



Hi Folks,

When the Stubbs Family Association met last October their focus was on the ship of the Coromandel, the year 2022 being the 220th anniversary of the voyage to New South Wales. Geoff Parsons prepared information and displays for the occasion and he has gratefully agreed to share that information in this newsletter.

An Ebenezer Church Heritage Day as part of the National Heritage Festival has been well attended over the last two years and we wondered would if a third one would receive the same support. The decision was made for us when 11 descendants of Jane Kennedy said that they would be staying in the Hawkesbury on the weekend of 6-7 May and would attend the heritage day if held.

You may wonder, "Who was Jane Kennedy?" The Coromandel settlers arrived in June 1802 and they spent the remainder of the year living on a government farm at Toongabbie. It was during that time that Francis, the wife of John Howe, died, apparently during child birth. John Howe did not remarry until 1811 and that was to Jane Kennedy of Parramatta. They came to live in what today is known as Howe's House in Thompson Square, Windsor. At that time Howe was the Chief Constable of Windsor.

Since our last newsletter we have heard the sad news of the deaths of two strong supporters of church family associations, namely Pat Holdorf and Bert Howard. Pat's support of the Owen Cavanaugh Family goes back to the 1970's and Bert's research of the Coromandel as published in the book 'Over-Halling the Colony' has been appreciated widely.

The future of Ebenezer Church is something that will be greatly discussed in coming months. We are now a small congregation that cannot afford a full-time minister and we do not have younger members following in our footsteps.

Over the last five years we have worked successfully as a Uniting Church Hawkesbury Zone, sharing two ministers across five congregations. Hopefully that can continue in the years ahead.

Regards,

Ted Brill, On behalf of the Congregation



EBENEZER CHURCH HERITAGE DAY

Sat 6th May 2023

10am to 1pm

- **Hear the fascinating pioneer story of Australia's oldest church**
- **Enjoy Ebenezer's popular devonshire teas**
- **Join small group walk-and-talks in the colonial graveyard, to historic tree, quarry and riverside beach**

Bookings and prepayment essential:

Adults: \$20 (includes morning tea)

School Children: \$5 if having morning tea (Fruit juices, soft drink available). No charge if not having morning tea

To book ...

Confirm that a place is available for you by contacting us as below:

Sue / Ted Brill - tedbrill@bigpond.com
0438 777 215; 02 4579 9235

Then make a direct deposit to ...

Uniting Financial Services

BSB: 634634

Account No: 100024249

Name of Account: Ebenezer Church Shop

Please use the number we give you as a reference.

Alternative methods of payment can be arranged by contacting us as above.

COROMANDEL

A ship that brought so much to New South Wales

There have been many ships named Coromandel and places using this name. In fact, the road which passes the Ebenezer Church is named Coromandel. This name originates from the east coast of historic India and at that time it extended as far as present-day Bangladesh.

Our Coromandel was built in Chittagong, Bangladesh in 1793. It was an armed merchant ship with twelve 18-pound cannons and was built of teak using techniques typical of shipbuilding in that area for the East India Company. It was 522 tons in weight and its length was 125 feet, about the length of my typical Sydney housing block.

Voyages

It made two voyages to the colony of New South Wales. The first was in 1802 and the second in 1804 with the first trip being more relevant to the area of the Hawkesbury. The ship was owned by Reeve and Green of London and was chartered by the government of the day in England to transport free settlers, convicts and provisions to the colony. There were eight free settler families on this first voyage with the promise of land and initial provisions to establish their farming. Those families were Davison, Hall, Howe, Johnston, Johnstone, Mein, Stubbs and Turnbull. In all, there were 232 people on board for this first voyage.

They left Portsmouth on the 12th of February 1802 in the company of a similar transport ship, the Perseus. The latter ship, being smaller and slower, was soon left behind. The Coromandel sailed down the Atlantic nearing Brazil before heading southeast and passing south of South Africa. The ship then sailed along the zone of the roaring 40s rounding to the south of Tasmania before heading north to Port Jackson, Sydney. The journey took four months and one day to arrive in Sydney (or 121 days, arriving on the 13th of June 1802).

This remarkable ship set several records on this journey:

- It was the first non-stop trip to the colony of New South Wales



The scale model of "our" Coromandel based on extensive research by A.J. (Bert) Howard and his contacts from plans obtained through the British National Museum, London. Bert, with the help of a number of colleagues, built this model in about three months using Australian timber to denote the connection to the colony.

- The longest non-stop voyage of any ship at that time
- It was the fastest trip to the colony of New South Wales (a record that stood for some 15 years).

An important aspect for the colony was that it transported settlers and convicts that had skill levels necessary for advancement of the colony. This was different from the earlier transport of unskilled criminal type of convicts. A very noteworthy feature of this trip was that not one convict life was lost on this journey. This was undoubtedly due to the charter conditions applied, the presence of a doctor on board, and the humane treatment of the convicts during the voyage. This feat of no convict loss of life was also achieved during the Coromandel's second voyage from England to Sydney in 1804.

The survival of all the convicts is even more remarkable in comparison to two other newly built ships, the Hercules and the Atlas, which transported convicts from Ireland in 1802. Those ships arrived shortly after the Coromandel with the convicts in an absolutely terrible state, with the loss of 127 out of 320 that boarded. The

governor of NSW Philip Gidley King highly commended the masters of the Coromandel and Perseus for the good state of the prisoners on arrival in the colony. But he was scathing of the masters of those other two ships who lost so many convict lives, one apparently also transporting other goods for their own gain.

