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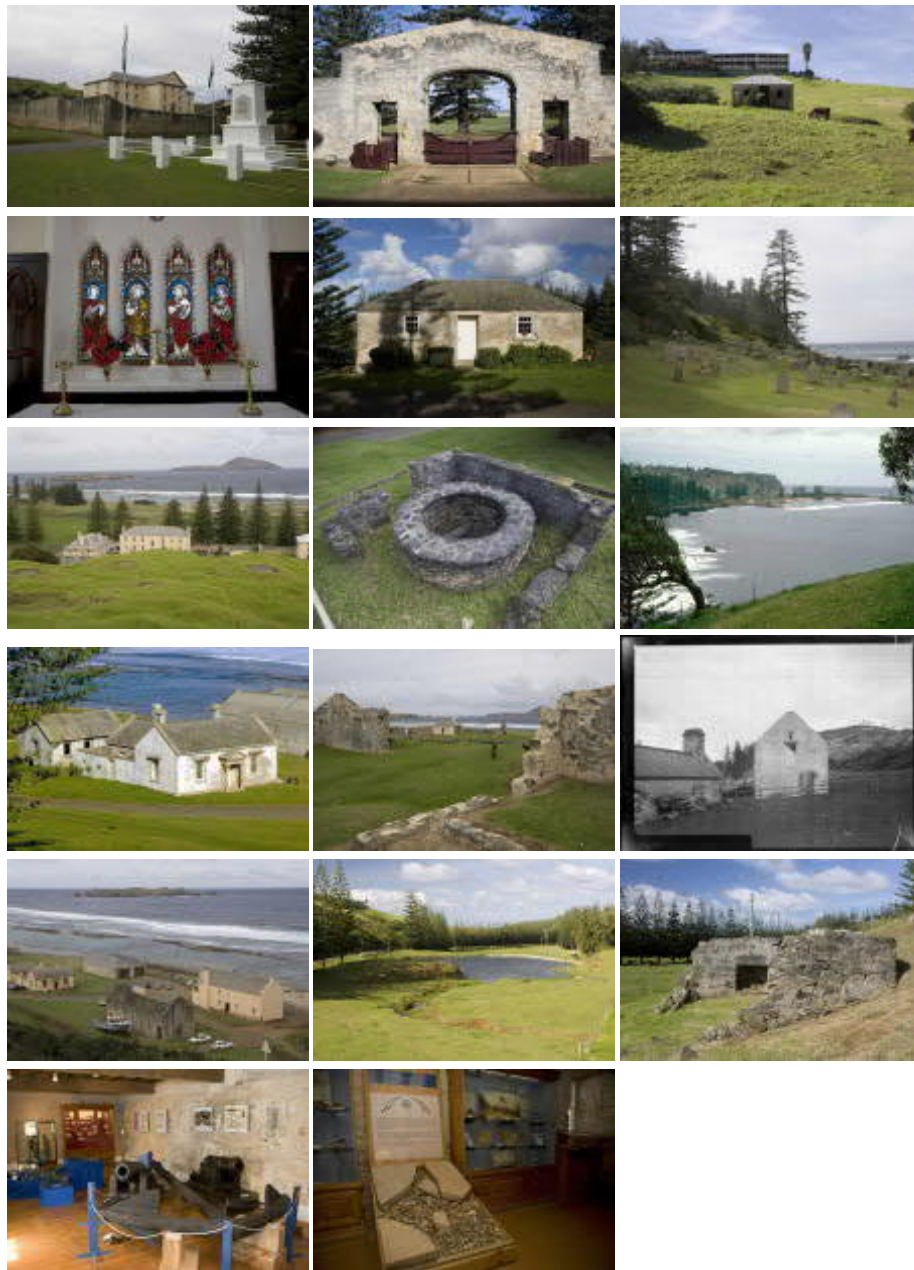
### Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area, Quality Row, Kingston, EXT, Australia

#### Photographs









**List** National Heritage List

**Class** Historic

**Legal Status** [Listed place](#) (01/08/2007)

**Place ID** 105962

**Place File No** 9/00/001/0036

**Summary Statement of Significance**

KAVHA on Norfolk Island is associated with three distinct (European) settlement periods: the convict era referred to as the First and Second Settlements from 1788-1814 and from 1825-1855 respectively; and the Pitcairn period from 1856 to the present, referred to as the Third Settlement. KAVHA is also important for its association with pre-European Polynesian occupation.

KAVHA is an outstanding convict settlement that spans the era of convict transportation to Eastern Australia between 1788 and 1855. It is a place which has the capacity to demonstrate differing penal systems, changes in penal philosophy and the principal characteristics of a long standing penal settlement.

Norfolk Island was proclaimed a British possession on 6 March 1788, six weeks after the arrival of the First Fleet at Port Jackson. The settlement faced starvation and the decision in 1790 to send a third of the population to Norfolk Island ensured the survival of the settlement and therefore played an important role in the development of the colony of New South Wales. KAVHA is significant for its association with Lieutenant Philip Gidley King who was responsible for establishing the First Settlement on KAVHA. There are significant archaeological remains of buildings and activities associated with the First Settlement.

KAVHA was reopened as a penal colony in 1825 in response to the need by the British Government to reinforce the idea that transportation was a punishment to be feared. The Second Settlement operated until 1855 and an outstanding collection of Georgian buildings, extensive archaeological remains, engineering works and landscaping are still in evidence from that time. The planning and operation of a nineteenth century penal settlement is clearly discernible.

During the Second Settlement, KAVHA gained a reputation as 'hell in paradise' for its brutal and sadistic treatment of inmates. It is an outstanding example of the severe punishment of convicts. Its reputation spread beyond the colonies to Britain and fuelled the anti-transportation debate. It is however also the site of experiments in convict reformation and recognised for its association with Alexander Maconochie, who formulated and applied most of the principles of modern penology while on Norfolk Island.

KAVHA is highly valued for its aesthetic qualities with the place and its setting being unimpacted by subsequent development. It is an evocative and picturesque historical landscape where the domestic scale and agricultural character of the setting is in marked contrast to the horror of the past signified by the convict ruins.

KAVHA is also valued for its Third Settlement period, as a distinctive place where a Polynesian/European community has lived and practised their cultural traditions since 1856. It is significant for its ongoing associations with Pitcairn Islanders.

The rich and varied history of KAVHA contributes to its potential to yield important information about the living and working conditions of convicts. The place also has the potential to yield significant information on pre-European Polynesian culture, exploration and settlement patterns.

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## Official Values

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### Criterion A Events, Processes

KAVHA is outstanding as a convict settlement spanning the era of convict transportation to eastern Australia. It is a cultural landscape comprising a large group of buildings from the convict era, some modified during the Pitcairn period (the third settlement), substantial ruins and standing structures, archaeological remains, landform and landscape elements.

KAVHA is of outstanding national significance in demonstrating the role of the penal systems and changes in penal philosophy in the Australian colonies from 1788-1855.

KAVHA is important for its role in the evolution of the colonies of both Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales. The buildings, archaeological remains and landforms of the First Settlement illustrate British convict settlement at the beginning of European occupation of Australia.

The design and layout, buildings, archaeological remains, engineering works and landscaping of the KAVHA Second Settlement (1825-1855) demonstrate the planning and operation of a nineteenth century penal settlement with a very high degree of integrity.

KAVHA is an outstanding example of a place of severe punishment. It was purposefully established to be the extreme element in the overall convict management system. Its aim was to create fear and prevent crime and re-offending. It became known as 'hell in paradise' for its brutal and sadistic treatment of inmates and this reputation spread beyond the colonies to Britain and ultimately served to fuel the anti-transportation debate. The Second Settlement buildings and archaeological remains of the convict establishment, the New Gaol, the Prisoners' Barracks, and the Crankmill demonstrate the harshness and severity of the treatment of convicts.

### **Criterion B Rarity**

Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) is uncommon as a place where a distinctive Polynesian/European community has lived and practised their cultural traditions for over 150 years. Aspects of the Third Settlement period including the artefacts, archives, Pitcairn language and ongoing use of the Cemetery are of national significance.

### **Criterion C Research**

The KAVHA artefact collections, the buildings in their landscape setting, the archaeological remains and the documentary records have significant potential to contribute to understanding the living and working conditions of convicts, the military and civil establishment, women and children, and changes in penal practice and philosophy during the span of convict transportation.

KAVHA has research potential to yield information on pre-European Polynesian culture, exploration and settlement patterns.

### **Criterion D Principal characteristics of a class of places**

KAVHA demonstrates the principal characteristics of a longstanding penal settlement in its physical layout, governance arrangements, the management and control of convicts, and the functional arrangements associated with settlement.

It has substantial ruins, standing structures and archaeological sub-surface remains related to its operation as a place of primary incarceration and early settlement, as a place of secondary punishment and finally as a place spanning both incarceration and secondary punishment.

The 1829 Government House, one of the earliest and most intact remaining government house buildings in Australia, is positioned prominently on Dove Hill with commanding views of the military precinct, colonial administration, convict quarters, farmland and the pier. The military precinct on Quality Row contains two extant barracks complexes: the Old Military Barracks and officers quarters constructed between 1829-1834 surrounded by high walls giving it an appearance of a military fortress; and the New Military Barracks commenced in 1836 which follows a similar fortress-like design. The Commissariat Store (now All Saints Church) (1835) is the finest remaining colonial (pre 1850) military commissariat store in Australia. The Old Military Barracks, together with the Commissariat Store and the New Military Barracks, form a group of buildings which is the most substantial military barracks complex in Australia dating from the 1830s. The military complexes are positioned in view of the convict precinct located closer to the water and at a lower elevation to optimise surveillance. Nine houses in Quality Row built from 1832-47 provided quarters for military and civil officers.

The archaeological remains of the two convict gaols, the perimeter walls and archaeological remains of the Prisoners' Barracks (1828-48) with the Protestant Chapel, show the development of penal philosophies with the original gaol built for barrack type accommodation while the extant remains of the New Prison and its perimeter walls (1836-40, 1845-57) provides a rare representation of a radial design. The role of harsh labour as punishment is evident in the archaeological remains of the blacksmith's shop (1846); lumber yard; water mill; the crankmill (1827-38), the remains of the only known human powered crankmill built in Australia before 1850; the salt house (1847); the windmill base (1842-43); lime kilns; the landing pier (1839-47) and sea wall, two of the earliest remaining large scale engineering works in Australia. The possibility of reform is evident in the Protestant and Catholic clergyman's quarters.

The settlement patterns are evident in the existing street layout and in the buildings along Quality Row which form the most extensive street of pre 1850 penal buildings in Australia. The functioning of the settlement is evident in the remains of institutions, buildings and precincts such as the commandant's house; magistrate's quarters; the ruins of the hospital, built on First Settlement remains (1829); the Surgeon's quarters and kitchen (1827), on the site of a First Settlement Government House, one of the earliest European dwellings in Australia; the Royal Engineer's office and stables (1850); the Beach Store, a former commissariat store (1825); a double boat shed (1841); the Police Office, now boatshed (1828-29); the flaghouse (1840s); Constable's Quarters, partly standing (1850-53); and the cemetery which has an outstanding collection of headstones and other remains dating from the earliest period of European settlement, including the first and second penal settlement periods and the Pitcairn period with associations with the *Bounty*, set in an evocative and picturesque historical landscape. Many stone walls, wells, drains, building platforms, bridges including Bloody Bridge, culverts, roads, quarry sites, privies and archaeological sites of former buildings remain which are important in demonstrating the rich patterns of KAVHA's settlement history. The remnant serpentine landscape is an outstanding example of colonial period (pre-1850) attitudes to landscape design in Australia.

### **Criterion E Aesthetic characteristics**

KAVHA is outstanding for its picturesque setting, historic associations, part ruinous configuration and subsequent lack of development. The aesthetic qualities of the landscape have been acknowledged since the First Settlement, forming the subject matter of an artistic record that has continued to the present.

Elements that contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the place include the sea, reef and islands, historic graves, Quality Row buildings, the New Gaol and prisoner's barracks in a ruinous state, and the extent of the nineteenth century buildings. The picturesque landscape setting, with its domestic scale and agricultural character, is valued for the contrast it represents between the horror of the past and the charm of the present.

KAVHA is outstanding for its views across the site, within the site, from the site to the seascape, and views of the site in its landscape setting.

### **Criterion G Social value**

KAVHA was the landing place of the Pitcairn Islanders in 1856. Their descendents today comprise nearly a third of Norfolk Island's population. They value KAVHA as a place of special significance because it has been continually and actively used as a place of residence, work, worship and recreation.

KAVHA is valued by the Norfolk Island residents for being a place of traditional and ongoing uses, including the continuity of a working waterfront at the Landing Pier; the centre of Norfolk Island administration; continuing religious worship at All Saints Church and the community's burial place at the cemetery; areas for recreation and sports; and as the cultural centre with cultural and social events, museums and archaeological sites.

### **Criterion H Significant people**

KAVHA is significant for its association with Lt Philip Gidley King RN in successfully establishing the First Settlement on Norfolk Island at the KAVHA site which contributed to the survival of the infant colony of New South Wales.

KAVHA is significant for its association with Alexander Maconochie who formulated and applied most of the principles on which modern penology is based during the period he was Superintendent of Norfolk Island.

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### **Description**

Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) is situated on the southern side of Norfolk Island fronting Slaughter Bay. Referred to as KAVHA it is a cultural landscape which includes an agrarian landscape (Arthurs Vale, Watermill valley and the northern hillsides) and the settled coastal plain at Kingston. Hills to the north and west fringe the settlement on the coastal plain. Roads provide ways through KAVHA, linking the groups of structures, access to the landing place, the foreshore, the cemetery and bridges. The Kingston plain is Norfolk's only coastal plain area with beach, dune and a coral edged lagoon.

