benefitted from a significant new arrival in the form of convict supervisors. The Governor immediately hired them as overseers and re-instated the working hours and they proved to be more than capable of directing the labour which until now, had been sorely lacking. This new situation reinvigorated the desire to improve their situation and new buildings were planned to complement those that had already been completed, whilst attention also turned towards clearing large tracts of land at Rose Hill. The healthiest male and female convicts were sent to Rose Hill accompanied by a subaltern's detachment from the New South Wales Corps to supplement the marines already there.

By August work was in full swing and Lt. Tench was at the Rose Hill Redoubt. Mary Rose had been in the colony for almost three months and I believe that John Trace was being employed on the Rose Hill clearances. For almost a year on board the LADY JULIANA, Mary Rose had shunned fraternising with any of the male members of the crew. Yet here she was standing alongside John Trace as they exchanged marriage vows before the colony's chaplain in Rose Hill and the date was Monday 23rd August 1790. I do not believe that this was a romantic liaison, although anything is possible. I believe that it was more of a working relationship and I will explain.

We have read already that the marines were offered land to settle and married men attracted more land than bachelors. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to think that emancipation, when it came, would follow the same pattern. Indeed this was confirmed in the Governor's dispatches brought by the JUSTINIAN. However, nothing has been said about the emancipation of female convicts and I remain convinced that they would not have been offered land. It made sense, therefore, to make a sensible and realistic marriage at the earliest opportunity and it would also seem that there was nothing to prevent convicts entering into marriage.

[19] Alleged to have been changed from Rose Hill to Parramatta on the 4 June 1791

[20] The rest of the crew including Captain Hunter did not return until February 1791

It is hard to imagine today, but there were many sections of British Society that were watching the evolution of the colony of New South Wales very closely and among them were none other than John Newton and William Wilberforce. They were determined that the colony should not be devoid of a Christian witness and that determination had been invested in the Fleet's Chaplain Richard Johnson. We have already read his words as he witnessed the arrival of the Second Fleet, but within days he was stood before John Trace and Mary Rose as their pastor. It was a part of his duties to travel to Rose Hill once each fortnight and hold a service, but it is clear that there was no church there in July/August 1790 when the Chaplain complained of a lack of attendance at his services. It was observed that these were held in the open air, unsheltered from the wind and rain or the heat of the sun, but it was decreed that every convict should attend at least once on a Sunday or else be deducted 2 lbs of flour from his ration and every overseer 3 lbs if there was no good reason for them not attending. However, it was said that when the new storehouse was built Johnson began using that for his services. A storehouse measuring 100 feet by 22 feet was erected and covered during July without the misfortune of any rain and it is very possible that this was the storehouse in question.

The marriage service itself was probably read from the Book of Common Prayer from which our own marriage service was read, but no questions were asked about their marital status and their ability to marry. There were no parishes and therefore, no banns to be read. Technically John Trace became a bigamist as he already had a wife in Elizabeth Lewis, the mother of his two sons, but nothing could be done about that. Neither John nor Mary would ever see England again. This was a colony in need of children. That is why the women had been sent. What had happened in the past had no relevance to their present circumstances.

Today there is an Anglican Cathedral dedicated to St. John and its website states that its' Marriage Registers begin in 1790 and are kept in the cathedral's archive. If that is true then John and Mary's marriage would be among the first to be recorded.

The first Rector of Parramatta's church dedicated to St. John, was the Rev. Samuel Marsden who took up his appointment in 1794 and stayed for 44 years and on the 23rd of August 1802 it was declared an Anglican Parish by Governor King (Philip Gidley King formerly of the SIRIUS and Norfolk Island) and this gently simple watercolour[21] captures the location which must have become familiar to John and Mary in the early 1800s.

A Settlement Called Parramatta

During July 1790, the Governor laid down the lines of a new town. The main street extended for one mile westward from the landing place to the foot of Rose Hill where he proposed to erect a house for his own use when he visited the settlement. The street was to be 205 feet in width and along each side, huts were to be erected large enough to accommodate ten people and standing 60 feet from each other and each should have a garden at the rear. These seemingly generous dimensions were simply to mitigate the effects of any fire, as the huts would be built of inflammable material. However, it also meant that as time progressed and the convicts were replaced by individual inhabitants, they would have sufficient space to live in respectable comfort. But currently the Governor had not forgotten that they were convicts and had also included two large plots that would be both the new barracks for the New South Wales Corps together with their own gardens.

Although 27 huts had been completed for the convicts by the end of September, these barracks together with a warehouse were the focus of attention during the month as they were to be brick built and a convict was sent from Sydney Cove who had presumably come from their brick making gang. A convenient vein of clay had been found and they had sufficient bricks to begin and finish the warehouse during November which had experienced not a drop of rain. The bricks were a deep red in colour after being burned in the kiln and they were thought not be as good as those made in Sydney. However, the storehouse was essential and similar in size to the others already built at 100 feet by 24 feet.

The lack of rain was advantageous to the builders, but it was a disaster for those trying to grow crops. There had been very little rain since June and the small amount that fell towards the end of September soon ceased and the gardens and 'corn grounds' were parched for lack of moisture. The weather is little different today, as the residents begin to dread that small spark that would set the country ablaze and in 1790 it came early in October driven by a strong wind blowing from the northwest.

With the work finished on the storehouse, attention turned to the barracks and its foundation was laid adjacent to the storehouse for its protection. There would be enough accommodation for one company of men with their officers together with a guard-room and two store houses. This would be a significant improvement on the ramshackle temporary buildings that had provided them with little comfort or shelter.

It is much easier to write about the development of the settlement in terms of its buildings than it is to visualise the daily life of its inhabitants. Thousands of pages have been written by eye witnesses – people who were there to see it, yet I still cannot say with confidence that I can relive in my mind the ordinary daily life of my ancestor John Trace.

[21] Museum of New South Wales post 1803 and presumably the date of the addition of the spires.

A criminal court was convened twice during October 1790 and one of those sittings was to try two men for a callous robbery from a hut in Parramatta. William Harris and the aptly named Edward Wildblood were tried for entering a hut where there was only one, sick man. They knocked him down and removed everything they could carry from the hut. They were sentenced to be executed at Rose Hill close to the hut they had robbed. They would not be missed. They had given a great deal of trouble to the community. During September they had twice robbed companions at Rose Hill before absconding into the woods, but they were well known to the 'watch' in Sydney and it was not long before they were caught. However, on the night before their arrest they killed a goat and the Governor sentenced them to be chained together and sent back to Rose Hill to labour on bread and water. It was in this situation that they took advantage of their overseer's brief absence and pillaged the hut of which they had previous knowledge. John and Mary would have known all about this and may even have seen its aftermath.

In November 1790, almost three years had passed since the arrival of the First Fleet and to a large extent people were becoming familiar with their surroundings. However, Rose Hill was the newest settlement and made up predominantly from the convict population. It was the perfect place to abscond, but they did so at their peril. The marines and now the soldiers of the New South Wales Corps were free agents who had free time, but the newly arrived detachment of soldiers were cautioned about the risks of straying into the woods. Ignoring that caution two soldiers went missing and it was almost five days before they were found – terrified and starving, but it would happen again. One man who would not get lost was Lieutenant Tench and we pick up his story in August 1790.

On this occasion he and his companions excursioned to the NW when they again met the River Nepean. They followed its course carefully noting all its features until they recognised the location where they had first discovered it, 14 months before. It confirmed in Tench's mind that the Nepean and Hawkesbury River was one and the same river, but that was still to be confirmed.

On the evening of the 16th November he returned to Rose Hill with an arrangement to meet the Chaplain the Rev. Mr. Johnson (sic) to walk around the whole of the cleared and cultivated land with the 'best farmer in the country.' On that single day he recorded everything that was to be seen in Parramatta in detail and it must be recorded in his own words as he answered almost every question that I have asked myself.

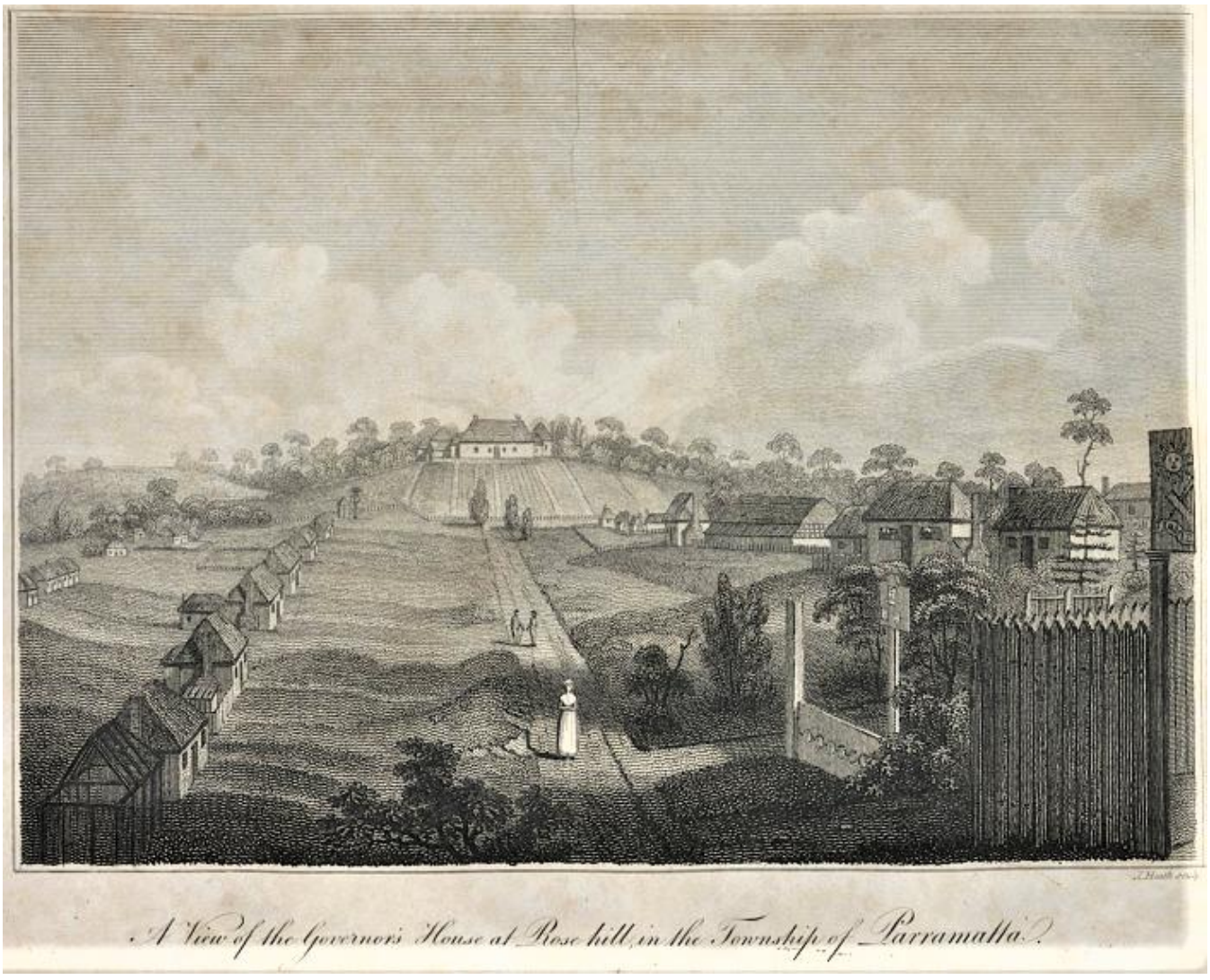
> The main street is already begun and is a mile long and of such breadth as to make Pall Mall hang its diminished head. It contains at present 32 houses completed of 24 feet by 12 feet each on the ground floor only built of wattles, plastered with clay and thatched. Each house is divided into two rooms, one of which contains a fireplace with a brick chimney. These houses are designed for men only and ten is the allotted number of inhabitants, although some already have 12 and even 14, such is the want of better accommodation, but more are building. In a cross street stand 9 houses for unmarried women and exclusive of these are several small huts where convict families of good character are allowed to reside.

This latter phrase suggests very strongly that it was here that John and Mary Trace would have lived and it will be noticed, as we proceed, that there is little reference to married convicts. Tench continues;

> Of the public buildings, besides the old wooden barracks and store, there is a house of lath and plaster, 44 feet long by 16 feet wide on the ground floor only for the Governor, with excellent outhouses attached to it. A new brick storehouse, 100 feet long by 24 feet wide with roof tiles, is almost completed with a house for the store keeper. The first stone of a

barrack 100 feet long by 24 feet wide, to which will be added wings for the officers, was laid today.

The location of the barrack is very convenient being close to the storehouse and within 150 yards of the wharf, where all the boats from Sydney unload. There is also an excellent barn, a granary, an enclosed yard to rear stock and a spacious blacksmith's shop. Unfortunately the hospital is wretched, being destitute of every convenience. Luckily for the gentleman who superintends the hospital and still more luckily for those doomed to enter it due to sickness, the air of Rose Hill has been, in general, very healthy.



Although dated 1798, this view encapsulates many of the features recorded by Tench and looks towards the Governor's house on the slope of Rose Hill. On the right is a glimpse of the barracks whilst in the middle distance is the storehouse with the storekeeper's house alongside. The road from the wharf is immediately behind the artist.

When Tench and Johnson embarked upon their perambulation they were joined by Edward Dod (sic) over a part of their inspection as Tench described him as a man *from the Governor's household who conducts everything here in the agricultural line.* He estimated that they had cleared and cultivated about 200 acres with 55 acres sown in wheat, barley and a little oats, with 30 acres sown with maize. The

remaining acreage is either recently cleared or occupied by buildings and gardens. Four enclosures were planned of about 20 acres each for the reception of cattle which they do not yet have in the colony and neither do they have a single horse or sheep. After a very technical discussion about the best time to sow which crops and its likely yield, it was then revealed that none of the land had been tilled with a plough, as they neither had a plough nor a horse to pull it. They were totally reliant on a convict with a hoe. He had to dig 16 rods each day with a rod representing about 15-18 feet or 250 feet in total, but as Dod commented some of the ground was barely scratched. As they walked past each crop in its 'field' the general perception was that the yield would be below average, almost to mediocrity and lacked any form of fertilisation without animals to provide it. Even the pigs didn't multiply for want of food. The gardens were in no better shape.

The convicts worked the same hours as they did in Sydney except that from 10 o'clock on a Saturday morning their time was their own until Monday morning, provided that they worked on their own gardens. As these were quite new it was a surprise to see that many had been barely touched and Tench described them as *deplorable.* It was thought that potatoes might thrive here provided that there was sufficient rain, which currently was not the case.

One of the convicts seemed to establish himself as a baker and he had a good bakehouse at which he would exchange flour for bread, but there no compulsion and Tench adds that any convict *could do with his flour what he pleases.* At this point Tench mentions a church, inferring that there was now a proper building for Divine Services which were held each month with two services in the day. Every convict was compelled to attend and if he didn't then the Chaplain could stop the issue of a part of his weekly provisions, as he was also a Justice of the Peace and this suggests some form of roll call or muster to uncover the absentees. Passing the temporary barracks Tench remarked that the garrison was formed of 2 subalterns, 2 sergeants, 3 corporals, a drummer and 21 men.

However, if agriculture was at the heart of the colony in the long term, then in the short term they needed bricks and the Master Brickmaker was a convict named Becket who had arrived with the Second Fleet. He supervised 52 convicts who were making 25,000 bricks each week in their kilns. He seemed uncommonly proud of this achievement and told Tench that in Birmingham, where he was working 18 months previously, they would have sold for 30 shillings per thousand.

The Road to Freedom

John Trace and James Ruse shared something in common. They were both husbandmen. They also shared time on the *Dunkirk*, the prison ship moored in Plymouth Dock. They had probably never met in spite of living just 27 miles apart. It was the distance that lay between Frithelstock in the north of Devon and Launceston, James's home. He was possibly born in St. Stephens by Launceston as there is one Richard Ruse who with his wife Anne were baptising children between 1758 and 1767 although there is no James among them.

James Ruse had been sentenced at Bodmin Assize in August 1782, but he was not put aboard a convict ship until he joined the First Fleet in 1787. It is not clear on which ship he travelled, but it was not the CHARLOTTE. In August 1789 his sentence was complete and the inference in Tench's text is that he could have been the first man to complete his sentence. When he claimed his freedom, Tench writes that the Governor allowed him an uncleaned piece of ground with assistance to clear it on condition that he settled in the colony and agreed to cultivate the land.

In return the Governor promised that the land would be his. The tone of this transaction suggests that in 1789 the Governor was not entirely clear about the status of 'freemen.' That would come later.

Twelve months later, during Tench's visit to Parramatta, he interviewed Ruse and recorded that interview as if Ruse was speaking and it is very clear that Ruse was very thoughtful and analytical. He had watched the Government farm fail and had worked out the reasons for that failure which was largely due to a lack of care in digging the land. But the lack of any form of fertiliser was a serious issue. Ruse had burnt the timber he had felled and made strenuous efforts at digging the ashes into the soil. He used the clods of turf as added fertiliser allowing them to be exposed to the weather and then digging in the grass and the weeds. He knew that the preparation and conditioning of the soil was essential to a good crop and as a consequence he was methodical and thorough in his approach. He also knew that if he should get a harvest of wheat then he should attempt to create compost from the straw buried in pits and planting turnip where the wheat had grown to further improve the soil, but he concluded that his land was no more than average and without cattle to provide manure he was bound to fail. However, his very last observation to Tench was deeply profound when he said, *the greatest check upon me is the dishonesty of the convicts, who in spite of my constant vigilance, rob me almost every night.*

He made a point of saying that although he had initially been given assistance by another convict, that help had been withdrawn. Instead, he had no help beyond that of his industrious wife *whom I married in this country.* This latter revelation might mean that Ruse had married in 1790 and that his wife had come with the Second Fleet. If that is true then he too would be among the first to be married at St. John's Parramatta as John Trace had been.

