

In Between'?

“the reason assigned why the ring is placed on a woman’s fourth finger of her left hand when she is married is, that is the last part live when the body becomes a corpse, having a communicator with the hart”

On the 22nd of January 1792 the Clerk of the Privy Council wrote to Under Secretary King informing him of the arrangement to transport Scottish prisoners under banishment. He requested that the coast of NSW be the place listed for banishment. The Act relating to Scottish prisoners was passed in the 25th of January. However, twenty of the first of the Scottish convicts to be transported sailed on the Pitt in 1791, before this had occurred. One of these convicts was Kennedy Murray. Four Scottish prisoners had previously sailed with the second Fleet but these had all been tried in England.

Kennedy spent 4 years and nine months in the UK before being transported. After 1788 once transport to Australia had commenced convicted men from England and Scotland, were all sent to the Hulks. The Hulks were old troop transports and men-o-war that had been used as floating prisons since 1776, when the birth of the United States put an end to the transportation of convicts to the New World. The masts and rigging of these ships was removed, they were moored off the mud banks along the Thames and the southern naval ports of England. The ships were still afloat and theoretically habitable; in reality, however, they were wet, dark, cramped, and foul-smelling. The Hulk Bill (16 Geo.111 cp 343) which enabled convict to be detained on board these old ships was approve 1776.

In a testimony before a committee of Parliament in 1778, Duncan Campbell testified water for drinking was taken from the Thames he claimed to have used filtering stones for the water to purify it. He had also had used scrap iron as bars over the port holes and bays large enough for a man to exit and hasps and padlocks were installed on hatch covers. This was thought enough as the convicts were also in irons and chained. Guards armed with drawn cutlasses, patrolled the upper deck. Campbell stated convicts had a single straw pad and one blanket was provided for each two convicts, and those that had a blanket or quilt provided by family or friend were able to keep this also. The weaker convicts would not have kept their extras for long. It was also 00claimed that the “bedding and the straw pads were infested with all manner of life.” The arrangement on whole was certain to be more comfortable for the rats, mice, lice and roaches, than that of the convicts.

The master of Hulks Duncan Campbell, leaned the best location to source meat was from Tower Hill, which was three miles up the river from Woolwich. Meat consisted of the heads of butchered cattle as they were available at minimal cost, thus “Ox Cheeks” were the main cut of meat. The prisoners complained that the meat was often “Kept to long and stinking” but they were served it five days a week. Servings of the stringy unpalatable meat from the ox cheeks were supplemented on Sundays with salt pork. The diet for the convict detailed on the Hulks did not improve until 1847. From the descriptions given, in the records showing the weekly allowances that was to been given out to the convicts, there is a near total absence of vegetables and fruit it is not surprising to find that the convicts suffered from Scurvy and other sickness.

The weekly food allowance for each mess of six convicts.

<i>Breakfast</i>	Everyday; a pint of barley or rice made into three quarts of soup.
<i>Dinner</i>	Sunday, six pounds of salt pork or seven pounds of beef with five quarts of beer. Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, six pounds of bullocks head.

<i>Supper</i>	Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, A pint of pease and barley made into three quarts of soup. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, A pint of oatmeal made into burgoo. (A think oatmeal porridge).
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Conditions on the Hulks were some of the most appalling in British penal history. John Howard noted there were cases, where a prisoner was thought to be dead of gaol-fever, “was brought out to be buried “on being washed with cold water had shown signs of life, and soon recovered.”

Between 1776 and 1788, John Howard visited the Hulk at Woolwich at least seven times. He made several trips to Plymouth and Portsmouth during the same period. In January 1778 Howard spent the day at Woolwich Warren observing convicts at work on Royal Arsenal projects. As a result of this visit Howard complained, as he had before, about the heavy chains worn on the legs of the convicts employed on the Warren.

John Howard said; But certain it is, that many of those who survive their confinement, are by it rendered incapable of working. Some of them by scorbutic distempers: others by their toes mortified, or quite rotted from their feet; many incidents of which I have seen.