The convict barracks and gaol were located on the foreshore. Swampy land separated the convict accommodation from the military and civil accommodation arranged on the inland side of the coastal flat while a succession of Government houses were positioned in commanding locations. The many surviving buildings at the site reflect these arrangements.

The cleared nature of the landscape, along with the siting and orientation of important buildings are an explicit demonstration of the settlement and penal philosophy of the British Empire in colonial Australia, being designed to provide for the continual surveillance of convicts and allow for agricultural requirements. Modification to the landscape through earthworks to facilitate the construction of buildings or protect agricultural plots (the 'causeway') and the large scale quarrying of limestone and the coral reef, illustrate attitudes to landscape based primarily on its value as a resource. Surviving evidence also illustrates aspects of design and process from the First and Second Settlements. This includes the remnant serpentine landscape and ornamental garden of Government House, the formal streetscape qualities of Quality Row, and evidence of communications through maintaining visual links and operation of a semaphore system. Evidence from the Third Settlement period is the introduction of new plant species, swamp drainage works, memorial plantings and reforestation to address erosion on the hill slopes.

KAVHA is rare, being the site of, and probably containing extensive archaeological evidence of the earliest European settlement from Australia to the south-west Pacific (1788), similar in size for a decade to the other initial settlement at Sydney Cove. Its significance is enhanced by the lack of substantial subsequent development. It contains areas and individual elements that are confirmed or well documented sites of First Settlement buildings and activities (1788-1814). The subsurface archaeological remains of the first and second Government Houses (1788-1803) are, along with First Government House Sydney (1788-1847), the oldest government house sites in Australia.

The concentration and intactness of fabric is considered rare. The intact layout, form and fabric of the place illustrate the patterns of human occupation, ways of life, and perceptions and values of the landscape, and accumulative impact of Europeans on a pristine natural environment (Australian Construction Services, 1994).

KAVHA is significant for its richness of settlement history and array of extant features. It contains areas, buildings and other elements of outstanding individual cultural significance including Government House (1829), one of the earliest and most intact remaining government house buildings in Australia, along with Old Government House Parramatta, and the Old Military Barracks (now the Legislative Assembly and Norfolk Island Court) (1829). The Old Military Barracks, together with the Commissariat Store and the New Military Barracks (now Norfolk Island Government Administration offices) (1836), form a group of buildings which is the most substantial military barracks complex in Australia dating from the 1830s. The Commissariat Store (now All Saints Church) (1835) is one of the finest remaining colonial (pre 1850) military commissariat stores in Australia along with that at Darlington (Tasmania). The soldiers' barracks is one of the finest military barrack buildings built in Australia in the nineteenth century.



There are nine houses providing quarters for military and civil officers (1832-47). Other features include: perimeter walls and archaeological remains of Prisoners' Barracks (1828-48) including the Protestant Chapel; perimeter walls and archaeological remains of the New Prison (Pentagonal Prison) (1836-40, 1845-57); ruins of the hospital, built on First Settlement remains (1829); the Surgeon's Quarters and Kitchen (1827) on the site of First Settlement Government House, one of the earliest European dwellings in Australia; the Landing Pier (1839-47) built over the First Settlement landing place and sea wall, two of the earliest remaining large scale engineering works in Australia; Beach store (1825); Settlement Guardhouse (1826) on the foundations of First Settlement building; Crankmill (1827-38), the remains of the only known human powered crankmill built in Australia before 1850; Royal Engineer's office and stables (1850); Double Boat Shed (1841); Police Office, now boatshed (1828-29); Flaghouse (1840s); Constable's Quarters, partly standing (1850-53); Blacksmith's Shop (1846); Salt House (1847); and Windmill base (1842-43).

The Cemetery has an outstanding collection of headstones and other remains dating from the earliest period of European settlement, including the first and second penal settlement periods and the Pitcairn period with associations with the Bounty, set in an evocative and picturesque historical landscape. Many stone walls, wells, drains, building platforms, bridges, culverts, roads, quarry sites, privies and archaeological sites of former buildings are important remains. These include Bloody Bridge. The remnant serpentine landscape is an outstanding example of colonial period (pre-1850) attitudes to landscape design in Australia which reflected contemporary English attitudes to landscape design.

The place is particularly infamous as one of two places of secondary punishment within the Australian colonies (the other being Port Arthur). Its reputation was renowned throughout the British Empire to act as a deterrent to further convict crime in the colonies. It is also associated with an experiment in penal reform in the NSW colony which underpinned modern approaches to penal practice internationally. It has an association with Australia's founding and early personalities such as King, Hunter, Foveaux, Wentworth, Anderson, Maconochie, Price and Cash. It is also associated with the 1790 wreck of *HMS Sirius*, the flagship of the First Fleet and the only sizable warship available to defend the colony which was about to sail to China to obtain desperately needed food supplies for the colony at Sydney Cove (Australian Construction Services, 1994).

The place is rich in aesthetic qualities due to the combination of spatial structure, visual quality and the strong relationship between built elements and their setting. Apart from visual quality, the place is a rich source of other sensory stimuli; the sounds, tastes and textures are all products of the friction wrought between such natural elements as wind, water and sun. Oceanic influences render the natural lighting of the place very changeable over a day, and dramatise the scene. The combination of cultural expression, natural forces and their resultant patterns enable a perception and interpretation of the place as a 'picturesque' and 'romantic' landscape made up of a number of elements including natural/built edges, sea/landscape vistas, gardens, rural pastures, cleared hills and formal plantings (Australian Construction Services, 1994).

The *Sirius* wreck (1790) remains on the seabed off the reef in Slaughter Bay. The first anchor raised was in 1903. Artefacts have been recovered from the wreck, some of which form part of the collection housed in the Norfolk Island Museum. The artefact collection, in combination with a detailed written record, has outstanding research potential for information about the lives of the bond and free in the early convict period. Other relics, including two of the *Sirius* anchors are on the mainland. The large anchor is displayed in Macquarie Place, Sydney and another is in the Maritime Museum in Sydney.

The low-lying land of KAVHA is generally composed of calcarenite, a limestone formed of cemented cross-bedded calcareous sand, the remnants of a formerly much more extensive coral formation (Tropman and Tropman 1994). The dunes behind Emily Bay and Cemetery Beach contain a number of small fossil and sub-fossil deposits of recent age (between 450 and 7 000 years BP). These sites have yielded some fossilised vertebrate bones, remains of several land snail species that are now considered to be extinct or extremely rare, and fossilised seeds and logs of the Norfolk Island Pine (Tropman and Tropman 1994; Anderson and White 2001; DEH 2005). These fossils provide evidence of plant and animal life that existed on Norfolk Island before human occupation.

Most of KAVHA has been cleared and the original vegetation severely modified. Tropman and Tropman (1994) describe it as dominated by Kikuyu grass and note that while the sheltered gullies contain some remnant ferns, mixed hardwoods and white oaks, they have been colonised by weed species such as olives and lantana. KAVHA may still support a small population of a rare landsnail (*Mathewsoconcha suteri*).

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## History

Norfolk Island, at the time of Cook's discovery in 1774, was uninhabited with no outward evidence of the Island's having been previously occupied. Evidence indicating that Norfolk Island had been inhabited prior to the European

occupation in 1788 was recognised in the first year of settlement by Lieutenant Governor King. Plantain bananas were found growing in Arthur's Vale, suggesting human intervention. By 1791, stone tools had been discovered in the interior of the Island providing further proof of former habitation. In the 1840s a skull and 'stone axe' were found during earthworks. Through the twentieth century, evidence of stone tool making in the form of adze blanks and basalt flakes were found at Emily Bay, and later, similar adzes were found at both Emily and Slaughter Bays within KAVHA. Archaeological investigations have unearthed artefact assemblages, structural remains which have been interpreted as a rudimentary marae (a religious structure commonly encountered in East Polynesia) and evidence of landscape modifications in the Emily Bay area. The assemblage is characteristic of East Polynesian culture. Radiocarbon dates indicate Polynesian settlement between AD 1200 and AD 1600 (White and Anderson 1999).

Cook had particularly noted the tall, straight spruce pines which grew in large numbers to a vast size. He observed they would be superior to the pines he saw in New Zealand and New Caledonia and would make excellent masts and yards for large ships. He also noted the luxuriant native flax plant which would be suitable for rope making and weaving into canvas. This source of potential naval supplies appealed to the Admiralty, as Britain had lost its North American colonies and their supplies of Quebec pine in 1783 following the American War of Independence (1776-1783). Although Britain had access to Canada's forests timber getting was only practicable near waterways, and consequently, it had fallen back on the Baltic region as its principal source of ship building timbers.

Arthur Phillip's instructions for the settlement of New South Wales included a directive that Norfolk Island was to be settled and secured as soon as possible after landing at Botany Bay. The intention was to prevent any other European power from occupying the island, to secure the naval supplies available on the island, to take advantage of the rich, deep soil reported by Cook and to quickly establish vegetable and grain crops to supplement the settlement at Sydney Cove. In accordance with this directive, Phillip despatched the tender *Supply* from Port Jackson on 15 February 1788 with Lieutenant Philip Gidley King and a party of nine male and six female convicts and seven staff to establish a settlement on the island. *Supply* arrived at Norfolk Island on 29 February 1788 and for five days boat parties under the direction of King explored the coastline seeking a suitable landing place. On the 5th of March, a passage was found through the reef on the southern side of the island. Norfolk Island was settled by Europeans on 6th March 1788, forty days after the British flag was raised at Port Jackson.

Phillip issued King with a series of orders indicating the manner in which the settlement would be regulated. These included that shelter for the landing party and stores should be secured immediately and the capabilities of the island assessed. The flax plant, cotton, corn and other grains were to be grown and convicts were to labour for the public good. Isolation of the settlement was to be maintained by preventing the construction of boats that were decked or exceeded twenty feet in length, and no commerce was to be conducted with passing ships except those in distress.

The First Settlement at Norfolk Island (1788-1814) was organised along similar lines to its mainland counterpart in New South Wales and men and women settlers were allowed. By late 1789 the colony at Sydney Cove was experiencing food shortages due to poor crop yields and the Second Fleet which was to bring additional stores for the colony had not arrived as expected. Governor Phillip had reduced the food ration to two-thirds and instructed King to do likewise on Norfolk Island. Although the settlement on the island had an ample food supply having successfully produced crops of maize, wheat, barley, potatoes and green vegetables plus having raised livestock consisting of pigs and poultry which had increased in number, and having access to a plentiful supply of local fish, King followed Phillip's orders and in November 1789 reduced the food ration for the island's population of 126 (Clune 1981:23). As the food shortages worsened at Port Jackson and in response to the reports from Norfolk Island that food supplies were plentiful, Governor Phillip resolved to move a sizable number of the convicts and marines to the island using the two ships that had remained at Sydney Cove to service the new colony, the *HMS Sirius* and the smaller armed tender *HMS Supply*. Some 281 people, about one-third of the population of the Port Jackson colony, were relocated to Norfolk Island leaving 591 persons at Port Jackson (Clune 1981:24). In this period Phillip also instigated a policy of sending convicts serving life sentences and the intractable among the convict population to Norfolk Island, commencing the island's reputation as a hell in paradise. It was also convenient for Phillip to rid himself of the more troublesome officers in the colony by posting them to Norfolk Island. The combination of difficult officers and recalcitrant prisoners shaped the destiny of the small colony on Norfolk Island.

Tragedy struck the infant island settlement on 19 March 1790 when *HMS Sirius* with 373 aboard, including a crew of 102 naval personnel, 161 convicts, 25 children and 31 marines was wrecked on the reef off Kingston, fortunately all on board were saved (Clune 1981:25). The loss of this valuable warship was not only a significant loss to New South Wales because as the larger of the two ships stationed at Sydney Cove it was detailed to proceed from Norfolk Island to China to obtain food supplies for the hungry settlement at Sydney Cove, but also the sudden increase in the population of Norfolk Island placed an enormous burden on the island's food supplies. The native birds on the island, the 'Bird of Providence', a species of petrel (*Pterodroma solandri*), saved the settlement from a severe food shortage. Lieutenant Ralph Collins recorded that more than 170,000 of these birds were received into the stores between March and August 1790 (Knaggs 2006:75).

King listed the island's population on 24 March 1790 as 90 civil, military and free, 80 from the *Sirius* (survivors of the shipwreck), 191 male convicts, 100 female convicts and 37 children, a total population of 498; a fourfold increase in the population in four months. By 1792 Norfolk Island had taken more than 1,100 people from the settlement at Port Jackson (Crowley (1974)). During most of the period conditions on the island were probably better than in NSW. By 1804 the free settlers on the island significantly outnumbered the convicts. A general muster on 12 July 1804 counted 1,084 inhabitants including 136 civil and military, 240 free men, 146 free women, 211 male convicts, 40 female convicts and 311 children (Clune 1981:73).

Children were a part of the settlement from its commencement. Some were the children of the military and officials sent to the island while others were the children of convicts and some, convicts themselves. In March 1789 the first known children of the First Fleet arrived to settle on Norfolk Island. One was an orphan, Edward Parkinson aged four and the other, Mary Fowles, aged around six years who was sent there as a means of separating her from her mother. The latter had been described by Judge-Advocate Collins as 'a woman of abandoned character'. The children had been designated as 'public wards' by Captain Phillip who had allocated the produce from five acres to sustain them. Their transfer to Norfolk Island appears to have been considered an act of philanthropic exile from the unsuitable environment of Port Jackson (Holden 1999:145).

