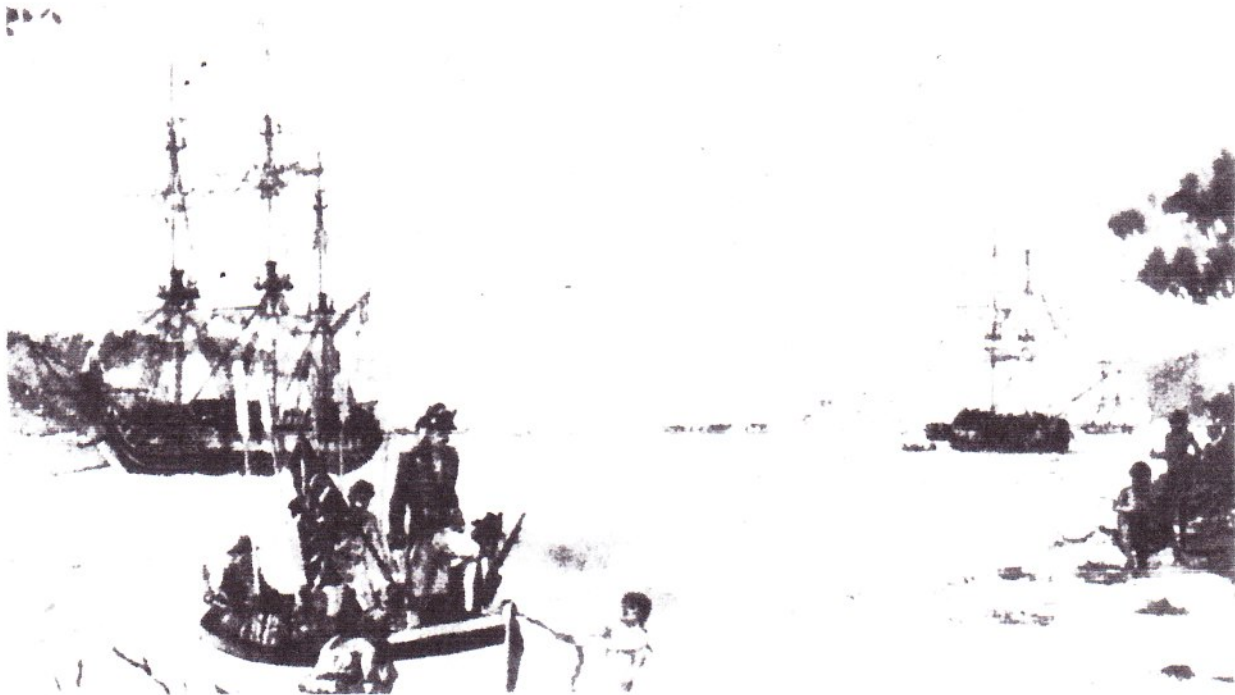


Involuntary Pioneers.

Ann Forbes Journey to and Life in, the Great South Land.



From a watercolour by Julian N Brier

The first recorded European landing at Sydney Cove 26th January 1788.

Male convicts were first brought ashore to establish a rudimentary settlement. Eleven days later **seventeen year old Ann Forbes** stepped ashore to a life of seven years of harsh discipline, threatening supply bungles and male protection relationships. Later, when the Government opened up land so that liberated convicts could fend for themselves rather than depend on the Government, (an emancipation measure) she became an early settler of the Hawkesbury River. This story is about a woman who was the Australian progenitor of thousands of present day Australians.

Involuntary Pioneers

Introduction

To explore or settle for the first time, may be accepted as a reasonable definition of the term pioneer.

Given that acceptance, there can be no doubt that the Australian Aborigine was by far and away the true pioneer of this land we now call Australia. Just where his journey emanated from and where, how and why he crossed the bridging challenge that led him into this Island Continent is still a matter for conjecture.

The next wave of pioneers came with European settlement of Australia. Now recognised as coming an estimated 60 000 years after the first pioneers, this second pioneering episode may be looked upon in generous sequential terms as a "*Johnny come lately*" event, however it came under differing circumstances to the first and may therefore be acceptable to the term pioneer, albeit on different terms. **Non-indigenous pioneers of Australia**, perhaps would be more appropriate.

The endeavours and failures and successes of this second wave have been the subject of much record and literature, both politically and socially and it is not the purpose of this article to elaborate further on those, but rather to turn to a single story related to the era which effects myself and probably many thousands of other Australians, many possibly not so aware. Again literature is published of the lives and adventures of the fleet arrivals, however because of the convicted status of the first arrivals, pioneering status appears to be more confined to their descendants and or the later arrived, free settlers.

I happen to be the descendant of one of the first fleet (maternal) and one of the third fleet (paternal) convicts transported to Australia. In years gone by such relationship was a matter to be kept in the darkest closet. Today as we have become more enlightened to the class intolerances, hapless living and working conditions, lack of employment under the so called industrial revolution and severe sentencing then current, we become more understanding and forgiving and some even look upon such relationship as intriguingly positive.

However that is not my issue, but having become aware of the trials and tribulations of the lives of two of my ancestry who had to answer to and were subject to, the sentence of transportation, I find myself with nothing but admiration for the courage and endurance that they were put to. This story however relates to the maternal side of my ancestral link as being one of the very first European women to set foot on Australian soil.

So courageous and adventurous that I would like to introduce you to and relate the story of my Great, Great Grandmother, Ann Forbes. I would also like to nominate her as **pioneer extraordinaire**, despite the fact that her exploits here in Australia did not materialise from a voluntary beginning. My opinion only, but after you have read her story, lived her adventures and wonder at the substantial portion of today's Australian population resulting from the ancestral base she and her progeny originated, I leave you to make up your own mind.

