

Arthur Phillip

Born on the 11th of October in 1738, Arthur Phillip starting working on boats in 1753 when he was 15.

In 1786 he was made commodore of the First Fleet which was headed to colonise the first European settlement in New South Wales. He travelled on the HMS Sirius for most of the journey before transferring to the HMS Supply.

Arthur became the Governor-designate once in Botany Bay.

He resigned sometime around 1792 and headed back to England where he took a break for a few years. Arthur was said to be a just and fair man who was kind to the Aboriginals. Even after he was speared in the shoulder by an Aboriginal he ordered his men not to retaliate. When he left NSW he took an Aboriginal friend, Bennelong with him.

In 1796 he began commanding ships again before retiring in 1805 at the age of 67. He died in 1814.

William Hubbard

William Hubbard was born around 1767 in England. In 1783 he stole a sheet along with another man and was convicted of theft in in March 1784.

Originally he was to be publicly whipped but instead was transported to America for 7 years. He was bought back early and placed on several different ship jails before travelling on the Scarborough as part of the First Fleet.

In 1789 he became a member of the night watch at Port Jackson. In 1790 he married Mary Goulding and in 1803 was given 70 acres of land at Mulgrave Place. They went on to have four children.

In 1820 to 1825 he was a constable and then became a waterman.

He died on the 18th of May 1843 at Sydney Benevolent Asylum.

Henry Lidgbird Ball

Henry Lidgbird Ball was born in 1756. In 1788 he commanded the HMS Supply as part of its journey with the First Fleet to Australia. He then continued to command the Supply on its journey from Botany Bay to Norfolk Island.

He had a daughter in 1789 with Sarah Partridge.

In 1790 he aided in the capture of Arabanoo, a man who became the first of the Aboriginal People to live with Europeans. Around the same time, he discovered and explored Lord Howe's Island.

Henry returned to England in December 1791 to recover from an illness he had had since January. He took on board the first kangaroo to be taken to England. Henry returned to duty in 1792, was made a captain in 1795 and then a Rear Admiral of the Blue in 1814.

In 1802 he married but his wife died a year later. Henry married again in 1810. He died in 1818 in England.

John Hunter

John Hunter was born in 1737 in Scotland. He was an officer in the Royal Navy and was the second captain of the HMS Sirius, a ten gun ship that protected the First Fleet on its journey to Australia.

After they arrived in Port Jackson he surveyed the harbour and nearby coast. In October of 1788 he sailed the HMS Sirius to the Cape of Good Hope for supplies as captain. When he returned he worked as a magistrate and surveyor. He kept a journal of his time in the First Fleet and it included charts and sketches, many of which were published later on.

In 1792 he returned to England after the HMS Sirius was shipwrecked on Norfolk Island. He was court marshalled for the loss of the ship but was found not guilty.

In 1795 he took over from Arthur Phillip to be the second Governor of New South Wales and served until 1800 when he was accused of being incompetent and recalled from office. Upon returning to England he cleared his name and continued to progress in naval rankings. He went on to be a Vice Admiral and retired before his death in 1821.

Duncan Sinclair

Duncan Sinclair was the master (captain) of the ship Alexander. It carried 210 male convict and 40 crew as part of the First Fleet to Australia.

On May 12th 1787 10 sailors mutinied because they had not been paid.

In July 1787 illness was wide spread and Duncan had to have the bilge water at the bottom of the ship pumped out.

In October some of the crew and convicts mutinied and the Surgeon on board believed it was due to Duncan not being a good enough leader.

In July 1788 two convicts took legal action against Duncan for goods in his care and he was ordered to compensate them with money.

In 1788 he lead the Alexander on the journey back to England along with the ship Friendship but too many of the crew developed Scurvy and they sank the Friendship on purpose and all returned on the Alexander due to not having enough crew for two ships.

Thomas Gilbert

Thomas Gilbert was the master (captain) of the Charlotte when it joined several other ships in the First Fleet to Australia. It carried 30 crew, 100 male convicts and 24 female convicts.

On the return voyage the Charlotte and Scarborough had been hired to go to Canton by the East India Company to bring home a cargo of tea. On their voyage past Norfolk Island, Thomas named several sites including a rock named Matthew (after the owner of the Charlotte), Charlotte's Bank, Charlotte's Bay and Matthew's Island. They exchanged items with several of the native people on the islands. The Charlotte and Scarborough sailed through what would later be called Gilbert Islands after Thomas Gilbert. Thomas went on to be Captain of the Neptune and was going to again take convicts to Australia as part of the Second Fleet but there was a last minute argument about who was in charge of the convicts and he was removed from the ship. He keep a journal of his voyages which was later later published.

