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ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF NORFOLK ISLAND

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A recent vacation on Norfolk Island provided a first hand insight into the island's eventful and rather enigmatic history and was the inspiration for this essay. Readers should be mindful that this paper is not based on my field research, I composed the text, drawn largely from published sources, "to get the facts straight" when compiling a slide presentation on the history and archaeology of the island. I offered it for publication in Archaeology in New Zealand solely because most New Zealanders I have spoken to know little about the island, its history, or its archaeology.

Norfolk Island (Fig. 1) is approximately 8 km long x 5 km wide, with a coastine of about 32 km and landmass of about 35 sq km. To the south, distant 1 km and 6 km respectively, are two smaller uninhabited islands, Nepean and Phillip. Norfolk is one of the most isolated islands in the Pacific. The nearest landmasses are New Caledonia to the north (c. 720 km), New Zealand to the southeast (c. 750 km), and Lord Howe Island (c. 850 km) to the southwest. Sydney, farther to the southwest, is twice as distant as Lord Howe.

The islands (Norfolk and Phillip) are the only parts of a submarine volcanic ridge, stretching from New Zealand to New Caledonia, which are above sea level. The main rock types are basaltic lavas and tuffs. The highest points on the islands, Mt Pitt (316 m) and Mount Bates (318 m) are remnants of an old volcanic vent. South of the vent and forming the body of the island, lies a deeply dissected plateau, standing 60 to 120 m above sea level. There is comparatively little surface runoff, most of the water being absorbed in the highly friable soils. The coast is characterised by steep 40-100 m high cliffs above narrow boulder strewn beaches. The only coastal lowland, in the Kingston area in the southwest, is 1.5 x 0.5 km in area and rises to 20 m above sea level. The shore of this lowland area (and also Nepean Island) is formed of calcarenites from which are derived the yellow sands which make up the adjacent beaches at Cemetery, Emily, and Slaughter Bays. The calcarenite also forms a small reef in Slaughter Bay. Historically the lowland area has been the favoured area for human settlement.

Flora and Fauna: Past and Present

In 1774 Wales noted that flax (*Phormium tenax*) formed an almost impenetrable cover near the shore, but inland the tall canopy forest of Norfolk pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*)