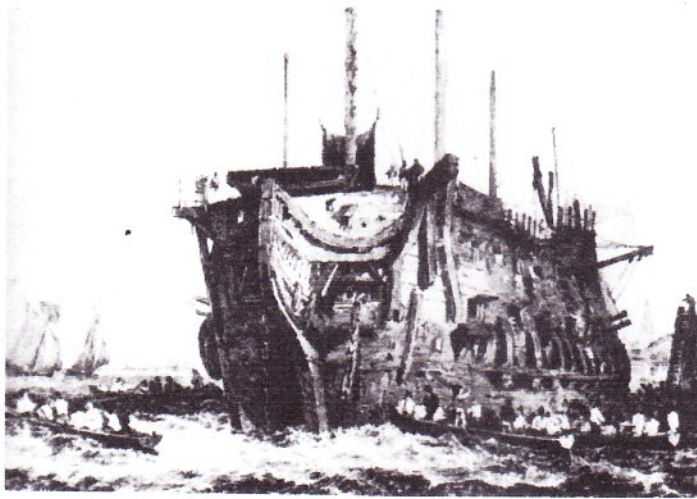
In the initial settlement a woman without a male associate was without protection from the heavy imbalance of males to females. Ann had three such partners. Her progeny from the partnerships is shown within. However her progeny from the last and long time relationship provided Ann and Thomas with 99 grandchildren.

The following is partly from an ancestral history I have compiled with the help of the many who have taken the trouble to research the fascinating story of this remarkable woman.

Jeff Lambert.

Ann Forbes' Journey into The Land Down Under

Life in England during the latter part of the 18th century was extremely hard. Modern machinery had displaced farm workers who moved to the cities looking for work. With little work available the cities became overcrowded with people out of work and struggling to survive. People resorted to **stealing to survive** and anything stolen deemed to exceed 1 shilling (10 cents) (then a workers day's wages) resulted in transportation. Stealing of items of higher value often resulted in the death penalty. Consequently gaols were full to overflowing and ships (or at least the hulks of former ships) deemed unseaworthy, but still able to float were used as prisons (prison hulks). From 250 to 300 convicts were crowded into any one of these hulks often measuring little more than 50 metres in length. Between 1776 and 1795 nearly **2000 of 6000** convicts aboard hulks **died of disease**, mostly typhoid and cholera.¹



G Cooke after S Prout, *Convict Hulk at Deptford 1826*. The hulks took the overflow from conventional prisons and were used as stage to transportation.

Transportation became one of the solutions to the overcrowding, and convicts were sent to America where they provided cheap labour. However after the American War of Independence ended in 1783, America refused to accept any further convicts. The newly formed **Colony of New South Wales** then became the transportation destination, although convicts were also sent to Canada and India.

It was on the 28th day of October 1786, that two women entered the shop of James Rollinson and **did steal, take and carry away, against the peace of our Lord the King, his crown and his Dignity, ten yards of printed cotton of the value of 20 shillings** (\$2). At the subsequent trial on the morning of Thursday the 5th April 1787, before Sir Henry Gould and Sir Alexander Thompson at the Surrey Lent Assizes, the two women, **Ann Forbes** aged 16 and **Lydia Munro** aged 30, were sentenced **to hang**.

Perhaps it was the planned use of the colony of New South Wales, as a penal settlement for transported convicts that saved the lives of Ann and Lydia for on the 16th of April, Lydia, followed on the 17th April 1787 by Ann, saw their death sentences **reprieved** in the form of sentence to transportation for 14 years for Lydia and 7 years for Ann. They were transferred from New Gaol at Southwark to Newgate Prison where they joined other women and embarked upon the *Prince of Wales* at Portsmouth, **bound for Botany Bay**.

The fleet, assembled in 1787, consisted of eleven vessels; 2 Naval ships, HMS *Sirius* and HMS *Supply*; 6 transports, the *Alexander*, *Lady Penryhn*, *Scarborough*, *Charlotte*,

Friendship and the Prince of Wales, all carrying convicts and three stores vessels, the Fishburn, Borrowdale and the Golden Grove. It became known as **the first fleet**.

The Prince of Wales (transport), had only recently been built on the Thames in 1786, weighed approximately 350 tons, and was 103 feet (31.4 metres) long, **(little more than a cricket pitch and a half long)** and 29 feet (8.84 metres wide). This was practically her maiden voyage. It had on board, a crew of approximately 24 seamen, 2 marine lieutenants, 29 Royal Marines, 2 male and 50 female convicts. The fleet arrived at Botany Bay on the 20th January 1788 after a journey of 25,400 kilometres, 8 months and one day after leaving England's shores.



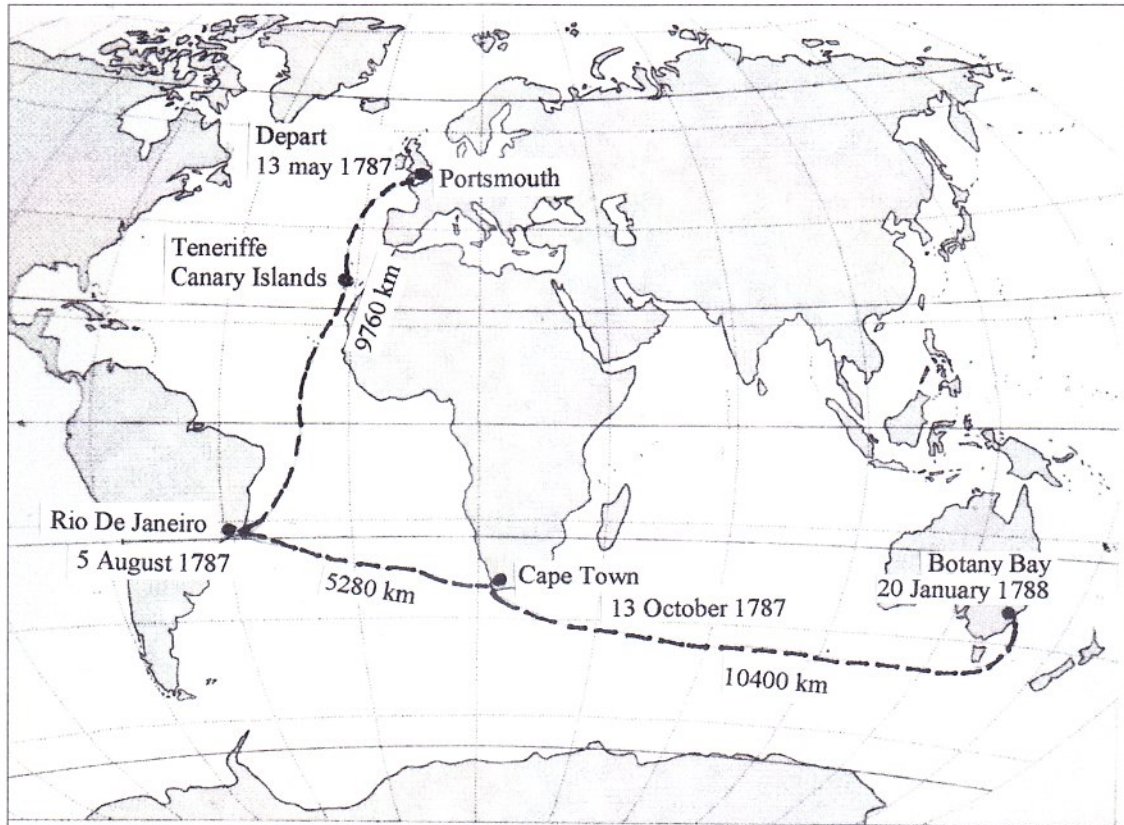
"Prince of Wales" leaving Portsmouth 1787 – from a Painting by Phil Belbin