Lt. Watkin Tench concluded his very comprehensive survey by putting it into the context of a census. The total population of Parramatta on that November day in 1790 was 552 people, 29 of whom were soldiers and one soldier had a wife and child with him – how odd. The 6 civilians were the storekeeper and the surgeon together with 4 convict Superintendents. As for the convicts themselves, there were 50 women and 450 men. Of the 450 men 310 were plain labourers whilst the majority of the remainder were 52 brick makers and 28 bricklayers (80), followed by 24 carpenters and 16 sawyers (40). What is noticeable is that although there are several tasks counted as 1 person, there were no farmers or freemen. It is also of some import to notice that there were 13 children and although there is no status for any of the male or female convicts, a number of them must have been married.

A month later and David Collins was reviewing the year 1790 as seen by the colony as a whole and although this was not a count of who was there, it was a count of those no longer there. 143 had died from illness of one sort or another and 123 of them were male convicts. The remaining 20 were made up of 7 women, 10 children, 2 seamen and a soldier. In addition to this number can be added a further 16 due to other causes; 4 executions, 1 midshipman, 2 soldiers and 6 convicts were drowned, 1 convict died in the woods and 2 had absconded: so ended 1790.

An Unpromising Prospect

The first day of the New Year 1791 was one on which all the convicts had been excused from labour. One young man at Rose Hill decided to wash his shirt at a nearby pond. Unbelievably he slipped from the bank and was drowned. How that was possible is astonishing, but he was yet another convict that had become a

statistic. Unfortunately the colony was not a place where good fortune came easily and although Henry Edward Dodd had walked around Rose Hill with Lt. Tench in the previous November, elucidating all his hopes for the crop that was being planned, on the night of the 28th January he died 'of decline.' David Collins writes;

> He had been ill for some time, but his death was accelerated by exposing himself in his shirt for three or four hours during the night, in search after some thieves who were plundering his garden. His body was interred in a corner of a large spot of ground which had been enclosed for the preservation of stock, whither he was attended by all the free people and convicts at Rose Hill. The services rendered to the public by this person were visible in the cultivation and improvements which appeared at the settlement where he had the direction. He had acquired an ascendancy over the convicts, which he preserved without being hated by them; he knew how to proportion their labour to their ability, and, by an attentive and quiet demeanour, had gained the approbation and countenance of the different officers who had been on duty at Rose Hill.

The text implies that it was very likely that John and Mary Trace attended the funeral, but he was a great loss to the Governor. Thomas Clark was appointed in his place as Superintendent of the convicts and keeper of the Government grain store at Rose Hill. Dodd's death 'of decline' was symptomatic of a much wider malaise which today might have been diagnosed as malnutrition. The entire colony was suffering from a poor and restricted diet and there were frequent calculations concerning the length of time their supplies would last. The heat was also a significant problem. During February there were occasions when the temperature reached 105˚F at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and was rarely below 85˚F with fires blazing in the woods around them. Birds were falling from the sky dead or dying and water was now beginning to disappear. Collins wrote that;

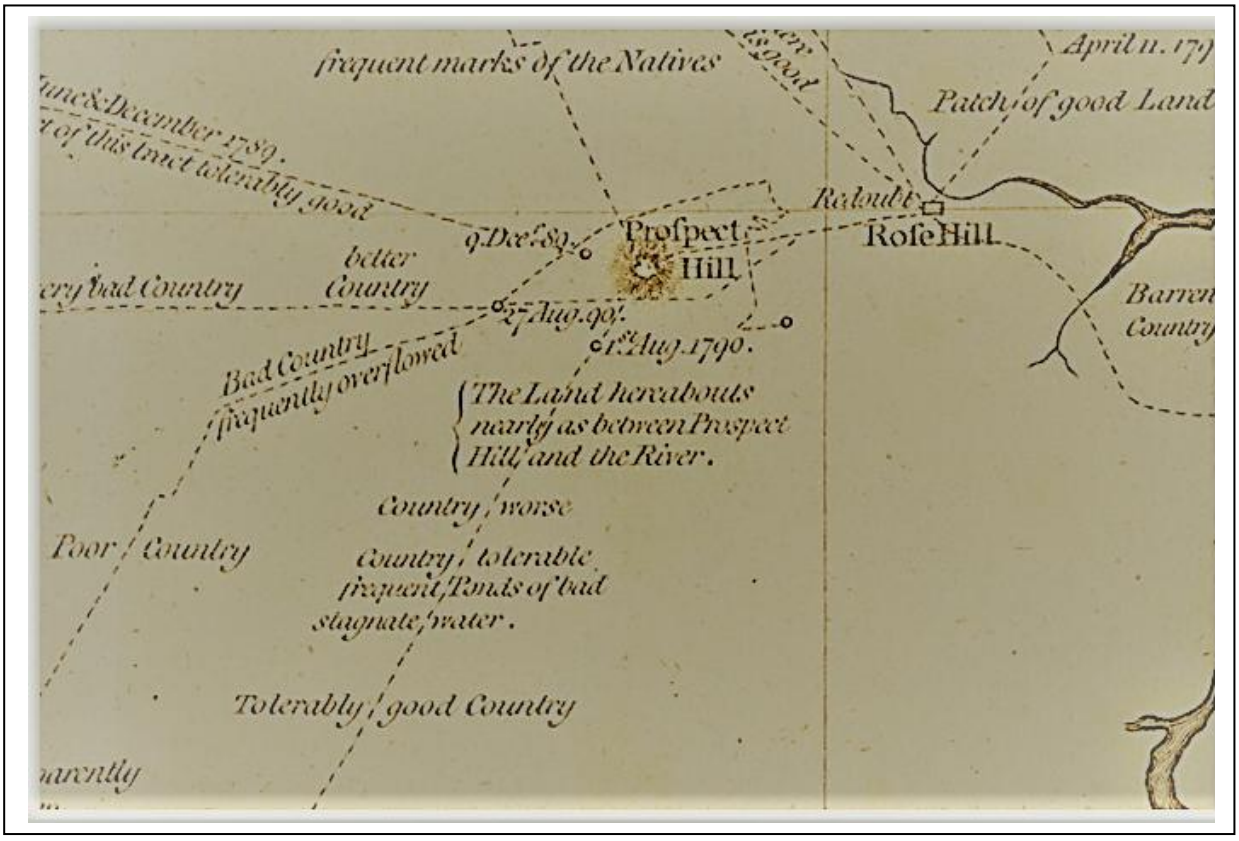
> At Parramatta and Toongabbie the heat was extreme; the country there too was in flames. Mr. Arndell was a great sufferer by it. The fire had spread to his farm; but by the efforts of his own people and the neighbouring settlers it was got under (control), and its progress supposed to be effectually checked, when an unlucky spark from a tree, which had been on fire to the topmost branch, flying upon the thatch of the hut where his people lived, it blazed out; the hut with all the out-buildings, and thirty bushels of wheat just got into a stack, were in a few minutes destroyed. The erecting of the hut and out-houses had cost £15 a short time before.
>
> The day preceding that of the excessive heat, James Castles, an industrious and thriving settler at Prospect Hill, had his hut accidentally burnt down, with all his comforts, and three bushels of wheat which he had just reaped. The governor ordered his hut to be rebuilt, and every assistance given which the stores afforded to repair his loss.

James Castles was next door to John Herbert and next but one to John Trace.

Henry Dodd had not lived long enough to see the results of his labours, or should that be, his convicts' labours. James Ruse had seen the results of their efforts elsewhere in the colony and he had not been impressed. He had also suffered from their same thieving habits. However, his harvest had been a success in spite of him only being on the land for 15 months. It might even be said that it was the first successful harvest on Australian soil and it went to his head. In March he went to the Governor and announced that he was now able to support himself and he rashly relinquished all claim on the Government stores for provisions. Keen to encourage him, the Governor consented to his claim and as a reward gave him the

30 acres of land where he now resided and David Collins attributed to him the accolade of **'the first settler.'**

Three years had passed since the First Fleet had unloaded its human cargo onto the shore of Sydney Cove. It had been three years of tragedy and failure overseen by a Governor who was a senior Captain in the Royal Navy. The time was fast approaching when the Governor had to be clear of his intentions for the future. He had already received instructions concerning the settlement of the marines and the naval seamen, should they wish to take advantage of staying in the colony. He does not, however, seem to be clear about the settlement of convicts once their sentence had been completed. He does not even seem to be clear about where those settlement allotments should be located. Watkin Tench had a much better idea. He had drawn a sketch map of his forays from Rose Hill.



Prospect Hill originally rose to 430 feet in height, but it was an igneous rock hill ideal for quarrying which eventually reduced its height by nearly 50 feet. The hill dominated the Cumberland Plain and its oval shape, nearly 2 miles along its axis, is outlined on the sketch map above. Lieutenant Tench had been the first to survey the area and he recorded his first impressions of the nature of the land in 1791, showing the routes he had taken from the redoubt that provided a guard for those moving in to this locality.

During April 1791 the Governor's plan for Rose Hill was modified once more and the background to it was a little complex. On the 26th February the SUPPLY returned from a visit to Norfolk Island bringing the crew of the wrecked SIRIUS with her. When the SUPPLY had visited Batavia her captain had hired a Dutch brig to bring additional supplies to the colony. When that brig arrived, the Governor had designs on buying her for the use of the colony, as without the SIRIUS they had only one ship, the SUPPLY. However, that purchase evolved into a different plan to

send her home to England with Captain Hunter and his crew from the SIRIUS. When this new plan became public property, three of the crew expressed a wish to stay. Two seamen and a senior rate wanted to take their chance in the new colony and the latter wanted to go back to Norfolk Island. The result of this new scheme is best described by David Collins. He wrote;

> April - Mr. Philip Schaffer, who came out from England as a superintendent of convicts, finding himself, from not speaking the language (being a German) inadequate to the just discharge of that duty, gave up his appointment as a superintendant, and accepted of a grant of land; and an allotment of one hundred and forty acres were marked out for him on the south side of the creek leading to Rose Hill. On the same side of the creek, but nearer to Rose Hill, two allotments of sixty acres each were marked out for two settlers from the *Sirius*. On the opposite side, the governor had placed a convict, Charles Williams, who had recommended himself to his notice by extraordinary propriety of conduct as an overseer, giving him thirty acres, and James Ruse received a grant of the same quantity of land at Rose Hill. These were all the settlers at this time established in New South Wales; but the governor was looking out for some situations in the vicinity of Rose Hill for other settlers, from among the people whose sentences of transportation had expired.

The number of settlers had now reached FIVE and two of those had been convicts. In Collins' words the Governor was looking for allotments and he was now looking a little farther than Rose Hill to a place called Prospect

On the 4th June and the birthday of King George, the town that had been marked out at Rose Hill had now taken on a more regular appearance with the establishment of small farms to complement all the buildings that had been completed, including the new brick-built barracks. The Governor decided that it should be called Parramatta, the name used by the local natives for the watercourse on which the town stood.

A month later, in July 1791[22], thirteen grants of land were made at Prospect Hill to newly freed convicts, but it was also the boundary between the colonists and the natives as they began to realise that the land was no longer theirs and hostility was inevitable. There is little doubt that there was nothing 'romantic' about living in a strange land. Initial encounters with the native peoples were understandably cautious and Governor Phillip was adamant that there should be no belligerence towards them. It was even hoped that they might be encouraged to help the 'settlers,' but it was inevitably doomed to fail.

On his first visit to Prospect Hill, Lieutenant Tench had noted frequent *tracks of the natives* to the north of the hill and it would become the "frontier" between colonists and indigenous Aborigines. Within a month of the first settlers starting to clear the land there was an attack on one of them. David Collins wrote;

> In the beginning of August 1791 information was received, that a much larger party of the natives than had yet been seen assembled at any one time had destroyed a hut belonging to a settler at Prospect Hill, who would have been murdered by them, but for the timely and accidental appearance of another settler with a musket. There was no doubt of the hut having been destroyed by natives, though perhaps their numbers were much exaggerated; the governor, therefore, determined to place other settlers upon the allotments which had been reserved for the crown; by which means assistance in similar or other incidents would be more ready to hand.

[22] Watkin Tench records the date as the 1st May 1791

A Question of Marriage

The male and female convicts had been in the settlement for two years (1788 and 1789) and as far as I can ascertain, there was no facility or intention to keep them apart outside of their living quarters. They seemed to be able to wander at will in spite of having prescribed working hours and allocated work. Collins wrote that – *each woman who could work at her needle was given material to make two shirts at a time and while she was employed in this task she could not be directed to perform another.*

It was seen on the voyage of the CHARLOTTE that the men and women readily and easily paired together, so what was the point of a formal marriage? It was often a marriage of convenience and sexual appetites could not be ignored. During 1790 it becomes obvious that the Chaplain Richard Johnson had begun to conduct marriage services, but on whose authority did he act? The answer to that question is not obvious and the barrack room lawyers among the convicts soon began to question the validity of his 'marriages.' In England he had the authority of the Church of England and the canon laws governing a parish, but to whom was he responsible here in the colony? It is true that the captain of a ship has the authority to marry couples vested in his position, but only because he represents the British Government whilst in command of a British registered ship. Was that now true of the Governor and if it was, then why was a Chaplain necessary? In other words 'authority' has to be recognised before it can be valid and in a settlement of this nature where the vast majority of the population, both male and female, could not easily be described as 'law-abiding,' it was too easy for couples to pair up regardless of any of the niceties of the society at large.

In a parish in England anyone coming for marriage would have been known to the Minister. If they were not then he would enquire of the minister in their home parish. When the ceremony was completed it had the authority of the rule of law and there was a record of the event in the parish register. Here in a new colony that did not exist. A section of the convict fraternity had come to view the colony's marriages with scepticism and disdain and following an incident where no less than eleven convicts absconded in the Governor's boat, it was noted that one among them was a woman. In fact she was Mary, the wife of the ring-leader William Bryant who had come out on the CHARLOTTE with John Trace and Watkin Tench.

This incident was not the first involving convicts absconding with a boat, but it was the largest and the Governor had begun to hear the rumours of their attitude to marriage and it was time that it was nipped in the bud. He issued an edict reminding them that anyone who quit the colony illegally or legally, when his time came, and abandoned a wife and children to be a burden on the Government, that person would be appropriately punished. It was an empty threat. He couldn't punish anyone who had absconded, unless he was caught and the two groups who had used boats to abscond during the previous 12 months were beyond reach.

However, the Governor's ire seems to have been directed at Sydney Cove as Collins writes that *the settlement at Rose Hill was exceedingly chaste.* So what could be said about John Trace and Mary Rose who married in August 1790? Mary was a spinster, but her husband had a wife and two children (the third son he did not know existed). The Rev. Johnson did not and could not know John's marital status and this added weight to the convicts' disdainful attitude. No one would know, if John chose to say nothing, yet it was not John Trace attracting the Governor's attention, but Mary Trace.

John Trace Loses His Wife

A pen picture had been created of Mary by John Nichol on the LADY JULIANA that suggests that she was something of a prude or 'shrinking violet,' yet something happened on or before October 1791 that caused the Governor to banish her to the penal colony established on Norfolk Island in spite of her being legally married. Her strong, independent streak had caused her separation from her husband after little more than a year of marriage. Michael Flynn writes in his book that;

> Rose seems to have committed some offence which caused Phillip to write to Banks in March 1791;
>
> *My desire of making her better has only been the cause of ruining the poor devil who married her.*
>
> He added that the girl was unworthy of the interest that the ladies of Joseph Bank's family had taken in her.
> In October of that year, she was separated from her husband and sent to Norfolk Island.

It all began on the morning of the 9th July 1791 when the cry 'flag's up' rang through the streets of Sydney. The MARY ANN dropped anchor that same evening with 141 female convicts from England and a small amount of provisions. It was soon learnt that she was the precursor of a significant fleet, later referred to as the 'Third Fleet,' that would arrive over the next two months and selected ships would be used to visit Norfolk Island to ring the changes. The arrival of a ship always increased expectations of news from home in the form of letters and newspapers, but the MARY ANN brought only dispatches for the Governor. Among them was the long awaited directive concerning the rights of those convicts whose time had expired.

It stated that no man should be compelled to stay in the colony, but neither should he be offered any inducement to leave it. Those who might choose to settle should be offered land with certain restrictions and a portion of provisions on declaring their intention to settle. If a convict possessed the means to transport himself from the country, he could leave it, free of all public debt.

Within three weeks, the MARY ANN was followed into Port Jackson by the MATILDA, a ship belonging to the same owners. The Governor proposed turning her around and sending her to Norfolk Island with all her convicts and provisions, but the captain declined saying that the ship was too 'leaky' to risk further expedition. He suggested sending the MARY ANN. The Governor agreed to this, but not before he had gained some advantage from the situation. He selected 55 male convicts from the MATILDA for their farming and craft skills and directed them to Parramatta and he replaced them with 32 bad characters from the colony and the MARY ANN sailed for the island on Monday 8th August.