Francis Walton

Francis Walton was born in 1758.

He was the master (captain) of the ship Friendship. The ship carried 80 male convicts and 24 female convicts along with 20 crew to Australia as part of the First Fleet.

When they stopped at the Cape of Good Hope they transferred all the female convicts to other ships to make more room for livestock.

In July 1787 Francis gave Ralph Clark (a Royal Marine) a puppy that he named Efford.

Two of the female convicts died on the way over.

The Friendship and the Alexander left in 1788 to travel back to Port Jackson but scurvy hit many people on both ships and there were only enough to sail one ship back so they sunk the Friendship, despite Francis protests, and returned in the Alexander.

In 1794 Francis went on to captain the Loyalist.

He married Kitty Cock in 1793 and had seven children. In 1804 he became the London Dock Master.

He died in 1839 aged 81.

William Cropton Sever

William Cropton Sever was the part owner of the transport ship Lady Penryhm.

When the ship was chartered by the Navy board to be a part of the First Fleet to Australia he became the master (captain) of the ship. The ship had 31 crew and 101 female convicts.

In 1788 William had a child with a convict named Ann Green that they named Letitia.

The ship had difficulties sailing and often was slower than the other ships. The women convicts caused many problems including theft and fighting. At Cape Town the Lady Penrhym took on the first horses brought to Australia. The Lady Penrhym headed home fairly soon after dropping the convicts in Australia but went via several islands on the way.

William lived in London at the time of his death aged 55.

John Mason

John Mason was the master (captain) of the ship Prince of Wales in the First Fleet.

The ship carried 25 crew, 2 male convicts and 47 female convicts along with 45 marines and their families. They left Portsmouth in May 1787.

They arrived in Australia in January 1788 and John left on the 14th of August back to London.

The ship stopped at Rio de Janerio on the 30th of April 1789 and John died of scurvy sometime after. Scurvy is caused by a lack of vitamin C and symptoms include weakness, feeling tired and sore arms and legs.

John Marshall

John Marshall was born in 1748 in England and became an apprentice sailor when he was ten.

He was the master (captain) of the ship Scarborough as it journeyed to Australia as part of the First Fleet. It carried 35 crew and 210 male convicts.

From Australia he sailed to China charting unknown islands as well as a new trade route .

After another trip back to Australia on the Scarborough as part of the Second Fleet he declined to do anymore convict transportations. This was due to an attempted mutiny and many of the convicts dying from poor health during the voyage.

He was severely wounded by an attack by the French during the American War of Independence. He died in 1819 at the age of 71.

Mary Abel

Mary Abel was born in 1757 in Worcester. She work as a servant in Hanbury.

In 1785 Mary was sentenced to 7 years prison for stealing hempen cloth, tablecloths, clothing and other items. She was transferred between a couple of jails before embarking on the Lady Penrhyn to head to Australia. Mary was pregnant at the time and gave birth to a boy on the 13th of April 1787. She named him William.

Mary married Thomas Tilley on the 4th of May 1878 at Sydney Cove who is thought to be Williams father.

Unfortunately her son died on the 19th of May 1788 and then in July on the 21st Mary also died.

Thomas Acres

Thomas Acres was born in 1758 in Exeter. He was a shoe maker.

Thomas committed highway robbery and assault against John Squance, stealing 10 shillings. He was convicted and sentenced to be hanged but it was later changed to 7 years and transportation.

He made the journey to Australia as a convict aboard the Charlotte.

In 1792 Thomas again became a free man. He had five children with Ann Guy and held 20 acres of land at Mulgrace Place in 1794. By 1802 Thomas and his family had 10 acres of wheat and 6 acres ready for corn. They were self sufficient which meant they did not need rations from the government.

Thomas Acres died in 1824.

Robert Bails

Robert Bails was born in 1766 in Reading. He worked as a soldier and later as a labourer.

He committed assault and highway robbery to value of 2 shilling and was sentenced to death. The sentence was reduced to 14 years with transportation. He escaped Reading jail on the 30th of November 1784 but was recaptured a few days later. He travelled aboard the ship Alexander as a convict on the First Fleet to Australia.