Convicts could spend months or even years on the hulks, before being loaded on to transports bound for New South Wales. The men worked ten-hour shifts ashore, often in the Royal Navy dockyards the Warren during the day, and they returned to the rotting ships by longboat at night they were fitted with heavy leg irons and chained together and they were given rough canvas clothing to wear. It would have been degrading to do such hard labour, because these chain-gangs were considered a grotesque ‘tourist attraction’.

During the summer months, convicts assigned to these projects, and others who worked on shore. Labored from seven am until noon and then from one pm until six pm. During winter, work began at eight thirty am; the convicts worked without a lunch break until two or three in the afternoon, when the prisoners would return to the hulks for the rest of the day.

Campbell and his captains were expected to have a complement of able-bodied workers available for work on the dredging projects and at the Royal Arsenal.

The attitude towards the convicts in confinement by an over-seer is seen in the writing about boating on the Thames in 1802.

On our way to the boat, we had a melancholy proof of the profligacy of the times by a sight of the multitude of convicts in chains, labouring in removing earth; eight are employed in drawing each cart. They were well clad and, by their appearance, seemed well fed; but in general the sense of shame is lost. If they had any at first, it soon is changed into hardened impudence by the depravity of their fellow prisoners.

Scots Magazine May 1777

“Some are sent about a mile below Woolwich, in lighters, to raise ballast, and row it back to the embankment at Woolwich Warren, close to the end of the Tiger Walk; others are there employed in throwing it from the lighters; some wheel it to different parts to be sifted; others wheel it from the screen, and spread it for the embankment. A party is continually busied turning round a machine for driving piles to secure the embankment from the rapidity of the ride. Carpenters &c are employed repairing the Justitia and Talyloe hulks that lie hard by for the nightly reception of these objects. Who have fetters on each leg, with a chain between that ties variously, some round their middle, others upright to the[ir] throat[s]. Some are chained two and two, and others whose crimes have been enormous, with heavy fetters. Six or seven men are continually walking about with them with drawn cutlasses, to prevent their escape, and likewise to prevent idleness. So far from being permitted to speak to any one, they hardly dare speak to each other; but the most surprising, is the revolution in

manners; not an oath is to be heard, and each criminal performs the task assigned to him with industry, and without murmuring”

Many, if not most, of the prisoners who went aboard the hulks during the eight years of their use, first spent time in confinement at Newgate. The convicts aboard the Hulk died at a rate of almost one in four, Goal fever became known as Hulk fever.

The Bunbury Committee asked Campbell where he buried all the dead from the Hulks. His reply was that a piece of ground had been made available on the Woolwich Warren “behind the Butt” the dead were buried there also “along the shore” he added that funerals were conducted by an officer.

Once convicts had spent their time on the hulks, they were moved to transport ships for the 15,000-mile journey to Australia. Almost all of the 825 vessels dispatched were fitted out by private contract, and none of them were purpose-built for transportation, some old slavers were used. The following table sets out the Hulks in service while Kennedy Murray was in England.

Thames

<i>Ship</i>	<i>Year in service</i>	<i>Time in service</i>	<i>Convict count</i>
<i>Justitia</i>	<i>1777</i>	<i>25 years</i>	<i>265</i>
<i>Censo</i>	<i>1777</i>	<i>20 years</i>	<i>265</i>
<i>Ceres</i>	<i>1778</i>	<i>10 years</i>	<i>220</i>
<i>Stanislaus</i>	<i>1780</i>	<i>22 years</i>	<i>230</i>

Plymouth

<i>Ship</i>	<i>Year in service</i>	<i>Time in service</i>	<i>Convict count</i>
<i>Chatham</i>	<i>1778</i>	<i>2 years</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>Dunkirk</i>	<i>1788</i>	<i>5 years</i>	<i>375</i>

Gosport

<i>Ship</i>	<i>Year in service</i>	<i>Time in service</i>	<i>Convict count</i>
<i>Lion</i>	<i>1788</i>	<i>12 years</i>	<i>270</i>

Portsmouth

<i>Ship</i>	<i>Year in service</i>	<i>Time in service</i>	<i>Convict count</i>
<i>La Fortunee</i>	<i>1788</i>	<i>15 years</i>	<i>330</i>
<i>Ceres</i>	<i>1787</i>	<i>10 years</i>	<i>220</i>

Plus Hospital ships and ships being fitted out in 1788 there was a total of 1937 prisoners detained on the hulks.

