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### First Fleet 1788

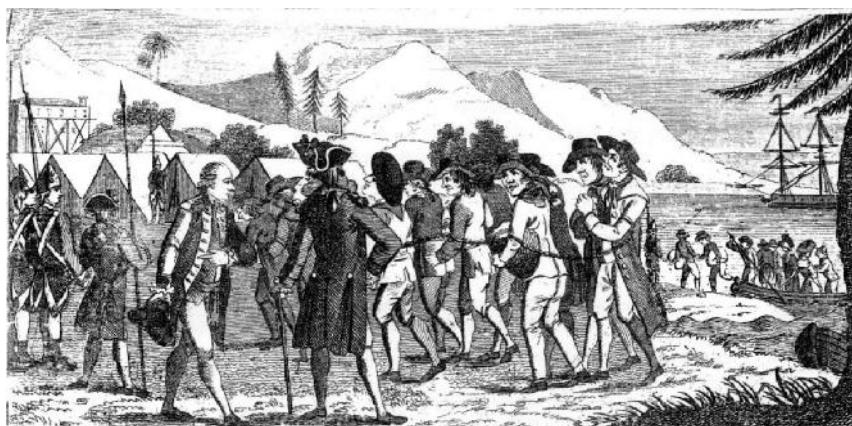
Abstract of Biographical Data from *The Founders of Australia: A Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet.*

*The Founders of Australia: A Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet* by Mollie Gillen (with Appendices by Yvonne Browning, Michael Flynn and Mollie Gillen) was published by Library of Australian History in Sydney in 1989.

The First Fleet reached Sydney in January 1788 carrying convicts and free settlers from England to establish the first European settlement in Australia. It comprised the following ships:

*Alexander*  
*Borrowdale*  
*Charlotte*  
*Fishburn*  
*Friendship*  
*Golden Grove*  
*Lady Penrhyn*  
*Prince of Wales*  
*Scarborough*  
*HMS Sirius*  
*HMS Supply*

The convicts had been tried in England and Wales but they and the marines, sailors and others on board came from diverse backgrounds, including about 180 of Scottish and Irish origin, 14 North Americans, 12 of black African origin, at least nine Jews and others from France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, the West Indies, India and Sweden.



*THE LANDING of the CONVICTS at BOTANY BAY*

Dr Gillen's volume, based on an exhaustive study of original sources in England and Australia over two decades, remains the most comprehensive study of the people of the First Fleet.

The First Fleet Dataset now included on BDA was compiled by Michael Flynn and comprises a biographical summary of every known First Fleeter embarked or born on the fleet, including those who died on the voyage (convicts, seamen, marines and settlers including officials, wives and children of marines and convicts).

It identifies all persons known to have embarked and children born on the voyage. As well as 732 convicts, 245 marines and 90 officials, wives and children landed alive in 1788, the fleet was crewed by more than 400 seamen, about half of them naval seamen on HMS *Sirius* and HMS *Supply*, the other half were merchant seamen on privately charted transports. The names of about 100 of the merchant seamen are unknown. About 1470 landed alive in the colony from the First Fleet of whom about 1270 were to remain when the merchant seamen sailed for England (the last ship departed in October 1788).

These figures do not include 144 convicts listed on indent records deriving from Orders in Council. They did not actually embark on the fleet but are included on BDA in the main convict indent Dataset for 1787-1812 with a note of their non-arrival appended. They did not sail for a variety of reasons including illness, death, escape or the issue of a last minute pardon.

Just under half of those First Fleeters who stayed in 1788 left the colony in later years for England, Ireland, India and elsewhere. A little over half ended their days in the Australian colonies, many leaving descendants who now number in the tens or hundreds of thousands in all states and territories, some bearing First Fleet surnames such as Palmer, King, Johnston, Bellette, Cavenaugh, Kable, Small and Lucas. Many descendants are members of the Fellowship of First Fleeters.

For each First Fleeter an abstract of their biography comprises name, ship and year of arrival, status, estimated age on arrival and year of birth, spouse(s), occupations (the first generally the occupation in England, the others after arrival in the colony), estimated number of known children (uncertain owing to patchy early baptism records), year and place of death.

The abstract appears on BDA in this format:

Matthew James Everingham, Arrived per Scarborough 1788, Arrival Status: First Fleeter, Convict, Age: 18 years, Birth Year: 1769c, Spouse 1: Elizabeth, Rhymes, Married: 1791, First Marriage Recorded: 1791; First Employment: Clerk; Last Employment Baker, Sawyer, Farmer, Constable; Children: 10, Died: 1817, Died at Windsor [NSW AUS]

The search term eg Matthew \* should be used when searching for a second given name.

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If the spouse is a First Fleeter, their abstract appears near the bottom of their partner's Biographical Report. For many, church marriage records of the parties have not yet been linked. These records will be linked in due course.

Sydney-born Dr Mollie Gillen died in Toronto, Canada, in January 2009, aged 100. Her biographical dictionary, now out of print, is being comprehensively revised by Michael Flynn, with the agreement of Dr Gillen's daughter, Barbara Gillen of London.

BDA plans to produce the revised Flynn/Gillen work in three volumes. The revision is a painstaking process aiming to provide full references for each biography with new analysis and adding data now accessible through internet research and including input from descendants. The publication will be available from the BDA online shop when completed.

This First Fleet Dataset is primarily based on the table published as Appendix 10 in *The Founders of Australia* in 1989 at pp 455-535. Not all recent research has been added but details will be updated as research proceeds and as a result of feedback from descendants and other interested researchers.

**[Click here](#)** to provide corrections, new information or suggested links for First Fleeters.

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This general information page has been compiled by Michael and Flynn and Malcolm Sainty, Jan 2015

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