Botany Bay was to prove unsuitable owing to its openness to the sea, its shallow draft, its poor sandy soil and lack of fresh water and the fleet up-anchored and headed for Port Jackson. Their journey on leaving the protection of the bay however saw the fleet facing heavy winds in the open sea with the Charlotte running foul of the Prince of Wales and ***it was only by the greatest fortune and the Goodness of the Almighty that they did not find themselves up on the rocks with all hands lost.*** Ann, along with other convicts below would no doubt have heard the commotion above and realised the danger they faced. Fortuitously for Ann and the hundreds of Australians who claim heritage from this remarkable woman, the Prince of Wales anchored safely at Sydney Cove. **It was Ann's second brush with death.**

Two French ships had been sighted entering Botany Bay and Governor Phillip, on arrival at Port Jackson, lost no time in raising the British Flag. The women convicts were the last to be taken ashore although Ann may have witnessed the raising of the first British flag on mainland Australian soil on January the 26th from the deck of the Prince of

Wales, as she was to set foot on Australian soil herself for the first time on the 6th February 1788.

ANN FORBES – JOURNEY TO THE LAND DOWNUNDER
13 MAY 1787 – 20 JANUARY 1788



In the main, women sought protection by association with selected males or marriage and in this Ann formed an association with a convict by the name of George Bannister. This association resulted in the birth of Sarah Bannister in 1790.

The Sydney Cove settlement however found itself in dire straits when it was found that the soils around the cove area were not conducive to growing crops. Secondly the promised supply fleet to follow up on the first fleet did not arrive. An advance settlement detachment had been dispatched to Norfolk Island aboard the *Supply* where it was reported that soil was superior to that of Sydney Cove. Among the convicts so dispatched was one **William Dring**.

The situation at Sydney Cove became desperate and convicts were transported to Norfolk Island as a last resort. The convicts, in the main, had no previous experience as farmers or fishermen, and supply had to be sought from Cape Town by the *Sirius* and Batavia by the *Supply*, however this was restricted when the warship *Sirius* was wrecked at Norfolk Island when, having disembarked the convicts at Cascade Bay, attempting to unload stores at Sydney Bay.

Thus Ann arrived at Norfolk Island without any record of Sarah being with her and it is assumed that Sarah had died. According to reports Bannister was not with her and did not arrive at Norfolk Island until 1792. Other reports claim the Bannister was with Ann when she arrived aboard the *Sirius*. Whatever the situation, Ann formed an association with the above mentioned William Dring and was reportedly married to him in 1791 at Norfolk Island. William and Ann had two children during their time at Norfolk Island, Ann b. 1792 and Elizabeth b. 1794.

The first crops at Norfolk failed due to salt burn, cutworms and the Norfolk Parrot enjoying what remained. Fortunately the eating quality of the mutton bird was discovered in what was a situation of necessity. The officers referred to it as the *bird of providence*, and no doubt this reference cannot be argued with. One referred to it as very fine eating, however the convicts thought it tasted oily and fishy somewhere between a penguin and chicken.² We wonder what Ann's opinion was? Nevertheless it was a saviour for the isolated settlement.

In the meantime better crop lands had been discovered at Rose Hill on the Parramatta River, the second and third convict fleets had arrived bringing with them supplies and further building materials and transports between England and Sydney became more frequent. Farmers began to hold their own, if not prosper and Sydney Town was expanding when Ann and William returned from Norfolk Island in 1794. Their eldest daughter Ann died and a son Charles was born in Sydney in 1796. William was sometimes in trouble both at Norfolk Island and back in Sydney and the relationship between William and Ann deteriorated and Ann formed an association with **Thomas Huxley**, whom she may have met on Norfolk Island. There is however, some argument that Thomas never went to Norfolk Island.

Thomas Huxley was apparently from a well known family in the Chester District of Cheshire. He was arrested under the alias of Thomas Jones for stealing a silk handkerchief of the value of 2 shillings (20 cents) and although he denied the theft he was transported to serve 7 years in NSW. Although there is some conjecture as to the relevant Thomas Jones (there were several Thomas Jones apprehended at the time) and the crime committed, the handkerchief event appears the most probable, both in time and place, as applicable to our Thomas. He was transported in the 3rd fleet aboard the *Salamander*, however because of the food shortage at Sydney, the *Salamander*, on arriving at Port Jackson, was ordered to Norfolk Island and it is probable that there, Thomas may have first met Ann.

Thomas, having served his time, was granted land at Richmond which he had applied for under the name of Thomas Jones. Located at the confluence of the Hawkesbury and the Colo Rivers it was situated in a district known as Lower Portland, on land known as Paradise Point. Today the road runs through what was Thomas's land to many residences fronting the Hawkesbury River and South's Junior League resort. It is accessed by a bridge over the Colo River known as *the bridge to nowhere*.