James Howard who some how made it back to England after being transported to Port Jackson, had a second time on the Hulks, he was on board the retribution at Woolwich in 1809. In the following he didn't feel the need to complain about Port Jackson or Newgate but have the following to say on the Hulks.

“I had now a new scene of misery to contemplate; and, all of the shocking scenes I had ever beheld, this was the most distressing. There were confined in this floating dungeon nearly six hundred men, most of them double-ironed; and the reader may concede the terrible effects arising from the continual rattling of chains, the filth and vermin naturally produced by such a crowd of miserable inhabitants, the oaths and execrations constantly heard among them; and above all, from the shocking necessity of associating and communicating more of less with so depraved set of beings. On arriving on board, we were all immediately stripped, and washed in large tubs of water, then, after putting on each a suit of course slop clothing, we were ironed, and sent below, our own clothes being taken from us, and detained till we could sell or otherwise dispose of them, as no person is exempt from the obligation to where the ship-dress. On descending the hatch-way, no conception can be formed on the scene which prevented itself. I shall not attempt to describe it; but nothing short of a descent into the infernal regions can be at all worthy of a comparison with it. I soon met with many of my old Botany Bay acquaintances, who were all eager to offer me their friendship and services, that is, with a view to rob me of what little I had; for in this place there is no other motive or subject for ingenuity all former friendships or connections are dissolved and a man here will rob his best benefactor, or even mess-mate, of an article worth one half penny. Every morning, at 7 o'clock all the convicts capable of work, or, in fact, all who are capable of getting into boats, are taken on shore to the Warren, in which the royal Arsenal and other public buildings are situated and are there employed at various kinds of labour, some of the very fatiguing; and while so employed, each gang of sixteen, or twenty men, watched and directed by a fellow called a guard. These guards are most commonly of the lowest class of human beings; wrenches devoid of all felling; ignorant in the extreme, brutal by nature, and rendered tyrannical and cruel by the consciousness of the power they possess. If I were to attempt a full description of the miseries endured in these ships, I could fill a volume, but I shall sum up by stating, that besides robbery from each other which is as common as cursing and swearing I witnessed among the prisoners themselves, during the twelve month I remained with them, one deliberate murder... and one suicide; and that unnatural crimes are openly committed.

The common view was that prisoners on the hulks were hardened criminals; In Dickens, Mrs. Joe tells Pip, ‘People are put in the Hulks because they murder, and because they rob, and forge, and do all sorts of bad’. Corruption was rife, and the prisoners’ lives were governed by a maze of whimsical rules. Bribery was also widespread, playing a part in many aspects of daily life, and also in death: a convict’s body, instead of being buried, could be sold to the dissectors’ agents who visited the docks. It is a wonder that a majority of convicts survived the horrors of the hulks, the last of which was decommissioned in 1858.

The Bee July 1790 an Edinburgh weekly paper carried a report from the colony.

“Our new guests expressed great concern at not finding everything here in a very prosperous state. They had been led to believe that matters were in a very fair train, and that plenty of conveniences were ready for their reception at the landing but found quite the contrary to be the case”

The Pitt

*“But one thing grating to the ear,
And shocking did to me appear,
The rattling of their chains I mean
As they by us were passing seen.
From these poor wretches case may we
This lesson learn, forever flee
The company of such”*

The Pitt was a Merchant Vessel, in the Service to the East India Company, a trade ship that had made 4 Voyages for the Company while between the years of 1785 and 1795. The Pitt was built in 1780 on the Thames and was 775 tons, at the time it was the largest ship to be used to transport convicts to NSW, the Captain Edward Manning and the Ships Surgeon was? Jameson. Kennedy Murray arrived on the Pitt on.....and it left Yarmouth Roads in England on 17th of July 1791, Kennedy had spent four years and nine months waiting since being sentenced.