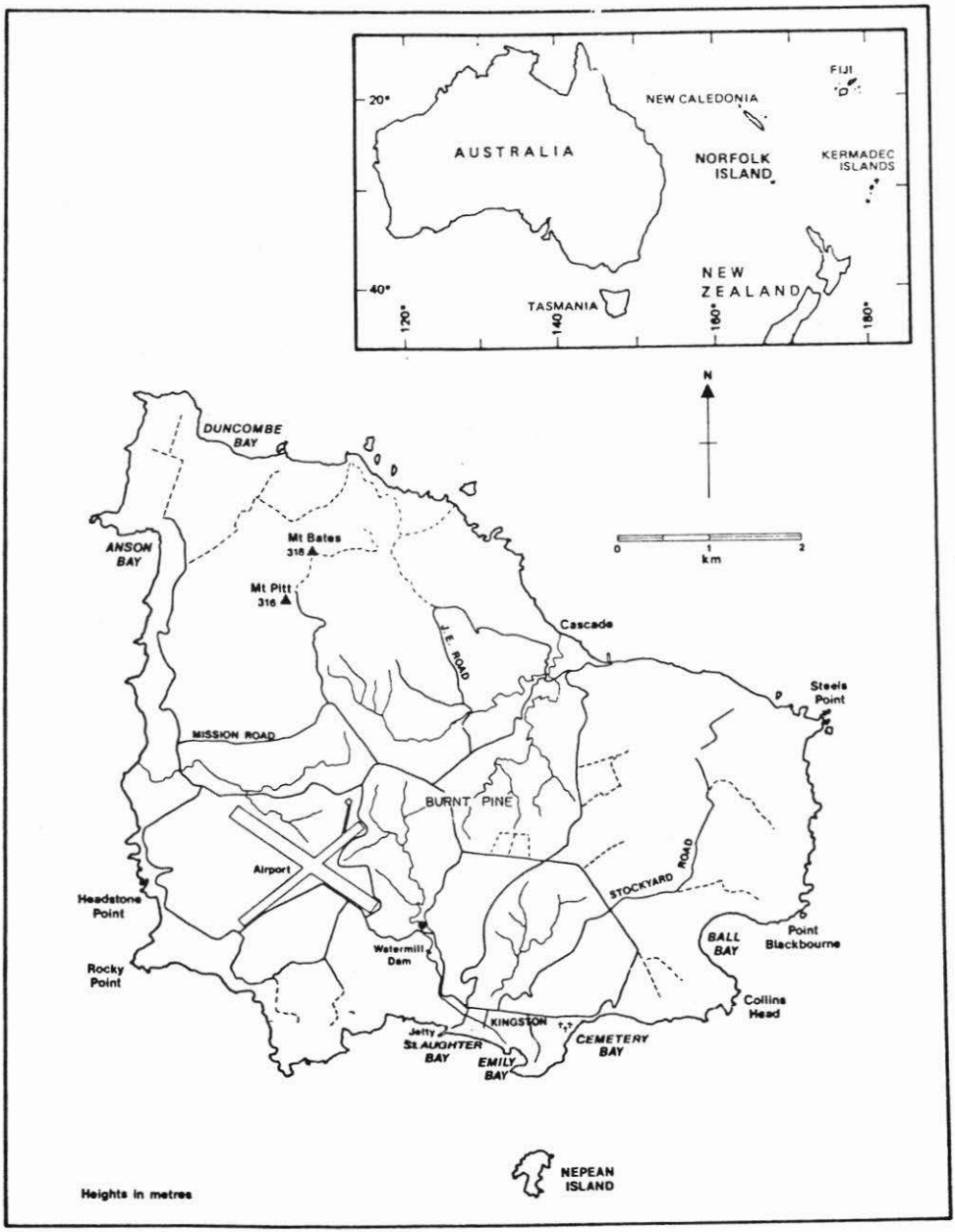

Figure 1. Norfolk Island.

prevented the establishment of dense undergrowth. The two smaller islands were also well covered with vegetation at that time. Since the establishment of the first penal colony in 1788 much of the islands have been deforested for grazing and timber.

Over 50 species of indigenous, migrant, and visiting birds have been recorded on the island (Turner and others 1968:38-41). Since European contact, six species have become locally extinct. These include the Norfolk Island variants of the New Zealand wood pigeon and kaka, and the Norfolk Island petrel (*Pterodroma melanopus*). The latter was of great economic importance during the establishment of the first European settlement (the first penal colony) on the island. A large breeding colony on Mt Pitt was regularly exploited until the birds became extinct. Some nights several thousand birds were taken (Specht 1983:4). The Norfolk Island version of the New Zealand parrakeet is now being bred in captivity. There are less than 10 left.

Turtles were relatively common in Emily Bay in 1788 but are now rarely seen. Then as now mollusca are common but there are few species suitable for human consumption. Over 160 fish species have been recorded in Norfolk waters, of which 147 are inshore species. Compared with more tropical areas the fish density is relatively low. The only freshwater fish is the eel (*Anguilla australis schmidti*). In January 1791, Lt-Governor King reported that "very large eels" were common in creeks and springs (Bladen 1892:429).

European Discovery

The European discovery of Norfolk Island took place in October 1774, when Captain Cook: in command of HMS *Resolution*, on his second voyage around the world, sighted the island. Extracts from his log entries (and in his own style) best tell the story.

> "Some of the officers and gentlemen went to take a view of the Island and its produce ...We found the island uninhabited and near a kin to New Zealand ...The flax plant, many other trees and plants common to that country was found here but the chief produce of the isle is Spruce Pines (Norfolk pines) which grow here in, vast abundence and to a vast size, from two to three feet diameter and upwards, it is of a different sort to those in New Caledonia and also those in New Zealand and for Masts, yards etc superior to both ...We cut down one of the smallest trees ...Here is another Isle where Masts for the largest ships may be had. Here are the same sort of pigions [sic], parrots and parrokeets [sic] as in New Zealand, rails and some small birds. The sea fowl are

> White Boobies, guls [sic], Tern etc ...The coast is not distitute [sic] of Fish ...I took possession of this Isle as I had done of all the others we had discovered, and named it Norfolk Isle, in honour of that noble family ...I had almost forgot to mention that the isle is supplied with fresh Water and produceth a bundence of small Cabbage Palms ...(some of which they cut down for food)." Shortly after "We stretched to the south ...My design was to touch at Queen Charlottes Sound in New Zealand, there to refresh my people and put the Ship in a condition to cross this great ocean in a high Latitude once more". Cook's Journal 11th October 1774 (Beaglehole 1961:565-568).

Cook's report to the Admiralty and the publication of his book A Voyage Towards The South Pole in 1777 gave Norfolk its first publicity. A little over a decade later (in 1788), a British penal colony was established on the island, the first of three discrete periods of European settlement.