A month later a second ship from among the fleet that had arrived in Port Jackson was made ready to sail to Norfolk Island. The SALAMANDER now highlighted the difficulty of landing stores on that island without any suitable harbour and wharf. Her entire cargo had to be offloaded and then restowed in a more suitable position. The point had been made, but not heard, that ships destined for that island should be loaded in a specific way and stores had to be small enough to fit into a whaler that could surf the reef. SALAMANDER sailed on the 4th September with near 200 male convicts and a sergeant's party of the New South Wales Corps to supplement the 18 privates that had preceded them on the MARY ANN. Two days out, she passed the MARY ANN on her return to Port

Jackson, but SALAMANDER'S visit to the island was exactly as feared. With convicts and provisions landed safely, their only boat, a Greenland whaler, was dashed to pieces in the surf on the reef, but the crew escaped with their lives.

Throughout this period ships had gradually gathered in Port Jackson until there were ten to be seen at anchor and among them was a large Royal Navy vessel named GORGON. She had arrived on the 21st September with Philip Gidley King, onetime a senior Lieutenant of the SIRIUS now returning from England as the new Lieutenant Governor of Norfolk Island. GORGON was a 44-gun 5th Rate ship-of-the-line and at 911 tons was the largest ship ever seen in Port Jackson. On the 25th October she fired a 21-gun salute in honour of the anniversary of the King's accession to the throne and the Governor entertained 50 officers to dinner at Government House, the largest number ever assembled in the colony. On the following day, Wednesday 26th October, all eyes were turned upon the transport ATLANTIC.

She had arrived at midday on the 20th August carrying about 200 convicts, half of whom were sent to Parramatta, but crucially she also carried stock destined for that settlement which could grace the enclosures that had long awaited them. When she left on that last Wednesday in October, her destination was Bombay by way of Norfolk Island. On board, she had VIP passengers, Philip King, destined to be the new Governor of the island with his wife and family and the Rev. Johnson making an occasional visit. Also travelling was the island's new assistant surgeon and Captain Paterson of the New South Wales Corps with 29 settlers discharged from among the now defunct marine detachment. However, the critical five words for this story were – *several male and female convicts* were among those embarked. Mary Trace must have been one of those female convicts, but it is not known what she had done.

If her presence on board could be confirmed, it seems to me that it is significant that she travelled with the Chaplain. She would have been known to him, as it had been only 14 months since he had conducted her marriage. She was also well known to Governor Phillip and he was the reason she was there, so no doubt words of explanation had passed between Phillip, King and Johnson concerning Mary Trace. It is also important to note that it says 'several convicts' implying a very small number and I think they had been singled out for a specific function – possibly weaving flax that was the main product of the island.

Although the ATLANTIC would eventually return from Bombay to Port Jackson, when the GORGON left, it is not clear what ship had been retained for the residents of the settlement which had swelled by over 1800 people since August. Their beloved SUPPLY was in such a poor condition that she had been forced to leave for England on the 26th November.

On the 18th December 1791 the GORGON left Port Jackson for England by way of Cape Town and she had on board Major Robert Ross, Lt. Watkin Tench and all the marines who had declined to become settlers.[23] Curiously when they reached Cape Town they found that they had to embark the four survivors of the escape from Sydney with the Governor's cutter. Mary Bryant and her daughter had survived, but her husband had perished with most of the others. Sadly, her daughter named after their convict ship *Charlotte*, died before they reached England.

[23] 3 Corporals, 1 Drummer and 59 Privates accepted land at Rose Hill and Norfolk Island

Parramatta in December 1791

It was inevitable that Watkin Tench should return to Parramatta once again before his departure for England. He began his visit on Friday 2nd December and he stayed for six days, but he declines to use its native name. Although fascinated by Aborigine culture and language, for Tench it would always be Rose Hill, the place he had explored before anyone else had arrived. At the conclusion of his visit he records a census and the population in that December week was 1628 of which 1469 were convicts both male (1336) and female (133). To his eyes Sydney had been a miserable failure and was no more than the storehouse nearest to the ships' anchorage that brought their supplies. Rose Hill, with its burgeoning satellites, would become the heart of the future Sydney and he makes it clear that he knew that he would never return to see it develop.

On his first day, as he walked around the town, he was unimpressed, even cynical when he wrote that; *in a colony that contains only a few hundred hovels built of twigs and mud, we feel 'important' enough to talk of a treasury, an admiralty and a public library which, together with other buildings, will form a part of a magnificent square.* He gave more credit to the great road that had been built from the landing place to the Governor's house, but he was much more impressed by the industrial complex that had been built to cope with the expanding clearances. There were nine covered sawpits that would allow work to continue regardless of the weather and these were supported by an excellent work shed for the carpenters and a new shop for the blacksmiths, but when it came to the hospital that was a different matter. He says, *the new hospital has been talked of for the last two years, but has not yet begun.* Instead there were two sheds capable of holding 100 patients each. They were built like marquees with their roofs thatched, but their in-patient list on the day he visited was 382 names – almost double capacity. He notes with some sadness that, *Rose Hill is less healthy than it used to be.* Dysentery had taken a hold of the settlement and was usually fatal and 25 men and 2 children had died there during November.

This was the settlement near which John Trace lived and over the next few days Tench would visit all those who had settled to 'farm' the land and these men would have been known to John Trace and Mary when she eventually rejoined him in Parramatta.

On Saturday 3rd December Tench began his survey of the 'public lands' and his opening notes state that the harvest had begun with wheat and barley, neither of which were the dominant crop, which was maize. Today, it would seem very odd to see large fields of maize and wheat within the boundary of a town, but that was the situation at Parramatta and especially the land surrounding the Governor's house. To Tench's eye, which he modestly claims to be inexperienced in farming, the crops vary from bad, through indifferent to very good and he is always quick to put an estimated figure on a yield. Astonishingly, around the lower part of the Governor's grounds, six thousand vines had been planted and a good, first harvest in 1792 was anticipated.

Until the GORGON's arrival, the colony had almost no stock, but the warship had brought 2 stallions, 6 mares and 2 colts together with 16 cows, 2 cow-calves and 1 bull calf, but they had lost both bulls on the passage. Tench jocularly remarks that the entire future of the continent's beef stock rested on that one bull calf. He thought that their condition looked good and was surprised to learn that they were not fed any supplementary fodder.

On Sunday Tench went to church and learnt that the new regiment in residence had their own chaplain to help with services, especially as the Rev. Johnson was currently on Norfolk Island. It is strange that all the buildings in the township have their own descriptions, but not the church, yet Tench found the church packed with several hundred convicts, the majority of whom he thought *looked the most miserable beings I had ever beheld, worn down by fatigue.* Storehouses were almost always 100 feet by 22 feet, but that would not accommodate several hundred people, so why has the church been ignored?

On Monday 5th December, Tench's plan took him to two small settlements to the NW of the Governor's house. The first was reached within a mile and was about 114 acres of maize which Tench thought tolerable, but very backward. There were thirteen large huts and several ponds which he suggested might supply a thousand people. However, he could find no one who would tell him how many people worked the land, so he moved on a further two miles to the next 'settlement.'

Walking through uncleared land, he met a man named Daveney who was the superintendent in charge of the clearance and he estimated that he had cleared 300 acres, a figure Tench thought nearer to 200. When asked how many men he had to undertake such a task, Daveney answered – 500. *Six weeks ago this was forest*, Daveney said. *This has been cleared in 30 working days.* Further questioning by Tench revealed the difficulty of working with convicts. Daveney had mustered only 460 men that day, the rest were either in the hospital or absconded. They had 13 huts similar to the other settlement, but each had two men to watch them and prevent them from being stripped of provisions given to their residents. They were expected to work from 5 a.m. until 10 a.m., but rested until 2 p.m. through the heat of the day. At 2 o'clock they resumed work until sunset, but they were only expected to produce 7 rods (35 metres) as representations to the Governor had reduced it from 8 rods due to their lack of strength from shortage of food. Tench understood the poor diet, but commented; *this surely cannot be called severe toil.*

As there was nothing more to see that constituted Government land, Tench decided to walk over to Prospect Hill to enquire of the success of those first thirteen convicts who had gained their freedom with a grant of land, but I think it fair to say that his tone was not optimistic, indeed there was a hint of sadness, for the soil was not fertile and the distance they were from water was unreasonable and for all their industriousness their reward was not guaranteed.

Seven months had passed since the land grants as Tench visited the community once again and reported on its progress. He lists the grantees in geographical order from north to south as they are shown on a map below (except that William Kilby's grant, just south of William Parish's, was soon to be taken over by Charles Bishop).

John Herbert has been highlighted for two reasons, the first being that his grant was exceptional as he was still a convict, but he had been given permission to work his land in his leisure time without encumbrance. The second reason is that he is very likely to have been familiar with John Trace as they were both sentenced at the same Lent Assizes in Exeter. One text suggests that he was transported on the CHARLOTTE, but another names the LADY PENRYHN. However Herbert was not the only one known to John Trace from his days on the CHARLOTTE as Lt. Watkin Tench had made the passage on that same ship.

Name	Trade	Acreage	Cultivation
John Silverthorne	Weaver	40	1¾
Thomas Martin	Weaver	40	1½
John Nichols	Gardener	40	2
William Butler and his wife	Seaman	50	4*
George Lisk	Watchmaker	40	
William Parish, wife and a child	Seaman	60	2¾
William Kilby, and his wife		60	1¾
Edward Pugh, wife and two Children	Carpenter	70	2½
Samuel Griffith	Butcher	40	1½
John Herbert			
James Castle	Husbandman	40	2
Joseph Morley		46	
John Williams and his wife	Carpenter	50	1

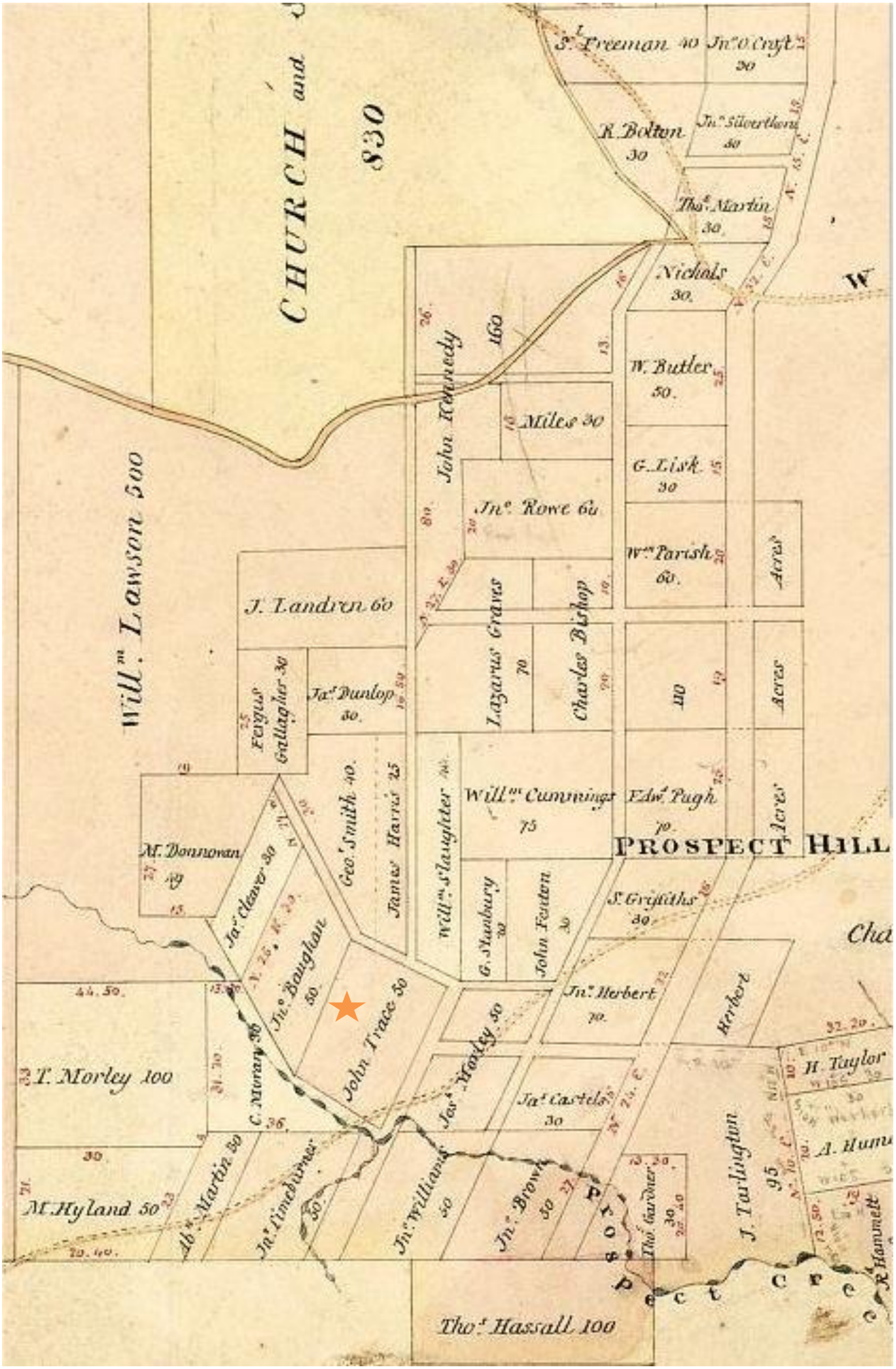
This is how Tench described the scene;

> ... I determined to visit all the private settlers to inspect their labours, and learn from them their schemes, their hopes and expectations. In pursuance of my resolution, I crossed the country to Prospect Hill, at the bottom of which live the following thirteen convicts, who have accepted allotments of ground, and are become settlers, (the chart above then followed).
>
> The terms on which these allotments have been granted are: that the estates shall be fully ceded for ever to all who shall continue to cultivate for five years, or more; that they shall be free of all taxes for the first ten years; but after that period to pay an annual quit-rent of one shilling. The penalty on non-performance of any of these articles is forfeiture of the estate, and all the labour which may have been bestowed upon it. These people are to receive provisions, (the same quantity as the working convicts), clothes, and medications, for eighteen months from the day on which they settled.
>
> To clear and cultivate the land, a hatchet, a tomahawk, two hoes, a spade and a shovel, are given to each person, whether man or woman; and a certain number of cross-cut saws among the whole. To stock their farms, two sow pigs were promised to each settler, but they almost all say they have not yet received any, of which they complain loudly. They all received grain to sow and plant for the first year. They settled here in July and August last. Most of them were obliged to build their own houses; and wretched hovels three-fourths of them are. Should any of them fall sick, the rest are bound to assist the sick person two days in a month, provided the sickness lasts not longer than two months; four days labour in each year, from every person, being all that he is entitled to. To give protection to this settlement, a corporal and two soldiers are encamped in the centre of the farms, as the natives once attacked the settlers and burnt one of their houses. These guards are, however, inevitably at such a distance from some of the farms as to be unable to afford them any assistance in case of another attack.
>
> With all these people I conversed and inspected their labours. Some I found tranquil and determined to persevere, provided encouragement should be given. Others were in a state of despondency, and predicted that they should starve unless the period of eighteen months during which they are to be clothed and fed, should be extended to three years. Their cultivation is yet in its infancy, and therefore opinions should not be hastily formed of what it may arrive at, with moderate skill and industry. They have at present little in the ground besides maize, and that looks not very promising. Some small patches of wheat which I saw are miserable indeed. The greatest part of the land I think but indifferent, being light and stoney. Of the thirteen farms ten are unprovided with water; and at some of them they are obliged to fetch this necessary article from the distance of a mile and a half. All the settlers complain sadly of being frequently robbed by the runaway convicts, who plunder them incessantly.

The single men were each granted 30 acres, those with wives had 50 acres, plus 10 acres for each child. Wide strips of bush called driftways were created between each pair of land blocks to allow for communication routes. However the driftways had the unfortunate effect of making access easy for attackers, whether escaped convicts who wished to raid the settlers' stores, or the original inhabitants of the area who resented the settlers' disruption to their means of subsistence.

No doubt the land boundaries were initially defined by being staked out on the ground. At some stage a rough survey would have been undertaken and a map drawn to show the grants. This frequent and tantalising reference to ‘a map’ was rewarded when that map was found and it was not limited to the first thirteen allocations. John Trace’s name was there at the southern end and just a short walk from John Herbert’s plot. Later grantees have been added to the map, but the original thirteen can be seen on the right of the map situated in a north-south linear strip of land from John Silverthorne's grant in the north, along the eastern slope of Prospect Hill and then curving westwards round its southern slopes to the grants of Joseph Morley and John Williams.

This was probably where the soil was judged to be the best, as volcanic basalt outcropping at the ridge had eroded and enriched the slope down to the creeks below. These are Greystanes Creek to the east which runs northwards and Prospect Creek to the south which flows south-eastwards forming the boundary between Joseph Morley's and John Williams' grants. Since all of the original thirteen blocks sloped from the ridge line down to the creek, which seems to have been tidal, Tench notes that most needed to carry water. It is unfortunate that there does not seem to be more detailed surveys showing these creeks, but the map below is a larger part of an earlier map and shows the relative location of Rose Hill to Sydney (arrow).