The ship had originally embarked 443 convicts but after an anonymous complaint of overcrowding, an inquiry was conducted and it eventually sailed with 402 prisoners. In the letter dated 21st of June 1791, J.W. asks Lord Grenville to address a serious grievance. In this letter the author writes ‘...were I

to describe the section of the vessel to you, the natural horror of screwing such a number of miserable objects within so small a compass would be evident'. The author contends that if they are sent off not a third of them will arrive alive. It states '...the present heat below decks is already almost suffocating, and must accumulate, with many horrid additions, as the ship arrived within the tropics'. The convicts were kept in unbelievably cramped conditions, with six men housed in cubicles of 6 feet by 6 feet, in the hull of the ship.

The government had laid down strict regulations devised for transporting the human cargo to its destination; but the abuses were widespread the care of prisoners and the prisons below the deck were often ignored especially in the early years of transportation. The ships were owned by private contractors, contracted for a sum of money to embark prisoners. This meant that there was no incentive offered to disembark the prisoners alive and in good health. Some of the early transports were undertaken by former slave-traders, and their treatment of the convicts on the voyages was almost inhuman. The deficiency in this system was noted but not addressed adequately until around 1813. The naval contingent on board was to oversee the preparations for the trip and supervise the contractor's agents during the trip.

In some cases, the prisoners' quarters had no portholes or sidelights. The lower decks were often dark and damp; lanterns and candles were banned, for fear of fire. The only fresh air many of them received was from a sail rigged to scoop a breeze down the hatchway; in a storm however, when the hatches were closed, there was no fresh air below. Sometimes corpses were left to rot for a week or more, in some cases, the convicts would often conceal the death of another convict until the smell could not be tolerated any longer, in order to receive rations of the dead prisoner. Prisoners who were thought to have broken the ship's rules or regulations were flogged or otherwise punished.

Conditions were known to be so appalling for persons convicted, that victims of crimes often appealed on prisoners' behalves, once they realized the terrible fate that lay in store for the accused once convicted.

Prisoner's rations consisted of flour, bread, beef, pork, peas, butter and rice. Each cell of convicts was supplied with cooking and eating utensils. In these early transports the prisoners had little to do to amuse themselves in their confined spaces. Mostly they were chained and sat and waited to arrive in the colony.

The following indenture was issued so that convicts of *The Pitt* could be legally transported to New South Wales and then on to Norfolk Island.

This indenture made the fifteenth day of June in the thirty first year of the Reign of your Sovereign, Lord George the Third by the Grace of God, Great Briton, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith and so forth and in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven hundred and Ninety One, between Thomas Shelton of the Session house in the City of London, Esquire of the one part and George Mackenzie Macaulay of Chatham Place, London Esquire on the other part. Whereas the several persons named in the under mentioned list being convicted of felony and misdemeanors were at the several Seffions of Oyer and Terminer Goal. Delivery and of Peace Holden, for Counties, Cities and places and at the times mentioned against their respective names by the Courts before whom they were convicted, or by His Majesty by and with advise of his privy Council perseverance to the Statutes in such case made and provided, ordered to be transported to the Eastern Cost of New South Wales or some other of the Islands adjacent for several terms also mentioned against their respective names.

Also traveling on board *The Pitt* was Major Francis Grose. He had been appointed in late 1789 as a recruiting officer for the 102nd regiment. This new outfit would be known as the New South Wales Corps and later as the Rum Corps. Grose had little trouble in recruiting misfits and criminals for his outfit and many were recruited from the Savoy Military prison Parsons argues that there is no evidence that soldiers were recruited from the Savoy military prison. Yet in a memorandum, from Grose to Under Secretary Lewis regarding an incident on the *Gorgon*, which was carrying a detachment of the NSW Corps Grose states that it was not a mutiny from what he had heard it was

simply "...some drunken irregularity committed by two soldiers from the Savoy. Later, in 1796, Governor Hunter is complaining to the Duke of Portland that,

the manner in which this corps has, since employed upon this service, been recruited does in great measure weaken the effect or service which we would expect to derive from the assistance of the military. Soldiers from the Savoy and other characters who have been considered disgraceful to every other regiment in his Majesty's service, have been thought fit and proper recruits for the New South Wales Corps.

Grose was paid 3 guineas to recruit each soldier and was allowed to keep the difference.