Pre-European Occupation

When Cook visited Norfolk in October 1774, he and the astronomer William Wales observed no sign of previous human visitation (Beaglehole 1961:869). The island was still uninhabited in March 1788 when Lieutenant Philip Gidley King arrived to establish the first penal colony. Within weeks of landing, King's party encountered possible signs of pre-European visitition (notably stone adzes, a piece of polished wood, a canoe, a coconut and "a clump of banana trees"). Subsequently other possible evidences of prior occupation have been reported including burials of unknown antiquity. In 1975 Jim Specht of the Australian Museum studied a group of stone artefacts from Norfolk Island and concluded they were similar to East Polynesian tools (Specht 1984:1). As he was aware stone tools were still being uncovered on the island it was resolved to undertake a field study on the island in 1976. Specht was assisted by Dr B.F. Leach (then on the staff of the Anthropology Dept., University of Otago) and Ms H. Czuchnicka. The results of that study and a reassessment of previously reported evidences were presented by Specht (1984). His report was the main database for the following discussion.

The central questions raised by the Norfolk Island finds were: If Pacific Islanders reached the island prior to European arrival, did their attempt(s) at colonisation fail, or did the evidence suggest that there had been one or more casual visits with no real attempt to establish a settlement? The questions were asked in relation to the fact that Norfolk is one of only a few islands in the Pacific that did not support viable human populations at the time of European contact, but nevertheless have yielded evidence of pre-European visitation (Emory 1934, Finney 1958). Furthermore, Norfolk is not only the largest of

these unoccupied islands, it is also much larger than some of the occupied islands. For example, the tiny islands of Banaba and Nauru with a combined area less than that of Norfolk, each supported flourishing populations at the time of contact. Easter Island, more than half as large again as Norfolk but much less isolated, had a substantial population, though stresses were evident, when Europeans first landed (McCoy 1979). At the other end of the scale, Pitcairn Island, only 1/8 the area of Norfolk and no less isolated, bears archaeological evidence of several phases of human utilisation prior to settlement by the *Bounty* mutineers and their Tahitian companions (Bellwood 1978:352).

Conclusions from the Archaeological Survey

The primary objective of the archaeological project was to locate sites, from which it was hoped to demonstrate the nature and antiquity of pre-European visitation or settlement on the island. Despite the large number of isolated stone artefact finds on the island (at least 50 are documented) and a test pitting programme, only one possible occupation site was located. At this location, Slaughter Bay, locals had found many heavily weathered basalt adze preforms and flakes in the intertidal zone. After an abortive investigation Specht (1984:9) concluded that the artefacts were derived from a "stone working area" but their waterworn state indicated they were not in-situ. A similar (but unwater-rolled) assemblage (the Rabone collection) was found in adjacent Emily Bay in 1934.

With the exception of one nondescript piece of worked bone, only stone artefacts had been found on Norfolk at the time of the survey. Since that date at least two more non-lithic pieces have been recovered. In 1983, a fragment of a heavily weathered shell ring was found by a diver in Slaughter Bay, and recently a large tridacna adze has been uncovered onshore in the same bay during sand quarrying. The latter item, now in the Kingston museum (which is presently being established), is significant in that its provenance has been accurately recorded and it appears to be in-situ (R. Varman pers.comm. August 1988).

The absence of stratigraphic deposits refocused attention on the stone artefacts which have been found on Norfolk Island over the years. They include ground axe or adze blades, flaked preforms, and struck flakes. Specht undertook detailed morphological and petrological studies on 34 stone items, defining four groups based on inferred origins: "Australian", "Melanesian", "Polynesian-Basaltic", and "Polynesian-Volcanoclastic". He concluded (see Specht 1984 for detailed analysis) that:

(a) the Australian artefacts must have been taken to Norfolk after 1788.

(b) the Melanesian-style artefacts were weak evidence for visits to Norfolk from that region in pre-European times and were probably brought to the island by students of the Melanesian Mission which was established in 1866.
(c) the unprovenanced assemblages (described above) from Slaughter and Emily Bays were the most convincing evidence of pre-European visits by Pacific Islanders. The artefacts from these two locations suggest stone flaking at each place, and it is unlikely that a non-European made them since they consist of imported basalt and are similar to early East Polynesian forms (Duff types 1 & 3, and possibly 4; Specht 1984:30).
(d) the volcanoclastic group consisted of 2B adze types probably derived from New Zealand. While Specht believed these artefacts possibly reflected a visit late in the prehistoric period directly from New Zealand or via the Kermadecs, he regards only the basalt artefact assemblages from Slaughter and Emily Bays as firm evidence of Pacific Islanders reaching Norfolk prior to the European discovery of the island.

Other Evidence

(a) Human remains have been found at several locations on Norfolk Island since 1833. None of these finds can be assigned unequivocably to the period prior to European arrival (Specht 1984:31).