He was described by a police officer as almost 1.8 metres high, having long, thin hair, scarred from smallpox, had thick lips and was heavily built. In 1788 he was charged with stealing meat and made to pay back the cost. In October 1789 he was sentenced to 25 lashes due to insolence towards the purser on the ship Sirius.

In 1801 he was pardoned and went on to work as a school master in 1806 and was listed as having 25 students in 1820.

Martha Baker

Martha Baker was born in 1762 in London. She was married to Thomas Baker.

She committed highway robbery in 1786, stealing a watch, a watch key and a seal. Martha was sentenced to 7 years. She travelled on the Lady Penrhyn to Australia as part of the First Fleet.

Martha married another man, Walter Batley on the 21st of February 1788 in Sydney Cove. She was sent to Norfolk Island on the ship Supply in November 1789 with her new husband.

By February 1790 she was self sufficient and living with Samuel Mobbs. She is recorded as having sold pigs to the government. In 1793 she travelled to India on the Britannia.

Thomas Barrett

Thomas Barrett was born in 1759 in London. In 1782 he stole a silver watch, a steel chain, a stone seal, two shirts, a hook and one shift. He was sentenced to death but it was reduced to transportation to America for life. He boarded the Mercury in 1784, headed for Nova Scotia but he organised a mutiny where he and some others tried to take over the ship.

During the mutiny he prevented the death of a steward and injury towards the captain so when he was recaptured instead of being sentenced to death he was again given transportation for life. He travelled on the ship Charlotte and on the voyage he and some others were involved in making and using counterfeit coin from spoons, buttons and buckles.

John White (the chief surgeon) asked Thomas to make a memento of the trip and so he made a medal out of a dish. This was sold at auction in 2008 for one million dollars.

In 1788 he stole beef and peas and became the first man executed by hanging in New South Wales.

John Hadon

John Hadon was born in 1756 in Exeter. He was sentenced to 7 years after stealing 39 shillings during a highway robbery in 1783.

John boarded the Mercury in 1784 headed for Nova Scotia but he was part of a mutiny where he and some others tried to take control of the ship.

He was returned to jail in a docked ship called Dunkirk and was described as being troublesome while there. In 1787 he was sent to Australia with the first fleet on the Charlotte.

In January 1789 he was sentenced to 100 lashes for being absent from work for three days.

Ann Inett

Ann Inett was born in 1757 in Worcester. She was a Mantua (a gown popular at the time) maker. Ann was convicted for stealing a petticoat at gun point and sentenced to death but this was reduced to 7 years.

She travelled to New South Wales on the Lady Penryhn.

Ann was sent to Norfolk Island where she lived with Philip Gidley King, a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Marines. They had two sons together and named them Norfolk and Sydney.

They returned back to Port Jackson in March of 1790 but Phillip returned to England alone in October. While there he married another lady and later returned to Australia and became Governor of New South Wales.

Ann went on to marry Richard John Robinson from the Second Fleet in 1796. Her sons returned to England with their father in 1796. In 1800 Ann was given land in Parramatta and her and her husband built an inn called the Yorkshire Grey.

She sailed back to England in 1820 on the Admiral Cockburn.

William Lane

William Lane was born in 1756 in Chelmsford. He worked as a labourer. In 1784 he stole some pickled pork, salted butter, a shrub, brandy, peppermint water, casks and a brass tap.

Originally he was set to go to America but ended up being sent to Australia aboard the Scarborough with the First Fleet.

In 1790 he stole some biscuits and was sentenced to two thousand lashings.

In 1796 he was given 30 acres of land on the banks of the Hawkesbury River. He sold the land to John Palmer in 1802 for 50 pounds. William Lane went on to rent land in Richmond Hill and own land in the Liverpool district.

William died on the 30th September 1815 in New South Wales.

Peter Opley

Peter Opley was born around 1769 in Maidston and became a butcher. In 1786 he stole a women's gown and was sentenced to 7 years. He was transported to Australia on the Alexander as part of the First Fleet.

In April 1788 he was given 100 lashes for theft and in January 1789, after being missing for three days from the camp, he was given 100 more. In March that year he stole bread and was given another 25 lashes.

Peter was sent to Norfolk island in March 1790. Within a year he had become self sufficient and took himself off government rations.

He took a three year lease for land in 1793 and then left for England in 1796.

Thomas Orford

Thomas Orford was born in London.

He had dark skin and spoke broken English. He stole a mans hat, a sheet, a bed gown, three shifts, ten shirts, three children aprons and ten handkerchiefs. He was sentenced in 1784 to 7 years, despite trying to tell the court a man had given him the items to carry to his house in exchange for a pint of beer.