The Pitt took 212 days to make the trip to Port Jackson. Shortly after departing smallpox broke out and 15 prisoners died. The Dublin Chronicle on 12th of January 1792 reports that ".at one time there were more than 150 on the sick list. They all recovered only eight convicts and two children being lost. The convicts were in general, remarkably well behaved; so much so, that several were permitted to assist in the navigation of the ship and to attend the watering-parties in landing without fetters" *The Pitt* stopped at St Jago in the Cape Verde Islands and soldiers and sailors were allowed ashore. *The Pitt* left Cape Verde on 20th of August. In the doldrums the ship was becalmed and experienced incessant rain for a month stalling any real progress.

An Irish prisoner some years later described the experience of being becalmed in the tropics.

..the suffering of the imprisoned wretches in the steaming and crowded hold was piteous to see. They were so packed that free movement was impossible. The best thing to do was sit each on his or her berth, and suffer in patience. The air was stifling and oppressive. There was no draught through the barred hatches. The deck above them was blazing hot. The pitch dropped from the seams and burned their flesh as it fell. There was only one word spoken or thought - one yearning idea in every mind - water, cold water to shake the parching thirst. Two pints of water a day were served out to each convict - a quart of half putrid and blood-warm liquid. It was a woeful sight to see the thirsty souls devour this allowance as soon as their hot hands seized the vessel. Day in and day out, the terrible calm held the ship, and the consuming heat sapped the lives of the pent-up convicts.

In addition to being becalmed the soldiers and sailors of the ship had brought on board a 'malignant fever', probably typhus. The fever struck after leaving Cape Verde and 27 on the ship died in a fortnight. The fact that this did not spread to the prisoners below might indicate that there was little contact between the two groups. The convicts were not however, exempt from disease. The ships surgeon reported "...The flux and scurvy attacked them without mercy. Never were seen, I believe, such ulcers and ulcerated legs in the world. The smallest appearance on the flesh in a day or two spread broader than your hand, and soon made its way to the very bone, and many of the soldiers experienced equal calamity". When the ship finally left the calms it hit violent gales and with a depleted crew convicts were used to man the ship. In mid October it stopped in Rio de Janeiro, between St. Jago and Rio 32 people on the ship died.

Major Francis Grose on board *The Pitt* would relieve Governor Phillip in Sydney. Grose blamed the deaths on the ship's management, whereas the Pitt's master blamed the stop at St. Jago. Bateson argues that it was more likely that it was the stopover. At Rio they went ashore and four convicts escaped. On November 1st the ship again set sail and 29 prisoners died between the Cape and Port Jackson. On arrival in Port Jackson 120 were listed as sick with many of these dying in the following weeks. Overall one in every eleven convicts transported on *The Pitt* died reroute.

Richard Atkins 47 years also traveled on the "The Pitt" with Kennedy, though he was a paying passenger, Atkins was to become another diarist in the colony, he was somewhat eccentric and recorded the weather and legal notes, he was the son of a Baronet and he had been well educated it was also said he was well presented, he was thought to have disposed of a considerable amount of the families money in England and apparently sailed to New South Wales to escape his creditors.

14th of February 1792, a Tuesday the *Pitt* sailed into Sydney Cove, Easty: wrote that she 'saluted the town with 13 guns.

Collins wrote:

The colony had been on reduced rations because provisions were low. The Pitt however, arrived bringing only salted meat and provisions for the next ten months for the convicts on board. This was only enough to provide for the entire settlement for 40 days. The authorities in England had not bothered to send extra provisions believing that a ship was on its way from Batavia. Therefore forty-one tons of storage space on the ship had been taken up with the frame of a sloop. David Collins, the Judge Advocate and Secretary of the colony, believed that since there was only one person in the colony qualified as a ship builder, it would have made better sense to have built the sloop in England and sail it out using the storage space for clothing and other necessities.

Upon arrival of *The Pitt* a shop was set up and various articles were sold. Collins commented that the even though the articles were highly priced there was still a scramble to buy.