(b) The presence of banana trees ("plantains") on Norfolk was the first indication that Pacific Islanders may have reached Norfolk before the British. They were found in an area known as Arthur's Vale, about 0.75 km inland from the Kingston settlement. Both Capt John Hunter (1793:306) and Lt-Governor King (Bladen 1893:566) reported they were growing there in thick clusters in April 1788. The discovery of the banana trees occasioned surprise among the colonists who hitherto had considered they were the first settlers. As bananas are propagated by vegetative processes it is highly improbable that they reached the island by rafting, and more so when one considers their distance inland. Cook's party of 1774 made no record of planting anything and did not land in the Kingston area. Moreover, the first discoveries of stone tools were found in the same vicinity. Thus, it seems likely that the bananas were introduced prior to 1788 by people other than Cook's party.

(c) The faunal evidence relates specifically to rats, the only terrestrial quadrapeds noted by King and his party (Bladen 1892:187). They, together with "grubworms" and "catterpillars" [sic] wreaked havoc on food supplies in the early years of the settlement. Rats are a frequent commensal of man (and his ships and cargo); their presence and distribution usually

following shortly after the establishment of human populations. Specht (1984:37) reviewed the evidence and concluded that the rat responsible for the devastation of crops in 1788 was *Rattus exulans*, the Polynesian rat. *R. exulans* is indigenous to the Pacific region and closely associated with humans, being commonly found around villages and plantations. Its preferred habitat is tree crops and grasslands, although it is also found in forested areas. As the rats were a severe pest within one month of the establishment of the penal colony in 1788, and sub-fossil *R. exulans* remains from deposits in the Kingston area date 700-800 years BP, it suggests that they were well established on the island prior to the arrival of Europeans, and moreover probably arrived with much earlier Polynesian travellers.

(d) The early European settlers recorded "discoveries" of coconuts, two badly damaged canoes, a crude anthropomorphic wooden carving, and a turtle which appeared to have had its back "pierced thro ...by a peg" (Bladen 1893:539). These items were found on various beaches around the island. While they cannot be regarded as direct evidence of pre-1774 Polynesian visitation, their presence does not detract from its feasibility. If the various items mentioned above drifted to Norfolk without human intervention, it increases the likelihood that Polynesian travellers or castaways made landfall on Norfolk by the same means.

Discussion

Specht (1984:44) concluded that "there can be no doubt that Pacific islanders from Eastern Polynesia reached Norfolk Island prior to its discovery by Europeans. There may also have been visits or landings from Melanesia, although the evidence for this is slender". Pre-European landings from Australia seem highly unlikely. The strongest evidence for a pre-1788 occupation of the island are the stone tools and banana trees found by the first British settlers. There are no non-human agencies that could have transported them 0.75 km inland to Arthur's Vale, even if they had been carried to the island in a drifting canoe(s). Specht (1984:39) hypothesized that the best interpretation of the surface finds and the assemblages from Emily and Slaughter Bays is that there was certainly one arrival from Eastern Polynesia, probably between A.D. 1000-1400, and possibly a second between A.D. 1400 and 1774. Two landings would cover all the finds on Norfolk.

One landing from tropical Eastern Polynesia is necessary to explain the presence of bananas in 1788, and the typology and petrology of some of the tools in the Emily and Slaughter Bay assemblages is consistent with this contention. The fact that someone had gone to the effort of establishing a banana plantation some distance inland suggests that they intended to

stay for a reasonably long time, if not settle permanently. Irrespective of the number of landings or their points of origin, the question remains as to what happened to the people. Specht (1984:40-45) reviewed the known and inferred terrestrial and marine food resources and various possible founder population dynamics and concluded in Norfolk's case that there were no a priori grounds for assuming that a small founder population of both sexes and reproductive age would inevitably be headed for extinction. The archaeological evidence from Norfolk does not support an interpretation of frequent or regular visits, or two way voyaging. There is no evidence of attempting to adapt to local conditions, followed by extinction. Other factors which may have discouraged long term Polynesian settlement on Norfolk include the fact it is not a tropical island, and it lacks extensive reefs and lagoon systems where fishing can be undertaken in comparative safety. On the contrary the rough open-sea conditions around Norfolk are often unfavourable for fishing. The island also lacks a rich molluscan fauna suitable for extensive human exploitation. The first penal colonists overcame such difficulties by heavily exploiting the extensive sea bird colonies, especially that of the Norfolk Island petrel. Polynesian colonists might have done the same. The absence of coconuts may have been the critical factor. Throughout the tropical Pacific the coconut is a major dietary component, but they are unable to grow in the relatively cool latitude of Norfolk (29°S).