CHURCH and
830
S. Freeman 40
Jn.o Croft 30
R. Bolton 30
Jn.o Silverthorn 30
Thos. Martin 30.
Nichols 30.
W
John Kennedy 160
W. Butler 50.
Miles 30
G. Lisk 30
Jn.o Rowe 60
Wm. Parish 60.
Acres
Will.m Lawson 500
J. Landren 60
Fergus Gallagher 30
Jas. Dunlop 30.
Lazarus Graves 70
Charles Bishop
110
Acres
M. Donnovan 49
Geo. Smith 40.
James Harris 25
Will.m Slaughter
Will.m Cummings 75
Edw.d Pugh 70.
Acres
PROSPECT HILL
Jas. Cleave 30
Jn.o Baughan 50.
G. Hanbury 30
John Fenton 30
S. Griffiths 30
Jn.o Herbert 70.
Herbert
44. 50.
T. Morley 100
C. Murray 30
John Trace 50
Jas. Hanby 50
Jas. Castels 30
H. Taylor
A. Hume
M. Hyland 50
Ab.m Martin 50
Jn.o Lindburne
Jn.o Williams 50
Jn.o Brown 50
Thos. Gardner 30
J. Tarlington 95
R. Hammett
Prospect Creek
Thos. Hassall 100

Tuesday 6th December saw Tench visiting a settlement about a mile to the north of 'Mr. Clarke's house.' Clarke was the Governor's senior official in Parramatta and as Mr Dodd's successor, he was the store manager, farmland manager, convict superintendent and Justice of the Peace. His house was next to the storehouse which was adjacent to the barracks. When Tench reached the settlement he found five men, or he should have done. Three of them were working 120 acres in partnership, but they had only managed to cultivate 1½ acres. One of them was married with a child, but it is not clear exactly what their status was. One of the trio named William Bradbury, had been given 30 acres and permission to settle on his assertion that his term of transportation had expired. It had not. He had been transported for life and it was only recently that his lie had been discovered. Desperation set in as he said that he would *rather perish than remain a convict.* The week prior to Tench's arrival, he had disappeared.

The other two men were both married and had the appearance of being free settlers. Each had 50 acres and each had worked 3 acres into cultivation and Tench was impressed by both of them. Simon Burne had been a hosier and Parr was a merchant's clerk, but Tench affirmed that if he was compelled to settle in New South Wales, this would be his chosen location, adjacent to the river with a good soil. Each settlement had its own small encampment of a corporal and two privates from the NSW Regiment to guard against native incursions and this one was no different.

The next settlement on Tench's journey was named *Ponds* due to the presence of such useful features and here he found 14 settlers and again it is not said, but would appear to be a settlement for free settlers. There was one exception to this and there must have been something unusual about him that had impressed the Governor. Anthony Rope had the largest plot at 70 acres with a wife and two children, but he was still a convict allowed to work the land in his leisure time. Perhaps the reason for this dispensation was that he was a bricklayer and he had impressed the Governor in some way.

However, the free settlers were one small group that all the authors, contemporary and modern, seem to have overlooked. There are occasional references to individuals on the transport ships, but they are not given the credit due to them. They had to voluntarily endure the same conditions as the convicts. Rations handed out from the store, a crude existence and inherent dangers in an alien land, as well as the constant thieving and bad behaviour of the convicts. Many of them had no experience of farming. They just wanted a 'new life' and an escape from their old one. Tench noted the results of their efforts. They were very varied, to say the least and some would be successful whilst others would fail.

John Ramsay impressed him the most. Everything about his farm and garden was in good order and Tench observed that, *it is not often seen that a sailor makes a good farmer, but this man contradicts that observation.* On the other hand Joseph Bishop made a point of emphasising to Tench that he was a 'gentleman of no trade' to which Tench remarked in his notes that, *this man will have the honour of dragging a timber cart when his term of victualling from the store comes to an end.* He was not the only settler who was out of his depth and neither was Ramsay the only one making progress, but that progress had a particular hindrance in this settlement. It was a 'bug'[24] that was destroying the young maize plants and the industrious men among them had been forced to plant twice, whilst others remained in blissful ignorance of the results of their ineptitude.

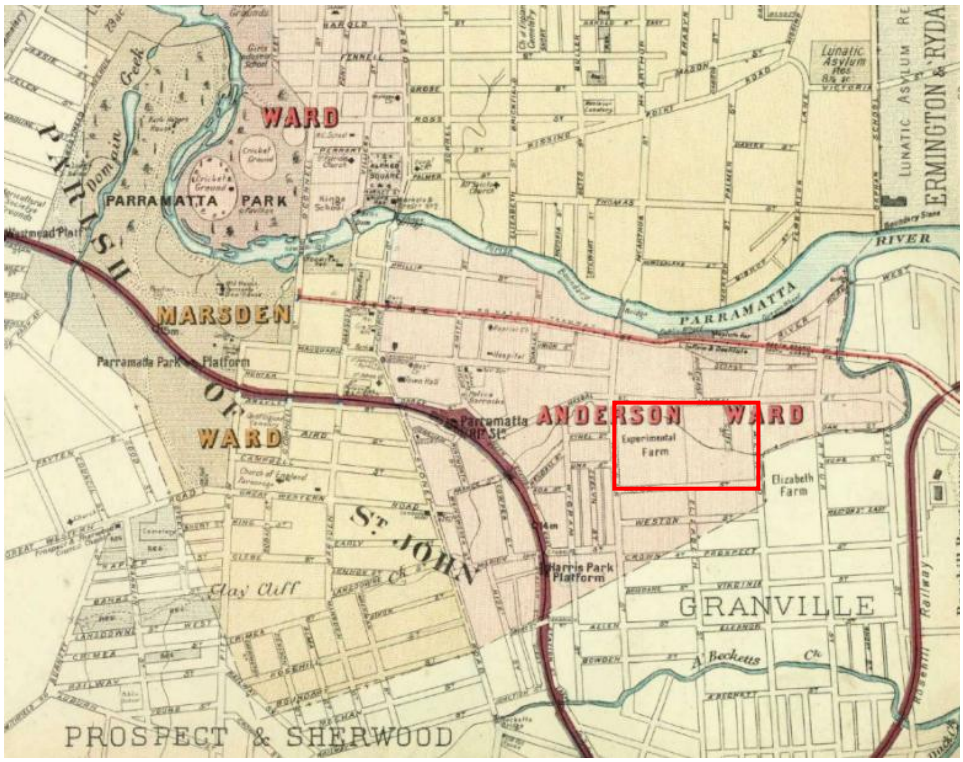
[24] This could have been the Fall Armyworm or the Corn Stalk Borer

It was the last two days of Lt. Watkin Tench's extended visit to Rose Hill and he had left the most pleasurable visits to the farms along the riverside until the end. There were six farms in occupation, the first two of which he visited on the 7th December. The largest farm belonged to Herr Schaffer, a man who came to the colony as a convict superintendent on a generous salary of £40 per year, but he had reluctantly resigned his post for having difficulty with the language. He was a soldier by profession and he had fought in America alongside the British Army as a lieutenant in an auxiliary Hessian Regiment, which some considered to be mercenary. In a sense he still was a mercenary, but he had the favour of the Governor who had granted him the largest allotment given so far, at 140 acres. The Governor had also ordered a brick house to be built which was almost complete and he had allowed him five convicts to help clear the land. These exceptional circumstances were reaping exceptional rewards.

In the seven months he had lived on the land he had cleared 14 acres and 12 were planted with maize that didn't look very promising, but besides an acre of wheat he had an acre of tobacco and 900 vines both of which he was more hopeful. He admitted to not being a farmer, but he had grown up on his father's vineyard on the Rhine and in that crop he could see his eventual profit. There was no mention of a wife to help him, but he did have a 12-year old daughter. Tench was obviously impressed by his modesty and his grasp of reality and as they parted company for the last time, Tench wished him 'success and prosperity.'

Schaffel's neighbour was Mr. Arndell, an Assistant Surgeon to the colony and he had his grant in the hands of a 'farm servant.' Only 6 acres were being cultivated and again four of them were in maize, one in wheat and one in oats. The crop looked good and Tench agreed with the man's assessment of its wheat yield at 12 bushels, but he was less convinced of the yield for maize at 30 bushels. Curiously when Tench returned to England, he received a letter from this servant in April 1792 informing him that the wheat had produced 15 bushels and the maize 40 bushels. It was almost a put-down - '*what do you know?*'

The 8th December was Tench's last day and he was determined not to leave the colony without one last visit to James Ruse, the man who was the pioneering settler from among the transported convicts. For some reason Tench asked to see his settlement grant document and he recorded its wording, word for word. It was a lot of 30 acres to be called *Experiment Farm* and it was free of all taxes for 10 years provided that



the occupier or his heirs continued to live there. After 10 years an annual rent of 1 shilling was payable. The interesting condition that was maybe a little odd, was that *all timber now growing or which will grow was reserved for the Crown, if it was fir, for naval purposes.* This seems to be out of step with the wholesale clearances taking place and the insistence on growing cereal crops. A map of the suburb dated 1889-94 has *Experiment Farm* marked upon it (red box). It is defined by Alfred Street and Harris Street running north/south and Nassal Street and Alice Street running east/west.

Ruse and his wife now lived in a brick house built at the direction of the Governor and he had 12 acres of maize growing. He told Tench that he had no intention of moving from his farm and neither would he grow anything other than maize. He had four breeding sows and thirty fowls and he had been told that in the following year if he thought he could maintain himself and his wife he would be allocated one convict labourer. However, he did move from his farm as we shall see.

Taking leave of Ruse, Tench crossed the river in a boat to the north shore, to the farm of Robert Webb who with his neighbour William Read, were onetime seamen on the SIRIUS. They each had 60 acres and were given a great deal of help by the Governor in the form of two sows and seven fowls and a modest house on each grant of land which they held on almost the same conditions as James Ruse. Tench observed that Webb *talked as a man should talk, as he expects to do well and always looks on the bright side*. His five acres of maize was thriving and promised a good yield, but the visit of Watkin Tench was now at its end. He had visited every one of the 38 settlements and had spoken with many of the settlers. He had seen their crops and their daily existence and he knew which ones were likely to fail.

The year ended with the first large scale protest that the colony had seen and it was said that it had been instigated by a group of 8-10 Irish troublemakers, recently arrived. The cause was entirely of their own making. It has already been said that the rations were issued to each man on a weekly basis on a Saturday, but it was a well known fact that for many it was gone by Tuesday. As a consequence the Governor ordered that it be given out daily and the scenes each morning were nothing short of a rowdy, squabbling rabble. The cry went up that the hand out should be restored to Saturdays and a huge crowd gathered outside the Governor's house at Parramatta demanding it. The Governor refused and told them that the names of the ring-leaders were known and a more subdued crowd dispersed.

December was also the month when the Governor issued a 'warrant of emancipation' to 13 convicts who had arrived on the GUARDIAN, but its terms were a little different. They were at liberty to work at any trade they were acquainted with, but employed wherever the Governor thought proper. Yet it also said that *they were at liberty to settle land on their own account.* So they had not been given a grant of land, but seemed to be free to choose one – I wonder why?

1791 ended with the roll call which found that 171 people had died of illness (155 male convicts) which was 28 more in total than 1790. Another 18 had died from extraneous causes or disappeared.

The Year John Trace Claimed His Freedom – 1792

The account of the colony written by David Collins begins chapter XVI with the departure of the QUEEN for Norfolk Island carrying 62 convicts and settlers and the new chaplain of the New South Wales Corps. The ship also had two stowaways as every ship that left the colony was found to have – even the GORGON, a naval ship,

had its quota. But the situation that was taxing minds was the recent absconding of 44 male and 9 female convicts who had come with the last fleet and were entirely Irish. These countrymen had brought with them the notion that China was out there in the distance with only a river between them and 'freedom.' It was no more than 100 miles away, or so they thought. This notion had fuelled several attempts already, but in much smaller numbers and not all had come to grief or found their way back into the colony. Instead they stayed on the fringes of Parramatta, hiding in the woods and becoming like wild animals living on roots and berries. They were dangerous and a kill or be-killed philosophy developed as the settlers mounted armed patrols at night to protect their gardens and their houses. Every building became a legitimate target and they were all robbed including the barrack store, the bake house and even the hospital dispensary. Instead of peaceably concentrating their efforts on improving the settlement, everyone was distracted by the depredations of these vicious thugs.

However, there was one benefit that came from it. Each settler had nowhere to store his produce and the government was failing in its duty to safeguard their efforts. At first they were offered the security of the Government store to keep their own supplies, but it was soon realised that it was just one step away from being a proper market and this concept was to everyone's liking and it was brought forward as a solution that would become permanent with a market in a new Town Hall.

In February the thief that robbed the bake house was caught, tried and hanged, an event that still seemed to be done in public on a convenient tree, but apart from the extinction of human life, the real tragedy was that these men were stealing food because they were starving and the public punishment had little effect on the spectators who would and did resort to the same solution for their hunger.

Another remedy to the problem of law and order in Parramatta was to send troublemakers and dubious characters far out into the wilderness to an area that became known as the New Grounds. Those involved in this new tactic were not impressed and a rumour was soon detected that a large body of convicts were planning to rob the settlers of their firearms and shoot their way to the coast where they would build or steal a boat. The ring-leader and five others were arrested and chained together whilst the authorities stamped out all thoughts of this form of insurrection. However, March saw 8 more settlers added to the growing settler population as marines who had asked to stay in the colony were given land on the north side of Port Jackson Harbour that the Governor named the Field of Mars.

After four years of toil, it has to be said that the general state of health within the colony and among the convicts in particular was very poor. The labour was concentrated in clearing ground beyond Parramatta and according to Collins, the convicts *wore a most miserable and emaciated appearance and numbers of them died daily.* The colony had harvested 461 bushels of wheat in 1791[25] and the convicts received that at the rate of 1lb each per week, but although that was not their entire ration, it is not a labouring diet.

April opened with a dreadful sick list and Collins noted that, *death is making rapid strides among us.* In fact, he was himself writing in a very melancholy tone when he recalled the loss of the GUARDIAN store ship from which they had never fully recovered and the most recent arrival was a ship that had brought no flour. There was never a time when the need for able bodied men was more urgent and the need for supplies from England to fill their warehouse to full ration was imperative.

[25] 11.73 tons at 57 lbs/bushel

For almost a week from Monday to Friday 9th to 13th April there was a tremendous storm of wind and rain and a great deal of damage was done at Parramatta with large numbers of the wattled huts badly affected. Large areas of land were under water and any corn that had not been harvested was flattened. It was dangerous to walk among the uncleared grounds and any thought of hunting was abandoned. This was unfortunate as the Governor had ordered the ration to be reduced on Friday 13th April to 3lbs of flour, 2 lbs of maize and 4 lbs of pork for each man and was the subject of much discussion among the bricklayers sent to Parramatta to repair the damage.

However, the damage did not stop the laying of the foundation for the Town Hall and the plan to establish a market within it was taking shape and a clerk for the market had been appointed. Every commodity brought to the market would be registered and it was not restricted to grain as fish, poultry, livestock, clothes and anything else considered to be saleable was encouraged. This was intended to benefit the settlers, but the convicts would steal anything from anybody with complete disregard for any consequences, so it would be a challenging and difficult business for everyone involved.

It was now May and it was considered that the colony was making some progress. The First Fleet was a fading memory and the convicts who came with it were nearing the end of their terms for transportation. They were becoming the first settlers and some, headed by James Ruse, had already done so. Curiously, not everyone wanted to settle. Some just wanted to carry on working for the Government in return for a guaranteed weekly provision of rations. Fourteen men wanted to do that, but they preferred to move to Sydney where they were assigned a hut to themselves. Some refused the rations and offered their labour to anyone who was able to employ them, but this was frowned upon and they were directed to submit a weekly account of their employment as it was thought that anyone who could not show a visible means of support might become a nuisance to the colony.

Starvation and robbery were the two most important issues on people's minds at the beginning of June and the Irish that came on the QUEEN in 1791 were at the heart of it. There were one hundred and twenty two convicts on that ship and at the beginning of June only fifty were left. In spite of that they were the instigators of the majority of the robberies, yet they were too weak to receive any punishment.

On the 12th June the ration was reduced to 1½ lbs of flour and 4 lbs of maize as it was estimated that one sixth of the maize crop had been stolen. This was now the main diet of the colony and as the colony still had no form of corn mill it became necessary to set up hand mills or querns, so that it could be ground to a rough state, but it was hard work that nobody liked. No one was in any doubt that they were now in a poorer state than they had been in 1790. There was only enough flour for 24 days and although the salt meat had not been reduced, there was only enough for three months. It was even being said that had people NOT died in such numbers, then the store would be empty.

The settlers eked out their rations until the 20th June when to everyone's relief and delight the flag hoisted at South Head announced the long awaited storeship ALTANTIC returning from Calcutta. Unfortunately she did not have on board everything that would solve their miserable situation. In fact the supplies were so poor that it was agreed that no further time would be wasted on lengthy excursions to India. The colony would wait to be supplied from England.

This miserable state of affairs was seriously suppressing any desire to prepare the ground for next year's crop and the farmers at Parramatta were lethargic about the future. Some even began to sell the livestock they had been given and this was strictly against the conditions under which the Governor had allocated their grants of land. To make an example to others, two farmers lost their land, but these were in the minority. Mr. Schaffer, of whom we have heard a lot, harvested over 200 bushels of maize and he was employing four convicts to ensure that he had 30 acres planted for the coming year.

Of course it was in Parramatta that the worst of the crime was to be found and the Governor decided to establish a resident magistrate there to deal with the stream of cases and in order to invoke some form of admonishment it had already been decided that the best punishment was to send them away from Parramatta to the 'New Grounds' where the work was hardest and there was nothing to steal except from each other. Word gradually got around that this punishment was dreaded more than the lash and as a result attempted suicides were not unknown.