Arriving in the Colony

“Every man is rich or poor according to the degree to which he can afford to enjoy the necessaries, conveniences, and amusements of human life. But after the division of labour has once thoroughly taken place, it is a very small part of these with which a man's own labour can supply him. The far greater part of them he must derive from the labour of other people, and he must be rich or poor according to the quantity of that labour which he can command, or which he can afford to purchase”

The settlement at Port Jackson was just over 4 years old when Kennedy Murray disembarked from *The Pitt* on 14th of February 1792. The population of Sydney Cove was 1400 there were 1500 people at Parramatta and 1100 on Norfolk Island. Up to 50% of the local aboriginal inhabitants had been killed by smallpox in 1789. Eight settlers from the marines had recently received their grants of land situated on the north side of the harbour near the Flats These were the first land grants and were officially given in 1792. The governor named this area 'The Field of Mars'. There was easy communication between Parramatta and Sydney Cove a road had been built up to cover the sixteen-mile trip. This road also allowed the transfer of stolen property and other communications without the knowledge of authorities.

Accommodation was not provided for convicts and upon arrival and they were required to find their own. Convicts were expected to labour for the public and then were given time to seek employment to supplement their income. From that time convicts were also assigned to labour on farms. It is possible, but unlikely that Kennedy would have been assigned. He probably arrived at the colony in a weakened state and at twenty-eight would have been older than many of the other convicts.

The major public works being carried out by convicts in the colony at that time were -

Sydney - building brick huts for convicts 2 apartments 26 x 14 feet - 10 convicts in each, completing tanks, one day for issuing provisions.

Parramatta - getting in and housing maize, preparing ground for crops and laying the foundations of the Town Hall and a hospital.

Toongabbie – Land clearing and farming.

On arrival all the tradesmen, carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, stonemasons and others useful in Sydney were put aside to work on the construction of buildings in Sydney, the remainder were sent up the river to Parramatta or Toongabbie. By far most of the convicts that disembarked from the Pitt, were placed in smaller boats and transported up the river to Parramatta, from there they walked to Toongabbie about 5 miles, the work to undertake was to clear the ground of trees, and work as labour on the Government farm.

Unfortunately the superintendent of convicts, records didn't survive from the early days of the colony and therefore we can only rely on personal accounts of these peoples lives at this time.

Kennedy arrived at a time when food was in short supply and rationing had been implemented. Over the next several months the rations continued to be cut as stores dwindled. Rations had been cut in December 1791. Flour was taken off and replaced with oatmeal and peas. At the end of December a further cut was implemented. It was not until July, when the store ship *Britannia* arrived that the situation eased. Labour projects in both Parramatta and Port Jackson proceeded slowly because of sickness and constant hunger.

There are accounts, relating to the size of trees growing in the area of Toongabbie, “as of enormous size and three hundred feet high”, these were the trees to be removed and then dragged by the convicts in gangs and burnt. Kennedy always listed himself as a laborer so with this as an occupation he was most likely to have been sent to Toongabbie to Labour with the rest of the convicts of the Pitt.

On the 3rd of October 1845 the following interview of Joseph Smith was taken by Caroline Chisholm in the hunter river district, Joseph appeared to have arrived in 1791. The following gives a very graphic description of life in Toongabbie.

I arrived in the colony fifty six years sine. It was Governor Phillip’s time and I was fourteen years old; there were only eight houses in the colony then. I know that myself and eighteen others laid in a hollow tree for seventeen weeks, and cooked out of a kettle with a wooden bottom; we used to stick it in a hole in the ground, and make a fire round it. I was seven years (bond), and then started working for a living wherever I could get it. There was plenty of hardship then. I have often taken grass and pounded it, and made soup from a native dog. I would eat anything then. For seventeen week[s] I had only five ounces of flour a day. We never got a full ration except when the ship was in harbour. The motto was, “Kill them or work them, their provision will be in store.

Many a time I have been yoked like a bullock with twenty of thirty others to drag along timber. About eight hundred died in six months at a place called Toongabbie, or Constitution Hill. I knew a man so weak, he was thrown into the grave, when he said, don’t cover me up; I’m not dead. For God sake don’t cover me up!’ The overseer answered, ‘Damn your eyes, you’ll die tonight, and we shall have the trouble to come back again! The man recovered; his name is James Glasshouse, and he is now alive at Richmond.