So, as Specht and his colleagues were aware (Specht 1984:45) there seems little likelihood of meaningful progress in understanding Norfolk's pre-European past unless an undisturbed archaeological site(s) is found, through which various possible explanations can be tested. Only one area, the Kingston common, seems a likely prospect. This area, the site of the later British penal settlements, is administered within the framework of a management plan. As an archaeologist administers work in the area, we may expect that any archaeological evidences likely to predate the penal colonies will be readily identified and studied to shed further light on the rather elusive "prehistory" of Norfolk.

The Historic Era

The historic era on Norfolk is commonly divided into three stages as follows:

1. The First (Penal) Settlement (1788-1814);
2. The Second (Penal) Settlement (1825-1856);
3. The free settlement phase, which commenced in 1856 with the arrival of 194 Pitcairn Islanders.

The First Settlement 1788-1814

In 1786 the British Government decided, because of overcrowding in British prisons, to rid the country immediately of prisoners under sentence or order of transportation and re-establish them in penal settlements in Australia. To move the large number of convicts as well as the officers, seamen, soldiers, and civilians associated with the project, the First Fleet was formed. The fleet comprising the flagship *Sirius*, the armed tender *Supply*, and nine transports and store ships, arrived at Botany Bay in 1788, all under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip. (Australia has just finished celebrating the bicentenary of the Fleet's arrival.) Phillip's instructions from King George III contained this passage: "Norfolk Island ...being represented as a spot which may hereafter become useful, you are, as soon as circumstances will admit of it, to send a small establishment thither to secure the same to us, and prevent it being occupied by the subjects of any other European power" (Hoare 1988:6).

Within a week of the Fleet arriving in Australia, Phillip appointed Lieutenant Phillip Gidley King superintendent and commandant of Norfolk Island. King and his party of seven free men and nine male and six "disciplined" female convicts were directed to embark on the *Supply* and proceed to Norfolk where they were to establish a settlement. After some difficulty finding a suitable landing place, tents and stores were eventually landed at "Sydney Bay" (later to be renamed Kingston). King was given strict instructions "to proceed to the cultivation of the flax-plant ...cotton, corn, and grains". Clearing land, sowing seeds and cutting timber occupied the settlers for the first few weeks. By 2 April 1788 King's men had completed a storehouse, and were busy pit-sawing timber for huts. Although the soil was very fertile, King's agricultural endeavours suffered one setback after another. In their first exposed positions (close to the beach) they were devastated by heavy salt laden winds. Then they were devastated by a plague of rats. Later, in quick succesion, "ye grubs", "ye catterpillars", "ye grub-worm", and "ye parroquets" attacked the crops. King tried all sorts of ingenious methods to combat the pests without much success. To add to the woes of the settlers, in January 1789, the fledging colony was badly damaged by a hurricane.

As the island was uninhabited when he first arrived, King assumed he and his company were the first settlers but within two months of their arrival he recorded that he had "discovered a great quantity of plantane (banana) trees", "stone hatchets", the remains of a canoe, a fresh coconut and a small carved piece of wood (these items were discussed earlier).

On 17 April 1788 King caught a marine stealing rum from his tent, and as "an attempt of ye same sort was made on the 2nd", he decided to make an example of him, and ordered "1 Dozen lashes for quitting work, 1 Dozen for breaking into ye Kings Stores and 1 Dozen for Theft". It was the beginning of an increasing level of brutality which later earned the island the sobriquet "Hell Hole of the Pacific".

The penal settlement began to swing into gear with the arrival of the *Golden Grove* in October 1788, and its cargo of convicts, extra troops and a few free settlers. From then on the arrival of other transports from Port Jackson became a regular occurence. In early 1790 because of food shortages in Port Jackson (partly as a result of the non-arrival of the much awaited "Second Fleet") Governor Phillip decided to send the *Sirius* and the *Supply* laden with two companies of marines, five free women and children, and 183 convicts and their seventeen children. Phillip anticipated that the island's fertile soil would keep these people from hunger. Both ships arrived at Sydney Bay in March 1790 but the *Sirius* struck a reef in the bay. Although there were no casualties, and much of the supplies and useful equipment were saved, the ship was lost. The loss of the *Sirius* left the new commandant Major Ross with nearly 500 people under his care, including the 80 crew members of the *Sirius* To preserve food supplies and social order he immediately imposed martial law. Despite the provisions salvaged from the *Sirius*, food was soon in short supply. But succour was at hand. In April, a petrel (*Pterodroma melanopus*), called "the bird of Providence" by the settlers, began nesting on Mt Pitt. The hungry Norfolk people made nightly excursions up the mountain to dig the birds out of their burrows and take their eggs. In a 3 month period from April to July 1790, the Keeper of the Public Stores recorded a total of 171,362 birds had been taken - an average of 1900 a day (Loukakis 1984:24). While they saved the colony from starvation, the depredation led to the birds' extinction on Norfolk c. 1800 (they still survive on Lord Howe Island).

