

MEDIA ALERT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Dictionary of Sydney launches new First Fleet histories

The Dictionary of Sydney is proud to launch new online entries on the history of the First Fleet on the Dictionary of Sydney website:

http://dictionaryofsydney.org/contributor/the_maritime_museums_of_australia_project_support_scheme_-_first_fleet_project

Funded by the Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support scheme, the new histories are laced with fascinating information about the days following the arrival of the First Fleet, the fate of the returning ships, and events on the voyage out.

In a new essay, historian Gary Sturgess explores the challenges faced by Arthur Phillip after the First Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove. Having successfully managed both the fleet and the convicts on a voyage 'to the extremity of the globe', Phillip struggled to keep the men and women, convicts and alcohol – in short, the camp and fleet – apart.

Of the eleven ships of the First Fleet:

- The *Alexander* was the largest and most notorious of the transport ships in the First Fleet carrying 'ye worst of land-lubbers.'
- The *Scarborough*, carrying male convicts, was the only ship of the First Fleet whose convicts plotted a mutiny. Also on board were James Ruse and Nathaniel Lucas who became two of the colony's most successful farmers.
- *HMS Supply* was the smallest and fastest ship in the First Fleet. A naval vessel, she carried 16 marines and accompanied the flagship *HMS Sirius* on the voyage to Sydney Cove. Over the next three years she made 11 journeys, the last causing her so much damage that she was ordered back to England.
- The *Lady Penrhyn* was the slowest ship of the First Fleet with the largest number of female convicts. She entered Port Jackson on 26 January and didn't unload until 6 February - the convict women spent a total of 13 months onboard
- The *Borrowdale* was one of three storeships, including *Fishburn* and *Golden Grove*, carrying two years' worth of provisions and stores for the new colony –including 'forges, hoes, corn mills and pit saws'.



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- *Fishburn* was the largest of the three store ships. Among her cargo were ducks, goats, leather, women's shoes and hats, camp kettles and garden seed. After her return to England, she was lost in a storm off Gun Fleet Sand in October 1789.
- *Golden Grove* made the fastest return journey of any of the First Fleet ships. Among her cargo were anvils, axes, tents, flour, chickens and Reverend Johnson's cats!
- The *Charlotte*, one of six transports, left Sydney Cove bound for Canton on 8 May 1788, arriving back in England in June 1789.
- The transport, *Friendship*, was scuttled and sunk on her return voyage after becoming stuck on sandbanks off the coast of Borneo.
- The *Prince of Wales* was the last ship to join the First Fleet and remained at Sydney Cove for five months while its stores were unloaded, returning to Falmouth on 25 March 1789, many of the crew having suffered from scurvy on the voyage home.
- The *HMS Sirius* carried Commodore Arthur Phillip and was the flagship of the fleet. She sank off Norfolk Island in March 1790, as she was preparing to sail for China for more provisions.

The First Fleet content places these ships within the wider picture of Sydney's past. Both familiar and unexpected, they enrich our understanding of Sydney as both a place and a community.

For more information about the project, go to:

[http://dictionaryofsydney.org/contributor/the maritime museums of australia project support scheme - first fleet project](http://dictionaryofsydney.org/contributor/the_maritime_museums_of_australia_project_support_scheme_-_first_fleet_project)

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ABOUT THE DICTIONARY

The Dictionary of Sydney is a not-for-profit community digital history project. Through links and connections, visitors to the Dictionary build their own experience of history. The Dictionary's key funding partner is the City of Sydney. The First Fleet project is funded through Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support scheme.

The Dictionary of Sydney is like no other city encyclopedia in the world. Based on a permanent historical digital repository, the Dictionary aims to gather resources on every aspect of human habitation in the greater Sydney area from the first arrival of people to the present. Launched in November 2009 and built through community collaboration, it's an ever-growing resource you can trust:

www.dictionaryofsydney.org

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Image for use with story

First Fleet ship the Borrowdale c1786, by Francis Holman

Required image credit:

Australian National Maritime Museum 00009033

Larger file available:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/r3haye1pwlctv40/AAAfKb7i8uActIkMqV8eXmM4a?dl=0>