The experiences of children arriving on Norfolk Island is captured in the experiences of some of the children who landed on the island on 13 March 1790 from *Sirius*. Their first brush with death occurred on 6 March when *Sirius* was nearly wrecked on North Head as it cleared Port Jackson. On arrival at Norfolk Island it was impossible to land on the south side of the island at the settlement because of pounding surf and *Sirius* sailed to the north of the island where the marines and some convicts were put ashore at Cascade. Following the landing of the marines, a boatload of women and children was sent ashore, however, as they landed the sea broke into the boat causing great alarm. Surviving that frightening experience they had to sleep in the open before commencing the eight kilometre trek across a very rough road to Kingston. *Sirius* put to sea because of deteriorating conditions and six days later when she was able to again approach Kingston and commence unloading, she was wrecked. The loss of *Sirius* and her stores compounded the children's ordeal as in the following May short rations were introduced on the island and children over twelve months old received half the adult ration with further reductions in July and August. At the beginning of 1790 most of the children from the First Fleet were under six years of age. Although they were young they were necessary helpers in foraging for food. They supplemented their meagre rations with edible wild plants and pine nuts, may have helped their mothers drying out the flour and rice from the *Sirius*, gathered firewood and thatch and prepared the cleared acreage for planting. Towards the end of that first difficult year it is also likely they helped pick caterpillars off the crops (Holden 1999:148).

Life on the island under Major Ross's period as Commandant (March 1790 –November 1791) witnessed a general breakdown of discipline and authority. Evidence of this is a number of incidents involving children including a marine who had already been sentenced for raping a nine-year old girl committed the same crime again, a convict boy of 14 being given 13 lashes for stealing and an incident involving Ross's own son, who was about nine years of age and by then a second lieutenant, when he became embroiled in an argument among the officers. The situation for children improved greatly when Lt King returned to take command of the island in December 1791. He established a school and orphanage and appointed a woman to care for the children, some of whom had been deserted by their parents, and to instruct them. King also established a fund to care for the orphans (Holden 1999:153).

Most of the clearing and the resultant changes to the natural environment at Kingston occurred during this period; the cleared lands were very fertile but heavy erosion occurred on the hills, and low lying areas silted up. Foveaux's records of March 1804 show that the area under cultivation was 2,140 acres with another 2,450 acres of allocated land that was officially regarded as 'waste' in the hands of settlers. The latter may well have been used for grazing rather than the cultivation of crops (CMP, 2002). The native pines which Cook recommended as a source of masts and spars for naval vessels had proved unsatisfactory for that role because it was a knotty timber lacking in turpentine sap, however, it did prove suitable for general building purposes. The native flax which also had initially attracted Cook's attention proved difficult to process, probably because the plant was seed flax (linseed) which has a poor fibre content and not fibre flax (Britts, 1980:37). However, by 1796 small quantities of No 7 grade sailmakers canvas were being produced (Edgecombe, 1991:17). About one third of the island was cleared during the first settlement period. Farms were scattered across the island and abundant remains of cultivation survived to be recognised on resettlement in 1825.

The settlement was centred on Kingston, then called Sydney, adjacent to the Landing Place which provided the most sheltered landing available to shipping. Arthurs Vale (Watermill Valley) and Stockyard Valley (Town Creek area) were used for agriculture. Two smaller settlements, Queensborough and Phillipsburg were established elsewhere on the Island and King initiated major works including the building of lime kilns at Kingston, a watermill, a windmill at Point Hunter (1795) and a large dam built downstream on Watermill Creek. In the main, convict housing at Kingston was thatched weatherboard huts. The first guard house built of brick was constructed in 1789 and another brick guard

house was commenced in 1790 with four cells being added in 1794. It also contained a 'dark hole', a wooden structure, most probably built of logs, which was a chamber for punitive confinement. The precise date it was built is unknown, however, records indicate it was built prior to 1793 (Kerr, 1984:17).

A weatherboard house was built for King, with a separate dwelling to house the surgeon and midshipman in April and May 1788. The houses had excavated cellars for the secure storage of the settlement's provisions and a storehouse was built (Knaggs 2006:73). With the increasing number of convicts on the island, a growing number of whom were intractable characters, King improved the security of the settlement at Kingston by erecting a stockade around the Superintendent's House and the Commandant's House leaving sufficient space within the enclosure for the later erection of a barracks for the marines. The use of the adjacent Nepean Island as a place of confinement for the most recalcitrant prisoners was commenced in 1791. This practise of placing prisoners on an isolated island with little or no supplies and no housing was intended to break even the most hardened of the convicts and was used in the colonies for 40 years. Coal Island at Kingston (later Newcastle) in 1804 and Grummet Island (in the 1820s and early 1830s) at the notorious Macquarie Harbour, Tasmania were other places where this practice was adopted (Kerr, 1984:16).

Construction of the first gaol and adjoining penitentiary house at Kingston were commenced in 1791 with the gaol being enlarged and enclosed with railings in 1792. This structure was destroyed by a cyclone in May 1794 and the prisoners were then housed in the overseer's stone house which was used as a gaol until a new stone gaol was built in 1801-02 (Kerr, 1984:18). The majority of convicts were accommodated in huts with only the worst offenders and those who had re-offended being housed in the small gaol. After the re-occupation of the island in 1825, the gaol was rebuilt and reused as a gaol at least until the new pentagonal prison was opened in 1848 (Kerr, 1984:21).

Following the discovery in 1791 that the calcarenite was a form of limestone suitable for rendering into lime by burning, King set men to work experimenting with lime and brick making. With the possibility of making bricks for the settlement, King commenced the construction of a new Government House with a commanding position (Knaggs 2006:76). However, as the materials used were at best 'tolerable' the walls were completed in stone. In January 1792 an area was cleared on Mount George as the site for a signal house to ensure adequate semaphore visibility for ships lying off Sydney Bay.

By May 1793 Kingston had the appearance of a small but organised village with four main streets in the settlement. By 1794 a fifth, Pitt Street had been laid out east of Sirius Street. Further buildings were constructed or altered including a school house, stone granary bake-house and it appears that a play house was built.

King's second term of office as Lieutenant Governor finished on 22 October 1796. Views by Chapman drawn in 1796 show the appearance of Kingston at the end of King's tenure. It has been estimated that with almost 45% of the island's 8 528 acres allocated, the island had already been: *'dramatically and permanently changed from an impenetrable wilderness to a largely cleared land'* (Knaggs 2006:79).

A number of riots and uprisings occurred during the First Settlement period, including two organised convict insurrections. On both occasions the convict conspirator's plans were betrayed by convict informers. One occurred during Lieutenant Governor King's first term as governor and the other during Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Foveaux's term. The first incident involved a plan in January 1789 when all but three of the 50 convicts on the island conspired to seized King with the intention of holding him hostage and take control of the next ship that arrived to escape from the island. The plot was uncovered and the leaders were placed in irons and had their ground confiscated. The ring leader was returned to Port Jackson to stand trial, but as the insurrection had not been implemented, no trial took place (Nobbs 1988:103-4).

The second planned insurrection, uncovered in December 1800 was to have more brutal and serious repercussions for the convicts. The plot was initiated by Irish prisoners, many of whom had been re-transported from Port Jackson during periods of fear of the Irish. The plan was betrayed by an Irish convict, Henry Gready, who was serving a life sentence for rape. On the evening Foveaux had the two alleged leaders Peter McLean and John Wolloughlan summarily executed, and over the next twenty days conducted a systematic course of floggings. The informers alleged that the plan had been to murder all those not involved in the uprising and Foveaux's pre-emptory action was later endorsed by his superiors in Port Jackson and England. The precedent of no charge and trial which was set after Norfolk's first aborted insurrection, was not followed. Gready subsequently received a pardon and Foveaux was thereafter referred to as 'the murderer' by many of the convicts (Nobbs 1899:104).

In contrast to the planned convict insurrections, a military strike took place in January 1794. It resulted from a number of incidents revolving around interactions between the military guard and convicts and culminated on 18 January when Lieutenant Governor King attended a play to mark the sovereign's birthday and was incensed by the behaviour of several soldiers. On his way home after the play the Lieutenant Governor intervened to prevent soldiers armed with bayonets from assisting one of their number who was involved in a brawl. Later in the night the brawl threatened to

become a mutiny. It was a traditional 18th century military dispute arising spontaneously from the clash between civil and military authorities, sharpened by the involvement of convicts and a naval governor (Nobbs 1988:91-92).

When King returned as Governor of New South Wales in 1800 to relieve Governor Hunter he took steps to ensure the continuing development of the settlement of Norfolk Island. He immediately appointed Major Foveaux as Lieutenant Governor who found the settlement buildings in a neglected state and initiated a renewed building program. Work on a new Government House was commenced in 1803 on Dove Hill. As early as the late 1790s the Home Office had been questioning the viability of the settlement, then in June 1803, Lord Hobart decided to remove part of the settlement to Van Diemen's Land. The cost of up-keeping the settlement on Norfolk Island, its distance from Port Jackson and the lack of a safe anchorage were the principal factors underpinning the decision. By 1806 when the evacuation of the island was ordered the population was around 700, the majority of whom were free settlers. The island's population reached its highest numbers in 1792, peaking at 1 156 in May of that year (Nobbs, 1988:5). The convict percentage of the population remained above 50 percent from the settlement's commencement in 1788 until mid 1893 and did not fall below the 30 percent level until May 1801. Foveaux discussed the decline in population with King when in Sydney in 1803. King favoured a reduced but permanent settlement on the island while Foveaux considered it unviable and advocated its abandonment. By September 1808 there were only 250 people on the island and by April 1810 this number had declined to 177 of whom 98 were free person, 53 soldiers and 26 convicts. The free settlers were gradually relocated to Van Diemen's Land where some settled on the Norfolk Plains near Longford and others at New Norfolk on the Derwent. The last of the settlers left the island in 1814 when all the habitable buildings were ordered destroyed.

During the First Penal Settlement many of the earthworks evident today were carried out to modify and control the landscape. This was done for agriculture, roads and to create platforms for building. Roads were created up the Flagstaff Hill ridge, along the north side of Flagstaff Hill and into Arthur's Vale, up the ridgeline in the vicinity of Middlegate Road and along Soldiers Gully. In some locations these roads have been obscured by later roads but in others the formation remains in the landscape.

The First Penal Settlement was constructed surrounding the landing place. Little above ground evidence remains of most of these structures which were probably constructed of ephemeral materials, in particular, wattle and grass or a vernacular form of weatherboarding. The destruction, including burning, of the township at the close of the First Settlement obliterated these buildings. Traces of the foundations of these buildings survive in the archaeological evidence. Erosion of the foreshore areas over time has contributed to the loss of evidence.

Archaeological remains of the first and second Government Houses and their surroundings remain behind the Landing Place and can be partially seen to the rear of the Second Settlement Surgeon's Quarters (now Lions Club). Artefacts from the excavations of these sites are held by the archaeological museum. The current Government House contains vestiges of the third Government House constructed for Foveaux c. 1803 but destroyed on closure of the First Settlement in 1814. The extent of survival of the walls of the earlier structure has not been fully determined, however, the structure is thought to have survived to approximately window head height. The chimneys are also thought to have survived. Some First Settlement structures are incorporated in the Second Settlement buildings including the Double Boat Shed, the Settlement Guardhouse, and possibly the Surgeon's Kitchen.

Places within KAVHA where there is considerable archaeological potential for evidence of the First Settlement include:

- In the vicinity of Kingston Pier and the Landing Area;
- Beneath the site of the Prisoner's Compound and Lumberyard (First Penal Settlement hospital, surgeon's quarter's and hospital garden);
- Emily Bay (series of buildings, one labelled 'Beachmaster' on early plans);
- Cutting into Flagstaff Hill (possible First Settlement drains);
- The site of the First Penal Settlement timberyard and sawpits is yet to be determined;
- The Lime Kiln area – the smallest of the three partly surviving lime kilns at Kingston, Lime-Kiln 3, is thought to date from the First Penal Settlement;
- Arthur's Vale retains visible evidence of the cropping patterns and the channel modifications (Watermill Creek) of the First Penal period. A section of the channel remains in its First Penal settlement alignment. There is also likely to be archaeological evidence of stream modifications and damming and of general agricultural use and possibly structures such as benching and huts. The construction of the Second Penal Settlement dam would have removed remains of the earlier dam except perhaps the earthworks; and
- The Government House sites.

During the break in human occupation from 1814 to 1825, the wide range of mainly agricultural plants introduced to Norfolk Island continued to change the landscape. Most died out but some introduced plants like lemon and guava spread into the forest throughout the island and now grow wild. Weeds such as lantana and wild olive (hedging plants) may also be remnants of the First Penal Settlement (Knaggs 2006:82). The goats and pigs turned loose on the island when it was abandoned multiplied rapidly.

Under Governor Macquarie the colony of NSW was transformed from a military/penal establishment to a civil colony with an accompanying improvement in the general conditions found in the colony. This general improvement and Macquarie's support for rehabilitation of convicts raised concerns in Britain as to the effectiveness of the British Government's policy in the Australian colonies and the effectiveness of transportation which it was concerned was no longer viewed as a deterrent to crime. By 1817 the Secretary of State was seeking an examination of the foundations of British policy in the South Pacific and in January 1819, Lord Bathurst appointed John Thomas Bigge as commissioner to investigate 'all the laws, regulations and usages of the settlements' (Crowley, 1974: 64-65). Bigge who had served as Chief Justice in Trinidad had developed a reputation as a reformer.

Published by the British Government in 1822-23, Bigge's three reports led the government to the conclusion that Macquarie had strayed from the primary function of the colony as a place of punishment and that the physical and social improvements made to the settlements in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land had rendered them incapable of being returned to places of punishment and confinement. Even Macquarie's chosen settlements for secondary offenders, Newcastle and Port Macquarie were considered too close to Sydney to afford the degree of isolation desired by Bigge, who recommended that Norfolk Island be re-opened as a penal settlement.