They used to have a large hole for the dead. Once a day men were sent down to collect the corpses of prisoners and throw them in without any ceremony or service. The native dogs used to come down at night and fight and howl in packs, gnawing the poor dead bodies.

The Governor would order the lash at the rate of five hundred, six hundred, to eight hundred; and if the men could have stood it they would have had more. I knew a man hung there and then for stealing a few biscuits, and another for stealing a duck frock. A man was condemned, no time, take him to a tree, and hang him. The overseers were allowed to flog the men in the fields, Often have men been taken from the gang, had fifty, and then back to work.

Any man would have committed murder for a month’s provisions. I would have committed three for a week’s provisions! I was chained seven weeks on my back for being out getting greens wild herds. The Rev. ____ used to come in nightly to force some confession. Men were obliged to tell lies to prevent their bowels from being cut out by the lash.

Old ____ (an overseer) killed three in a fortnight at the saw by overwork. We used to be taken in large parties to raise a tree. When the body of the tree was raised, he (Old _____), would call some of the men away, ____ then more. The men were bent double _____ they could not bear it _____ they fell _____ the tree on one or two, killed on the spot. “Take him away; put him in the ground!’ There was no more about it. Afterwards I went to live with D’Arcy Wentworth and a better master never lived. Little Billy (William Charles) has often been carried in my arms. Old D’Arcy wanted me to take charge of his home bush property but I took up the river. J.S.

A convict describes the aftermath of a flogging:

“unless it were at the meal Hours or at Night he was immediately sent to work, his back like Bullocks Liver and most likely his shoes full of Blood, and not permitted to go to the Hospital until next morning when his back would be washed by the Doctor’s Mate and a little Hog’s Lard spread on with a piece of Tow, and so off to work...and it often happened that the same man would be flogged the following day for Neglect of Work.”

The following is an account by a convict was published in "Our old towns and institutions" on October 4th 1845 by William Freame.

I arrived on the 16th of October, 1791. I was sent to Toongabbie. In those days we were yoked to draw timber, 25 in a gang. We had a stick between us, 6Ft. long and six men abreast and dragged with our hands. One man Dixon he came from "The Pitt". He began on a Thursday and died on Saturday dragging a load down Constitution Hill. How they used to die' The men were weak – dreadfully weak for the want of food. I have seen 70 men flogged at night at 25 lashes each. If a man was found out of camp he got 25. Drwas a great tyrant

The Spanish dollar was the current coin of the colony, which some of the masters [were] taking at five shillings and others at four and sixpence, the Governor, in consideration of the officers having been obliged to receive the dollars at five shillings sterling when given for [a] bill drawn in the settlement, issued a proclamation fixing the currency of the Spanish dollar at that sum.

2nd of April 1792. A letter was dated by Francis Grose in it he seemed quite happy with the living conditions provided for him, There seemed to be quite a difference in living standards between people of Sydney town and the convicts working and living in Toongabbie, from the account above, this would have been a living hell.

I am at last, thank God, safely landed with my family at this place, and, to my great astonishment, instead of the rock I expected to see, I find myself surrounded with gardens that flourish and produce fruit of every description. Vegetables are here in great abundance, and I live in a good house as I wish for. I am given the farm of my predecessor, which produces a sufficiency to supply my family with everything I have occasion for. In short, all that is wanting, to put this colony in an independent state is one ship freighted with corn and black cattle. Was that but done, all difficulties would be over.

Everybody at home seems to have an unfavorable opinion of this place, and I am certain no one could possibly be more prejudiced against it than myself. I am glad to have it in my power to change my opinion, and be able to assure you that sine I have left England I have seen no place I like better than this.

The major difficulty in the colonies was getting the labour to work. Numerous complaints were made about lazy and unproductive convicts. Scottish convicts were later regarded as the worst convicts in NSW and Van Diemens land. Kennedy did not arrive with this stigma as he and his 19 fellow convicts were the first Scottish convicts to be transported to the colony. It may be that this lot set a precedent for later convicts!