Thomas was originally meant to be transported to Africa but instead was sent to Australia on the Alexander as part of the First Fleet.

In 1788 he married Elizabeth Osbourne at Port Jackson. In 1794 he received 30 acres of land at Bulanaming.

John White

Born around 1756 he was the chief surgeon for the first fleet. He worked with three other surgeons on the fleet, Dennis Consider, Thomas Arndell and William Balmain. Prior to the ships sailing he was in charge of ordering the medical supplies and supervised the loading of the convicts onto the ships.

During the voyage to Australia he would often visit the other ships to check on the health of those on board. He kept a diary about his time with the first fleet and reported 48 deaths and 28 births. He also enjoyed studying nature, especially birds. In 1790 his diary was published in London and it included drawings of the local animals, birds and trees.

He adopted a young Aboriginal boy called Nanbaree whose parents died when smallpox went through the indigenous population in 1789.

In 1794 he travelled back to London.

James Martin

James Martin was born around 1760 in Ballymena. He had a wife and son and worked in England. In 1786 he stole eleven screws, bolts and a few other goods from Powderham Castle. He was sentenced to seven years and transportation. James Martin was held on the Dunkirk hulk, another ship, before being transferred to the Charlotte on the 11th of March 1787 to head to Australia.

He was the only convict to keep a journal during his time at Sydney Cove and was known to be a useful tradesman.

On the 28th of March 1791 he stole a boat along with seven other men and one of the men's family. They headed north up the coast line, surviving storms and meeting Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander People. They reached Kupang in Dutch West Timor on 5th June 1791 and pretended to be shipwreck survivors. It was not long before they were discovered to be runaway convicts and were sent back to England.

While most of the others died during the journey, James survived and was placed in Newgate jail to serve out the rest of his sentence.

Arthur Bowes Smyth

Arthur Bowes Smyth was born in England in 1750. He was a surgeon like his father and in 1787 he served on the Lady Penrhyn as part of the First Fleet.

He kept a journal of his time with the First Fleet including details about the weather, voyage, treatment of the sick and events on board. It also included 25 pictures, one of which was the first European drawing of an emu. A few of the others were pictures of birds that are now extinct.

The journal and pictures went on to be published.

He travelled on the Lady Penrhyn as it continued on to China before returning to England.

He died shortly after returning to England in 1790.

William Bradley

William Bradley was born in 1757. He joined the navy in 1772, working his way up from captain's servant on a number of different ships.

He was the First Lieutenant on the HMS Sirius when it sailed as part of the First Fleet to Australia. He started a journal when the First Fleet first started being organised.

His journal documented the difficulties of keeping cattle on board alive, the weather and ships that passed.

Once in Australia he talked about his interest in Aboriginal people and nature. He included water-coloured pictures and charts showing their voyages.

He worked with John Hunter to survey and chart Sydney Harbour.

In 1789 he was part of the group that was ordered to capture two Aborigines and called it the most unpleasant thing he had ever done.

In 1790 he was on board the HMS Sirius when it was shipwrecked on its way to Norfolk Island. He surveyed the island before returning to England.

He died in France in 1833.

Ralph Clark

Ralph Clark was born in Scotland around 1755. In 1784 he married Betsey Alicia Trevan and the next year they had a son called Ralph.

He was a Second Lieutenant in the 6th Company of Marines serving on the Friendship, transporting convicts to Botany Bay in 1787. The captain gave him a pup named Efford. Ralph kept a journal which was later published.

During his time with the colony he kept guard of convicts, served on the Criminal Court, went fishing and shooting and collected specimens to send back to England. Ralph was asked by Governor Arthur Phillip to stage a play using convicts as actors. He was known to be friendly with the local Aboriginal tribe and refused when asked to capture two of the men.

In 1789 as First Lieutenant on the Sirius he went to Norfolk Island where the ship was wrecked on the rocks. On the island he was quartermaster general and keeper of the stores and later in charge of settlements. He returned to England on the Gorgon in 1791 but continued to serve and was killed in action in 1794.

David Collins

David Collins was born in London on the 3rd of March 1756. He joined the Royal Marines at the age of 14.

In 1787 he served on the HMS Sirius and after arrival he worked as secretary to Governor Phillips. He was also in charge of the colony's legal establishments making him a Judge Advocate for the military and civil courts in New South Wales. He kept a journal of his time in the colony and the journey over. This included some pictures.