Although Thomas preferred to be known under his real name of Huxley, because of his land having been recorded earlier under the name of Jones, later transactions of the land extended the use of his alias *Jones*, much to the complication of research, as the name Huxley is not as common as that of Jones. Thomas may have been cognisant of the complication himself as he resorted, in instances, of signing his name as **Huxley**

otherwise Jones. Apparently farms were often known and named after their owner, such as **Jones Farm.**

An old English variant of the first part of the surname was *Uck* which when combined with the last part of the name *leah* (meaning a glade or open space) gave Uckleah which could have contracted to *Uxley*. Uxley was the name given in the 1822 muster showing Ann as being the **wife of Thomas Uxley**, and although the name Thomas Uxley is not mentioned in the muster, the name Thomas Jones is. The census musters would probably see him using the name associated with his land, *Thomas Jones*, thus leading to the muster conundrum above.

According to the owners of a gun shop in northern Wales called Huxley-Jones, the owners said that originally it was first called Uxleyiones which became Uxley-Jones before becoming in turn, Huxley-Jones. They also commented that the original owners had strong ties with Cheshire, where the Huxley's were well established.³

It appears obvious that Thomas Uxley, was a name sometimes used in other than land matters by our Thomas and that the story of Tom Ugley's Point may have originated from the use of Uxley rather than Huxley. It is said that Tomas Huxley acquired 90 acres of land at Dover Point from James Bull. Thomas apparently was on good terms with the aborigines in the Sutherland area and they had great difficulty in pronouncing "x" sounding more like a "g" so that *Uxley* became to them *Ugley*.⁴ Thus today we have, **Tom Ugly's Point** and **Tom Ugly's Bridge** over the Georges River.

It is generally accepted that the Aboriginal pronunciation prevailed into modern times with, incidentally, the naming having nothing to do with Huxley's countenance. With the exception of the reference to Uxley/Ugley mentioned above, which is a personal opinion, it is noted that this story was **passed down by Thomas's son James** and it has been **repeated** (circa 1940) by **Thelma Lambert (Stickley) to her son Peter Lambert**.⁴ Both are descendents of Thomas through Grace⁽³⁾ David⁽²⁾ and James⁽¹⁾

Thomas became a successful farmer and with Ann they raised their family of 9 in the attractive surroundings of Paradise Point on the Hawkesbury River. In spite of the hard work in establishing the farm it must indeed have seemed like paradise to Ann after the harrowing experience of prison and the journey to a strange land in which she, along with other convicts of the first fleet, helped to establish the first European settlements in Australia, both at Sydney Cove and Norfolk Island. The experience appears not to have been of detriment to the health of either Thomas or Ann, where in an era in which three score years and ten was the expected lifetime, **Ann** passed away in 1851 **at the age of 80** with **Thomas** passing away some 4 years later in 1854 **at the age of 84**. Thomas's gravestone was inscribed accordingly:

*Our term of time is seventy years
An age that few survive
But if with more than common strength
To eighty we arrive
Yet then our boasted strength decays
To sorrow turn'd and pain
So soon the slender thread is cut
And we no more remain*

Ann was buried at Sackville Reach cemetery which is in the grounds of the original St Thomas Church of England. **She became the oldest person of the first fleet to die in Australia.**

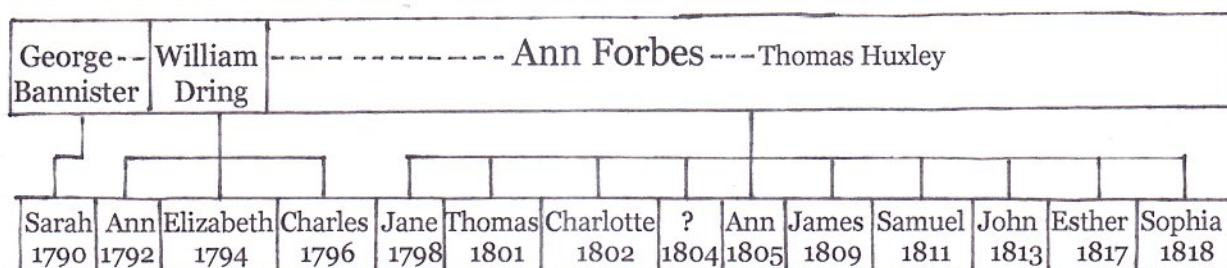
Thomas was buried in the cemetery at St Peters Church of England at Richmond.

Portia Robertson's submission pays tribute to the convict/settlers;

*"most of the convicts became law abiding citizens of their new country and took care to instil in their children the same morality. The records do not reveal any misdemeanours of Thomas Snr, Ann, their children or their grandchildren as citizens of Australia—quite an achievement considering the odds against them."*⁶

If we could but travel back in time, I do not consider that there would any more rewarding wish for me than to enjoy the acquaintance of my Great, Great Grandparents. Especially Ann with her experiences of having to be deployed to Norfolk when the promised supply fleet failed to arrive. From Norfolk she would have witnessed the wreck of the Sirius leaving both Norfolk and the Australian mainland with only the small supply tender *"The Supply"* between them and the remoteness of the European civilisation and so many other dramatic events that she would have witnessed or have been a part of.

Base Australian genealogy tree --- Ann Forbes and Thomas Huxley.



