



FOPIA Newsletter

April 2020

Edited by Karilyn Beiers

EXPEDITION TO MORETON BAY - 1824

A couple of weeks ago, an email was received from Caroline Fewtrell of Holland Park West referring FOPIA to a newspaper report from 1824 where "Peel's Island" was mentioned. She located the articles through the National Library of Australia's Trove site.

Our thanks go to Caroline for bringing this information to our attention, and, as a final Newsletter, the article (which was not clear and was in small print) has been transposed, with all punctuation and other idiosyncrasies exactly as in the newspaper article.

The article, which is from the Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser dated 31 December 1824 (Tas-1821-1825) Page 3 (<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1090456>), was written from an article printed in The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW-1803-1842) Page 2 (<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2183475>). The article was then published in Tasmania following receipt of newspapers from Sydney via the Amity.

"SYDNEY INTELLIGENCE"

--ooOoo--

Sydney Papers of the 2nd and 9th instant having been received by the Amity, we selected the following articles of intelligence:-

"GOVERNOR'S RETURN - On Saturday morning last (Dec. 4), H.M. colonial brig Amity returned from the Northern Settlements, last from Moreton Bay, with His Excellency the Governor in Chief, His Honor the Chief Justice, The Surveyor-General, Captain McArthur and Mr Francis Stephen, all in excellent health.

We are happy to inform our Readers that the Amity was only four days returning, while she was eleven days on the passage to Moreton-bay; in which she encountered heavy gales and bad weather. One night in particular, the thunder was so awful, and the lightning so vivid (the wind at the time blowing a gale), as to resemble a storm in the West Indies. His Excellency, we believe, passed five years of his life in these Islands, and never witnessed more stormy and alarming weather: the fire balls, as it were, danced upon the deck.

The information that we have been able to obtain, is not of a much more interesting nature than that which we have already given to our Readers. His Excellency the Governor is amazingly gratified with the excursion; and, from the knowledge He has been able personally to acquire, there can be little doubt but that Australia will, at no distant period, derive considerable and lasting benefit.

The Amity entered by the Northern, and returned through the Southern entrance. The length of Moreton Bay is ascertained to be 60 and its breadth 20 miles; containing, within the basin, no less than 1200 miles! His Excellency and His Honor the Chief Justice, with the other Gentlemen, went up the Brisbane River only 28 miles. At this extent the breadth of the river is about half-a-mile. The river preserves its character the length of this distance. The scenery on each side was truly picturesque; on one side high open forest land would present itself, whilst on the other, a comparatively low country, covered with close vegetation, was to be seen; these views were alternate, and from the striking contrast, were of the most engaging description. The pine, with which the country seems to abound, holds out prospects of a truly promising kind. Some of the trees measured from 8 to 10 feet in circumference, and in height might be from 90 to 100 feet, without the intervention of a branch to injure their symmetry.

As the natives were particularly troublesome to the New Settlement at Red Cliff Point, by purloining the tools and other useful articles, at every opportunity, the Commandant has been constrained to keep them at a respectful distance, owing to which very few were to be seen by the Party. Up to the day preceding that of the departure of the Amity, only three natives had been descried and they were at some distance. On the morning of the Amity's weighing anchor, however, a small party came round a point of land. The Governor, the Chief Justice, and other Gentlemen, presently landed. One of them quickly recognised Finnegan (the partner of Parsons who had been so many months with them), and evinced extraordinary pleasure. In a few moments the party increased to 15, men and boys, but no females were to be seen. Two of the Hunter's River natives had attended the Expedition, and were on shore with His Excellency, but they failed in making themselves understood, other than by gestures - they seemed quite ignorant of each other's dialect. They were very friendly, and betrayed no symptom of fear; Indeed, one was so inordinately gratified, as to roll himself in the sand - from pure pleasure. They were in a state of nudity, with the exception of curiously wrought nets, which were worn round the neck for the purpose of carrying fish and other food: These were gladly bartered away for tomahawks, &c. They were armed with no destructive weapons. His Excellency regretted that the Expedition had not earlier fallen in with these Aborigines, that some degree of confidence might have been commenced upon, if not established, between them and the Europeans. They were evidently of a superior order to those in the more Southern part of this continent.

His Excellency, and the Gentlemen of the Expedition, remained one night up the River Brisbane, having encamped on Peel's Island, so named in honour of the right Honorable Secretary of State for the Home Department.