The Free Settlers

The free settlers were initially sent to government farms at Toongabbie where they sowed, grew and harvested various crops. By March of 1803 these Coromandel families had selected the locations of their permanent 100-acre grants in the region of Ebenezer at the Hawksbury River. So these people from the old country had their plots of land, some provisions, and labour to commence a life of farming in the new colony.

The religious faiths of all these free settlers and other families who had settled in the area led to services being held out in the open under the historic tree close to the current Ebenezer Church, just across the road. These other families were Arndell, Bushell, Grono, Cavanough, Jacklin, Jones and Suddis. This worship was non-denominational as the people came from a number of different religious backgrounds. This proceeded to the building of the stone block church on donated land that we see there today. It served as both church and schoolhouse for the people in this environ.

Fate of “our” Coromandel

This Coromandel was subsequently captured by a French privateer, Captain Henri, in the ship, La Henriette on 3 February 1805 about 1000 miles southeast of India as it was returning to Britain. Captain Henri took the Coromandel to Ile de France, east of Madagascar. There, the Coromandel and its cargo were confiscated by the French government, as they were at war with Britain.

In December 1810 the British forces captured Ile de France and renamed it Mauritius. It is uncertain where our ship was at that time or what name it was sailing under as the French typically renamed captured ships. But it did return to service with the British.



Painting of the Coromandel by Peter Krak based on the scale model built by Bert Howard.

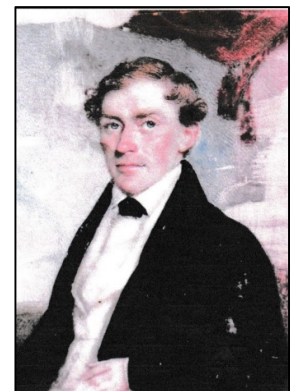
Thanks to this ship, the emigrating families and the transported convicts there have been many thousands of dependents that have called NSW, then Australia, home.

Compiled by Geoff Parsons from information from Bert Howard, Stubbs Family Reunion volumes, and The History of Ebenezer – Australia’s Oldest Church

Surgeon on the Coromandel

Charles Throsby

This is the only image found of anyone on the Coromandel in 1802. The author [Geoff Parsons] took this photo many years ago from a tiny delicate painting on ivory in a plain heavy teak frame – the original was held by an old Throsby family member. On the back was written in pencil “India 1801” – this was when Charles visited India on the Coromandel before sailing back to England.



Charles left the Coromandel at Sydney Cove in 1802.

Charles Throsby was to make an outstanding contribution to the colony as surgeon, grazier, magistrate, Member of the Upper House, explorer and public servant.

Throsby was known to be considerate and evoked strong loyalty from his servants. His attitude to the Aborigines was enlightened, for he believed that their indiscriminate slaughter would bring only revenge and that it was possible to live in harmony with them.

Church Pioneers – Andrew & Mary Johnston

When Andrew Johnston selected his grant on the Hawkesbury he chose a wide stretch of river flat. The 90 acre allotment was smaller than the 100 acres that others received but perhaps this was because it had a larger proportion of productive river soil.

Andrew Johnston is believed to have practised as an architect in London. However there is no evidence, apart from Ebenezer Church, that he continued his practice in his new country other than the building of his first and second home.

Johnston successfully worked his 'New Berwick Farm' at Portland Head and his family grew in number to eight sons and two daughters.

At first the pioneer settlers built their homes close to the river for at that time water had to be carried by bucket from the river to the house. Later when a settler could afford a cask he would put it on a slide and drag it, full of water, with his horse or bullocks, to the kitchen door.

Dr Lang told the story of how Andrew Johnston had to move his wife Mary three times during one night to escape the rising water of the 1806 flood. The day before Mary had given birth to a daughter, Hannah. To move them, Andrew put his wife and child in a tarpaulin slung under a dray.

When the time came to build Ebenezer Church, not only did Andrew Johnston design the building but he also supervised its construction and contributed generously towards its cost. He later became the first Presbyterian elder in the colony, being ordained by Rev. John Dunmore Lang in 1824.

Andrew Johnston was prominent in affairs of church and state. He was a strong supporter of Governor Bligh, naming one of his sons James Bligh, a practice that has been continued to the present generation.



The cedar plumb bob that Andrew Johnston used when building Ebenezer Church hangs in the Hawkesbury Museum in Windsor.

Grono Family Association

The Grono Family Association has been disbanded. The retiring committee of Karen Mills, Nigel Mills, Mandy Waller, Marilyn Hume and Janice Taylor are to be congratulated on their achievements – their thoroughly researched publications, the restoration of Grono graves and, through their reunions, keeping the story alive of John & Elizabeth Grono.

Unsold copies of Grono history books have been donated for sale in the church shop and permission has been granted to reproduce more copies when needed. Remaining Association funds to the value of \$5,194 have been donated for the maintenance of Ebenezer Church.

The Grono Family Association's collection of family history materials has been transferred to the Hawkesbury Library and people can access them there. There is also the website

<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~gronofamily/genealogy/index.htm>

We thank the retiring committee for their support of Ebenezer Church over 16 years.



Keep the date – Sunday 8 October - An Evening of Jazz on the riverbank at historic Ebenezer Church – details to follow

Hawkesbury Johnston Family Facebook Page

Robyn Sanday has informed us that there is a Facebook page for the Johnston family. It shares family updates, photos and stories. If any descendants of Andrew & Mary would like to join just send a request.



*The Johnston home at Portland Head
Photo by Michael Kemp*

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