In 1824 Lord Bathurst instructed Governor Brisbane to re-occupy the island on the principle of operating as a 'great hulk or penitentiary' to provide secondary punishment, the main object being the absence of the hope of mitigation. Secondary punishment was the punishment handed out to convicts who had re-offended after being transported. Lord Bathurst issued a dictum that no sentence was to be mitigated and no prisoners withdrawn until they had been on the island for ten years and behaved well for five, although this direction was later modified. Governor Brisbane acted on the instruction and Norfolk Island was re-occupied on 6 June 1825 by Captain Turton as Commandant, with a party of 50 soldiers, 57 convicts, six women and six children. The convicts included *capital respites* (convicts capitally committed, sentenced to death, and later respited to life imprisonment or a long period in chains with hard labour), as well as desperate and dangerous convicts. By the 1820s the mainland colony was also suffering a serious problem with bushrangers. A hulk, the *Phoenix* was purchased to act as a floating prison in Port Jackson for any bushrangers who were apprehended. From there they would be transferred to a place of secondary punishment. Norfolk Island was intended, among other purposes to act as a deterrent to bushranging.

Governor Brisbane left no doubt as to Norfolk Island's role in the penal system when he described it as the '*ne plus ultra* of convict degradation'. He further said of Norfolk Island: '*I have decided to reserve that place for Capital Respites, and other higher classes of offences. I could wish it to be understood that the felon, who is sent there, is forever excluded from all hope of return*' (Clune, 1981:113).

Governor Brisbane's successor, Ralph Darling took over as Governor of New South Wales on 19 December 1825 having served for a brief time as Military Governor of Mauritius after the British captured the former French colony in 1811. On Mauritius Darling had experience of the use of convict work gangs on public works and oversights an island dependant on slave labour to work the sugar plantations. Darling was a man with strong military views on convict discipline and his concept of government was one of military simplicity, and required strict adherence to regulations and the unquestioning allegiance of his subordinates. He arrived in the colony of New South Wales with instructions from the Home Government that all convicts who were capable of reform were to be assigned to settlers and the incorrigibles sent to the penal settlements. One of Darling's prime tasks as governor was to continue the implementation of the recommendations of the Bigge Report so as to ensure transportation was again an effective deterrent to crime.

The Second Settlement of Norfolk Island (1825-1855) was of an entirely different character to the First Settlement as it was run as a penitentiary for doubly convicted British felons. Except for being executed, a sentence to one of the penal settlements at Norfolk Island, Port Macquarie or Moreton Bay in New South Wales or Port Arthur in Tasmania was the most dreaded fate in Australia during the 19th century. A sentence of secondary transportation could be ordered after summary trial by two magistrates. Both Governor Darling in New South Wales and Lieutenant Governor Arthur in Tasmania were keen to ensure that discipline at the settlements would be most rigorous to deter others from committing crimes (Shaw 1966:203). Agricultural work was to be by hand with hoes and spades, no ploughs or working cattle were to be used. Hard labour was from sunrise to sunset and task work was prohibited. Prisoners were divided into two classes to encourage and reward good behaviour. The higher class was to have 'lighter' work and be allowed tobacco. Overseers, constables, clerks and officer's servants were to be chosen from this class but only after having served two, four or six years at the penal station, according to the term of their sentence (Shaw 1966:205). No opportunities for early release created despair. Until 1836 no clergyman was found willing to go to Norfolk Island except for brief visits so there was no religious instruction and no one to turn to for comfort or sympathy. There were neither schools nor books nor any kind of relaxation – nothing but bitterness (Shaw 1966:206).

Captain Richard Turton of the 40th Regiment was appointed the first Commandant of the Second Settlement. On

arrival at Kingston on 6 June 1825, Turton found the former settlement in ruins and overgrown by tall grass. The pigs and goats turned loose on the island when the first settlement closed had multiplied considerably thereby providing the new settlement with a plentiful supply of meat. Turton set about re-establishing Kingston, building huts to house the garrison and the convicts, and by December 1825 had built a new storehouse. He also rebuilt Government House and the gaol. He also commenced the convicts working on clearing the over-grown roads and gardens, the latter, at Authur's Vale and Longridge being planted with wheat and barley.

The settlement at Norfolk Island again centred on Kingston and the remains of some First Settlement buildings were rebuilt, old agricultural areas rehabilitated and new areas cleared. Control of the settlement including building activity and employment of convict labour were closely monitored by the Colonial Secretaries of the period. A tight rein was to be kept on the penal settlement to ensure it served as a deterrent to re-offending.

Designed to be the '*ne plus ultra* of convict degradation' the second settlement on Norfolk Island provided the most terrible aspect of the transportation system to Australia. 211 men were on Norfolk Island in 1829. However, after Port Macquarie was closed and numbers were reduced at Moreton Bay, the numbers on Norfolk Island steadily increased to reach 1 400 in 1838. The prisoners were nearly all among 'the most depraved and dissolute' of the convicts and the story of the settlement is tragic and horrible (Shaw, 1966:205). Shaw attributed the lack of proper supervision from Sydney, the combination of isolation, poor buildings, the lack of any female companionship except for the families of the highest officials, the character of the prisoners, including those employed as overseers, and the summary trials for offences against discipline as combining to make homosexual and sadistic practices almost inevitable (Shaw, 1966:205).

Unlike the first settlement where the emphasis was on agriculture and many of the convicts were settled on farms throughout the island growing significant quantities of produce, the second settlement was totally structured around making convict life harsh. The convicts were poorly feed and consequently their capacity for labour and the production of crops was not high. The second settlement barely grew enough grain for its own use, although it had the potential to produce far greater quantities. The convicts health was poor due to the cramped, unclean conditions in which they lived and their poor diet which was reported in 1826 as '*nearly all got one meal every 48 hours*'. The situation did not change greatly over the years and the debility brought on by this diet caused many deaths (Nobbs, 1991:20).

The convicts work life was made harsh by tilling the soil with hoes as no ploughs were allowed on the island until 1839. The convicts worked slowly, and this, coupled with the overseer's lack of farming experience resulted in poor crop yields in what should otherwise have been highly productive agriculture.

No free settlers were allowed on the island during this period of infamy and Darling ordered that no women (convict or free) be allowed on the island. Female convicts and the wives of military personnel already on the island were removed. Darling later changed this instruction when London ordered Colonel Morisset to take over as Commandant of Norfolk Island. A married man, Morisset was permitted to take his wife to the island when he became Commandant in 1828.

The form and layout of the settlement, the extant buildings and structures, archaeological deposits and the documentary records of the second settlement at Kingston are the material evidence of this convict period during which public works, farming and timber getting were the major activities to which the convict labour was directed. Small farms were established all over the island by the military and privileged convicts. Arthur's Vale and Stockyard Valley were used largely for gardening and a substantial agricultural station was developed at Longridge. Another substantial settlement occurred at Cascade on the northern side of the island adjacent to a second landing pier.

The industrial processes carried out at KAVHA were intended to produce food and building materials, and to a more limited extent shoes and clothing for the Penal Settlement. A limited range of goods that could not be easily produced on the island were imported, primarily manufactured items such as glass and ceramics.

During the Second Settlement the island was extensively exploited for its native pine which was highly suitable for house building, ship-building and general building uses. The maximum population during this phase was around 3 000 and extensive public works included the construction of well formed roads, drainage systems, substantial bridges, stores, residences for the officers and officials, military barracks and the prison were completed. Large gaols and barracks were built at Kingston and Longridge together with the buildings for the storage of crops and other goods, including underground silos on the ridge behind the Commissariat Store. The construction of the fourth Commandant's House (today's Government House) on Dove Hill with commanding views over the settlement and towards Flagstaff Hill was commenced in 1829; earlier Commandant's Houses not having survived. During the 1830s and 40s handsome houses were built on Quality Row at Kingston for the military and civil officers of the island. The rising slopes to the north of the settlement were cleared to provide uninterrupted views required for surveillance to prevent convicts escaping. The land was later used for grazing. A stone pier was constructed between 1839 and 1847 on the site of the First Settlement landing place.

It is this period that earned Norfolk Island a world renowned reputation for cruelty and baseness. As a place of secondary punishment it was intended to provide a deterrent to convicts not to re-offend. Places of secondary punishment were designed to provide extremely harsh working and living conditions as well as being sufficiently remote from centres of settlement so that there was no possibility of escape and return to society. Norfolk's island location and its various commandants ensured the conditions and the treatment meted out to convicts met the requirements. Under certain commandants, the conditions were particularly extreme; most notable were Lieutenant Colonel James Morisset, Commandant from May 1829 to April 1834, and John Giles Price, Commandant from August 1846 to January 1853, both earning reputations for their sadistic treatment of convicts. In contrast, Captain Alexander Maconochie, Commandant from March 1840 to February 1844, was committed to penal reform which he introduced on his arrival on the island. Maconochie analysed convictism in terms of the day's philosophical radicalism, arguing that convicts were generally victims of society and could be redeemed through sympathetic care (Alexander (ed) 2005:426). His goal was to rehabilitate the convicts. His reforms earned the displeasure of his superiors and led Governor Gipps to relieve him of his post.

The Second Settlement's role as a place of secondary punishment defined its character for the thirty years of this settlement period. The convict population of the island throughout the period was only a very small percentage (at most around 2 percent) of the convict population of New South Wales, as only the intractable convicts were sent to Norfolk Island. They were the worst of the convict population from both New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land; men who had become brutalised by the system and ever increasing levels of punishment only served to make them more recalcitrant. They were prisoners who rebuffed all attempts to be moulded by the convict system and could not even be flogged into submission. The prospect of punishment by death was no deterrent. Indeed the depravity and viciousness with which punishment was meted out to these men made death a palatable alternative to life in secondary punishment. It also meant they were dangerous men, to themselves, other convicts and their guards. They were the failures of the convict system but equally the system failed them. The ruthless men charged with running Norfolk Island and controlling its convict population were themselves part of a brutalising system. Only Maconochie brought a humanising regime of reform to the second settlement period through four of its thirty years. The others, with varying degrees of ruthlessness perpetuated the brutal, inhumane treatment deemed appropriate for such prisoners. It was during Morisset's period as commandant, which was noted for his extensive use of the lash, that Norfolk Island became renowned for its reputation as 'hell on earth'. The island's fearsome reputation was well known in Britain by 1833.

Bushranging had grown more common in the 1820s in New South Wales and Governors Brisbane and Darling were determined to stamp it out. An old hulk, the *Phoenix*, was used as a floating prison at Port Jackson prior to prisoners being transported to a place of secondary punishment, many to Norfolk Island and incarceration at Kingston. Darling, who took up his post on 19 December 1825 introduced a range of measures including the issuing of orders on 6 March 1826 threatening exile to Norfolk Island for any associates of bushrangers.

Among the more famous bushrangers to serve their sentences on Norfolk Island was the Van Diemen's Land bushranger, Martin Cash of the famed 'Cash and Company'. Cash was transported to Norfolk Island for the killing in 1844 of a police constable in Hobart. Cash was captured with Kavanagh, one of his 'Company', in Hobart and both were sentenced to death but were reprieved and sentenced to transportation to Norfolk Island. Kavanagh rebelled on the island and was eventually hanged for his part in an abortive escape plan. Cash mended his ways and eventually served the last days of his sentence as an overseer on Norfolk Island where he met and married Mary Bennett, a convict widow working on the island. They left the island in September 1854 sailing for Van Diemen's Land where Cash took up a position as a constable at the Cascades Agricultural Settlement (Clune, 1981:270). Another bushranger who rose to fame was William Westwood, leader of the mutiny at Kingston in July 1846.

Mutinies and uprising were not uncommon; they punctuate KAVHA's history. One such event occurred 25 September 1826 when nearly half the convict population revolted and attempted to over-run the garrison and take control of the island. One soldier was killed, one convict was shot and killed, and two others drowned. Some fifty or so convicts were involved in the uprising which involved locking up the civil officers and raiding the stores, some then seized boats and headed for Philip Island which lies seven kilometres to the south of Kingston. The escapees were pursued and captured, and duly sent to Sydney to stand trial. Two of the ringleaders were executed following the Sydney trial and the remainder returned to labour in chains.

Shortly after that uprising a further event occurred when sixty-six convicts aboard the brig *Wellington* bound for Norfolk Island rose up and overpowered their guards and the ship's crew. They changed course for New Zealand only to be overpowered on their arrival in the Bay of Islands by the crew of a whaler. They were then returned to Sydney where the ring leaders stood trial and were subsequently executed. The remainder of the convicts were again transported to Norfolk Island to serve their sentences.

One of the worst uprising occurred on 15 January 1834 when a large number of convicts attempted to overwhelm the



guard, seize the Commandant and take over the island with the plan of seizing the next Government vessel to call at Norfolk Island and sail to freedom. The convict population was around 700 and the military numbered around 120. It was a highly planned mutiny that had been kept secret for three months. The breadth and detail of the planning and execution of the uprising alarmed authorities. The convicts who were party to the action rose up simultaneously in different parts of Kingston and Longridge seizing the hospital and other locations, releasing other convicts from their chains, breaking into the tool houses and arming themselves with tools as well as with weapons taken from guards who had been over-powered. A frontal attack was made on the guard that escorted the *capital respites* to and from their places of labour, however, some of the guard escaped and gun fire raised the alarm across Kingston. The officers and the remaining military responded immediately quashing the rebellion, killing two convicts and wounding another eleven of whom seven eventually died of their wounds, before finally capturing many of the conspirators. Others escaped but were recaptured. The Deputy Commandant, Captain Foster Fyans, known as 'Flogger', pursued the escapees to Longridge and after rounding up some 100 prisoners set about making an example of them by his usual means. They were tightly bound on a triangle which made them particularly vulnerable to the lashes of the 'cat' with which they were flogged. In all 130 prisoners were put in chains and confined awaiting trial. The Commandant's report on the uprising recommended against transporting the prisoners and witnesses to Sydney for trial, and consequently, Supreme Court Judge William Burton arrived at Kingston in July 1834 to conduct the trials.