We are credibly informed, that His Excellency intends either the removal of the present temporary settlement, or the establishment of another, about 9 ⁽¹⁾ miles from the mouth of the Brisbane, which will be more desirable for the purposes of navigation. The scite fixed upon was designated, by His Honor the Chief Justice, Edenglassie. The river is half-a-mile wide at this eligible position for a Settlement; having ten fathoms water, possesses good anchorage, and has, by nature, a wharf already nearly complete. Our limits will not allow of more at present.

On arriving in the Harbour, His Excellency immediately proceeded to Parramatta, by water."

--oo0oo--

The newspaper also contains other interesting articles which appear on the same page; These have been transposed for your information as they provide an insight into life in "the Colonies" in 1824.

The first article shows how navigation "experiences" were recorded for future shipping, by accident on most occasions!

<p><i>"Thursday last (Dec 2) arrived from Manilla, the ship Swallow, Captain James Black. She sailed from the last port the 28th of August, bound for South America, with a cargo of sundries. Having encountered an unknown reef in the North Pacific Ocean, she was so much seriously</i></p>	<p><i>injured as to render it incumbent on Captain Black to make for this port, in order to repair. This dangerous reef is now laid down by Captain B. and is stated to be at Lat. 3° 37' N. and Long. 154° 38' E."</i></p>
--	---

--oo0oo--

The next was in relation to the "Minerva" which arrived carrying prisoners

<p><i>"On Friday (Nov 19) arrived the ship Minerva, Captain John Bell, sailed from London the 14th of July, touching at the Cape of Good Hope, which she left the 1st of October, with 170 male prisoners; lost two on the passage. The guard consists</i></p>	<p><i>of Major Kirkwood, Quarter Master Hales and 45 men of the 40th Regt. lost one man. Surgeon Superintendent Dr Nesbitt, R.N. Brings a mail. Passengers - Mrs Hales and three children and Mrs Bell. "</i></p>
--	--

--oo0oo--

⁽¹⁾ Copy hard to read - Appears to be 9 miles but may be 19 or 29 miles

Caroline also referred to two other articles and I have since been able to read an article from the Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser dated 24 December 1824 (Tas 1821-1825) Page 2 (<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1090444>)

This article (published a week prior to the main article above) tells about the Amity being forced to take shelter at Newcastle on its way to Moreton Bay, due to bad weather. The report is very amusing and definitely not likely to be printed in such detail these days.

The article is dated "**Newcastle, 21st November, 1824**"

At the time, the Commandant, a Captain Gillman, was absent. The report goes on to say:

"An express was dispatched to acquaint Captain Gillman, who was at Wallis Plains, a distance of 25 miles from Newcastle, of the circumstance, and Captain Gillman returned to this Settlement in four hours and a half from the time the express started, and immediately proceeded on board the Amity to pay his respects to the Governor."

"The following morning, Saturday, His Excellency, accompanied by the Chief Justice and the Gentlemen, came on shore, and walked to the light and signal stations, from whence they proceeded to inspect the public buildings; and after having taken refreshments at the Commandant's, returned on board the Amity, with the exception of the Chief Justice, who was so much indisposed as to make it advisable for him to remain on shore at Captain Gillman's. The same evening His Excellency honored Captain Gillman with his company, and his Suite, at dinner.

At night there was a festival of black natives, which the Governor condescended to be present at, and ordered to be furnished with a plentiful supply of victuals and drink. His Excellency was on board his vessel, about ten that night; the Chief Justice remaining on shore at Captain Gillman's.

Next morning, Sunday, the Governor, with his Party, attended Divine Service at the Church, and having taken apartments at the Commandant's, and afterwards dined with him and Mrs Gillman, they returned on board the Amity.

The next morning the wind proving favourable, the Amity got under weigh about 8o'clock, and proceeded to Moreton Bay, in company with the Mars ⁽²⁾.

Whilst we are happy to say that His Excellency appeared to be in excellent health and spirits, we are glad to have it in our power to add, that the Chief Justice was quite restored to health, when he took his departure from this Settlement."

--ooOoo--

**CHEERS AND GOOD LUCK TO ALL MEMBERS OF
THE FRIENDS OF PEEL ISLAND
THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP OVER THE YEARS**

⁽²⁾ The cutter Mars travelled in company with the Amity