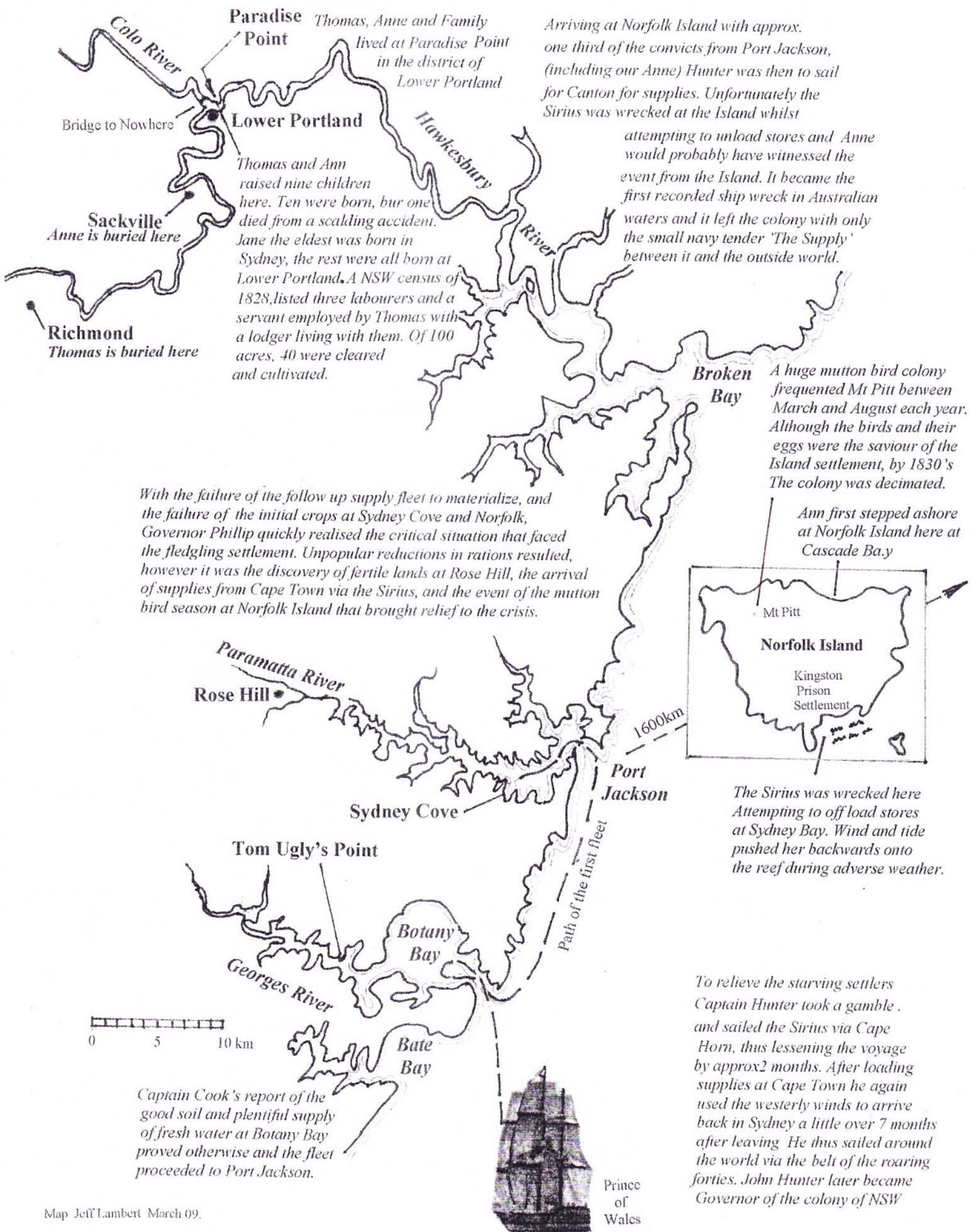
- Note: 1. The question mark between Charlotte and Ann above is thought to be a son scalded to death when he fell into a tub of boiling wort. No name is available as the children living in remote areas, were quite often not registered until convenient or the advent of a population muster.
2. **Esther** Cavanaugh (nee Huxley) contributed **17** of the **99 grandchildren** the progeny of **Ann and Thomas** presented them with.
3. Of her other relationships her daughter **Elizabeth** by William Dring, also presented Ann with **17 grandchildren**. No --- television was not then discovered!

Attached: 1. Sketch map of Sydney - Hawkesbury area plus Norfolk Island inset.
2. Addendum ----Wreck of the Sirius

Reference:

1. <http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.56/chapter/prison-hulks-on-the-River-Thames.html>
2. Robert Hughes *"The Fatal Shore"* p.100, 101.
3. Professor Douglas R Huxley *"Transported to Paradise"* p 11.
4. Personal suggestion - Jeff Lambert
5. Personal comment - Peter Lambert.
6. Portia Robinson - *"The Hatch and Brood of Time"*

Events and Localities relevant to Ann Forbs and Thomas Huxley



Arriving at Norfolk Island with approx. one third of the convicts from Port Jackson, (including our Anne) Hunter was then to sail for Canton for supplies. Unfortunately the Sirius was wrecked at the Island whilst

attempting to unload stores and Anne would probably have witnessed the event from the Island. It became the first recorded ship wreck in Australian waters and it left the colony with only the small navy tender 'The Supply' between it and the outside world.

With the failure of the follow up supply fleet to materialize, and the failure of the initial crops at Sydney Cove and Norfolk, Governor Phillip quickly realised the critical situation that faced the fledgling settlement. Unpopular reductions in rations resulted, however it was the discovery of fertile lands at Rose Hill, the arrival of supplies from Cape Town via the Sirius, and the event of the mutton bird season at Norfolk Island that brought relief to the crisis.

The Sirius was wrecked here Attempting to off load stores at Sydney Bay. Wind and tide pushed her backwards onto the reef during adverse weather.

To relieve the starving settlers Captain Hunter took a gamble, and sailed the Sirius via Cape Horn, thus lessening the voyage by approx 2 months. After loading supplies at Cape Town he again used the westerly winds to arrive back in Sydney a little over 7 months after leaving. He thus sailed around the world via the belt of the roaring forties. John Hunter later became Governor of the colony of NSW

Eaglecrest
6/2/13.

Addendum to the Ann Forbes Story

On one of my rare visits to my doctor, I was sitting there waiting for the call, when I noticed an old Australian Geographic (1993) Browsing through I noticed an article on the Wreck of the Sirius and the name William Dring appeared.

The waiting room is homely, bright with plenty of literature and a sign that says '*please don't remove literature from the surgery as it is so placed to pass the waiting time of patients*'.

(or words to that effect) So you see I could hardly walk out with the magazine under my arm or even accidentally fallen in beside my Xray portraits of my inner structure. So I did a deal with the practice manager with the thoughts of sharing this interesting information with the rest of the family.