This uprising occurred towards the end Lt Col James Morisset's time as Commandant (1829-34). A particularly harsh and brutal Commandant, he never failed to exert his power and dominance over the convicts by punishing them for the slightest infringements of discipline. The lash, and eventually the gallows, were his response to unruly behaviour, but violence beget violence and his regime was notable for increasing turbulence among the convicts (Britts, 1980:87). Morisset earned the nickname 'Lasher' Morisset and he, with his deputy, 'Flogger' Fyans elevated Norfolk Island's reputation as 'Hell on Earth'. That such a broad scale and well contrived plan of revolt occurred towards the end of Morisset's reign as commandant was not without reason.

Following the arrival at Kingston of the Judge, the Crown Solicitor and an attorney for the defence, fifty-five of the prisoners were prosecuted as the ringleaders of the uprising. Mr Justice Burton was deeply moved by the conditions he confronted on Norfolk Island and the impact that incarceration had on the men who came before him. He wrote of the experience in his book, *The State of Religion and Education in New South Wales*, published in 1840 and his descriptions of the trial provide insights into convict life at Kingston. Burton wrote .....

*'In the course of these trials, which occupied ten day, eighty-seven different witnesses were examined on the part of the Prosecution and for the Prisoners; many of the principal witnesses five or six times over, during which they underwent a course and mode of Cross-examination by the Prisoners, such as no Advocate in the World could conduct; and revealed to the Court a picture of depravity, which, it may be asserted, no human Judge ever had revealed to him before.*

*This will be fully understood, when it is explained that some of the principal witnesses against the Conspirators, were Prisoners who had been concerned in the affair as deeply as themselves that almost all of them were their fellow prisoners; that they passed days and nights together in confinement, as many as 120 in a single ward; that they had been intimately associated in the commission of other crimes of deeper stain; that their occupation, and they had none of a Holier kind, during their hours of respite from labour, and those which should be given to repose, was the relation of crimes in which they had been engaged, or to which they were privy; no Conspirator could desire a better knowledge of the character of his companions than was thus obtained; they proved indeed by their searching questions on cross-examination, and abundantly proved to the mind of the hearer, by the faint and downcast denial of the Witness, that they were intimately acquainted with each other's thoughts and words and works; and each particular of these was appalling.*

*But beyond all this, the unhappy Prisoners themselves, when brought up, as they were in the order of their conviction, (and of the number tried, thirty were capitally convicted, and sentenced of death), completed the abominable revelation by communicating to the Judge, in earnest, deep, but calm expostulation, the crimes committed there, upon which, to be now particular would not be meet; and he can therefore no otherwise describe the State of the Island than figuratively, a mode of expression, however, which he does not believe to exceed the reality when he says that the picture presented of that place to his mind, upon that occasion, was a Cage full of Unclean Birds, full of Crimes against God and Man, Murders and Blasphemies, and all Uncleaness.*

*One of them, a man who displayed singular ability, and uncommon calmness and self-possession under circumstances so appalling to ordinary minds, represented it to be a 'Hell upon Earth', and such assuredly it was, as far as the torment of that Region is made up of the company of evil spirits, glorying in Evil Deeds; 'let a man's heart' he said, 'be what it will, when he comes here, his Man's heart is taken away from him, and there is given to him the heart of a Beast.'*

*He represented, and others followed him in the same course, that the crimes which had brought them there, were not of the kind which should condemn them to such a state; that many of them had been decent men, possessed of means of support, and had wives and families in the world; and they were condemned to the same place of helplessness and despair with those whose crimes were of the deepest kind.*

*Banished for life or fourteen years to a spot where the face of Woman is never seen – doomed to daily toil, fed upon the most common diet, salt beef, and maize and water.*

*'Subject to the lash,' said he, to use his own expression, 'if a man looked at an Overseer or a Constable, or neglected his work, or committed any offence, however trivial, and often for no offence at all.'*

*'Sentence has been passed upon us before,' one of them said, 'and we thought we should be executed, and we prepared to die, and we wish we had been executed then. It was no mercy to send us to this place; I do not ask for life, I do not want to be spared, on condition of remaining here, life is not worth having on such term.'* (Nobbs, 1991:34-35).

The Home Government's policy and that of the Governor of New South Wales to use Norfolk Island as a deterrent to anyone who might participate in criminal activity had well and truly been implemented. Brisbane's goal of making it the '*ne plus ultra* of convict degradation' had been achieved.

Homosexuality was common and the younger convicts were particularly vulnerable. In 1847 the island's superintendent referred to: '*some of the wretched lads previously known as "colonial women"*'. The evasive language of even earlier reports cannot conceal that threat to young convicts... '*At night the sleeping wards are very cess-pools of unheard of vices*' (Holden 1999:154).

An 1840s parliamentary report was more direct in its language:

*'The young have no chance of escaping from abuse, even forcible violation is resorted to. To resist can hardly be expected, in a situation so utterly removed from, and lamentably destitute of, protection. A terrorism is sternly and resolutely maintained, to revenge, not merely exposure but even complaint'* (Holden 1999:154).

The most violent uprising which occurred at Kingston took place in July 1846. It was a spontaneous response triggered by the sadistic Stipendiary Magistrate Samuel Barrow's order that the men's cooking pots be withdrawn. They were one of the few items the convicts considered their own having been made by the convicts for their personal use. This event occurred shortly after John Price took over as Commandant but had its genesis in the mis-management of the settlement by its previous Commandant, Major Joseph Childs. Child had no previous experience of running a penal settlement and was an incompetent Commandant making arbitrary decisions including increasing prisoner's sentences for offences committed on the island without their knowledge. The convicts suffered extreme abuse from their captors and Child's failure to reign in Stipendiary Magistrate Barrow's abuses of his power perpetrated the brutal and sadistic pattern of treatment of the convicts that was to be continued by Price. Under these men, the convict system on Norfolk Island degenerated into one of terror for the prisoners and was exacerbated by the use of convict overseers who showed no mercy to their charges. Against this background, the uprising in July 1846 was a flash point when anger at the brutal treatment being meted out to the convicts sparked a spontaneous rebellion led by the former bushranger William Westwood who had shown no previous inclination towards violence. It was a short but vicious event during which Westwood led some thirty men in blind retaliation against an already harsh system that had been perverted by men like Barrow and Price, and had already pushed convict life beyond the limits of human endurance. It personified the worst results of authority's brutally retributive policies. According to Cash, who did not participate in the outbreak, Westwood had been: '*flogged, goaded and tantalsed till he was reduced to a lunatic and a savage*' (Nobbs,1991:26).

Westwood murdered four officials but failed to kill Barrow who had been his main target. He and eleven other convicts who were implicated as accomplices stood trial on the island. All were sentenced to death and executed then buried in an unmarked mass grave without religious rites on 13 October 1846. The site, on the edge of the cemetery which is located at the eastern end of KAVHA, is known as 'murderers mound'.

Having been part of New South Wales from 1788, Norfolk Island was annexed to the Colony of Van Diemen's Land on 29 September 1844. Transportation to New South Wales ceased in 1840 and after that date convicts were transported from Britain direct to Norfolk Island. The composition of the island's convict population changed following the British Government's decision to introduce a probation system of convict transportation and discipline. The probation system emerged from the Molesworth House of Commons Committee (1837-38) which was convened to enquire into the effectiveness of transportation as a punishment, its influence on the moral state of the penal colonies and whether or not it might be improved (Nobbs, 1991:53). The assignment system of convict discipline which had operated since the early days of the settlement had been viewed as something of a lottery subject to what type of master a convict was assigned to, and further, it was viewed by many as a form of slavery which was ineffective in providing for the

controlled punishment and reform of convicts. The probation system involved a staged approach to criminal reform in which prisoners were classed into groups according to their crime and conduct, with good behaviour being rewarded with additional freedom and privileges. Under the new system, the first stage of probation for any British sentence of transportation for life and some other sentences of fifteen years or more, involved serving detention on Norfolk Island for two to four years under conditions of hard labour and severe discipline, then subsequent transfer to Van Diemen's Land to enter the second stage of their probation. The cessation of transportation to New South Wales and the introduction of the new probation system necessitated the annexation of Norfolk Island to Van Diemen's Land to implement the new arrangements. This also involved transferring all prisoners who had been convicted in Britain and were already on Norfolk Island to Van Diemen's Land so as to make room for the incoming prisoners. This occurred in 1844. Under the probation system Norfolk Island received around 1 400 probationary prisoners direct from England in the first two years of the scheme (1844-46).

In his report to the British Parliament in 1847, Catholic Bishop Robert Wilson, who was greatly interested in penal reform, detailed the appalling conditions on Norfolk Island. His report helped bring an end to the island's use as a penal settlement.

The penal settlement was gradually closed between 1847 and 1855 and the convicts withdrawn to Port Arthur in Van Diemen's Land where they served out their sentences, others having been released on tickets of leave. Transportation to Van Diemen's Land ceased in 1853 and a formal Order in Council was made on 29 December 1853, repealing all Orders making Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island penal settlements (Clune, 1981:269). A small party remained on the island to care for the farms and livestock and to hand over to the incoming settlers from Pitcairn Island who constituted the third settlement phase of the island's history.

The Third (or Pitcairn) Settlement of the Island (1856 – to the present) started on 8 June 1856 with the arrival at the Kingston pier of the entire population (194 persons) of Pitcairn Island. The Pitcairners were the descendants of the *HMS Bounty* mutineers (of 1789) and Tahitian women, and three men who had settled on Pitcairn Island during the 1820s.

In 1855 the British Parliament passed the *Australian Waste Lands Act*, separating New South Wales from Van Diemen's Land and making provision for the Home Government to separate Norfolk Island from Van Diemen's Land. The latter occurred on 24 June 1856 when by Order in Council Norfolk Island was declared a distinct settlement of the British Crown with responsibility for administration given to the Governor of New South Wales as Governor of Norfolk Island, a position occupied at the time by Sir William Denison. In June 1856, Denison sent Captain Fremantle to Norfolk Island and in a letter to the Chief Magistrate outlined the arrangements that now existed between the Governor of New South Wales and the Pitcairn settlers on Norfolk Island including that the Chief Magistrate would act as administrator in the Governor's absence. It was the first written document regarding the transfer that was passed from a representative of the Government to the Pitcairn community and was taken by the community to be a formal cession. Governor Denison visited the island in September 1857 and dispelled the islanders' belief that a formal cession had taken place. He reinforced the position that the island was the property of the Crown and that the right of ownership of the land would be held as a grant from the Crown. Denison also formulated a set of laws and regulations for Norfolk Island that were gazetted on 30 October 1857. He viewed the relocation of the Pitcairners to Norfolk Island as a social experiment and wished to retain the '*peculiar form of polity under which they (the Pitcairners) have hitherto existed as a community*' (Nobbs, 1984:43-46).

The history of the Pitcairners starts in the famous voyage of the *Bounty*. The voyage commenced in late November 1787, when *HMS Bounty* under the command of Lieutenant (later Captain) William Bligh (later Governor of NSW), sailed from Britain bound for Tahiti to take on board breadfruit trees and transported them to the West Indies where they would be planted to grow a cheap and plentiful supply of food for the slaves working in the sugar plantations. After a torrid journey of ten months the *Bounty* reached Tahiti where it stayed for 23 weeks. The crew enchanted by the Polynesian life-style easily settled into the way of life, some taking local women as wives, actual or de facto. Bligh was known to be an arrogant and difficult man and not the easiest of captains under whom to serve due to his ill temper, cruel tongue and belief in his own superiority. *Bounty's* mate, Fletcher Christian was a handsome, agreeable young man of aristocratic background who contrasted greatly with the bad-tempered Bligh who was of yeoman stock, however, Christian had earned his captain's respect as a seaman. Shortly after *Bounty's* homeward voyage began the crew led by Fletcher Christian mutinied on 28 April 1789. Bligh and eighteen loyal sailors were set adrift in a 23 foot ship's boat. Bligh, a highly accomplished navigator, then completed one of the greatest feats of maritime history by sailing the open craft 3,600 miles to Coupang (Timor), from where he returned to England seeking retribution for the mutineers. *Bounty* returned to Tahiti where some of the men remained. Christian then sailed *Bounty* with nine of the mutineers, six Polynesian men, nineteen women and one baby through the Pacific seeking a hiding place in which to settle. Christian would have had no doubt that the Royal Navy would not allow such an action to go unpunished. After initially attempting to settle on Toobouai, the mutineers finally selected the uninhabited Pitcairn Island as their hide-away. Settling on the island in January 1790 they scuttled the *Bounty* to avoid detection.

Violence scared the small community as arguments over the women and distilled alcohol led to fights and murders of the mutineers and all the Polynesian men. Only one of the mutineers remained alive when the first contact with other Europeans was made. The American ship *Topaz* stopped at the island and its crew was surprised to find English speaking natives. The *Bounty* connection was soon established. It was not until 1814 that the first Royal Naval ships called at Pitcairn Island, twenty-five years after the mutiny. Their captains did not seize John Adams, the only surviving mutineer and Bligh's wish for retribution was never realised. Adams had become fervently religious and took upon himself the role of teacher, religious instructor and father (Clarke, 1986:91). It was Adams who established the devout nature of the Pitcairn Island community which is today reflected in their descendents living on Norfolk Island.