By September 1792 the population had risen to 1,115 of whom 812 were maintained from the public store. Of the remaining 303 convicts (including 22 women) 158 were employed in cultivation, and the others as carpenters, shingle-makers, charcoal burners, quarrymen, limeburners, lath-makers, barrowmen, masons, and labourers (Hoare 1988:23).

In early 1793 two Maoris, "Hoodoo and Toogee" were captured in the Bay of Islands and taken to Norfolk to teach the Maori art of dressing flax. But as flax-dressing in New Zealand was exclusively women's work, neither was able to impart much knowledge and the fledging Norfolk flax industry continued to struggle. The Maoris were taken back to the Bay of Islands in November 1793.

At the turn of the century, Norfolk began to receive an increasing number of "Irish Exiles", Irish political prisoners who had agreed to accept an amnesty provided they accepted voluntary exile in Australia. About the same time, the British Government decided that Norfolk was becoming too expensive to maintain, and the Governor was instructed that part of the settlement was to be moved to Port Dalrymple in Van Diemen's Land. An anti-moving petition and deliberate stalling tactics by the Governor and free settlers were to no avail. The evacuation commenced in 1808 and was completed in 1814. Practically all the stock was salted, only a few pigs, goats, and dogs being left. After the stores and provisions were taken aboard during the final evacuation, all the buildings were fired to discourage either convicts or free settlers who might have felt inclined to reoccupy them. Some refuse deposits dating from the era of the first penal settlement have been excavated (R. Varman pers.comm.). A notable feature of the deposits are Chinese export porcelain wares.

The Second Penal Settlement (1825-1856)

In 1824 it was decided to re-open Norfolk Island as a penal Colony for the worst criminals from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Norfolk was re-occupied on 4 June 1825, when Captain R. Turton, a detachment of soldiers, six women, six children, and 57 convicts (most of whom were "mechanics") were landed at Sydney Bay (Hoare 1988:37).

Turton found the former settlement in a state of "perfect ruin" and erected temporary shelters within the standing walls of the ruined structures. The dogs left behind to exterminate the remaining goats and pigs had not succeeded in this endeavour. Goats were numerous and pigs were "beyond all calculation".

During the Second Settlement more prisoners were sent to Norfolk than during the period of the earlier settlement. This was also the time which, with the exception of two short spells, saw the greater physical brutality as well as a stronger emphasis on confinement. Extracts from official documents indicate that the new Norfolk penal colony was from the outset intended to be "a place of the extremest punishment, short of death". "No hope of mitigation of their sentences by removal (from the island) should be held out". Women were to be excluded. As a result rebellions and uprisings happened frequently. Once quelled, ringleaders were usually hung, and other participants flogged, although the latter was a fairly standard punishment for any perceived misdemeanour.

Turton and succeeding commandants embarked on a building programme of which the purpose was as much "to work the convicts" as it was to provide useful structures. The fact

that so many buildings (from the Second Settlement) were built in the late 1820s and 1830s is testimony to the enforced productivity of the convicts. They include the Government House, and the "crank mill" which was used as a form of hard labour. By the late 1830s many of the dominant buildings associated with the penal settlement had been completed. These included the Commissariat Store (now All Saints Church), the new Military Barracks (now the island's Administrative Centre), and the Prisoner's Barracks. The New Goal (Fig. 2), with its distinctive pentagonal cell block, was started but not completed until the late 1840s. Other buildings, which are still standing, followed including the Royal Engineer's office (1851), the Constable or Overseers cottages, and the Salt House (where salt was collected in pans by boiling off the sea water).

The building materials came from various sources. Initially stone was cannabilised from the remnant structures of the First Settlement. Later sandstone was cut from small quarries around the island and on Nepean Island. Most walls were made of coral or limestone rubble, which were then rendered with a lime-sand mix. Dressed sandstone was used for corners, doorways and window sills, and Norfolk pine for joinery and roofs. The floors were either boards or stone slabs. Some Sydney blue gum was imported for framing.

By 1840 there were at least 1200 doubly convicted convicts on Norfolk in seriously overcrowded quarters. Some reforms were instituted, particularly under Superintendent Maconachie. These included a limit of 15 years detention for all prisoners on the island, the introduction of a mark system for new prisoners, and the granting of small garden plots to each prisoner. But with the renewed imposition of a harsher regime after Maconochie's departure, more revolts and unrest occurred. In 1846 a decision was made to abandon the Norfolk penal colony and transfer the convicts to Port Arthur, Van Diemen's Land. For various reasons this process did not begin until 1852. The same year a decision was made to settle a small group of Pitcairn Islanders on Norfolk. Over the next four years, the convict and overseer population was progressively reduced, until only a small party remained who were responsible for handing over the island and its assets to the Pitcairners in June 1856.