Another group that could not be ignored in this desperate situation was the natives. It had been established that there were about 15 or 16 living in the woods surrounding the settlement. On the 18th June a small party of them was seen leaving a hut dressed in western clothes, but when the observer realised they were natives he fired his musket at the man wielding a spear. They dropped what had been stolen and ran. However, native culture required them to return the assault, but not on the man who had made it. Any man was sufficient. Two or three days later a convict was digging a well at Prospect Hill when he was violently butchered. There is no other word for it. His injuries were horrific. The natives had taken their revenge - this was where John and Mary Trace would live in a few months time.

On the 26th July the colony's wait was over, when the BRITANNIA anchored in Port Jackson to the relief of everyone in the colony. This welcome ship from England had been in transit for 23 weeks from Falmouth and two more ships were following in her wake. She brought eight months supply of beef and pork, four months supply of flour and enough clothing for the convicts to last them for twelve months. One of the following ships was the KITTY which had sailed from Deptford and it was rumoured that she had fifteen Quaker families embarked as passengers who had sought permission from the Government to become settlers, but in the end they changed their minds and cast their hopes in a different direction.

The relief among the authorities that their storehouses had been replenished was always accompanied by those inevitable thoughts of what might have happened if the ship had not arrived. The fact of the matter was that their salted meat would have gone within 24 days and the dreadful Bengal flour brought on the ATLANTIC, provided almost no sustenance. Happily the colony could now revert to almost a full ration of provisions. However, the euphoria of the moment was soon dampened when it was discovered at the storehouse that the weight of the meat casks was deficient. An immediate investigation was ordered led by Lt. Bowen RN and the Master of the BRITANNIA and they soon found every cask deficient by 36 lbs and the meat was lean and boney. It was the worst they had ever seen issued to his Majesty's service and such a serious deception was felt very sorely by the settlers.

A rather happier occasion occurred in August when it gave the Governor great pleasure in exercising the power vested in him by his Majesty's Commission in granting Elizabeth Perry an absolute remission of the term for which she had been sentenced. This woman had arrived in 1790 on board the infamous NEPTUNE, but she had married James Ruse and together they had made a significant

contribution to the settlement by their industry. They had supported themselves and their child together with two convicts, independently of the public store and in the Governor's words *these were the reasons which had restored her rights and privileges as a free woman and extending to her the hand of forgiveness.*

Writing from his position as Judge Advocate and Secretary to the new colony, it was perhaps inevitable that Collins should view convicts who had been transported for their crimes, as habitual criminals and occasionally this tone creeps into his writing. In August 1792 it was thought necessary to revisit the regulations that the Governor had issued only a few months before concerning those convicts whose sentences had expired as the numbers rapidly increased. He said that *many of them seem to have forgotten that they are still subject to the laws of the colony and have shaken off all restraint and dependence whatsoever.* The Governor now demanded that they should declare their intentions regarding the manner in which they wished to live in the colony. If they wished to provide for themselves, Collins would provide a Certificate to state that their sentence had been served and they must then deposit that Certificate with the Store Superintendent who would remove them from the list of persons to be supplied with provisions. They then had to report each week, how they had been employed.

There were then two further options. They could return to England if they could persuade a visiting ship's master to take them or they could work in the colony for the Government. If they chose to do this then they should register with the Store Superintendent who would clothe and feed them for as long as their services were required.

Once again, it is clear that there had been no forethought by the British Government on the subject and it had been left to the initiative of Governor Phillip to make up rules and laws as he discovered the need for them. When this latest set of rules percolated through the colony it became clear that the vast majority of 'freemen' had declared their intention to return to England at the first opportunity. However, leaving the colony was not as easy as the Governor had said. They were not free to leave as had been suggested and the Government HAD given some thought to the situation. They did not want 'their kind' back in Britain.

Contracts that were being issued to convict transport ships leaving the ports of Great Britain now had a clause inserted in them to the effect that they were not to embark 'freemen' without the Governor's permission and there had to be a certificate to that effect. It was the old adage 'once a crook always a crook' that was firmly believed by the Middle and Upper Classes. However, the behaviour of the convicts in the colony was generally good, so they could always try their luck and ask the Governor for his 'blessing.'

FREEDOM DAY

It was Saturday 3rd November 1792 and John Trace would never forget it. David Collins, Judge Advocate, wrote that *three warrants of emancipation were passed (this day) under the seal of the territory – one to John TRACE, a convict who came on the first fleet, having three months of his term remaining,*[26] *but that term was given to him, so he might become a settler.*

The other two warrants were granted to Thomas Restil and George Barrington and both men were a little unusual. Notice also that it says nothing about a grant of

[26] John TRACE was sentenced on the 20 March 1786 for 7 years to expire in 1793.

land to John Trace which I will come back to in a moment. Thomas Restil had been sent from Norfolk Island on the recommendation of Governor King, but it was conditional on his never returning to England as he had been transported for life.

George Barrington was a somewhat different character. He was born in Co.Kildare, Ireland in 1755 and honed his trade as a pick-pocket at the Irish racecourses until he fled to London to avoid arrest. He based himself in Covent Garden and Drury Lane and was caught more than once robbing a High Society victim, yet escaping punishment through the influence of his 'friends.' His luck ran out in 1790 when he was sentenced at the Old Bailey to transportation for 7 years. He left Newgate Prison for Blackwall Bridge where he and a hundred others were loaded into two lighters to take them to Deptford to board the transport ACTIVE which was to form the Third Fleet to leave Spithead in March 1791.

On the voyage a plot was hatched among the convicts to commandeer the ship and Barrington was the one who quietly informed the Naval Agent what was afoot. This immediately changed his status in the eyes of authority and they would remember him, provided he used it with discretion. He was also a very literary man and wrote a verse about his departure from England and later an account of his experiences which was published in 1796. He even had the rare privilege of an etched likeness, which is reproduced here. ACTIVE landed her 'freight' at Port Jackson on the 13th October 1791. There were 250 men and 6 women in a deplorable condition who were each given a new set of clothes and their old ones burnt.

Collins records that the Governor employed Barrington at Toongabbie (see later map) as a subordinate to the Superintendent of Convicts, but he was soon promoted to Principal Watchman. Again he attracted attention for his diligent, sober and impartial approach to the task that was not lost on the Governor. In spite of being in the colony for only one year and still having 5 years to serve, the Governor used his authority to 'draw him from the line of convicts' and certify his emancipation with a grant of 30 acres near Parramatta. As the Governor remarked, *'it was not only a reward for past good conduct, but also an incitement to continue it.* He was not at liberty to return to England, but he was a free man and a settler as well as a Civil Officer in whose integrity much confidence was placed.

So, emancipation was the most desirable acquisition that any convict could enjoy. He was now in a state equal to everyone else, no matter what their rank and it was a freedom from any restriction, which was further enhanced when a grant of land was given in return for an undertaking to become a 'settler.' Some say that John Trace had given that undertaking in August and his grant of 50 acres had been made at that time and this may be true. If so, it does not explain Collins' wording that he had been pardoned his three months *so that he might become a settler*, but in all of this there is one missing ingredient – John Trace's wife Mary.

They had been married now for more than two years and John quite rightly made it clear to the Governor that he needed his wife's return from Norfolk Island in order to assist him with the land grant. It was a part of the 'deal' and the Governor agreed. She would return to him at the first opportunity.

All Change

Although the calendar for 1792 had not quite changed to the New Year there were two significant occurrences that would impact upon John Trace's new life. The first was the arrival of the ship that would eventually bring Mary Trace back from Norfolk Island to Parramatta and the second was the departure of Governor Arthur Phillip as John's emancipation was among the last actions taken by the Governor as he began to 'clear his desk.' The instruction for the return of Mary Trace must have been left in the 'pending tray' as the only ship in the harbour available for a return voyage to Norfolk Island was the KITTY. She had arrived on the 18th November after an exceptionally long passage of 33 weeks. The ship was in a poor state. Its cargo of flour had been ruined by sea water and her mutinous crew was not to the Master's liking.

The interesting thing about this ship was that she brought two chests containing 3870 ounces of silver dollars (about £1001 at the time) as at no time in the narrative had there been any explanation concerning the use of money, especially as there was now an expanding market with exact prices for every commodity that changed hands. It would also seem that no one in the Government service, including the military men and convict superintendents had ever been paid. Even the marines that had left the service and stayed on as settlers had not received a single penny. The settlers existed on a system of exchange notes or IOUs as well as barter (one day's labour for a dozen eggs 2 shillings). With the KITTY's arrival, they were now in need of a bank.

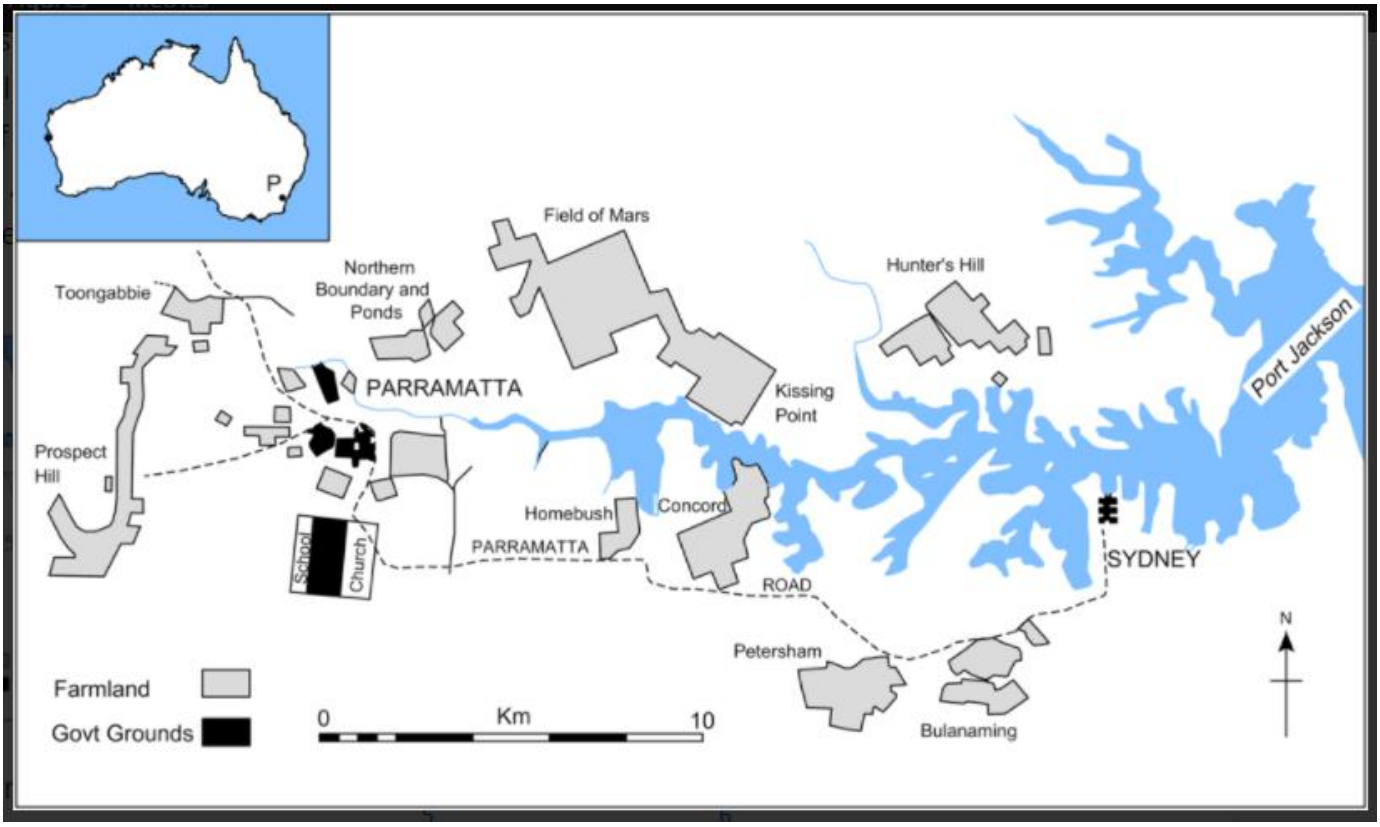
Arthur Phillip had come to his decision to leave the colony reluctantly, but with a concern for his weakening health. The knowledge that the newest public grounds at Toongabbie were showing every promise of a productive harvest convinced him that it was time to leave and he would quit the colony on the ATLANTIC. On the 3rd December he issued his last directive to the settlement to increase the ration of flour from 3 lbs to 4 lbs, lifting the weekly provision of food to the highest level since their arrival almost 5 years before.

Arthur Phillip left the Governor's House for the last time at 6 o'clock on the evening of Monday 10th December 1792 and he went to his boat with all the pomp due to him led by Major Grose of the New South Wales Corps. At sunrise the following day the ATLANTIC set sail and by 8 o'clock she was clear of the Heads and set a course for England. In the words of David Collins, *he had surmounted all the natural and artificial obstacles that the country and its inhabitants had thrown in his way.* Therefore a summary of their achievement is appropriate before this story resumes.

The Settlement of Sydney 1788-1792

It is of interest to note the exact locations where 67 settlers were to be found with an average of more than 9 acres each in cultivation.

Parramatta		1 settler
Prospect Hill	4 miles to the west of Parramatta	18 settlers
Ponds	2 miles north east of Parramatta	16 settlers
Northern Boundary	2 miles from Parramatta	5 settlers
Field of Mars	North Shore Parramatta Creek	8 settlers (marines)
Eastern Farms		12 settlers
Parramatta Creek		7 settlers



The lone settler in Parramatta was most probably James Ruse who had settled his land towards the end of November 1789, but none of the others began cultivation before mid-July 1791, so the progress was entirely concentrated on the previous 15 months to October 1792 (the date of the survey). Of course the focus is entirely on the cereal crop and little has been said so far about the animals as their success was entirely dependent upon the grazing and supplementary feed available to them.

All the animals were at Parramatta and all of them belonged to the Government. There were three bulls, two bull calves, fifteen cows and three calves, yet milk seems to be the prerogative of the goats, but only by inference, as milk of any kind does not feature in this narrative. Curiously, horses have never been described by their breed as there was a significant difference between working horses and riding horses. Why there has never been any mention of a plough, even if they had such an implement, is also very odd. Yet, there were five stallions and six mares, so what was their intended use? As working animals, tack would have been required and if they were to be ridden by the gentry, then saddles would also be needed, another item whose trade has never been mentioned. Australia has always been famous for its sheep counted in millions, but in October 1792 there 105, but this was not the final total as the Governor had given one ewe to every married settler and one each to the marines; and finally 43 hogs and an unspecified number of goats.

This summary has been about the land and the animals and it has also indicated where the settlers were to be found. John Trace was among the 18 settlers at Prospect Hill and a detailed map of that settlement has already been seen on a previous page, but before I take that further, let me summarise the help that was given to each man to aid his settlement. Each man received 'tools for husbandry' which has never been defined, but must have included a hoe and an axe as these are frequently referenced. He then received seed to sow when once the ground had been cleared and prepared for sowing. He hoped for an animal of some sort, but that depended on what could be spared, yet we know that married men, and John Trace was married, received a ewe. That is something of an irony in John's case, as he had been transported for having mutton that he would not explain, but he had

been cleared of stealing a ewe. Every man also had a hut built at Government expense. He then received rations from the Government store for 18 months. However, there was a gentle pressure from the Governor to employ one or more convicts, especially if he could be supported by the settler and not the Government store and many of the more successful farmers had begun to do that in quite a short space of time.

However, during the five years of work and living with the land, it had soon become clear that the extreme heat of the summer months was to be feared and as fields of maize, wheat and other lesser cereals had begun to appear like great table cloths covering the land, there was a daily dread of fire. This very year, December had been unbearably hot and two days after the wheat had been got off the fields at Toongabbie, the entire stubble was set alight by the fire gods. In fact the whole of the surrounding countryside was alight driven by a strong north westerly wind and had the wheat still been on the stalk, then it would have been a total loss. The only settler to suffer was Mr. Arndell, who with his neighbours had successfully checked the spread of the fire when a spark from a tree-top fell onto the thatch of his newly constructed house. Within a very few minutes, his house with its outbuildings and a newly built rick of wheat were reduced to smouldering ashes.

On the last day of the year 1792, two more convicts were emancipated, but there was also a new departure from the old system with the grant of 25 acres to Ensign Cummings of the New South Wales Corps and he was the first military officer to acquire a land grant, yet no explanation of this change in circumstances was given. Up until this point no mention of officers had been made in the instructions for granting land, but it had been assumed that this would eventually be met, opening the way for those other officers who had expressed a wish to acquire land. It was also the mark of the new regime that very noticeably becomes dominated by the needs and wishes of the 'Army' when Governor Phillip had been a sensitive and benevolent senior Royal Navy Captain.

Each year also ended with a head count and 1792 had seen the loss of 418 male convicts, 18 female convicts and 29 children. One convict had been executed and three had disappeared into the woods, whilst in addition to them, two civilian officers and six soldiers had died. This was a decrease in 477 people living on the settlement. However, the year ended with the completion of the new brick hospital at Parramatta with two wards and its location had been carefully chosen to be at some distance from the town, close to the river. The plot had been enclosed with generous areas for taking the air and for exercise and to prevent any 'improper communication' with the other convicts.

1793 and a New Beginning

With the departure of Arthur Phillip, the office of Governor inevitably fell upon the shoulders of the Lieutenant Governor as Major Francis Grose was sworn into the elevated role by the Judge Advocate, David Collins. He had only arrived in February 1792 on the PITT as the Major-General of the New South Wales Corps, but for the foreseeable future he was now in command of the entire colony as the KITTY was making preparations to sail for Norfolk Island.