By 1831 a scarcity of water and food confronted the Pitcairn community as it grew in size. In response, the entire Pitcairn community relocated to Tahiti, where they were struck by measles which claimed twelve lives. A devout people, they were shocked at the easy morals of the Tahitians and eventually returned to Pitcairn Island. The problems of scarcity of food and water increased as the community continued to grow. Complaints were made to the British Government about their situation and in response the Islanders were offered resettlement on Norfolk Island, a fertile place with established viable farms, that was being closed as a penal settlement. On 8 June 1856, the entire Pitcairn community aboard the *Morayshire* arrived at Norfolk Island, landing at Kingston to start their new life.

Initially the Pitcairners were housed, by ballot, in many of the existing smaller buildings at Kingston and the land was parcelled out in 50 acre lots. These buildings were maintained until 1908 when many were vacated and fired in response to Government evictions. Other buildings, roads and infrastructure were maintained (and over the years a few renovated) for administrative and maritime use including the New Military Barracks in which a school was established following the arrival in June 1859 of Thomas Rossiter, Governor Denison's agent who roles included school teacher, Government store-keeper and meteorologist. The remainder of the Second Settlement buildings, including the convict buildings, were allowed to fall to ruin from 1855. In the early 20th century some of these were quarried for building materials.

On arrival at Kingston in 1856 the community found the Protestant Chapel in the former Prisoner's Barracks in a poor state of repair and the leaking roof forced a relocation of services to the Old Military Barracks, the only non-residential structures in a good state of repair. In 1870 the Pitcairn settlers commenced construction of a church in Quality Row. A timber structure, it was completed in 1872 but destroyed by a severe storm in 1874 and was not rebuilt. Services were then transferred to the Commissariat Store which was remodelled, having the second floor removed to create All Saint's Anglican Church which remains in use to this day.

On 30 October 1857, the New South Wales Government Gazette promulgated new laws and regulations for Norfolk Island. All previous laws, ordinances and regulations were repealed and annulled, and 39 new laws came into effect. Governor Dennison had drafted the new laws to vest the executive government of Norfolk Island in his absence in a Chief Magistrate and two Assistants or Councillors to be elected annually by every person who had resided on the island for six months, had attained the age of twenty years and could read and write.

While some of the Pitcairners returned to live on Pitcairn Island, the population on Norfolk Island grew and by 1869 it was 300, around 1883 it had reached 470 (exclusive of the Mission) (Clune, 1981: 274-276). In 1865 the headquarters of the New Zealand Mission, an Anglican mission to Melanesia was moved to Norfolk Island and in 1867 the Mission, located on the western side of the island, received 99 acres as a free grant and a further grant of 933 acres for which they paid two Pounds per acre. The Pitcairners who farmed the island, fished and went shore whaling were angered by the grants believing that the island had been granted to them, suddenly found that one-fifth of the alienated land had been given over to the Mission. In 1884 the NSW Governor, Lord Loftus visited the island and at a Parliamentary sitting which the entire male population attended, strongly criticised the community on a number of matters including letting the land go to ruin and affirming the Governor's right to grant land on the island as he considered appropriate. The community had less than 180 acres of the 5,000 acres of alienated land on the island (total area of 8,600 acres) under cultivation. They preferred fishing and whaling to agriculture.

On 6 March 1896, the then Governor Viscount Hampden issued a proclamation announcing that a 'Government Resident' would shortly be appointed who would replace the locally elected Chief Magistrate. Hampden intended not only to repeal the existing laws and regulations but to replace them with the same laws that applied in New South Wales, excluding land and electoral laws (Nobbs, 2006:138). On 15 January 1897, an Order in Council revoked the Order of 1 November 1856, paving the way for a transfer of the administration of the island to New South Wales in anticipation of annexation to either New South Wales or some future federal body of which New South Wales may become a part. Moves to federate the Australian colonies were already well under way. The change in administrative arrangements took place on the day the colonies federated, 1 January 1901, when administration of the island was transferred to the Governor of New South Wales. Norfolk Island was not involved in the federation and remained a British possession.

The Australian Parliament passed the *Norfolk Island Act 1913* which paved the way for Norfolk Island to become a Territory under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia. 148 Islanders petitioned the King in January 1914 objecting to the forcible annexation to Australia without consultation and seeking some form of accommodation with New Zealand. Their petition was unsuccessful and on 30 March 1914 the British Parliament revoked the relevant Order in Council thereby placing Norfolk Island under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia. Transfer of the administrative arrangements from the Governor of New South Wales to the Commonwealth took place on 1 July 1914.

Fishing, farming and whaling remained the principal economic activities in Norfolk Island's third settlement phase until the tourism industry developed post World War 2. In 1902 the island was connected to Australia by an undersea cable that continued on to Canada. It remained in use until 1962 when it became redundant due to the use of wireless telegraphy. Kingston served as the main centre for the whaling industry with the Crank Mill, Pier Store and the Double Boat Shed being occupied by the four whaling companies on the island as well as being the main storage centre for the oil readied for export. Cascade was also used for whaling activity in the late 19th century and was also the site of the whaling station established in 1956 that operated for six years until the scarcity of whales forced its closure in 1962.

World War 2 saw the construction of an airfield on Norfolk Island. Originally proposed by the United States Air Force (USAF) as a base, it was not used by the USAF but by the Royal New Zealand Air Force, which operated the airfield for aircraft staging through the area. It was not used as an operational base. The airfield gave greater access to the island after the war and the commencement of a regular air service in 1947 paved the way for the tourism industry which is now a major component of the island's economy. Tourist numbers grew from 978 in 1961, to 10 683 in 1971 and by 1973/74 the number had increased to 15 684. The numbers continued to rise and in 1986/87 29 085 tourists visited the island, the numbers rising to 38 298 tourists in 1999/2000 (Mosley, 2001:60-63). The 1960s marked a change in the composition of the community with increasing numbers of persons not born on Norfolk Island settling on the island as ordinary residents. By August 2001, the permanent population of the island was 1 574 of whom 756 were of Pitcairn descent (Norfolk Island Census, 2001:10).

Between 1976 and 1978 works were undertaken to convert the Old Military Barracks into the seat of the Norfolk Island Assembly and Administration which came into being following the passage of the *Norfolk Island Act 1979*. The Act conferred a degree of self government on the island.

The third settlement period continues to the present and has resulted in development and other activities in most parts of the Island, some of which date back to the early years of this settlement period. Between 1856 and 1960 approximately three-quarters of the island was cleared and intensively farmed, and the reserves were greatly modified by grazing and timber exploitation.

Throughout the Third Settlement Kingston has remained the administrative and shipping centre of Norfolk Island and much of the adjacent land including Arthur's Vale (but not Stockyard Valley) has been a Government Reserve for stock grazing, recreational and tourist uses. KAVHA has been the focus of the third settlement community not only as the administrative-government centre but also as a cultural and religious centre. Anniversary Day or Bounty Day, as it is also known, is the annual re-enactment each June of the arrival of the Pitcairn community at Kingston. It is a major cultural event in the island's calendar when the community celebrates its history and cultural origins. Norfolk, the local language, an amalgam of 18th century English and Tahitian is today spoken by those of Pitcairn descent despite attempts by the authorities to eradicate the language in the early part of the 20th century by banning its use in the classroom. The community continued speaking the language and in 1987 it was introduced into the school curriculum to ensure its preservation for following generations. All Saints Church (Anglican) holds a central place in the religious life of the community both historically and as an on-going place of worship. KAVHA also serves the community as a place of recreation. The area includes the golf course, the cricket pitch and the beautiful Emily Bay where islanders and tourists picnic, fish and swim, and the adjacent Slaughter Bay inside the reef which is used for fishing, skin diving and coral viewing.

Since the early 1960s many of the surviving buildings and ruins have been stabilised and reconstructed, and new fencing, tree plantings and other landscape work carried out.

In 1973 building works came under the control of an Inter-Departmental Committee of the Commonwealth Government. This has led to the reconstruction of many of the buildings informed by archaeological surveys, excavations and architectural advice, and the implementation of measures to protect the historical character of the area from visual intrusion.

In 1989 the KAVHA Management Board was established by a Memorandum of Understanding between the

Commonwealth and Norfolk Island Governments. The MOU was revised in 1994.

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### Condition and Integrity

Evidence of the First Settlement (1788-1814) exists as archaeological remains or as footings in some later buildings. The historic buildings and remains of the Second Settlement (1825-1855) are relatively well conserved with considerable restoration and stabilisation works having been carried out since the 1970s. Importantly, the lack of any substantial development since 1855 makes KAVHA outstanding as the landscape in which the built remains are relatively unaltered since it was cleared of its forest for farming during the first settlement and for surveillance and communications in the second settlement period. The historic landscape is well preserved reflecting the unique history of Norfolk Island.

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### Location

About 250ha, at Kingston, being an area bounded by a line commencing at the High Water Mark approximately 120m to the south east of Bloody Bridge, then proceeding westerly via the High Water Mark to about 230m west of the eastern boundary of Block 91a, then from high water level following the watershed boundary along the ridge west of Watermill Creek up to the 90m contour, then north-westerly via that contour to the boundary of Block 176, then following the western and northern boundary of Block 176 or the 90m ASL (whichever is the lower) to the north west corner of Block 52r, then via the northern boundary of Block 52r and its prolongation across Taylors Road to the western boundary of Block 79a, then northerly and easterly via the western and northern boundary of Block 79a to its intersection with the 90m ASL, then easterly via the 90m ASL to its intersection with the eastern boundary of Block 64b, then south easterly via the eastern boundary of Block 64b to its intersection with Block 65d2, then northerly and southerly via the northern and eastern boundary of Block 65d2 to Rooty Hill Road, then directly across this road to the north east corner of Block 67a, then south easterly via the north east boundary of Block 67a to its intersection with the north west boundary of Block 67c, then north easterly and south easterly via the north west and north east boundary of Block 67c to Driver Christian Road, then easterly via the southern side of Driver Christian Road to a point where it veers south (approximately 60 metres to the east), then southerly via the western road reserve boundary of Driver Christian Road and its prolongation to the High Water Mark (point of commencement).

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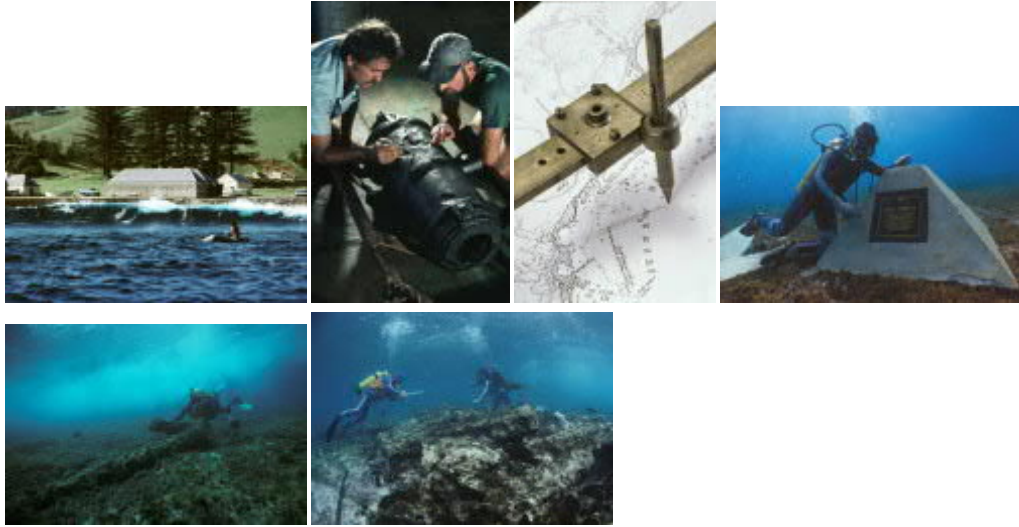


## Place Details

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### HMS Sirius Shipwreck, Kingston, EXT, Australia

#### Photographs



**List** National Heritage List

**Class** Historic

**Legal Status** [Listed place](#) (25/10/2011)

**Place ID** 106167

**Place File No** 9/00/001/0023

#### Summary Statement of Significance

The archaeological remains of HMS *Sirius* represent a tangible link to the most significant vessel associated with early migration of European people to Australia. HMS *Sirius* was guardian of the first fleet during its epic voyage to Australia between 1787 and 1788, which brought the convicts, soldiers and sailors who became Australia's first permanent European settlers. HMS *Sirius* was also the mainstay of early colonial defence in New South Wales and the primary supply and communication link with Great Britain during the first two years of the settlement.

The careers of the first three governors' of the colony of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip (1788-1792), John Hunter (1795-1800) and Philip Gidley King (1800-1806) are closely associated with the history of HMS *Sirius* as all three sailed as senior officers on board HMS *Sirius* during the voyage of the first fleet to New South Wales. Hunter was also Captain of HMS *Sirius* during its last ill-fated voyage in 1790, when it was totally wrecked at Norfolk Island.

The loss of HMS *Sirius* at Norfolk Island on 19 March 1790 was a disaster to the fledgling colony during a period of crisis, when the settlement at Port Jackson was in danger of collapse and abandonment. It can be argued that the adaptability, ingenuity and grim determination to survive, demonstrated by the colonists at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island following this disaster, became an enduring trait of the Australian people.

The archaeological investigations of the shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* have demonstrated its significant archaeological potential for research into the cultural heritage of the early European settlement of Australia. The remaining fabric of HMS *Sirius* and associated artefact assemblages represents a "time capsule" of cultural life from the period leading up to its shipwreck in 1790.