The painting (in watercolour) of the wreck of the Sirius was by an on the spot witness so that it forms a vital link in our early history. The artist was one of the ship's officers --- one Lieutenant William Bradley. The event happened on the 19th March 1790 on the fringing reef within Sydney Bay. See copy attached and humble apologies for the reproduction.

My Great Great Grandmother may have witnessed the rescue operations from the vantage point of the painter or more than likely she may have been part of the rescue operations. Anne Forbes was part of a contingent sent from Sydney to relieve the food starved population of Sydney Cove, by deploying a proportion of the population to Norfolk, where it was deemed better growing soil and conditions would be available. The promised *follow up* supply fleet to the first fleet failed to arrive. The inexperience of the convicts in farming and fishing did little to improve the situation and it was a desperate Governor Phillip who ordered the deployment. Anne sailed on the Sirius from Sydney Cove to Norfolk Island.

Before this however Phillip had ordered Captain John Hunter, to temporarily relieve the desperate situation by sailing the Sirius for Cape Town for supplies. To save valuable time Hunter sailed, not by the familiar route westerly to Cape Town, but taking advantage of the *roaring forties*, sailed the more dangerous route easterly around Cape Horn and on to Cape Town. After loading supplies, he then had the roaring forties again at his back to reach Sydney in record time (two months quicker than the established route and was possibly the first to circumnavigate the globe in the southerly 40 degree latitudes, with the aid of the winds the Antarctic heavily influences "*the roaring forties*.") Even so it was a decision based upon a desperate situation confronting our earliest settlers. Be they in chains or not.

The Sydney settlement, isolated in those days from the European civilisation by some 25 000 kilometres and months of communication and bearing the brunt of the failure of the promised supply fleet to arrive, found itself in a dire predicament to which most of today's Australian population are oblivious of the hardships imposed of forced reduction of already meagre rations and the above mentioned deployment developments and disruptions. All strictly implemented to save the population from starvation related illnesses or starvation itself and threatening the lives of forebears, such as our own Ann Forbes.

Isolated, with the only communication with the outside world being via a long voyage (around 8 months) in the only ships in the colony, His Majesty's ships Sirius and the supply tender (The Supply). So the loss of the Sirius (not known in Sydney Town until the return of the Supply) came as a severe blow to the administration. The only vessel remaining in the colony was then the Supply. About a cricket pitch long (21 metres) and less than two car lengths in width (8 metres), it was the only link left to the outside world. Even so, in those days of very limited charted waters, it made a trip to Batavia for drastically needed supplies.

William Dring was Ann's first and only legal husband. In those days of the colony where men were plentiful and women not so plentiful, women sought protection by association with a suitable male, whether by marriage or de-facto relationship. Ann's first association was with George Bannister to which they had one child, Sarah. It has been presumed that Sarah died before Anne was deployed to Norfolk. Her second association was with William Dring where it is suggested she was married in a mass wedding ceremony on Norfolk Island in 1791 when a parson visited Norfolk Island. They had three children --- Anne, Elizabeth and Charles.

But her next partner became her de-facto for the rest of her life. Thomas Huxley to whom she had ten children outlived Anne by three years, dying in 1854 at 84 years and Anne in 1851 at 80 years. Goodly years for those days --- exacerbated by harsh penal conditions. (one of the ten children, their sixth born, James (b.1809), is the forebear of the Huxley/Lambert line)

Upon the wreck of the Sirius, William Dring and a fellow convict, James Branagan, **volunteered** to swim out to the wreck to liberate some animals. In doing so they made the delightful discovery that the Officer's liquor cabinet was still intact and to celebrate the liberation of the animals and the salvage of other stores etc, they toasted the success of same so many times that they became as high as kites during which they accidentally set fire to part of the wreck. The pair received two months in irons, which is probably why most people are reluctant to volunteer for anything these days.

Research on Anne and Charles Dring is limited however Elizabeth Dring, who outshone her mother Ann in male attachment (in association with 5 different males) presented Anne and William with 17 grandchildren. However the progeny of Thomas and Anne presented them with 99 grandchildren. Can you imagine Xmas or birthdays, or even a family barbeque!

I personally do not have the time to look to research and total the enormous family, that the multitude of genealogical lines, owing origin to this remarkable woman, has complemented the Australian population. Perhaps some of the younger set may see fit to take on this enormous task. If so I feel sure it would be of immense interest to the nation and perhaps, just perhaps, it may be that some may find that they have unknowingly married a relative --- be the relationship unconcernedly distant.

You will note from the painting, the Norfolk pines on both Nepean and Phillip Islands. The small ship in the background is the Supply which gave warning of the Sirius's drift onto the reef but could not assist.

Cook first noticed the Norfolk pines when he sailed to Norfolk and he recommended that Norfolk become a possession of Great Britain, solely for its pines for masts for its ships and for the native flax growing on the island which was deemed suitable for both rope and sails. However Norfolk had no safe harbour and plants and seed were taken to Australia for propagation, where they grew well and still dot the Australian coastline. The main source for masts up to that time was from Russia and hence was not suitable (location and price wise) for journeys through the antipodes where masts became wind stressed, damaged and even lost.

However the Norfolk pine proved unsuitable for masts and the flax unsuitable for rope. It was a disastrous exercise as the resinous sap was not durable for the expected length of time and the pines dried out and snapped. So when you see the introduced pines along the coast, whether you agree environmentally with the species introduction or not, think of all the excitement that they once induced in making majestic tall masts (up to 33 metres high for a 74 gunner) and to the bitter disappointment and loss of investment when they failed.

Jeff.

ON THE MORNING OF 19 MARCH 1790, the *Sirius* was hove to in Sydney Bay, Norfolk Island, unloading stores into boats when it began to drift towards a line of rocks off Point Ross, on the western side of the open bay. A shouted warning came from Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball, commander of *HMS Supply*, which was under sail nearby. The *Supply's* crew was familiar with the bay and knew its dangers. Ball tacked his ship right under the *Sirius's* bow and headed for the open sea, but the larger vessel was pinned in the bay by a sudden wind shift.