There is abundant archaeological evidence of the Second Settlement on Norfolk Island (Fig. 3). At least 30 major buildings at Kingston, the site of both penal colonies, still stand as well as many structures elsewhere on the island. Many have been restored (in accordance with a management plan) and are used for various purposes, or are stabilised ruins. An on-going restoration and archaeology programme is directed by Robert Varman, the resident archaeologist. Several excavations have been conducted by Varman but little has been written up to

Figure 2. A view of the New Gaol site at Kingston started in the 1830s but not completed until the 1840s. Note the distinctive pentagonal cell block within the outer courtyard.

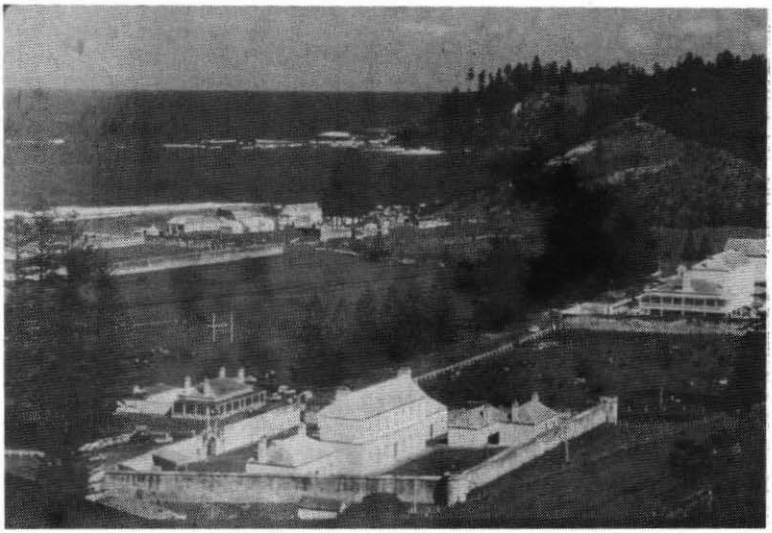

Figure 3. A view of some of the reconstructed 2nd penal settlement buildings (1825-56) at Kingston.

date due to lack of funds. The excavations have produced magnificent collections of 1790s-1850s cultural material (Fig. 4).

The Pitcairn Islanders

The saga of the initial European settlement of Pitcairn Island in 1790 by the Bounty mutineers and their Tahitian companions is well known and beyond the scope of this paper. After Pitcairn was settled, some 33 years passed before the founder population was enlarged by the addition of a few new immigrants. In 1830, the British Government concerned at the scarcity of water on tbe island, conveyed the entire population to Tahiti. The move was a disaster. Sickness broke out and many died. Within six months most of the heartbroken survivors returned to Pitcairn but things were not the same as before. For the next two decades the small community struggled, wracked by discord and unrest, and from 1840 onwards from epidemics and malnutrition owing to poor harvests. In 1853 the Pitcairners asked the British Government to shift them to Norfolk Island or some other suitable spot.

Approval was given for their transfer to Norfolk with an understanding that land grants would be made to the various families, and in the knowledge that it was not intended to allow other settlers to reside on the island (Hoare 1988:71). On 3 May 1856, the whole Pitcairn community of 193 persons and their household goods were embarked on the *Morayshire* and conveyed to Norfolk. They landed on 8 June 1856 and founded the population from which the present day Norfolk Islanders are descended.

Despite the bounteous legacy of homes, substantial buildings, formed roads, stone jetties, cultivations, and livestock (from the penal settlement) which the Pitcairners inherited on their arrival, within a short time many of the older people yearned for Pitcairn. They missed its warmth, and traditional foods - yams, taro, and coconuts. Accustomed to a largely vegetable diet they found beef unpalatable. They also missed the closeness of their former society and disliked the constant intervention by the colonial authorities. As a consequence some decided to return to Pitcairn, much to the chagrin of the New South Wales Government. In 1858 and again in 1863 parties embarked on ships, to return to their homeland, but enough stayed to ensure that the island was not forsaken by European settlers for a third time.