The important role played by HMS *Sirius* in the European phase of Australian settlement is widely recognised within the Australian community and is especially significant to the descendants of the first European settlers or "first fleters" as they are often described. This importance was highlighted with the selection of HMS *Sirius* as a significant archaeological project to celebrate the Australian bicentennial in 1988.

The history and archaeological remains of the HMS *Sirius* are also highly valued by the people of Norfolk Island as the vessel represents a significant phase in the peopling of the Island and its development as a place of secondary punishment of convicts transported to Australia.

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## Official Values

### Criterion A Events, Processes

The shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of its importance in defining events in Australia's cultural history and for its part in development of the processes of Australian migration and defence.

The archaeological remains of HMS *Sirius* represent a tangible link to one of the most significant vessels associated with early migration of European people to Australia. HMS *Sirius* was guardian of the first fleet during its epic voyage to Australia between 1787 and 1788, which brought the convicts, soldiers and sailors who became Australia's first permanent European settlers. HMS *Sirius* was also the mainstay of early colonial defence in New South Wales and the primary supply and communication link with Great Britain during the first two years of the settlement.

The loss of HMS *Sirius* at Norfolk Island on 19 March 1790 was a disaster to the fledgling colony during a period of crisis, when the settlement at Port Jackson was in danger of collapse and abandonment. It can be argued that the adaptability, ingenuity and grim determination to survive, demonstrated by the colonists at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island following this disaster, became an enduring trait of the Australian people.

### Criterion B Rarity

The shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* has outstanding heritage value to the nation because it possesses rare and uncommon aspects of Australia's cultural history relating to early European settlement.

The archaeological remains of HMS *Sirius* are the only known remains of a vessel of the first fleet that sailed to Australia.

As the first fleet flagship, the story and *in-situ* remains of HMS *Sirius* are pivotal to the understanding of aspects of life during the early years of Britain's New South Wales colony. The artefacts already recovered during salvage and archaeological excavations of the site, represent the largest single assemblage of material culture from the first fleet voyage to Australia and the early European occupation of Port Jackson and Norfolk Island during the first two years of the settlement.

In an international context, HMS *Sirius* also represents one of the few located examples of an 18th Century British warship that exhibits the use of experimental construction techniques in the period following the American revolutionary war and along with HMS *Pandora* is one of only two such naval shipwrecks from this period located in Australian waters.

### Criterion C Research

The shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of its potential to yield information that would contribute to a greater understanding of Australia's history of early European settlement. The existing artefact collections and to the remaining insitu fabric of HMS *Sirius* contain important physical evidence of key historical events in Australia's history, including the voyage to Australia and the movement of colonists to Norfolk Island.

Contemporary historical documentation relating to HMS *Sirius* is limited and there remain many unanswered historical and technical questions surrounding the ship and its cargo, especially at the time of its loss on Norfolk Island. The archaeological investigations of the shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* have demonstrated its significant archaeological potential for research into the cultural heritage of the early European settlement of Australia.

The remaining fabric of HMS *Sirius* and associated artefact assemblages represents a "time capsule" of cultural life from the period leading up to its shipwreck in 1790, which are relatively free from the effects of cultural disturbance after contemporary salvage ended in 1792.

### **Criterion G Social value**

The shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of its strong and special association with the Norfolk Island Community, the descendants of the first fleet settlers and the Australian community as a whole.

The arrival of HMS *Sirius* and the first fleet at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788 is one of the most important moments in our country's history, which is celebrated each year as the "Australia Day" national public holiday. The importance of the role HMS *Sirius* played in the founding of Australia is often reiterated on Australia Day including the unveiling of the HMS *Sirius* memorial in Macquarie Place, Sydney, which contains an anchor and cannon from the ship, which was conducted with great fanfare on Australia day in 1907.

The important role played by HMS *Sirius* in the European phase of Australian settlement is widely recognised within the Australian community and is especially significant to the descendants of the first European settlers or "first fleters" as they are often described. This importance was highlighted with the selection of HMS *Sirius* as a significant archaeological project to celebrate the Australian bicentennial in 1988.

HMS *Sirius* is also important to the people of Norfolk Island and is a celebrated part of their island's history, with the artefact collection from HMS *Sirius* housed in the Norfolk Island Museum. The history and archaeological remains of the HMS *Sirius* are highly valued by the people of Norfolk Island as the vessel represents a significant phase in the peopling of the Island and its development as a place of secondary punishment of convicts transported to Australia.

### **Criterion H Significant people**

The shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* has outstanding heritage value because of its special association with the lives of prominent Australians who served as officers on HMS *Sirius*.

The careers of the first three governors' of the colony of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip (1788-1792), John Hunter (1795-1800) and Philip Gidley King (1800-1806) are closely associated with the history of HMS *Sirius*. All three sailed as senior officers on board HMS *Sirius* during the voyage of the first fleet to New South Wales; Phillip as Fleet Captain, Hunter as his second in command and King as Second Lieutenant. Hunter was also Captain of HMS *Sirius* during its last ill-fated voyage in 1790, when it was wrecked at Norfolk Island.

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### **Description**

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The primary shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* is located on the outer reef at Slaughter Bay. There are also several secondary artefact deposition sites within the confines of the bay. The calcaranite reef extends along an east-west axis of Slaughter Bay and forms a natural barrier protecting an inshore lagoon from the normal action of the sea. At high tide and during storms waves break over the reef and wash onto the foreshore at Kingston. Like the outer reef, the foreshore is formed by a layer of calcaranite stone. The eastern end of Slaughter Bay is defined by Salt House Point, which is a low promontory protecting the crescent beach of Emily Bay. The western end of Slaughter Bay terminates at Kingston Pier. A break in the outer reef forms a natural inlet to the lagoon. In several areas the outer reef is cut by gutters paralleling the shore. Depths within the lagoon are shallow and average around three metres. The lagoon floor is covered by sand over coarse coral rubble. Artefacts from HMS *Sirius* have been identified at six main locations in the waters adjacent to Kingston (see attached map of sites):

Site 1. The outer edge of the breakers (primary shipwreck site).

Site 2. The gully between the outer reef and the high inshore reef platform.

Site 3. East of Kingston Pier on the tidal reef platform.

Site 3A. Slightly East of Site 3.

Site 4. The lagoon in Slaughter Bay (secondary shipwreck site).

Site 5. West of the pier.

Site 6. Stone causeway located between sites 2 and 3.

With the exception of Site 6, the system of site numbering is the same that has been used to identify sites in the HMS *Sirius* archaeological excavation reports. Sites 1, 2, 3, 3A, 4 and 6 are within the proposed place boundary. Site 5, which is located outside the proposed boundary, has been excluded because this area contains the remains of several other historic shipwrecks and it is believed that the majority of artefacts from HMS *Sirius* were removed by local divers prior to the first archaeological expedition in 1983.

Site 1 has been identified as the primary shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius*, which is where the vessel first struck the reef on 19 March 1790 and remained there for 9 days. Light weight objects that were washed inshore from the ship during this period have been located during excavations at sites 2, 3, and 3A. The hull of the ship gradually started to break up and became more buoyant after many heavy objects detached from the hull including two carronades, several anchors and approximately 200 blocks (approximately 60 tonnes) of iron ballast. On 28 March 1790 heavy seas pushed the remains of the vessel closer inshore to the approximate position of Site 4 where much of the contemporary salvage was undertaken between 1790 and 1792.

At Site 6 there appears to be a man made causeway made of calcareous stone between reefs adjacent to the primary shipwreck site. The origins of this causeway have not been discovered and it does not appear on maps of Norfolk Island until 1904. It has been theorised that it relates to the early mining of stone by convicts for building on Norfolk Island or may have been constructed to assist in removal of the HMS *Sirius* anchor that is now located in Macquarie Place, Sydney. Another possibility for the origin of the causeway is that it was constructed to allow the quarrying of calcarenite stone used for the construction of the Kingston Pier between 1839 and 1847.

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## History

### HMS *Sirius* and the first fleet

HMS *Sirius* is one of Australia's most important shipwrecks because of its principal role in the foundation of the first British settlement in New South Wales. On 13 May 1787, a fleet of 11 ships, sailing with convicts, weighed anchor and left England's shores. The departure of the fleet, bound for Botany Bay on the east coast of Australia, attracted little public attention despite the magnitude of the venture. A decision by the British Government, in 1786, to establish a settlement in what was then a scarcely known region of the world and remote from the recognised trade routes of the period, marked the beginning of a new era in British colonial expansion.

The 511 ton, sixth rate naval frigate HMS *Sirius* was commissioned to lead the First Fleet under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, with John Hunter as second captain. A former Navy transport of 170 tons, HMS *Supply*, was also chosen as an armed tender under the command of Lieutenant Henry Ball. Escorting a convoy of six transports and three store ships, the *Sirius* embarked upon the eight month voyage via Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope, arriving at Botany Bay in January 1788. After exploring the neighbourhood of Port Jackson, Phillip chose Sydney Cove as the site for the new settlement. Within three weeks of arrival, on 15 February 1788, the *Supply* set sail for Norfolk Island, where Lieutenant Philip Gidley King had orders to establish a satellite colony. The *Sirius* was thus left as the main defence vessel for the New South Wales colony, its means of obtaining supplies and its communication link with the outside world.

Although the contract for the First Fleet expedition provided for two years supply of provisions, defective packing and bad stowage damaged a considerable quantity of the foodstuffs on the outward passage. By September 1788 the shortage of food and equipment at Sydney Cove was causing such concern that Phillip decided to send the *Sirius* to Cape Town to purchase additional stores, especially flour and medicines. Under the command of John Hunter, the *Sirius* sailed an easterly course with the prevailing wind, surviving dangerous seas off Cape Horn and terrific storms off the east coast of Tasmania on the return voyage. On its return to Port Jackson on 9 May 1788 the ship was closely examined and spent the following four months undergoing repairs to storm damage and other defects.

Meanwhile, the situation at Sydney Cove was becoming critical as the settlement was failing in its attempts at self

sufficiency and fresh supplies had not arrived from Britain.

HMS *Guardian*, dispatched from England in September 1789, was to have re-supplied the colony, but never reached Australia. Soon after leaving Cape Town the ship struck an iceberg and was badly holed, eventually returning to port after jettisoning or losing much of its cargo. As soon as the *Sirius* was fit for sea, Governor Phillip made a crucial decision: to send both the *Sirius* and *Supply* to Norfolk Island with a substantial number of convicts and marines in an attempt to lessen the demand for scarce resources, and the *Sirius* would then proceed to China to purchase supplies. Norfolk Island is an isolated volcanic outcrop in the South Pacific Ocean, lying 1,500 kilometres north-east of Port Jackson. Rising abruptly from the Norfolk Ridge, the island's coastline consists almost entirely of sheer surf lashed cliffs up to 90 metres high, and water depths drop off rapidly to more than 2000 metres. Not surprisingly, early European navigators found it a daunting experience to find a suitable landing place around the island. Even today Cascade Bay on the north-east side of the island and Sydney Bay in the south are the only two places where landing can be made with any degree of safety, given favourable weather and sea conditions. After a stormy passage, the *Sirius* and *Supply* arrived at Norfolk Island on 13 March 1790 and managed to send the marines and most of the convicts ashore at Cascade Bay before being forced out to sea by bad weather.

When the gale moderated on 19 March they attempted to enter Sydney Bay opposite the main settlement. The master of *Supply* was familiar with the conditions and had already landed his portion of the provisions when the *Sirius* approached. On shore, the raised signal flag still indicated that longboats could be launched without danger. But by the time the boats from the *Sirius* were in the water and loaded with stores, the ship had begun to drift rapidly shoreward. Acknowledging a warning from Lieutenant Ball of the *Supply*, Hunter set sail in the smaller vessel's wake, but an unfortunate wind shift prevented the ships from weathering the western end of the bay. The *Supply* managed to tack and headed out to sea, but the *Sirius* remained embayed, and the onshore wind and current made it impossible for the ship to avoid a reef lying a hundred metres from shore. Unable to tack against the prevailing wind, the *Sirius* was thrown backward on to the reef and in less than ten minutes the hull was stove in.

An anchor was let go to steady the ship, and Captain Hunter ordered the masts cut away as the heavy surf rolled in. Although some of the men had to stay on board the *Sirius* overnight, the crew and remaining passengers were rescued by means of a travelling block and hauling lines rigged from the wreck to a pine tree on shore and aided by the ship's boats. Over the ensuing weeks, provisions, livestock, equipment and other goods were salvaged from the wreck with the assistance of convict labour, but this did little to relieve the hardships of the survivors. To ensure peace and good order on Norfolk Island, the lieutenant governor declared martial law and ordered half allowance of provisions. The loss of the *Sirius* left the settlers at Norfolk Island and Sydney Cove feeling utterly devastated and close to panic. They had considered the *Sirius* their insurance against starvation and adversity, but now with only one seaworthy ship left, plans for re-supply from the Cape and communication with England were even more tenuous. The Sydney colonists had barely three months worth of supplies remaining, even after their rations had been substantially reduced, and the people on Norfolk Island had hardly any provisions to feed them after the loss of *Sirius*.

The situation was not relieved until June 1790 when the store ships and convict transports of the Second Fleet from England arrived at Port Jackson and cargoes were obtained from such ports such as Batavia and Calcutta. Captain Hunter along with the other officers and crew of the *Sirius* were forced to remain at Norfolk Island until February 1791, when they reached Port Jackson on board the *Supply*. Most of the officers and crew returned to England in April 1792 on the Dutch vessel *Waaksamheid*, minus a few men who had remained in the colony. The following month a court martial was held on board HMS *Brunswick* to try the officers for the loss of the *Sirius*. All were honourably acquitted when it was found that everything was done that could be done, to save the ship.