After only just clearing the rocks, the *Sirius* manoeuvred in the hope that it could escape through a shallow passage inshore of Nepean Island, at the eastern end of the bay. But the ship was trapped too close to shore. The onshore wind and the current drove it backwards towards the fringing reef in front of the settlement. Captain John Hunter let go a bower anchor to hold it, but it was too late: the *Sirius* struck.

His ship holed and taking in water, the desperate Hunter ordered the masts cut away to reduce stress on the hull, but the heavy surf now threw the vessel well onto the reef, about 200 m from shore.

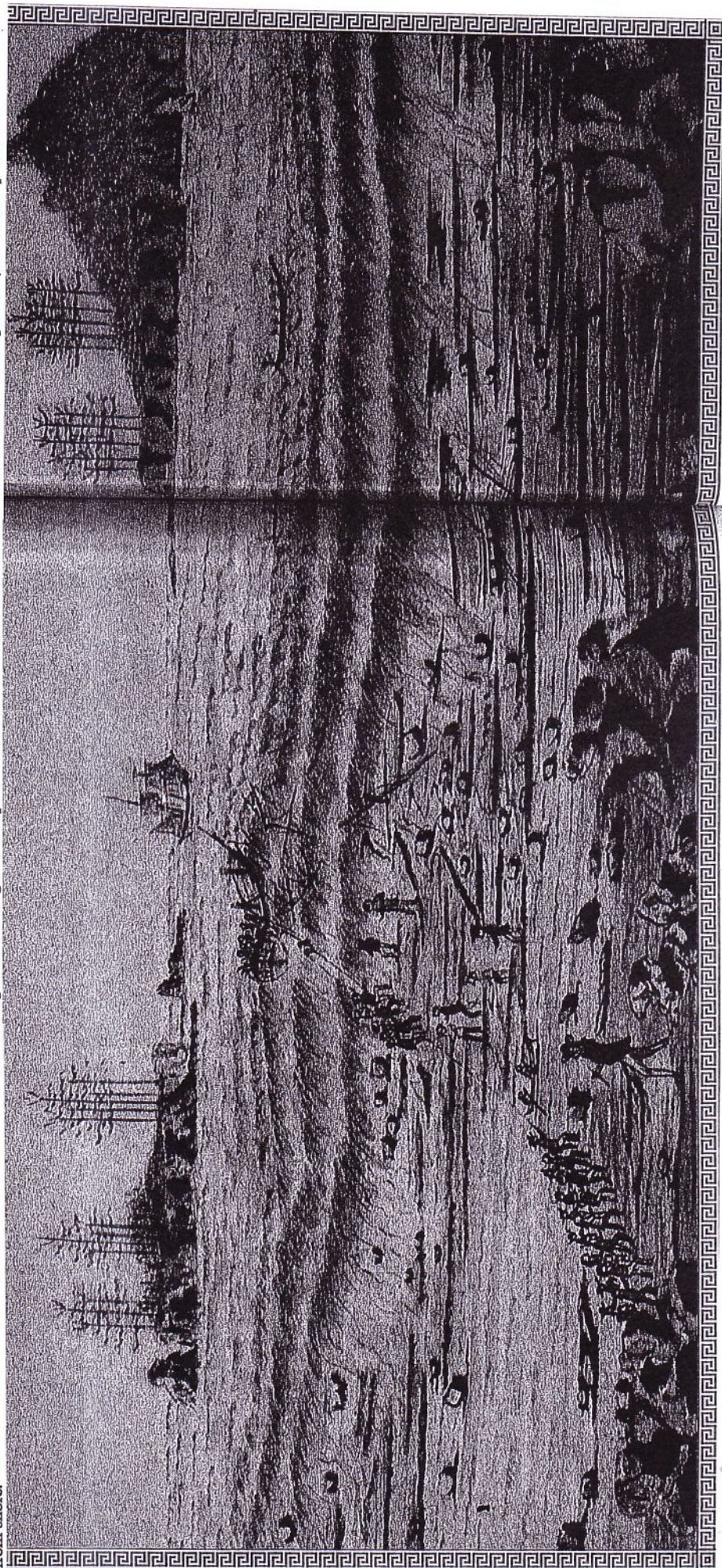
"In Less than 10 Minutes, the Masts were all over the side, the Ship an intire Wreck," wrote young Lieutenant Newton Fowell to his father. "Mr Ball came in his Boats to see if he could be of any assistance but he was desired to return & take care of his own Vessel as it was impossible to be of the least Service to the *Sirius*."

In haste and confusion, provisions and belongings were stacked on deck to be floated ashore. The crew landed two boats piled with supplies and secured a cable to a pine tree. A travelling block and hauling lines were set up, and soon three or four people at a time were being pulled to the higher part of the reef, from where they got ashore by small boat. But by evening the rising tide covered the reef, halting the rescue operation and leaving more than half the ship's company on board overnight.

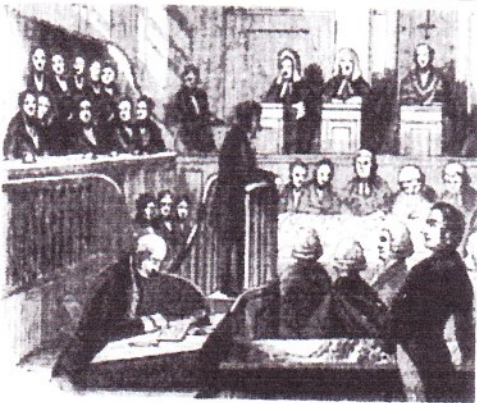
They all got ashore the next day, and two days later convicts William Dring and James Branagan volunteered to return and liberate the livestock. In an incident that provides light relief at this distance but could have had dire consequences, the two also liberated the ship's liquor supply and were soon gloriously drunk, setting the *Sirius* alight in two places.

Ashore, a heartbroken Lieutenant Ralph Clark wrote: "Gracious god, what will become of us all. The whole of our Provisions are in this Ship, now a Wreck before us... and here am I who has nothing more than what I stand in and not the Smallest hope of my getting any thing out of the Ship, for every body expects that She will goe to pices when the tide comes in... I am So low that I cannot hold the pindle [pencil] to write." On the island, martial law was declared. In Sydney when the *Supply* returned, an appalled Governor Phillip wrote: "You never saw such dismay as the news of the wreck occasioned among us all."