No sooner had the Governor sailed with the ATLANTIC, than his generosity of giving publicly owned animals to selected settlers was thrown into disrepute as almost without exception they were offered for sale. Some settlers took a goat in exchange, but the vast majority were seeking spirits and had it not been for the foresight of the officers in buying the sheep, they would have been destroyed in a matter of

days. Collins wrote that *farms that should have been peaceful retreats of industry were, for a time, seats of inebriety and disorder.*

At about the same time an American ship named HOPE from Rhode Island, appeared in Port Jackson's harbour and was the first independent trader the colony had seen. It had stopped on the pretext of wanting wood and water, but it had a cargo of meat, flour and spirits and it was willing to sell them. The meat and flour was always welcome, but the spirits were a mistake – a 600 gallon mistake, which soon found its way to the convicts.

It is now January 1793 and the focus turns upon the KITTY preparing to leave for Norfolk Island. The KITTY was a merchantman built in Sunderland in 1787 and like many others of her kind, she was a slaver. Before being contracted for her voyage to New South Wales she had taken a cargo of slaves from West Africa to Jamaica. KITTY was not a large vessel at 360 tons, but the supplies she carried to New South Wales were more important than her cargo of convicts. Measured in pounds there were 282,567 lbs of flour (127 tons); 165,360 lbs of pork (74 tons) and 126,000 lbs of beef (56 tons). Not all of it intended for Port Jackson, but the KITTY could not sail until her Master had sorted out the mutinous behaviour among his crew who seemed to do, or not do exactly as they wished.

The Lieutenant Governor, in support of the Master, ordered the ring-leader to be given 100 lashes and a second man 25 lashes, after which the crew's disobedience was subdued and five more left the ship. Soon afterwards the HOPE sailed from the colony taking three convicts on board who had completed their time and been allowed to embark on that ship. Governor Phillip had taken the first two such emancipated convicts with him to England on the ATLANTIC, but these three were heading for Canton and between them they were the first 'freemen' to leave the shore to which they had been transported.

The KITTY was ready to sail for Norfolk Island on Sunday 20th January and she had on board a large detachment of 2 officers, 6 NCOs, a drummer and 60 men of the New South Wales Corps who would relieve the detachment already there. Among the other passengers were a master carpenter, two coopers, two tailors and several women and on Friday 25th January she left Port Jackson.

It was two months, before she returned to her moorings on the 21st March 1793 with 172 people on board. Collins does not enumerate these returning passengers. He simply says that she had on board *Captain Paterson and his Company, together with a number of free people and convicts whom Governor King desired to be rid of.*

Mary Trace was one of those 'convicts,' as her time had not yet expired, but life on the Island had been tolerable and healthy and there had been no crime for the magistrate's court for three months. Mary Trace could now return to her husband in Prospect and they could settle down to work on their land together.

A Unique Existence 1793 to 1800

It can be said without fear of contradiction that there is no other family story anywhere within my ancestry that can compare with the story of John TRACE and Mary ROSE. The months that had elapsed between receiving his land and Mary's home-coming, was probably spent on creating a more permanent structure for a house and a garden for her to tend on her return.

However, there are slight discrepancies in the narrative that have to be reconciled and one has already been mentioned in the date of his land grant. At the beginning

of this book I quoted from a modern work by Mollie Gillen[27] that is taken as a standard history of the first settlers that was undoubtedly researched from the wealth of original documents with which New South Wales is blessed. In her book Gillen suggests that John Trace was given his grant of land in mid-August 1792 when he agreed to become a settler. His emancipation came later, in November. The source I have used extensively in this narrative was written by David Collins, Advocate General and Secretary to the Colony, who actually wrote and issued the warrants recorded in his book.[28] Collins recounts John's emancipation, but not that of his land grant, but that omission is more than simply that of John Trace.

When John Trace received his parcel of 50 acres, he was one of five recipients and the five together are shown on the map of Prospect Hill on an earlier page (69) and all were named John.

John Brown, 50 acres on the south bank of Prospect Creek;
John Limeburner, 50 acres just west of John Brown;
John Trace, 50 acres on the north bank of Prospect Creek;
John Baughan, 50 acres adjacent to John Trace;
John Ocraft, 30 acres at the northern extremity of the settlement.

The trend seems to have been that the agreement to settle came first and it did not preclude land being given to a convict. He was then permitted to work on this land in his spare time. Yet, it was made abundantly clear that work had to be seen to be done and that meant, in the first instance, clearing trees.

The more I have read about this phase the more it has struck me, in the light of modern experience, how dangerous this operation was with the risks associated with falling trees. One convict had been killed that year in just such an incident, whilst two others had been killed by lightning whilst sheltering under a tree in a particularly destructive storm. The smoke from the burning of trees must have been incessant and uncomfortable, whilst every new settler meant yet more acres to be cleared and the numbers were now beginning to escalate.

In addition to this facet of life, there were also the natives to be considered. This is a topic I have deliberately avoided as it is so complex that it bears little relevance to John Trace's story – until now.

At the beginning of the colonisation the natives were largely curious bystanders. The Governor was very keen to get alongside them and learn from them. It was the obvious thing to do, but the natives were not enthusiastic. Why should they be? It was also apparent that they did not have a permanent residence in the form of a village, yet their 'tribes' were very localised and not particularly large. It is clear from the contemporary descriptions that the group found around Sydney Cove was unconnected to the group that was found in the Parramatta district, whilst those on the shore of Botany Bay were different from those at Sydney Cove.

During the explorations inland by Watkin Tench and others, they discovered that natives were not encountered unless they were on the move and passing through the area whilst hunting. It was also noticeable that they were not generally belligerent unless provoked and that was too common among the hard men that had arrived on their land, in spite of the Governor's orders to the contrary. So, what would it have been like to live in a location like Prospect Hill as man and wife with maybe a child to consider, whilst knowing that your every move might be

[27] *The Founders of Australia* by Mollie Gillen published 1989
[28] *An Account of the English Colony of New South Wales* by David Collins Esq. published 1798

watched by someone intent on robbing you of everything that had been hard won? There was little doubt that the majority of the robberies were committed by fellow countrymen and it transpired that it was usually the newest arrivals that were to blame. There was a nasty incident in Parramatta on the night of the 13th October 1793 when four men with blackened faces entered the hut of John Randall with bludgeons, but were driven off after a hard fight. At about the same time a second hut in Parramatta belonging to Mr. Atkins was robbed of a cask of wine and a large quantity of provisions, but they left their booty at the garden fence when discovered and disappeared into the woods.

However, it was almost impossible to prevent this criminal activity as the perpetrators had no fear of the consequences. John Crow was one such villain who was charged and convicted of stealing a large amount of clothing and provisions from yet another hut in Parramatta for which he was sentenced to DEATH!

But the natives could not be forgotten. At the end of December a large party of natives from a little known tribe rarely seen near the settlement, waylaid a group of settlers returning to Toongabbie from the store at Parramatta from which they had just received all their rations. The natives flew into the woods, eluding all pursuit and the entire quantity of provisions was lost.

At the onset of the New Year 1794 David Collins wrote that, *no regular account had been kept of what the settlers' farms had produced, but it had been estimated that it was near to 7000 bushels, yet only 160 bushels had been offered to the Government store.* Prospect Hill had proved to be the most productive, yet Collins seems peeved that the expectations of the Government had not been met. This was yet another case where the detail of the plan had not been thought through. Instead, he continues, *they are getting rid of their grain in any way they can; by brewing or distilling, even baking and actually eating it.* How shocking! What was shocking was the propensity for gambling it away. Paying their debts with it and even pledging the entire farm to be lost in a single bet. Who would have thought it?

It would seem that Prospect Hill and Parramatta were separated one from the other by open ground and it had been noticed that as the cereal crops ripened towards harvest, natives constantly assembled quite openly around the farms and public grounds with a view to robbery. It wasn't the crop that they wanted, but the fact that it drew the settlers from their huts which left them vulnerable to being stripped. If that happened they took everything, as the natives never worked alone. Yet it was not unknown for them to attack the settlers as they walked from one settlement to the other especially when carrying provisions and the first attack for the year occurred in January.

Following this incident attacks began to be reported frequently. For February Collins writes that *the natives were again troublesome.* Two accounts had been sent from Parramatta describing attacks on settlers' wives walking between farms and Collins continues, *one of these women (married to TRACE a setter at the foot of Prospect Hill) was so severely wounded that she lay for a long time dangerously ill at the hospital.* They had robbed her and almost stripped her of her clothes, but they could not be identified in spite of the gossip saying that they had been seen around Sydney.[29] The Lieutenant Governor could do nothing – reprisals were dangerous.

At the end of every year there was a summary of the population of the settlement usually expressed in deaths in all its forms and 1793 had been no different when

[29] This incident is also recorded in the book *First Frontier* by Peter Turbet

the population had declined by 157. Among this number, whatever it happened to be, there was inevitably a number of children and in 1793 it was 29. Although this was only the sixth count, that number, in the 20s, was always the same no matter how many adults had perished and this must reflect their proportion within the adult population. However in February 1794 it was published that there were 254 children being fed from the Government stores in the colony and Governor King had sent a figure from Norfolk Island of 148 children in that isolated colony. Together that made a total of 402 children confirmed on the 20th February 1794.

At the end of 1795 Mary Trace was sufficiently recovered from her dreadful experience with the natives to conceive a child of her own. John and Mary could expect the arrival of their baby in the NSW spring of 1796.

Their son George Trace was born on the 10th August 1796 and baptised at St. John's Parramatta and that is as much as is known about him. It might be surmised that Mary was not a particularly motherly woman and her behaviour on board the LADY JULIANA might be cited as evidence, but that is by no means certain. George was now a statistic on the colony's books, but he would also distract Mary from her work with John.

There was no doubt that the colony was beginning to escalate as more and more settlements were established. In this period, clearance of the land between Sydney Cove and Parramatta had begun, as a track way had been made between the two when Parramatta was settled, but it had always been a dangerous place where both natives and convicts hid their presence and preyed on unsuspecting settlers as they moved back and forth. When the clearances began, it was found that the soil was particularly fertile, something that the authorities in Sydney had not realised when they abandoned all efforts around the shoreline.

The distance between the two settlements, by the standards of today was quite significant at sixteen miles, but in the 1790s this seemed of little consequence and is rarely mentioned. At about this time the entrepreneurs among the ex-convicts began to look for ways of establishing a ferry service between the two settlements as boats were becoming increasingly common, and although there was a handful of men who were good carpenters, shipwrights were rare among them and some of the boats were so dangerous that a loss of life was inevitable.

Glancing back at the map of the grants given to the emancipated convicts it is necessary to complete the picture at Prospect Hill with those that were allocated in 1797 and 1799 as these men were neighbours to John and Mary Trace.

In 1797 they were on the northern slopes of Prospect Hill, west of the present ridge line at Prospect Lookout:

John Rowe, 60 acres on the west side of the northern summit, Prospect Lookout;
Edward Miles, 30 acres adjacent to John Rowe to the north;

and in 1799:

Lazarus Graves, 70 acres adjacent to John Rowe to the south;
John Kennedy, 160 acres north and west of John Rowe and Edward Miles' grants.

However, it was also a time when disenchantment set in, even among those that had been tolerably successful. Men like James Ruse and John Williams. Both sold their farms during this time. Ruse secured £40 for his Experiment Farm and my reader might ask, why so little? He was not enamoured by the thought of growing maize year after year and he had thought to diversify into tobacco, but it was a harsh, unforgiving environment where the returns were far from certain and after

five years of solid labour he had had enough. The Experiment was no longer captivating and £40 was above the going rate for land at £1 per acre.

When looking at John Trace's efforts compared to those around him, one cannot help but acquire the feeling that he had cleared enough land to grow something for himself, but he was going no further. He had 50 acres of land, but he never had more than 15 acres cleared and 5 acres cultivated. It is often mentioned how well the gardens were stocked, but it was also a fact of life that 'garden robbery' was the most common crime in and around Parramatta. Perhaps, one is the inevitable result of the other

There can be no doubt that both John and Mary knew what they were doing as both of them had country roots. Mary's father was alleged to have been a successful Lincolnshire farmer, a prime growing area and John had experience of keeping animals and making sure that they were well fed, fodder which had to be grown on the farm and not bought from the farm shop.

It is difficult to say whether or not their 'farm' was a success. If John had been in England he would not have had 50 acres of his own land. He would never have owned land. Here in New South Wales he was not in competition with the landed gentry. He was in competition with men from a myriad of backgrounds from clerks to seamen. Most of them wanted to have a go at it, but few of them realised the relentless toil and frustration that went with it. At least John and Mary had experienced it at first hand, but neither Devon nor Lincolnshire could be compared with this untouched continent of Australia with its lack of water, blinding heat and mesmerising lightning storms, not forgetting a party of spear carrying natives with designs on your chattels.

It was 1796 when the man who wrote the narrative on which most of this story is based, left the colony. On the 29th September David Collins left for England on the BRITANNIA by way of Norfolk Island to embark Lieutenant Governor Philip Gidley King and his family. His term of office had been curtailed by deteriorating health, but his short time at the helm had seen huge, productive strides forward on a very fertile island with a very low incidence of crime in the community.

The last pages of Collins's book contain a mass of detailed statistics some of which do not square with the previous narrative and chief among them was the animal census. There were far more animals in the colony than had previously been enumerated. For example, I have highlighted ploughing that has never been mentioned because at that time ploughing was done by oxen and none had previously been recorded in the colony, yet in 1796 the Government owned 46 enough to plough every acre that had been cleared. Cows were also at a premium with very small numbers, yet there were almost as many bulls as there were cows with 74 and 101 respectively. As for horses, well it could not be expected that a military officer did not have a horse and there were in fact 43, far more than there were officers in the NSW Corps.

However, it was the numbers of smaller animals together with their owners that defy explanation. Sheep and goats were invaluable to small holders, yet the settlers could claim only 30 sheep and 140 goats. The Government Officers, both civil and military, owned 1310 and 1176 respectively – I wonder at that disparity.

It leads me to record an interesting paragraph which reveals the inner thoughts of Collins as he reflected on his time in the colony as Judge Advocate. He said,

> The great want of men in the colony must be supplied as soon as a peace shall take place, but the want of respectable settlers may be longer felt; by these are

meant men of property with whom the gentlemen of the colony could associate and who would be thoroughly experienced in the business of agriculture. Should such men ever arrive, the administration of justice might assume a less military appearance and the trial by jury, ever dear to Englishmen, might be seen in NSW.

It had become clear within the text that military officers were often in the market to buy a farm as, one by one, the settlers became disenchanted. Land could be bought in 1796 for between 12 shillings and £1 per acre, so the grant to a married man of 50 acres was cheaper than a cow at £80, whilst a live kangaroo cost 6d. It was also to be noted that when a settler did sell his land he often followed this by selling his labour and in 1796 it was 3 shillings per day. To clear one acre of land was charged at £3 which at 60 shillings represented 20 days work or a month working 5 days per week, but what it does not say, but infers by omission, is that the settler did not leave his house on that land. He became either a tenant farmer or simply the live-in labourer for which he was paid, but John Trace had not reached that point in his life, just yet.

At the beginning of 1798, the foundation of the colony was becoming a distant memory. It had been ten years since John Trace had set foot on the continent for the first time. No one would have imagined that this motley crowd of convicts would all contribute in some small way to the foundation of Australia's greatest city, but after a faltering start the force for change was unstoppable. Today its citizens may have little concept of the lives and effort that was invested into their heritage. Few of the contributors were there willingly. For most it was a grudging acceptance. They participated because they had no choice and some left when they had gained their freedom. But for the First Fleeters it was different. For the most part, the survivors stayed and those at Prospect Hill would have been found within the area circled below, whilst the Prospect Reservoir now sits on the land identified by Lieutenant Tench as being *'bad country, frequently overflowed.'*

The three contemporary books by Watkin Tench, David Collins and Captain John Hunter RN of the SIRIUS have now run their course. Their detail is astonishing and this book cannot begin to do them justice. As our story continues into the 19th century it is the poorer for the lack of detail so far enjoyed.

A New Century in a New World

In 1800 John Trace had been working his plot for seven years and it was in that year that his progress was officially recorded. It said that he had 1 acre sown in wheat and 3 acres ready for maize and that he was no longer dependent upon Government stores, but it added that his wife and child continued to be dependent. That seems to be an odd state of affairs. It also struck me that 4 acres from 50 acres in seven years was a rather poor rate of progress, a state that was hinted at by one of the settlement's modern historians, Michael Flynn, but why had it taken John so long to clear and plant a single handful of acres? Surely it cannot be entirely blamed on the incursions of the Aborigines, or the scavenging wild dogs.

Molly Gillen uses 111 words to describe John and Mary's life over the next twenty years from 1802 to 1822. She writes;

By mid-1800 John Trace was off stores with one acre sown in wheat and three acres ready for maize, but his wife and child were still publically victualled. Two years later Trace had cleared 15 acres, but although he had an extra acre ready for maize, he still only had one acre sown with wheat, but he did have a hog, the first to be recorded. However, 1802 was the year when neither he nor his family were in receipt of Government stores. John had reached a state of self-sufficiency with evidence that their son George was still alive.

This was ten years after his land grant and although he had been off stores at least once before, I do not get the impression that he was ambitious in any way and that becomes more perplexing when he seems to have become indebted to other settlers.