Shortly after arriving on Norfolk, some of the Pitcairners joined the crews of American whaling ships, which were then frequent visitors seeking water and provisions. Within three years, 33 islanders had pooled their funds and bought two boats and whaling gear from an American whaler. Whaling, using

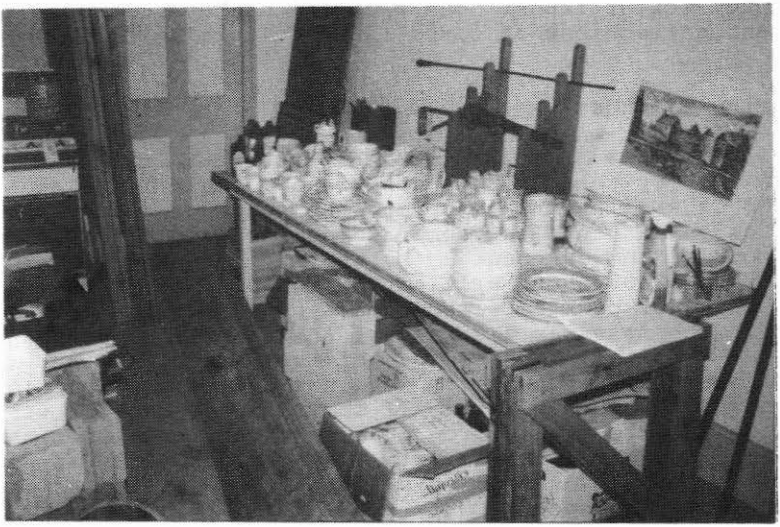

Figure 4. Reconstructed domestic ceramics from 2nd penal settlement sites (1825-56) awaiting analysis before display in the revamped Kingston Museum.

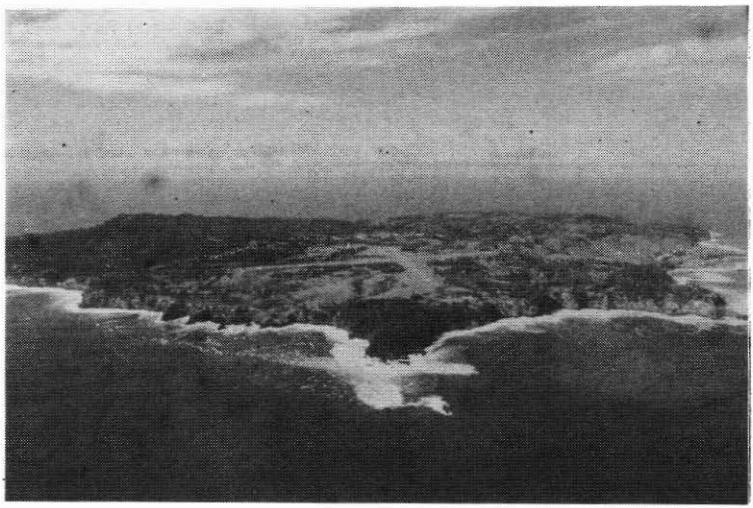

Figure 5. An aerial view of Norfolk Island from the northwest, with airfield showing prominently.

traditional hand-harpooning techniques, continued right into the mid twentieth century. Despite spells in abeyance and variable profitability, whaling was revived from time to time, the last and largest operation finally closing in 1962. The abandoned station buildings at Cascade Bay have been demolished but the rusting remains of the digestor are an interesting relic of the industry.

Because of Norfolk's isolation, and the consequent lack of markets, the Pitcairners and their descendents were rarely prosperous. Trade with New Zealand flourished as occasion permitted, but it was not until the establishment of the Melanesian Mission that the people found a small but steady market for their goods. The Mission was the dream of Bishop Selwyn in New Zealand. In 1866 he acquired 428 hectares of land on the west side of the island from the N.S.W. Government for the establishment of a school to train native teachers and clergy. The land transfer caused considerable concern amongst the islanders. The feeling must have been mutual. The Mission, although it made an important contribution to the island's economy, was a more or less self-contained community centred round its own church, homes for the European and Melanesian missionaries and 200 plus pupils, workshops, printing house, and store. St Barnabas Chapel, consecrated in 1880, and Bishop's Court nearby (one time home of the Bishop of Melanesia) are the most notable structures dating from the mission era. Photographs of melancholy Melanesians at the Mission suggest it was not much fun becoming a Christian under the auspices of the Melanesian Mission.

Like many Pacific Island communities, primary production for export has been hampered by the lack of a harbour and an economical shipping service. The Second World War left the island with a good airfield (constructed originally by the R.N.Z.A.F. and subsequently upgraded in the 1960s) and opened the door to tourism, which has become the major industry (Fig. 5). The old penal settlement "capital" Kingston remains the administration centre, but Burnt Pine on the plateau has become the commercial centre. In 1979 after considerable political turmoil, the island was granted limited self-government. To maintain the quality of life and environment a decision has been made to limit permanent residents to a maximum of 2000 and visitors to no more than 20,000 per annum. Of the 1700 residents on the island today, some 300 can claim direct descent from the Pitcairners. Although the most imposing historic buildings on the island date from the Second Penal settlement, the native tongue is very much that of the Pitcairners - a unique mixture of Tahitian and county English and Welsh - a language they still speak among themselves.

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