The plight of the First Fleet's flagship on the reef off Sydney Bay, Norfolk Island, on 19 March 1790 is graphically brought to life in this watercolour, drawn on the spot by Lieutenant William Bradley, one of the ship's officers. Men on the high reef haul crew members to safety with a travelling block and lines as *HMS Supply*, unable to help for fear of a similar end, stands off between Nepean, left, and Philip islands.



Sentenced to Down Under



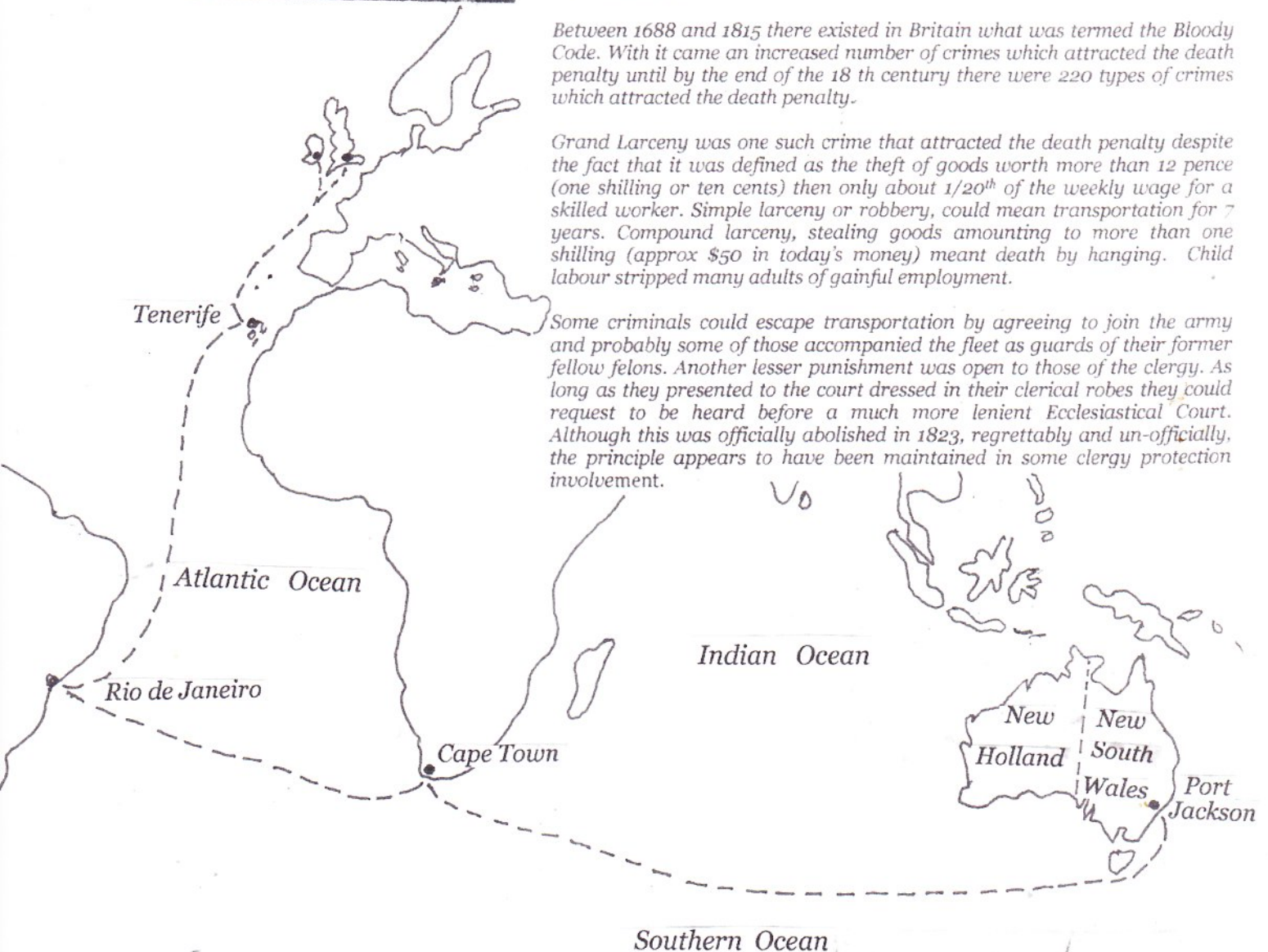
*"Now all you young Dookies and Dutchesses,
Take warning from what I've to say,
Mind all that you own that you touchesses,
Or you'll end up in Botany Bay."*

Between 1788 and the mid 1850's more than 165 000 convicts were transported to Australia. Approximately 70% were English and Welsh, 24% Irish (which would have included political prisoners) and Scottish some 5%. Those transported to Australia constituted approximately one third of the total convicted.

Between 1688 and 1815 there existed in Britain what was termed the Bloody Code. With it came an increased number of crimes which attracted the death penalty until by the end of the 18th century there were 220 types of crimes which attracted the death penalty.

Grand Larceny was one such crime that attracted the death penalty despite the fact that it was defined as the theft of goods worth more than 12 pence (one shilling or ten cents) then only about 1/20th of the weekly wage for a skilled worker. Simple larceny or robbery, could mean transportation for 7 years. Compound larceny, stealing goods amounting to more than one shilling (approx \$50 in today's money) meant death by hanging. Child labour stripped many adults of gainful employment.

Some criminals could escape transportation by agreeing to join the army and probably some of those accompanied the fleet as guards of their former fellow felons. Another lesser punishment was open to those of the clergy. As long as they presented to the court dressed in their clerical robes they could request to be heard before a much more lenient Ecclesiastical Court. Although this was officially abolished in 1823, regrettably and un-officially, the principle appears to have been maintained in some clergy protection involvement.



*"Oh If I had the wings of a turtle-dove,
I'd soar on my pinions so high,
Straight back to the arms of my Polly love,
And in her sweet presence I'd die."*