This situation may have had something to do with an action that took place on the 2nd July 1801, when it was noted that *he had assigned a 50 acre farm previously owned by John Limeburner, to John Worely to secure a £13 debt.* This unusual wording is very surprising as it suggests that he had come to own John Limeburner's farm and was using it to secure a debt of £13 which represented a little over 5 shillings per acre, a derogatory value compared to those of 1796. The identity of John Worely is a mystery. There is no one of the name Worely or similar among the convicts transported in the First Fleet and his name is not in the ledger of land owners in 1814.

John Limeburner had been transported in the CHARLOTTE with John Trace and he had also been awarded his grant of land at the same time as Trace, in 1792. It was opposite to John on the south bank of the 'creek,' but the map to which I frequently refer was not drawn to scale and the size of the grants and characteristics of the creeks are poorly represented. A typical early 19th century farm in Cornwall and North Devon would have had the majority of its fields sized at 1-2 acres with an occasional 4-acre field, often named as such. So 50 acres could easily represent two dozen fields if John Trace had been working at home in Frithelstock. Nevertheless John Trace was alleged to owe John Worely £13 in 1801.

Then, according to Gillen, John Trace was trying to raise money once again, in 1809, but we have to keep a sense of proportion. Eight years was a long time in a new colony and a lot of development was going on around them. Gillen says that Trace *sold 16 rods at the Brickfields for £5.* The fact that he owned land at the Brickfields suggests that the land had been discarded from its original use, but where was it?

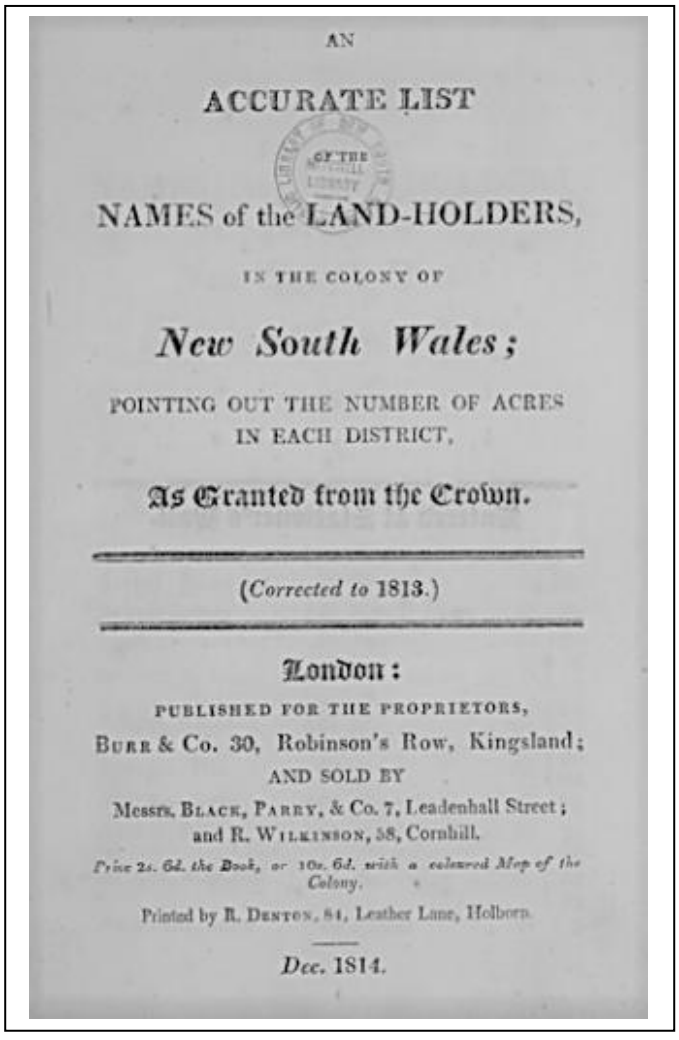
The only place to carry that name was the area that had provided the first bricks, which later became known as Brickfield Hill, but although it was the first, it was not the only brickfields in the locality. One had been developed at Parramatta

whilst building the hospital and the barracks there for the NSW Corps. The land that Trace sold was a very small piece of land being only equivalent to 0.1 acres or 480 square yards, yet £5 could have been a lot of money for such a small plot.

The Demise of John Trace

In spite of a deluge of information concerning the new colony into which John Trace had been absorbed, the fact remains that his life can only be glimpsed within the broader context. His personal and domestic circumstances remain veiled in mystery. His land and his daily efforts, together with his debts remain unexplained. It is evident in the way that Mollie Gillen writes about him, that she has seen other documents that may contain extra detail. She says that *in 1814 John Trace was on charity at Sydney and his wife has been mistakenly recorded as Mary Lewis.*

Gillen's use of the name Sydney is inevitable for a modern writer, but once again this can be misleading to the uninformed reader. John Trace had not moved from his grant of land at Prospect Hill to Sydney as the ledger of land owners for 1814 shows. Together with John Limeburner they retain the same plots they were awarded at the outset of their settlement.



AN

ACCURATE LIST

OF THE

NAMES of the LAND-HOLDERS,

IN THE COLONY OF

New South Wales;

POINTING OUT THE NUMBER OF ACRES IN EACH DISTRICT,

As Granted from the Crown.

(*Corrected to* 1813.)

London:

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS,

BURR & Co. 30, Robinson's Row, Kingsland;

AND SOLD BY

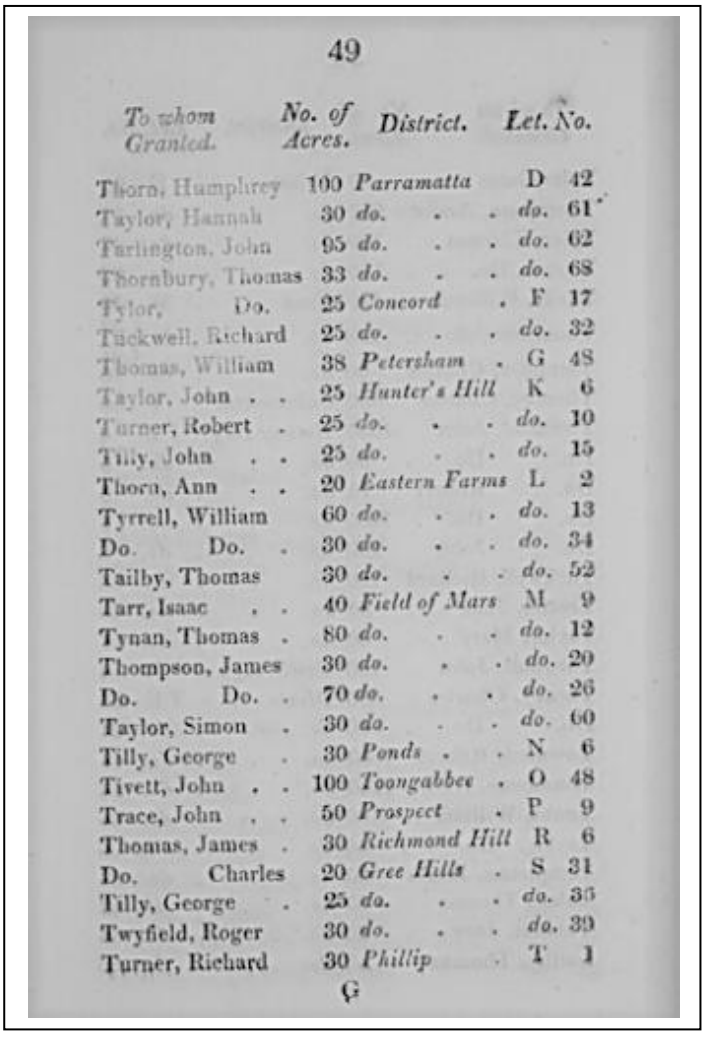
Messrs. BLACK, PARRY, & Co. 7, Leadenhall Street;

and R. WILKINSON, 58, Cornhill.

Price 2s. 6d. the Book, or 10s. 6d. with a coloured Map of the Colony.

Printed by R. DENTON, 84, Leather Lane, Holborn.

Dec. 1814.



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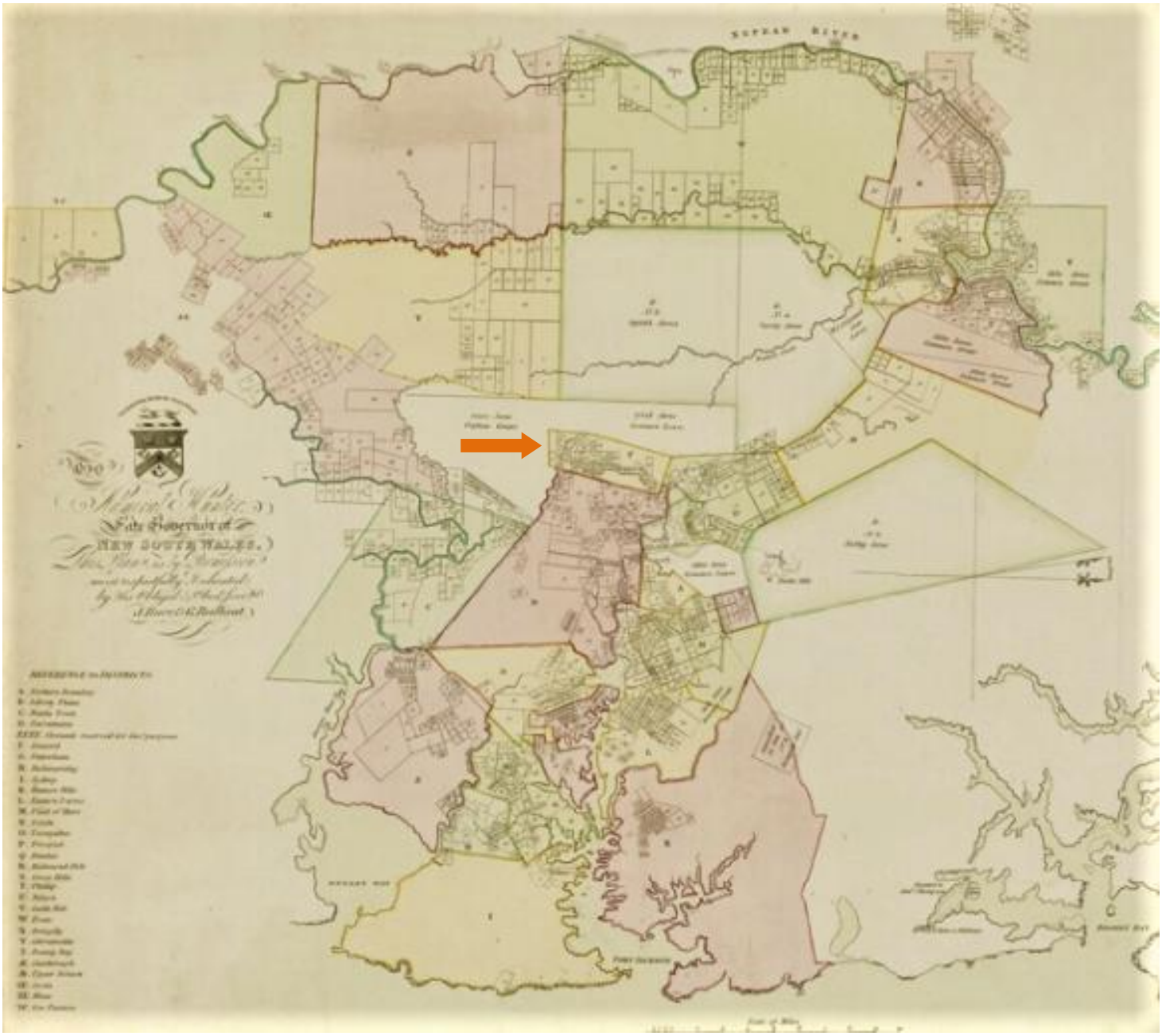
To whom Granted.	*No. of Acres.*	*District.*	*Let.*	*No.*
Thorn, Humphrey	100	*Parramatta*	D	42
Taylor, Hannah	30	*do.*	*do.*	61
Farlington, John	95	*do.*	*do.*	62
Thornbury, Thomas	33	*do.*	*do.*	68
Tylor, Do.	25	*Concord*	F	17
Tuckwell, Richard	25	*do.*	*do.*	32
Thomas, William	38	*Petersham*	G	48
Taylor, John	25	*Hunter's Hill*	K	6
Turner, Robert	25	*do.*	*do.*	10
Tilly, John	25	*do.*	*do.*	15
Thorn, Ann	20	*Eastern Farms*	L	2
Tyrrell, William	60	*do.*	*do.*	13
Do. Do.	30	*do.*	*do.*	34
Tailby, Thomas	30	*do.*	*do.*	52
Tarr, Isaac	40	*Field of Mars*	M	9
Tynan, Thomas	80	*do.*	*do.*	12
Thompson, James	30	*do.*	*do.*	20
Do. Do.	70	*do.*	*do.*	26
Taylor, Simon	30	*do.*	*do.*	60
Tilly, George	30	*Ponds*	N	6
Tivett, John	100	*Toongabbee*	O	48
Trace, John	50	*Prospect*	P	9
Thomas, James	30	*Richmond Hill*	R	6
Do. Charles	20	*Gree Hills*	S	31
Tilly, George	25	*do.*	*do.*	35
Twyfield, Roger	30	*do.*	*do.*	39
Turner, Richard	30	*Phillip*	T	1

G

However, Gillen's use of the word 'charity,' may also be a modern terminology for receiving rations from the Government Store. The charity documents, from which this information emerges, must have kept track of his situation and one thing that

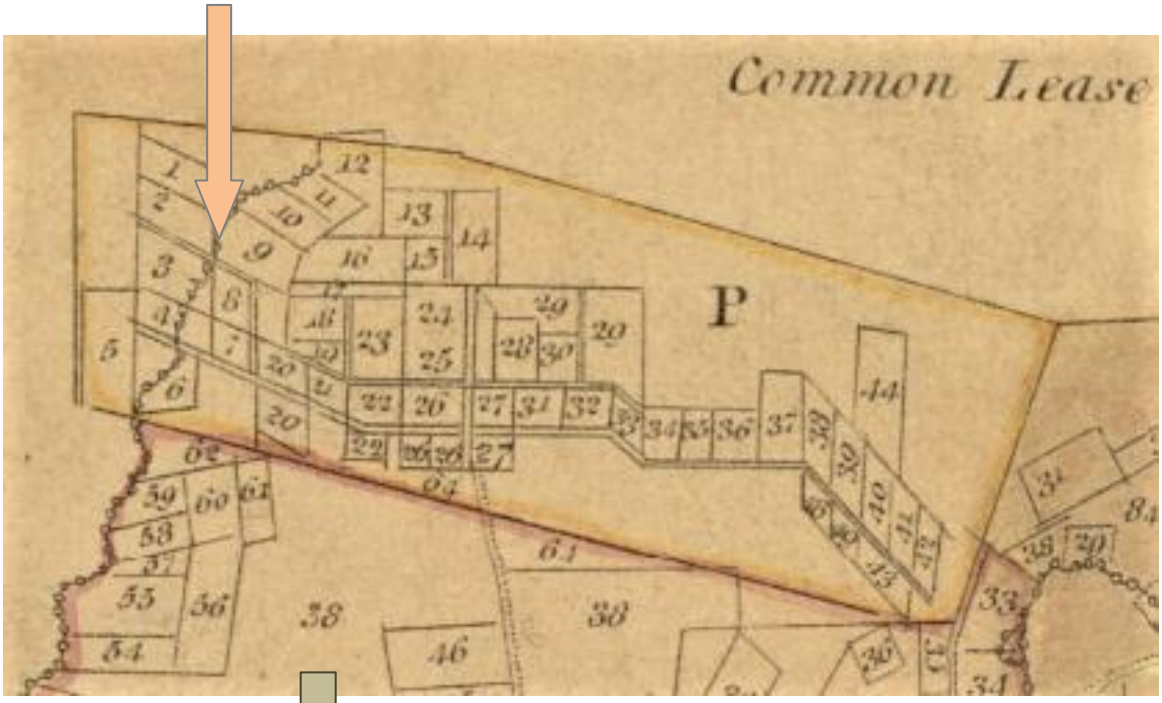
is evident is that there is no mention of their son George. Perhaps this may have been because he would have been 18 years old in 1814 and if he was still living, he should have been gainfully employed, but I rather think that the tone of the record implies that he had already passed away.

