

Sydney Cove Snapshot

Duncan MacDonald Jakarta 26 January 2011



The first step in the colonisation of the continent which was later named Australia, took place in London in 1785. It was initiated by the *Secretary of State for the Colonies*, Thomas Townsend, Lord Sydney.

Lord Sydney adopted the recommendation of Captain James Cook (1728 - 1779), who sighted the east coast of **Australia** in 1770, that an **English** settlement be established in **New South Wales**.

When **England** lost its colonies in 1788 after the *American War of Independence*, it needed some



Captain Arthur Phillip 1787

ence, it needed some other place to send the many convicts that were being held in hulks in the *river Thames*.

Orders-in-Council for establishing a settlement in New **South Wales** were set up on 6 December 1785. Command of the expedition was

given to Captain Arthur Phillip (1738 - 1814).

The First Fleet rendezvous at Isle of Wight. Captain Phillip as commodore of the squadron, hoisted his flag on *H.M.S. Sirius*, and weighed anchor at daybreak on 13th May 1787, setting sail for New South Wales.

The First Fleet comprised the frigate *H.M.S. Sirius*, 540 tons, 20 guns, 160 men, commanded by Captain John Hunter. The *Sirius* was 30 meters long, 10 meters wide and had a depth of 4 meters. The main mast stood 32 meters above the deck. Its best speed with a favourable wind was 10 knots.

H.M.S. Supply, armed tender brig *was the fastest in the fleet*, 8 guns, 55 men, commanded by Lieutenant Henry Ligbird Ball.

Golden Grove, store ship with Fishburn, store ship and Borrowdale, store ship.

Scarborough, transport, carrying 1 captain, 33 marines, 208 male convicts.

Lady Penrhyn, transport, carrying 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 3 privates and *102 female convicts*;

Friendship, transport, 1 captain, 44 marines and privates, 77 male and 20 female convicts.

Charlotte, transport, 1 captain, 43 men, 88 male and 20 *female convicts*.

Prince of Wales, transport, 2 lieutenants, 30 marines and *50 female convicts*.

The *Alexander*, was the largest convict transport of 450 tons. Her master was **Duncan SinClare** with 2 lieutenants, 35 marines and *213 male convicts*.

The total number of persons who embarked in the first fleet on that fateful Sunday was:

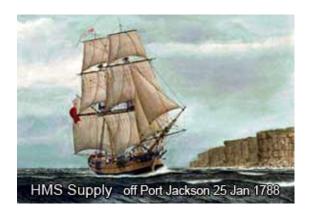
Civil officers	10
Marines including officers	212
Wives (28) and children (17) of above	45
Other free persons	81
Male convicts	504
Female convicts	192
TOTAL	1,044

The Supply sighted the coast of New South Wales on 3 January 1788 and anchored in **Botany Bay** on 18 January 1788. The Sirius with the remainder of the convoy arrived on 20th January 1788. The number of persons landed was 1,030. That meant only 14 persons died on the eight month voyage (1.3%) which was very low by the standards of the day.

There was no fresh water at **Botany Bay** and it was considered to be exposed to bad weather. Governor Phillip, together with Captain Hunter and several other officers, therefore set out in whale boats for a bay to the north, mentioned by Captain Cook, called **Broken Bay**.

They entered a place on the way marked **"Port Jackson"** and selected a cove *"about half-a-mile in length and a quarter-of-a-mile across the entrance"* situated six miles inside this harbour, as a place for the new settlement.

In honour of **Lord Sydney**, the Governor named it **Sydney Cove** on 22 January 1788



The following day while sailing back to **Botany Bay**, on a point of land on the north side of **Port Jackson**, Phillip noticed the *confident and manly behaviour* of the natives at the water's edge. So he named it **Manly Cove**. In one of history's more amazing coincidences, 2 **French** frigates under the command of Comte de Laperouse (1741-1788), sailed into **Botany Bay** on 24 January 1788, while the **English** were relocating.

The **French** were treated courteously by the **English** and fortunately some of Laperouse letters and document were given to the **English** and eventually sent back to **Paris** via **London**.

Laperouse sailed from Botany Bay on 10 March 1788 for New Caledonia and Santa Cruz islands. *They were never seen again.*

Governor Phillip in the *Supply* and the rest of the fleet quit **Botany Bay** and sailed into **Port Jackson** on 25th January 1788.



Sydney Cove 26 Jan 1788

The colony of **New South Wales** was formally taken possession in the name of the **King of England** by Governor Arthur Phillip on 26 **January 1788**. British colours were hoisted on **Dawes Point**.

The Governor and principal officers assembled and drank the **King's** health and success to the new colony.

It is not recorded what the local **aboriginals** thought of all this

Three of the transports *Lady Penrhyn*, *Scarborough* and *Charlotte* left for **China** to load tea for the *East India Company*. The *Supply* also sailed for **Lord Howe Island** on 6 May 1788.

The new colony ran low on food and rationing was enforced. The *Sirius* was despatched to the **Cape of Good Hope** on 30 September 1788 for supplies.

The Sirius returned with four months provisions on 9 May 1789, which led to great rejoicing in the colony. *Unfortunately the Sirius was later wrecked on Norfolk Island in 1790*. The *Supply* was then sent to **Batavia (Jakarta)** under the command of Lieutenant Ball for provisions on 17 April 1790.

The store ship *Justinian* from **England** arrived on 20 June 1790 with a timely supply of provisions.



Sydney Cove 1788

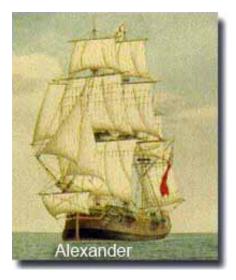
The Second Fleet convoyed by the 44 gun *Gorgon* arrived in **Sydney Cove** on 21 September 1791 with *1,695 male and 68 female convicts.*

198 (10.1%) died on the passage. A further 480 were sick from scurvy, dysentery and fever. Treatment of the convicts on this expedition was a disgrace. They were abused and exploited by private ship owners.

The Settlement was placed on full rations after many months of privation on July 1792, after the arrival of the *Atlantic* from Calcutta with a much needed cargo of rice and other provisions. Approximately 80,000 convicts were transported to New South Wales between 1788 and 1842. 85% were male with 15% female.

Two thirds (66%) of the convicts were literate - **a much higher percentage than the free immigrants** (58%). *Almost two thirds were English* - along with a small number of Scots and Welsh, with the remaining one third Irish.

Most were ordinary working class men and women. **The majority were first offenders** with 75% convicted of petty larceny or receiving stolen goods.



Note: The writer's direct ancestor on his mother's side, William Nash, a private in the marines in Captain Shea's company, came to Australia in the First Fleet on board the *Alexander*