In 1797 he returned to London and published his journal with the help of his wife.

In 1803 he was made lieutenant governor and was in charge of forming a settlement in Victoria. This location turned out to be bad and instead he made a settlement in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). He remained in this position until he died in 1810.

John Easty

John Easty was born in England. He joined the marines around 1783 and was a private soldier who was later appointed to the Scarborough in Captain Lieutenant Meredith's company as part of the First Fleet to Australia.

John wrote a journal of his time with the First Fleet including detailing accidents, crimes, punishments and encounters with the Aboriginal People.

In 1788 he was flogged for bringing a female convict into camp.

In 1792 he returned to England on the Atlantic with the last group of marines to leave Sydney.

In 1794 he left the marines and was employed by a grocers in London.

John asked the Admiralty in 1796 for the compensation promised for short rations while in New South Wales.

His journal was published in 1965.

Phillip Gidley King

Phillip Gidley King was born in 1758 in England. He joined the Royal Navy at only 12 years old and worked as the captain's servant. In 1778 he became a lieutenant and was selected by Arthur Phillip in 1787 to be a second lieutenant on the HMS Sirius on the First Fleet.

Phillip was chosen to be the leader of the colony established on Norfolk Island and later became the third governor of New South Wales. He had two children with a convict named Ann Inett but went onto marry Anna Coombe in 1791 and had five more children.

Phillip wrote a journal about his time with the First Fleet. He included details about the weather, fish caught, people who were sick or punished and crops that were grown.

It was published as an appendix to John Hunter's book in 1793.

Phillip became the governor of New South Wales in 1800 and helped develop livestock farming, whaling, mining, build schools and launch the first newspaper in Australia. He was forced to resign in 1806.

Jacob Nagle

Jacob Nagle was born in 1761 in America. He served there as a soldier and a sailor until he was taken prisoner by the British. He then went on to join the British Navy in 1782.

He was selected for the trip to Australia and placed on the HMS Sirius. When the fleet arrived in New South Wales he was part of Governor Phillip's boat crew that went searching for a better spot to settle. He was also present when Governor Phillip was speared in the shoulder and during the capture of two Aboriginals.

In 1790 he was aboard the HMS Sirius when it was wrecked on the rocks at Norfolk Island. He was a strong swimmer and was able to help retrieve supplies. The crew was rescued in 1791 and he returned to England.

In 1840 he wrote a memoir about the time he spent as part of the First Fleet. He died in 1841 back in America.

James Scott

James Scott was a Sergeant of Marines aboard the Prince of Wales on its journey to Australia as part of the First Fleet.

He took his wife who gave birth to his daughter on August 29th 1787 aboard the ship called Elizabeth.

Their journey was not entirely pleasant with another officer getting drunk and falling on James' wife.

Once they arrived at Botany Bay James was assigned to Captain James Campbell's company and named commander of the settlements quarter guard. James also did some farming and expeditions inland. In 1790 they had a son they named William.

In 1791 the Scott family returned to England. He died in 1796 and his diary of his time in the First Fleet and at Sydney Cove was published in 1963.

Watkin Tench

Watkin Tench was born around 1758 in England. He joined His Majesty's Marine Forces in 1776 at the age of 17. He went on to become a Captain-Lieutenant of the Marine Corps and an author.

In 1786 he volunteered for a three year tour of service as part of the First Fleet heading to Botany Bay. He sailed in the transport Charlotte as one of the two captain-lieutenants under Major Robert Ross.

Watkin kept a journal of the journey and early settlement life. He sent the script back to England in 1788 in the hope that it would be published. It was published and became one of the earliest accounts of the First Fleet Voyage and went on to be published in several different languages. He went on to stay in Australia for another service before sailing home on the HMS Gorgon in 1791.

In 1792 he married Anna Maria Sargent. He died on the 7th of May 1833.

Elizabeth Hayward

Elizabeth was born on the 20th of July 1773 in Stepney. She worked as a clog maker and in December 1786 she stole from her employer a linen gown, a silk bonnet and a bath cloak. She then sold these for money.

Elizabeth was sentenced to 7 years and transportation. She was only 13 years at the time, making her the youngest convict. She sailed on the Lady Penrhyn which had the worst conditions of the ships as it was meant to have only 70 convicts but instead had over 100.

Once at Sydney Cove she was assigned to the wife of the chaplain and was a servant in their household.

In 1789 she was sentenced to 30 lashes for insolence to Mr Johnson. She later went on to have children, own land and died at 56.