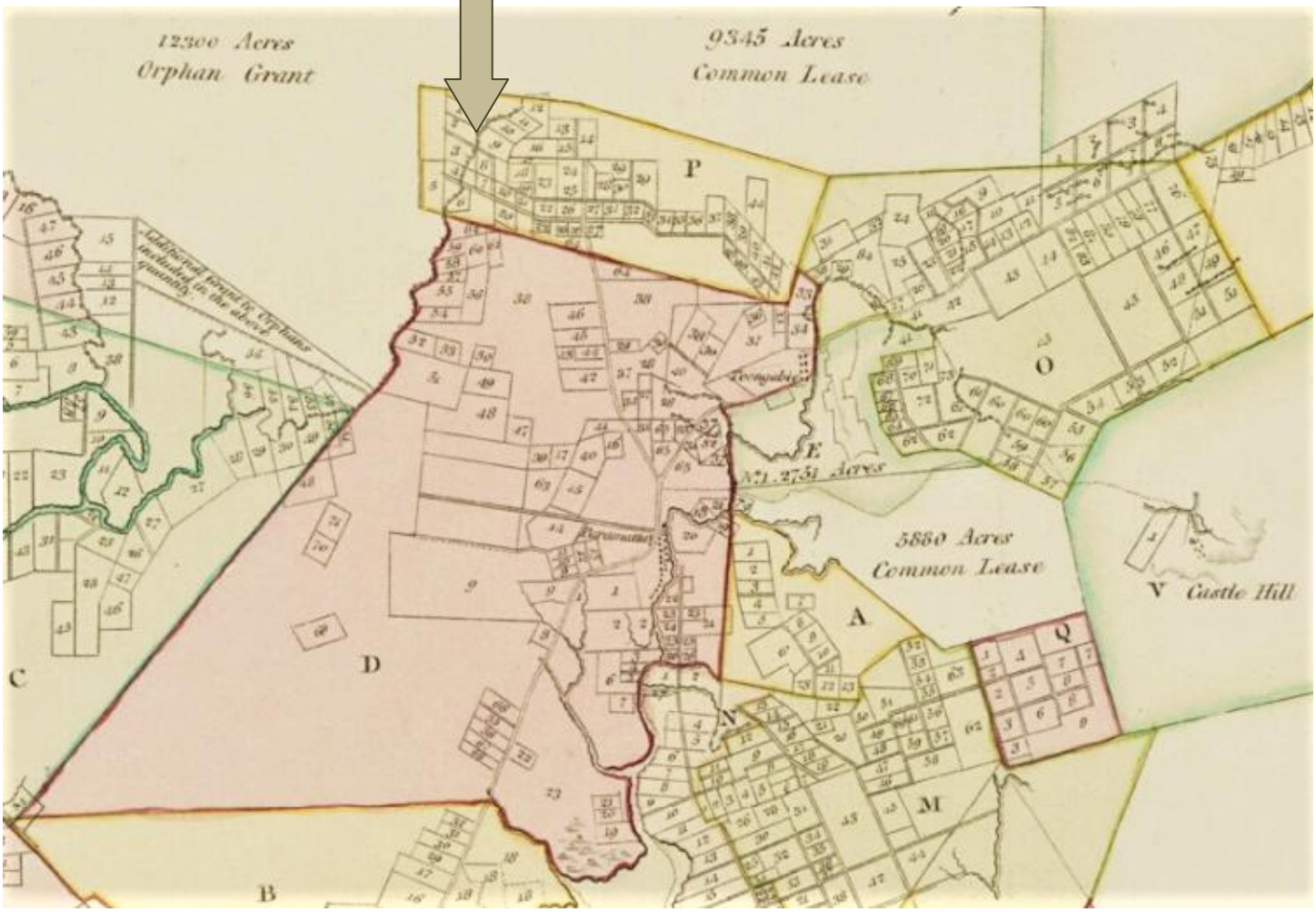
In a sense Gillen was wrong to say that *his wife had been mistakenly recorded as Mary Lewis.* Yes, the name of the lady with him in 1814 was wrong, but his wife was called Lewis. His first and legal wife was Elizabeth Lewis, so when John Trace was asked who his wife was, he muddled them up and gave the game away.



This is the full extent of New South Wales In 1814. Sydney extended to 28 named districts and 30 defined areas, the additional two being Government land and cow pasture. Port Jackson is at the centre bottom and North to the RHS. Prospect is marked with an arrow and EVERY plot is numbered and named

Each of these three images is taken from the previous map so we have zoomed in upon John and Mary Trace, but we can get no closer. Plot 9 had always been theirs and John Limeburner was still registered as the owner of Plot 2 in 1814.





In 1819 John is recorded as an invalid and in 1822 the couple were still together in Sydney (probably Prospect), but on the 1st July 1823 John Trace died at an age alleged to be 82. That suggests a birth in 1741, but as no record of a baptism has been found I can only say that he was born between 1739 and 1755. At his trial it was alleged that he was 31 and that gives a date of birth of 1755 which coincided with a possible sister named Sarah who was baptised in that year. However, John Trace was dead and he was buried in the colony's cemetery.

The Resting Place of John Trace – First Fleeter

In 1820 land was set aside at Brickfield Hill for consecration as a burial ground and a brick wall was erected to enclose 4 acres. Within four years another 7 acres had been added and by 1860 it was full with an estimated 21,000 burials. Initially it was known as the Sydney Burial Ground, but as the street plan evolved it became known as the Devonshire Street Cemetery. It closed in 1866, but the dead would not be left to rest in peace.

In 1901 the abandoned cemetery was required for a new central railway terminus and the buried remains had to be moved. Those that were not claimed by descendants were removed to a purpose built cemetery named Bunnerong Cemetery and the new caskets were transported by a specially built, dedicated tram line. 2825 headstones were also moved to this new cemetery which was adjacent to

the Botany Cemetery which had opened in 1893. In 1972 Bunnerong was so neglected and dilapidated that it was decided to absorb it into the Botany Cemetery.

In 1974 the local council decided to create a Pioneer Memorial Park and move the headstones once again, but this time only 745 headstones were sufficiently intact to survive the move. The area is now known as the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park and incorporates both the Botany Cemetery and the Pioneer Memorial Park.

In a book entitled *Dispatched Down Under* by Ron Withington he writes;

Plaque Ceremonies

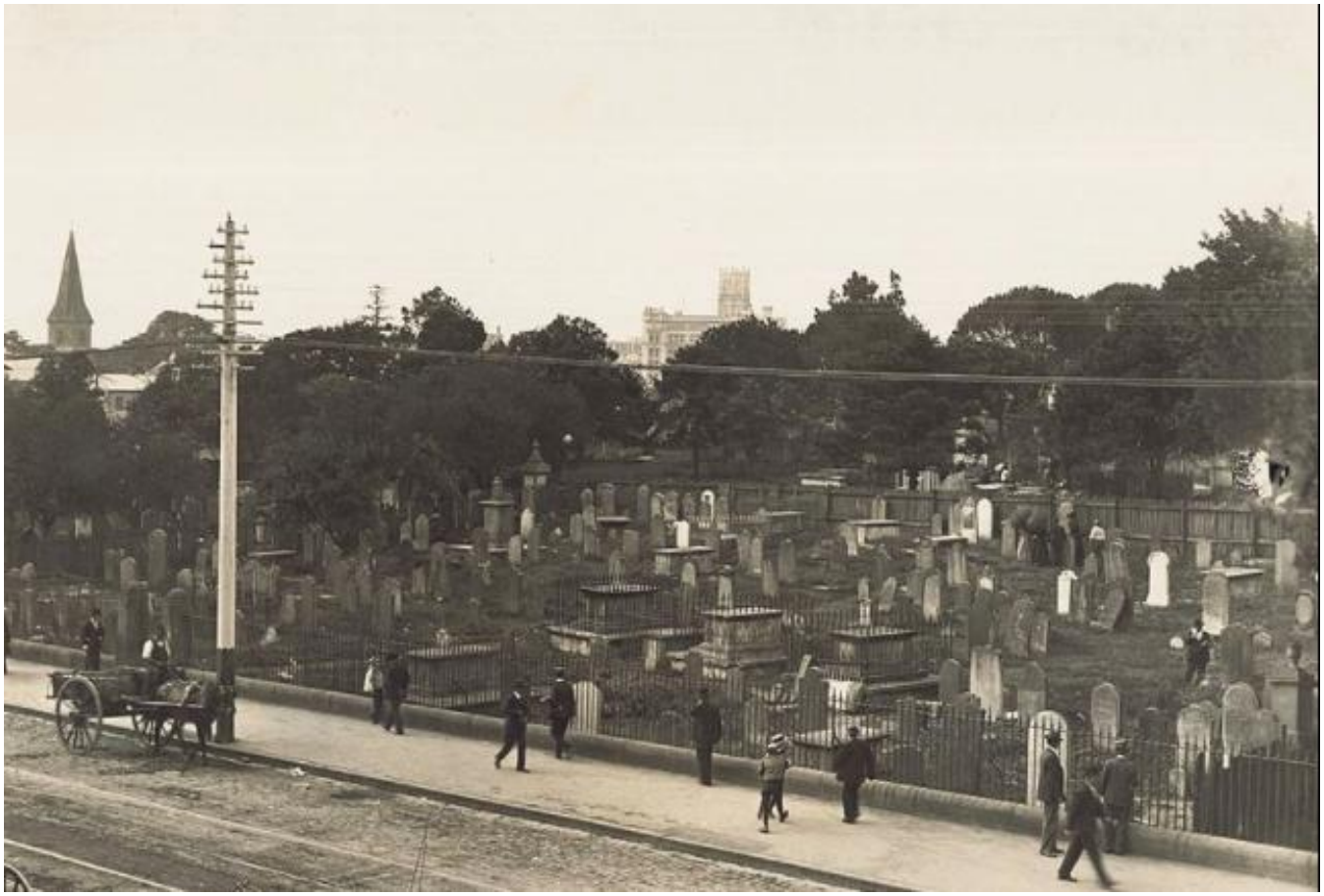
The Pioneer Memorial Park is best entered from Bunnerong Road. In the extreme south eastern row, close to this entry road, is the headstone of John Trace. It faces south. His is the only tombstone of a First Fleeter to survive the various relocations, damage and decay.

On Sunday 26 June 1988, a plaque ceremony was held at the headstone. Members of the Fellowship were joined by members of the Cape Banks Family History Society and the Botany Cemetery Trust. The President of the Fellowship, James Donohoe, welcomed the guests and Douglas Oakes read the eulogy. As John Trace has no known present-day descendants, Alderman Margaret Martin unveiled the plaque and the Reverend Len Kingston concluded the ceremony with prayer.

A larger plaque had been fixed to the stone pillar at the entrance to the Park, in memory of those who were buried there but whose headstones had not survived. James Donohoe gave the address and this plaque was unveiled by Alderman Chris Bastic. The proceedings were concluded with an afternoon tea served to all the participants by the Cape Banks Family History Society members.

A general view of the headstones in the park can be seen on You Tube, but does not feature the unique headstone that is now John Trace. Below is the plaque that was attached to John's headstone at the ceremony described above.

I have headed the section –The Resting Place of John Trace, but I must admit to not having a clear idea of his resting place. It was last noted as Bunnerong, but when it was decided to move the headstones, the bodies were left in place. So, unless a substitute headstone was left to mark their resting place, they are now 'lost.' This view of the Devonshire Street Cemetery, John's original resting place, was taken in 1902 as preparations were in hand to re-inter everyone buried there.



At the end of John Trace's life it is inevitable to wonder whether the shame of transportation made any real difference to his life. It must have been emotionally traumatic at the outset, but no more for him than his young wife Elizabeth (Lewis) with their two boys. In the 18th century the penal colony was on the other side of the world in a land untouched by human intervention. They must have realised they would never see each other again.

His marriage in the colony to Mary Rose within weeks of her arrival might seem to some to have been overly hasty, yet this was not a romantic situation. This was one in which arrangements were mutually beneficial and in this case it would be 50 acres of land and not the 30 acres that was granted to a bachelor. There seems little doubt that John was not an ambitious farmer and land manager.

John and Mary were married for 33 years. They had enjoyed a son George together. Whether life had been harder as a result of their transportation is difficult to say. It certainly would not have been much easier in Devon and John had the satisfaction of being his own master, even if it did bring with it an onerous responsibility.

A faithful friend, a father dear
A loving husband lieth here
In space of time god did him take
Lord rest his soul for Jesus sake.

The verse that covers almost half of his headstone was unexpected. A headstone was rarely erected on many family graves in England, although it was not uncommon among the Trace/Tracey Family. In 1823 there was no such thing as a Funeral Director offering a choice of suitable inscriptions from his sales catalogue. However Mary must have had some prompting to select a verse that she felt comfortably reflected their time together. If it can be taken as read, and I am sure that it can, then these few words tell us a great deal about the man John Trace – transported for felony and considered by his country to be mere dross.

In the end he was at the beginning – the beginning of a nation and although he left no legacy of Australian descendents, the Fellowship of the First Fleeters was wrong to say in 1988 that John Trace has no known descendents. He does and one of them has researched and written their life story and been humbled by it.

As I write these concluding words I notice that it is the last day of the month. It is the 30th November 2021 and exactly two months have passed since my first discovery of John Trace's name in a tiny village in North Devon. That discovery led to this document and the realisation that even convicts had a name and a life. It just happened that these convicts founded a nation and have been memorialised as a result.

Mary (Rose) Trace married again, as was perfectly normal and reasonable in those days. Michael Flynn captures this moment in her life in his book about the Second Fleeters. He says;

> At St. Phillip's Sydney on the 5th February 1824 Mary Ann (sic) Trace married James Knight, a widower, age given as 60. He was a convict labourer who had arrived on the GENERAL HEWITT in 1814. Mary was described as a widow, free and aged 56 and both signed the register with a 'X.'
>
> In 1835 he was mustered as a convict still under sentence and employed by Mr. Hutchinson of Sydney. Mary was mustered as a housekeeper of Sydney, living with Knight. She may have been the Mary Knight whose burial was registered at St. Phillip's Sydney on the 2nd September 1832 age given as 79, but ages of the elderly were often overestimated on burial records.

However, family history is rarely certain and in Mary's case there was inevitably another Mary Knight who died in 1840, but it is believed that she arrived on the EXPERIMENT in 1804 and lived with one William Knight.

I cannot leave this story without asking the question – what happened to Elizabeth Trace née Lewis who John had left behind in Devon? Surely she would have married again, but how could she until John had long been forgotten? That would never happen in two tiny parishes. He would never be forgotten, so Elizabeth would have to move, but how could she with no means of support? A new parish would not take her, but there was a way.....
She would get pregnant and she would have to declare the father to the parish officers who would then agree with the man how he intended to support her. There was still the problem of a marriage to John Trace. He could be declared dead like a seaman falling overboard far out in the Atlantic, but what if John came back after his sentence? That would never happen.....surely?

Frithelstock – *12 December 1790 - Henry base baptised to Elizabeth TRACE wife of John Trace, a convict supposed not to have been within the four ?? for some years.*

They NEVER forget!

Replica of SIRIUS anchor

Governor Phillip with his greyhound

DEDICATION: John Trace, 5 June 1988, Botany Pioneer Park NSW

Display Sail for Lady Juliana, a ship of the Second Fleet

45 – 63 Military Road
MATRAVILLE
New South Wales 2036

Tail Piece

From distant climes, o’er wide-spread seas, we come,
Though not with much elcat, or beat of drum;
True patriots all; for. be it understood,
We left our country, for our country’s good;
No private views disgraced our generous zeal,
What urged our travels was our country’s weal;
And none will doubt, but that our emigration
Has proved most useful to the British Nation.

George Barrington 1791

APPENDIX 1

Important Sources and Further Reading

The most important source was this book published in 1798
An Account of the English Colony NSW by David Collins
https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00010.html

https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00063.html
An Account of the Colony by Captain Hunter of the SIRIUS

1788 by Watkin Tench
A softback book in the Trethewey Library
A compilation of two accounts by Lieutenant Watkin Tench RM dated 1789 & 1793

This site is a detailed account of Prospect Hill & includes the map showing John Trace's land
http://www.spathaky.name/prospecthill/history/settlement.htm

A page from the same site briefly explains the conflict between the English and the Aborigine
http://www.spathaky.name/prospecthill/history/collision.htm

This very important document from Cambridge University details the Building Construction Practise in the Colony of New South Wales from the arrival of the First Fleet
https://www.arct.cam.ac.uk/system/files/documents/vol-2-1475-1500-guy.pdf

As there are many different perspectives to the colony this is an excellent account of the Colony from an Irish perspective with excellent coloured illustrations
http://www.gallagherclan.org/australia_irish_australia.aspx

This is a full list of every convict that sailed on the first fleet with their respective ships
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_convicts_on_the_First_Fleet#W

This is a list of 576 Devonians that were transported in the First and Second Fleets
https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~alanelliott/genealogy/TLF%20App%20A.HTML

This is a list of 37 Convicts who sailed on the CHARLOTTE and seem likely to have been embarked at Plymouth –other sources say that 84 male and 24 female convicts were on board.
https://convictrecords.com.au/ships/charlotte/1787

This is a list of the Gaol Calendar for the Devon Epiphany Quarter Sessions 1786 that shows every defendant that was moved from Exeter Gaol to the Court – John Trace is the 10th name from the top and has been misspelt in transcription.
https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/CourtRecords/QS32-73

This is the website of the Society that is keeping their memory alive and the source of everything that has been and will be written about them.
http://www.fellowshipfirstfleeters.org.au/johntrace.htm
www.fellowshipfirstfleeters.org.au

APPENDIX 2

In an attempt to identify the parents and siblings of John Trace as well as locate his own baptism, these entries were found in the registers of Langtree and Frithelstock

FURTHER INVESTIGATION – EARLY 18th CENTURY

LANGTREE Baptisms 1744 to 1760

1744 July 8 – MARY daughter of William TRACE of Frithelstock and his wife MARY

1755 Mar 2 – SARAH daughter of William TRACE and Mary – Page 8

A second family in the Parish attributed to father only

1733	JAMES	son	of Thomas TRACE	
1739 Sep 27	SAMUEL	son	of Thomas TRACE	Page 43
1743 Feb 9	JOSEPH	son	of Thomas TRACE	Page 45
1745	CATHERINE	daughter	of Thomas TRACE	

1728 April ? Thomas TRACE married Catherine FORNTON?

FRITHELSTOCK
During the research a very important transcription of every name from the Frithelstock Baptism Registers between 1563 and 1823 was found

https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/Frithelstock/FrithelstockBaptisms

Baptisms 1741 to 1759

1749 Mar 15 ELIZABETH daughter of William TRACE and Mary Page 36

MARRIAGE

1739 May 1 William TRACE married Mary ARNOLD

BURIAL

1780 September 21 William aged 73 years – born 1707
There are no baptisms transcribed between 1690 and 1711