#### The archaeology of HMS *Sirius*

The approximate location of the *Sirius* wreck had always been known, as the hull did not entirely disappear for almost two years after it struck, and it was depicted on contemporary and later charts of Norfolk Island. An anchor remained visible on the site until 1905, when it was removed for permanent display at Macquarie Place in Sydney and another anchor was recovered in 1973, but generally the human disturbance of the site remained minimal. In 1982 ideas were being sought for projects to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary, and the *Sirius* shipwreck, with its First Fleet connection, appeared to be an ideal candidate. The archaeological investigation of the *Sirius* was an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment, which was then responsible for the administration of the Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

Documentary research and an initial inspection of the site in 1983 by staff from the Western Australian Museum provided sufficient background information for the project to proceed. Funding for the project was provided by the Australian Bicentennial Authority and was supported by staff from a number of institutions around the country. The people of Norfolk Island have a strong association with the shipwreck of HMS *Sirius* and therefore support from the local government authority and suitable arrangements for the repatriation of conserved artefacts were critical for the success of the project.

The anticipated environmental conditions on the wreck were a major concern as the survival of any archaeological material was uncertain. Using the predictive model developed by British archaeologist Keith Muckelroy, the *Sirius* fell within the most difficult category of underwater site; possibly having no structural or organic remains and only a few scattered objects on the seabed. However, previous work in Western Australia on the Dutch East India Company shipwrecks, such as the *Batavia*, had shown that substantial archaeological materials could still remain on shallow water reef sites subjected to high energy wave action. With this site conditions in mind it was necessary to use

experienced archaeological divers, as the exposed wreck location was hazardous in most sea conditions. The majority of survey and recording work was carried out with scuba diving equipment from small inflatable dive boats anchored seaward of the surf zone. With water depths of less than 4 metres, the underwater dive times were limited only by air supply and site conditions.

Three seasons of fieldwork during 1985, 1987 and 1988 demonstrated that the wreck site had greater archaeological potential than was initially anticipated. Excellent conditions for diving during the 1987 expedition gave access to areas of the reef normally prohibited by breaking surf. This allowed the site to be accurately surveyed and mapped over an area measuring 50 metres by 80 metres, and swim searches also located material outside this main deposition zone. The use of a magnetometer to detect iron, even while hidden in coral concretions, assisted with the survey of the inner lagoon area and the parts of the reef not directly affected by breaking waves. Because of the shallow depth of water and position of the wreck relatively close to shore, it was also possible to accurately link the underwater recording to known survey control points on land.

As the *Sirius* was extensively salvaged, it is perhaps surprising that some of the ships navigational and scientific instruments were found, including a sextant, dividers and a brass pantograph for copying maps and charts. Very few ceramic or glass items were located due to the exposed nature of the site, but at least some bottle fragments appear to have been from the equipment of the ship's surgeon. Other material included equipment from the Marine contingent such as uniform buttons and belt plates, as well as musket parts and ammunition. One unexpected artefact found on the wreck was an edge ground stone hatchet head, made and used by Australian Aboriginals from around the Nepean River, West of Sydney. It has been suggested that this may be part of a collection of 'curiosities' made by one of the officers on board, similarly to the Polynesian objects found during the excavation of *HMS Pandora*.

A number of artefacts were recovered from concretions found on the reef, primarily consisting of a variety of metal fittings and equipment, including keel bolts, hull fastenings, sheathing, pump parts and rudder straps. The items connected to the fastening and sheathing of the timber hull were of particular interest as they are clear examples of the application and adaptation of new technology in naval vessels during the late 18th Century. By the time the *Sirius* was being fitted out for the voyage to Botany Bay, the Royal Navy had been experimenting with the use of copper sheathing as an antifouling device for more than twenty years. Due to the damaging galvanic reaction between the copper sheathing and the iron fastenings used to secure ship timbers, the Navy was also progressively introducing new types of copper alloy fastenings to its fleet.

It is known that the *Sirius* was originally constructed with iron fastenings, but copper alloy fastenings had been introduced during its First Fleet refit and possibly during repairs at Port Jackson in 1788. It was also recorded that the *Sirius* was carrying spare copper fastening bolts to be used experimentally for testing their durability under the copper sheathing en route from England. This is consistent with research and artefacts recovered from HMAV *Bounty* at Pitcairn Island. The bronze metal (copper and tin) used in ship fittings and fastenings from the period has a distinctive metallurgical composition, and this information was used to identify some artefact material raised from part of the site that was clearly from later shipwrecks in the area. Additionally, it was possible to distinguish two distinct batches of copper alloy sheathing used to protect the hull of the *Sirius* from the relative proportions of metals in samples tested from the site.

The project also recorded more than 200 of the cast iron ballast pigs originally located at the lowest point of the ship's hull to aid stability. Also known as 'kentledge', iron ballast came in a number of standard sizes and weights. The individual ballast pigs were laid fore and aft along each side of the keel and overlaid with rock shingle ballast, which provided a more suitable surface for stowing the timber casks in which provisions were kept. A few tons of ballast iron were usually kept spare for shifting about to alter the vessel's trim, and this was made easier by the location of holes at each end of the pigs to attach ropes or lifting tackle. Eleven ballast pigs were recovered from the wreck site, and these appear to represent three different sized types; the largest weighing approximately 155 kilograms. From documentary evidence on the amount of ballast that the *Sirius* was carrying, it is clear that approximately two fifths of the original ballast iron from the shipwreck has still not been located.

During the 1985 expedition the last of the ship's three main anchors was raised, and its conservation treatment was completed at Norfolk Island by 1988. Two smaller anchors were also recorded lying on the reef, and these badly damaged examples are believed to have made up the full number carried by the ship. As a rated naval vessel, the *Sirius* also carried a complement of iron cannon. Originally twenty guns were aboard, but some had been removed to supply the garrison at the Port Jackson settlement. It is not known how many cannon the *Sirius* was equipped with when it went aground, but most of the guns were retrieved from the wreck by contemporary salvage operations. In the initial search for the exact location of the *Sirius*, archaeologists recorded a remnant of a stone causeway running out from shore to the reef. The origins of this causeway have not been discovered and it does not appear on maps of Norfolk Island until 1904. It has been theorised that it may be a roadway built during the salvage work in 1791, that it may relate to the early mining of stone by convicts for building on Norfolk Island or may have been constructed to assist in removal of the *HMS Sirius* anchor that is now located in Macquarie Place, Sydney. Another possibility for the origin of the causeway is that it was constructed to allow the quarrying of stone used for the construction of the Kingston Pier between 1839 and 1847. The two remaining guns on the site, 18-pounder carronades or 'smashers' designed for close range actions, were recovered in 1985 and 1993. There are only several known examples of this type of gun still in existence.

Further work on the *Sirius* site was conducted in 2002 through an initiative by the Norfolk Island Government. This project concentrated on the excavation of sand gullies between the reef and the shore, where a considerable range of artefact material was located. Local personnel under expert supervision have conserved the majority of the *Sirius* artefact collection at Norfolk Island, but some of the more complex items were returned to the Western Australian Museum for more detailed conservation and recording. Major artefacts such as one of the carronades that required complex treatment and analysis has now been remounted in a replica gun carriage for local display on Norfolk Island. The majority of the *Sirius* artefact collection is housed and displayed on Norfolk Island at the main colonial settlement of Kingston, close to where the ship was wrecked. Some of the archaeological material, including the anchor recovered in 1985, is now on permanent exhibition at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney.

#### Analysis and significance of the HMS *Sirius* shipwreck

Although the exposed position of the *Sirius* shipwreck had resulted in the destruction all but the most robust artefact material, there is enough evidence from the underwater survey and contemporary historical accounts to account for the final movements of the doomed vessel. When the *Sirius* struck the on 19 March 1790, it went stern first as the crew attempted to drop an anchor to arrest the ship's progress. The prevailing wind and current then forced the hull broadside against the reef as the masts were cut away, dragging two guns over the side. The anchor raised in 1985 and the carronades recovered from the site mark the orientation of the hull at this point. That evening the rising tide pulled the ship taut on the anchor chain, and it swung around again with its bow out to sea, the crew apparently dropping another anchor near the stern to steady the vessel.

In this position the *Sirius* remained relatively intact while the initial salvage efforts were under way, but on 28 March 1790 the ship had again swung broadside as the iron ballast began to fall out of the ruptured hull. Next day the now much lighter hull progressively moved further up on to the reef away from worst of the surf. Finally, the rising tide turned the ship's bow towards the land, then threw it 'more than her own length near to the shore'. The final resting place of the wreck, approximately 70 metres away from where it had first struck, is now marked by a large quantity of ballast iron. This iron ballast may possibly protect some surviving hull timbers, but problems with the exposure of any fragile material to such a destructive marine environment have so far limited further investigations.

Analysis of the results of the *Sirius* project has also shed new light on the construction of the vessel and raised challenging questions concerning the debate as to why Botany Bay was chosen as a penal settlement. Convict ships are frequently depicted as being rotten old tubs, and contemporary criticisms of the *Sirius* by some of the officers and crew have led historians to assume that the ship was poorly constructed, unsuited to and ill-equipped for the voyage to Botany Bay. Given this hypothesis, it has been argued that the settlement at Botany Bay was merely a temporary expedient to relieve England's overcrowded gaols following the American Revolutionary War, rather than part of a considered, well executed strategic plan to establish and maintain a permanent British presence in eastern and South Pacific waters.

As part of the project, the records of the British Navy departments that organised the First Fleet voyage were examined in 1987. Contrary to previously held beliefs, the *Sirius* had originally been built as a Baltic trader or East Country ship and not an East Indiaman. Constructed at Rotherhithe on the River Thames as the *Berwick*, the vessel had been purchased on the stocks by the Admiralty in November 1781 for use as an armed naval store ship during the final stages of the American conflict. It was standard practice in the British Navy to draw up hull plans of all its craft, and the surviving plans and descriptions of the *Berwick* show that it was a relatively short, beamy and deep vessel with good cargo carrying qualities similar to the collier barks chosen by Captain James Cook for his voyages of exploration to the South Seas. A bronze spectacle plate that formed part of the ships rigging, which was recovered from the wreck site at Norfolk Island, bears the name 'BERWICK', thus confirming the identity of the shipwreck as the *Sirius*.

The documentary research produced sufficient information about the original construction and conversion of the *Berwick* to show that the building and outfit were of a high standard for the period. An account written by one of the *Berwick*'s officers also indicates that the ship had above average sailing characteristics when compared to its contemporaries. Although the *Berwick* was laid up 'in ordinary' (or mothballed) in 1785, the records showed that the vessel received an extensive overhaul during late 1786 specifically for its role in the First Fleet voyage. By the time the newly renamed *Sirius* was ready, costs for the refit and supplies came in at more than £7,000, which was expensive for the period and indicative of a thoroughness of preparations for the naval contingent of the expedition.

In March 2001, the then Governor General of Australia, Sir William Deane, unveiled a new memorial to HMS *Sirius* on Norfolk Island that was built from bricks transported from the ruins of Captain Arthur Phillip's house in Hampshire, England. The location of the memorial, close to where the *Sirius* had been wrecked in March 1790, is particularly evocative of the dangers faced by the early European occupiers of Norfolk Island. In his address, Sir William not only recalled the history of the ship and its loss but also emphasised the significance of sites, relics and monuments as touchstones in our concept of Australia. He stated that 'For those of us who gather, this is a precious site in the history of our nation and this island. The relics retrieved from the wreck offer us a rare insight into the world of our past.'

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#### Condition and Integrity

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Artefacts belonging to HMS *Sirius* have been discovered imbedded in the coral rock of reefs, lodged in cracks, or buried in deep gutters between the reefs. The archaeological excavations undertaken between 1983 and 2002 recovered a substantial number of significant artefacts and the surveys indicate that a considerable number of artefacts remain *in-situ*. Some areas in Slaughter Bay are particularly susceptible to the rough sea conditions and have yet to be archaeologically investigated for further evidence of HMS *Sirius*. Artefacts recovered from HMS *Sirius* are now located in several places and collections including:

- Norfolk Island Museum (which holds the principle collection of artefacts);
- At various locations around Norfolk Island;
- Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney, New South Wales;
- Macquarie Place, Sydney, New South Wales.

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## Location

The primary shipwreck site of HMS *Sirius* is located East of Kingston Pier in Slaughter Bay, Norfolk Island, at a point centred on latitude 29 degrees, 3 minutes and 37 seconds South and longitude 167 degrees, 57 minutes and 18 seconds East. The boundary encompasses the primary shipwreck site and other identified archaeological deposits associated with HMS *Sirius* within Slaughter Bay. These sites are contained within and bounded by an imaginary line;

(i) The commencement point being the Southeast corner of Kingston Pier at latitude 29 degrees, 3 minutes and 30.63 seconds South and longitude 167 degrees, 57 minutes and 12.11 seconds East;

(ii) thence East along the mean low water mark of the coast of Norfolk Island to a point where the parallel of latitude 29 degrees, 3 minutes and 34.03 seconds South intersects with the meridian of longitude 167 degrees, 57 minutes and 36.38 seconds East;

(iii) thence West South West to a point where the parallel of latitude 29 degrees, 3 minutes and 42.36 seconds South intersects with the meridian of longitude 167 degrees, 57 minutes and 20.11 seconds East;

(iv) thence West North West to a point where the parallel of latitude 29 degrees, 3 minutes and 39.27 seconds South intersects with the meridian of longitude 167 degrees, 57 minutes and 12.09 seconds East;

(v) thence North along the meridian of longitude 167 degrees, 57 minutes and 12.09 seconds East to the point of commencement.

All geographic coordinates for the location and area are expressed in terms of the Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994 (GDA94).

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