Governor Phillip was still in command of the colony and would be relieved by Major Francis Grose. Three days after *The Pitt's* arrival, on the morning of the 17th, a parade was held and Francis Grose was officially appointed as Lieutenant Governor. To conclude the ceremony *The Pitt* saluted with 15 guns.

During April 1792 there was high mortality and emaciation amongst the convicts although most of this was amongst those that had arrived in the past year. It would have been extremely difficult for the prisoners that had arrived sick and undernourished to then be subjected to further cuts in their food intake as well as be expected to labour after months of inactivity. Robberies in the colony increased and the convicts used the excuse of hunger but Collins states that it was "...a plea that in the then situation of the colony could not be so much attended to as it certainly would have been in a country of greater plenty." To add to the troubles heavy storms over the period of 9th to the 13th April damaged buildings and crops.

Trench wrote that our method of cooking the pork 'was to cut off the daily morsel and toast it on a fork before the fire, catching the drops which fell on a slice of bread, or in a saucer of rice'. He said that 'every grain of rice was a moving body from the inhabitation lodged within it', but the 'flour was the remnant of what was brought from the cape by the Sirius, and was good; Instead of baking it, the soldiers and convicts used to boil it up with greens'

Friday 27th July 1792

Collins In the consequence of the arrival of the Britannia the commissary was.....directed to issue, until further orders, the following weekly ration... To each male four pounds of maize, three pounds of soujee, seven pounds of beef, or in lieu thereof four pounds of pork, three pints of peas or dhal and half a pound or rice. Two-thirds of the mans ration was directed to be issued to each woman, and to every child above 10 years of age, one half of the mans ration.

This had been a rough year for Kennedy as he had faced the trip out to Australia, had brushes with smallpox, scurvy, typhus, starvation, storms, drought, fires, soaring temperatures, he would have witnessed punishment being handed out to other convicts or received some himself. Acclimatizing to this new environment in a weakened state must have been unbearable.

An account by George Thompson, which was published in 1794, does not omit any of the true conditions out at Toongabbie.

"About four miles from this place (Parramatta), is another settlement, Toongabby, where the greatest number of convicts are, and work very hard, (there is also a good crop of corn standing and promises well) their hours for work are from five in the morning till eleven, they then leave off till two in the afternoon, and work from that time till sunset. They are allowed no breakfast hour, because they seldom have anything to eat. Their labor is felling trees, digging up the stumps, rooting up the shrubs and grass, turning up the ground with spades or hoes, and carrying the timber to convenient places. From the heat of the sun, the short allowance of provisions and the ill-treatment they receive from a set of merciless wretches (most of their own description) who are the superintendents, their lives are truly miserable. At night, they are placed in a hut, fourteen, sixteen or eighteen together (with a woman, whose duty it is to keep it clean, and to provide victuals for the men when at work), without the comfort of either beds or blankets, unless they take them from the ship they came out in, or rich enough to purchase them when they come on shore. They have neither bowl, plate, spoon, nor knife, but what they can make of the green wood of the country, only one small iron pot being allowed to dress their poor allocation of meat, rice, &c; in short, all the necessary conveniences of life they are strangers to, and suffer everything they could dread in their sentence of transportation.....The women have a more comfortable life than the men; those who are not fortunate enough to be selected for wives, (which every officer, settler, and soldier is entitled to, and few are without) are made hut-keepers; those who are not dignified with this office, are made to make shirts, frocks, trowsers, &c, for the men, at a certain number per day; occasionally to pick grass in the fields, and for a very slight offence are kept constantly at work the same as the men."

Richard Fitzgerald's report to Commissioner Bigge in 1820 he presented the following evidence on the farm at Toongabbie.

That in 1792 to 1793 there were, nearly nine hundred men and upwards of two hundred and sixty women employed at the farm. The men worked in gangs of twenty five and were allotted task. The heaviest work was felling an acre of ground per week. One third of the convicts employed were boys, but they were employed at the lighter tasks.

In September 1796 Kennedy was sent to Norfolk Island after he had served four years and seven months in New South Wales labouring as a convict he arrived on the Calcutta on 1st of October, Kennedy is No 664 on the victualising register.