

1.2 The first night and recollection...

The first night on *Norfolk*, I slept very badly on my small piece of canvass on the ground. I tossed and turned. I was exhausted. *James* was fast asleep beside me. Others in the tent continually snored and grunted and moaned. Small memories of how we came here, kept my mind awake.

On leaving *Port Jackson*, the same day a perfect hurricane with the most tremendous seas came up. The gale kept up all day and night with great violence, we all thought the ship was going to sink. We had been told that the island was about 1000 miles away in the middle of the ocean with no land in between. *Mr. Cunningham* showed me the sailing chart, and some of the sailing directions, I did not understand it all, but I knew that the ships officers could find it, after all we had sailed all the way from England.

On the way we did see a small group of very pointy islands that *Lt. Ball* called "*Lord Howe*" islands.

When *Norfolk Island* was in sight, *Lt. King* addressed all of us on board the ship.

" I must find not only a landing site, but at the same place be able to erect our tents, find a reliable supply of water, and be able to start clearing the ground and plant crops to eat, and be able to launch a boat to catch fish."

For a few days depending upon the wind direction and anchoring places, the *Supply* sailed around the island. The ships boat was rowed to the shore at several places, and small landing parties went ashore over rocks and reefs and then climbed up the steep cliffs.

At a place *Lt. King* named *Anson Bay*, *John Jay* one of the *Supply* quartermasters was drowned while trying to catch a turtle. He grabbed it in shallow water, but the turtle slowly dragged him out into the deeper waters.

We all called out to let it go, but he hung on, until he got out of his depth, and then maybe a flipper hit him. However, he is now wrapped in a piece of canvass, and will be buried at sea, when the *Supply* sails back to *Port Jackson*.

"Jump in the boat *David*, take the bow oar. You might have to swim ashore and tie us up with the painter." That was *Mr. Cunningham*, giving me orders. I was very excited, because what I had seen from the ship it looked alright to land between two big rocks, but it would also require a climb of maybe three hundred feet up the cliffs, to flatter ground above.



Eastern shoreline of Norfolk Island. Did Captain Cook climb there?

"Now boy! jump in." That was *Lt. King*.

When all the explorers except the boats crew were standing on several rocks, *Lt. King* called out. "Here *Davie*, take my haversack on your back, then grab hold of those plants and trees. Start climbing up there. We will follow."

That was great fun, and a lot easier, and less scary than climbing up the masts in a roaring gale. I pulled myself up clinging to draping vines, roots and bushes. Sometimes my face was pressed into the soil, whilst I hung on and scabbled with my feet for foot holds. I was a bit worried about those things called snakes. I have never seen one, but they say they are about ten feet long, thicker than a man's leg, and can bite you with poison then open up their mouths and swallow you.

I could hear all the landing party below me making a lot of noise. All of them grunting, and sweating, pulling themselves up after me, sometimes falling backwards when a branch or bush pulled out or their feet slipped. Hopefully it will scare the snakes away

"Whoa *Davie*," called out *Lt. Ball*. "Stop near that big tree, with all the creepers hanging off it. We need a blow."

From that point we climbed upwards, downwards, sideways, into valleys, over small peaks, it seemed to go on forever. We could not see any flat ground. Suddenly I was able to look all around over the tops of trees. We were at the top of a large hill, and there out at sea was the *Supply*.

"Aha, I see we have climbed the mountain I named Mount Pitt when we were out at sea. I don't think *Captain Cook* climbed this far"*Lt. King* called out. 'I must do a quick survey map, give me my satchel *Davie*."

From that point we made our way tiredly by direct route down to the ship. *Mr. Callan*, the *Supply Surgeon*, who was with us, got behind and became lost. Because it was getting dark down at the cove, *Lt. King* ordered everybody into the ship's boat to return to the *Supply*. *Mr. Callan* would have to be found in the morning. I was to stay on shore, just in case *Mr. Callan* found the cove during the night. I was to tell him about the boat returning in the morning.

I was given 2 ships biscuits, one for *Mr. Callan* and one for myself, and a piece of canvass we could wrap around ourselves. We were to drink from the little stream of water about fifty yards away. *Mr. Callan* did not arrive that night, but at day break he quickly found the landing place. He told me that he must have been only two hundred yards away all night.

The next day, back on board the ship, as the bower anchor was picked up, we all felt very disappointed about not finding a place to start the settlement. The *Supply* sailed south and then around the two islands and anchored. This was the last area not fully explored. *Mr. Blackburn* was to take a boat and examine the shoreline. We rowed along the outer reef line westwards, and then suddenly *Mr. Blackburn* spotted the break in the reef. That is how we came to be ashore on *Norfolk Island*, after I followed orders and had taken that dangerous swim through the surf and the reef opening.



The original AND STILL the only Entrance through the reef, to Norfolk Island