

FAIRLIE



*Barque, 698 tons, 106' x 35' x 17' with 5'11" 'tween decks;
Built 1811 at Calcutta in the yard of J Gilmore for J Biddulph, owned in 1848 by J & F
Somes*

Master: Captain William Davis, Surgeon Superintendant: Dr Wilkinson

London, April 22, 1848 to Port Jackson August 7, 1848 – 108 days at sea

It had been the intention of the (British) Government to send the first of the (lacemaker) emigrants on the *Harpley* commissioned for that purpose. Consul Bonham was becoming increasingly concerned for the well-being of those in Calais. Their distress was growing and the cost of their subsistence was very large. With this in mind the Immigration Board found places for forty six and a half statute adults (children under the age of twelve counted as half an adult) aboard the *Fairlie* which was ready to sail for Plymouth to take on board *bona fide* Bonded Immigrants for New South Wales.

With such short notice Bonham selected those he considered to be the best equipped for the voyage. The forty six and a half statute adults equated to fifty six men, women and children. They were dispatched from Calais for Deptford to board the *Fairlie* immediately. (Well Suited to the Colony, Gillian Kelly 1998)

SHIP'S RETURN, FAIRLIE 1848

Remarks

The Fairlie is extremely well suited for the Emigration service and was in a very cleanly condition on arrival.

The general appearance of the vessel and of the immigrants indicate a very effective management Board, for which it is but just to award considerable credit to Mr Wilkinson, although for reasons stated the Authorities here considered it undesirable that he should be again employed in the Service. The provisions and water proved to be of excellent quality and no complaints have been made as to the regularity of their issues.

With two exceptions the people expressed themselves as being fully satisfied with their treatment during the voyage. The exceptions referred to were complaints made by two of the single men that the Surgeon Superintendent used coarse and irritating language to them. The Board were satisfied at the time that the language was well merited and they did not attach importance to the statement made respecting the use of improper language by the Surgeon Superintendent. I am, however, inclined to believe that the mens' complaint was well founded since I have had given to me a specimen of the violent and grossly offensive language which Mr Wilkinson is capable of using even in letters not unreflectively written.

I consider it my duty to lay the letters to which I refer before His Excellency the Governor because they appear to me to indicate a serious want of temper and discretion and seems to render it undesirable, even if it were not unsafe that their writer should be again placed in charge of Emigrants. Concurring with this view His Excellency the Governor has recommended that Mr Wilkinson should not again be entrusted with the superintendence of an Emigrant to this Colony.

Mr Wilkinson reports that he received all requisite assistance from the Master and crew. The Emigrants generally were of a good description. Two of the single women were delivered of a child on the voyage. Another is in an advanced state of pregnancy and was sent to the General Hospital and a fourth (Hannah Lawrence) was sent to Maitland by the Government and who was in service there, returned to Sydney and is believed to be on the streets. The principal diseases reported by the Surgeon Superintendent were simple functional fevers, Diarrhoea, Dysentry and Catarrh.

Francis Merewether

Agent for Immigration

Sydney, 29 January 1849



Norfolk Island issued a 25 cent stamp commemorating the wreck of the *Fairlie*. The wreck was a smaller boat with the name *Fairlie*, but not the barque *Fairlie*. On 14 Feb. 1840 some men sailed from Norfolk Island for a shooting excursion to Phillip Island, and when she was returning the *Fairlie* was caught in a rough surf when entering the bay, the swell threw her up perpendicularly and she rolled over and capsized. On shore, seeing what happened, a rescue boat put off, but the surf immediately set it back. An officer and two privates of the 50th Regiment, the Coxswain and eight prisoners were saved by swimming to the beach, but Captain John C. Best and a soldier of the 50th regiment, and a Mr. McLean drowned. .

The vessel depicted on this stamp is not the *Fairlie* wrecked on 14 February, 1840 on Norfolk Island. The depicted ship is most apparently the East India Company ship *Fairlie*, and she was not wrecked on Norfolk Island.

The depicted *Fairlie* was built in 1811. Built by the yard of J.Gilmore, Calcutta for the account of John Biddulph. She was launched 5 June 1811 under the name *Fairlie*. A two-decked vessel, height between decks 5.11ft. Tonnage 698 86/94 tons (bm), dim. 106.0 x 35.3 x 17.1ft.

On 4 June 1812 she was chartered by the East India Company for a round voyage to Bengal. She made that voyage under command of Capt. Peter d'Esterre with the charter terminated on 03 June 1814.

On 22 May 1815 chartered again by the British East India Company, for a round voyage via Madeira to Bengal under the command of Captain Thomas E Ward. This charter finished on 05 Nov. 1816. Her last voyage for the British East India Company under the same command,

was chartered on 01 April 1818 for a round voyage to Bengal and Bombay, and finished 08 June 1819.

In 1824 she was sold to David Gordon, and traded to India as a licensed ship. By 1833 she was under the command of Captain J Cromartie. She sailed on 27 Oct. 1833 from England with 376 convicts for Australia under the command of Captain Henry Ager. After a passage of 111 days she arrived in New South Wales on 15 February 1834. During the passage 4 convicts died. After disembarking she sailed for England.

She sailed from London on 4 April 1840 with cargo and 266 passengers under the command of Edward Garrett, RN. On 6 April she set course for Australia via the Downs and arrived at Port Adelaide on 7 July 1840. One of the passengers, James Bowley, kept a diary during that voyage. He said there were a captain, threemates, a bosun and a crew of thirty. He joined the ship on the 3rd April, and the next day the anchor was weighed at 2 pm. She was towed by two steam tugs the *Samson* and *London* to Gravesend, where she anchored at 6 pm. On 5 April they were towed another five miles toward the Channel and at 5.30 pm anchored off The Mouse (in the Thames Estuary). Next day the two tugs towed them to Margate Roads where she anchored at 4 pm.

On 07 April at 10 am. with all sails set, she sailed from Margate Road, passing the Lizard on the 8th at 10 pm., despite having the jib-boom carried away at 4pm that day. All the passengers became very seasick in this first encounter with the deep sea, and due to the fresh breeze the topsails were reefed. The ship picked up the Southeast trade winds April 18th after sighting Porto Santo and Madeira the previous day and the ship made good time crossing the Equator at 8.15 am on 17th May.

They spoke to the French East India barque *Don Pedro* on 1 May, the *Arab* 92 days out from van Diemen's Land on May 3 when letters were sent back home. The *Aden* bound for Liverpool was sighted on the 19th. On 21 June the *Husher* bound from Scotland was spokento well as the steamer brig *Courier* which had sailed 15 days before the *Fairlie*.

Points of interest mentioned include the barren, bird-occupied island of Trinidad and Martin, between which the ship sailed on May 16, and the Isle of St Paul on June 18.

A heavy head sea on May 12 caused the loss of the main royal mast. They lost the tradewinds on May 18 and on June 4, the Captain's birthday, a north westerly storm, with thunder and lightning struck the ship. Even the mainsail was furled at 6 pm. It was so wild that the man at the wheel was temporarily blinded by a thunderbolt which struck alongside the ship. There were more storms in mid-June and the ship leaked badly.

Bowley vividly described the crossing of the line ceremonies when in the confusion a medicine chest was upset and some chemicals combined to produce smoke that led to cries of fire. Fortunately there was no fire and prayers of thanksgiving were offered.

Some characters enlivened the voyage but upset the victims when hammocks were cut down on the night of June 26. During the voyage a challenge was issued for the fastest marathon around the deck- about 1 & 1/8th miles. A sailor won a guinea reward in a time of 9 minutes 13 seconds and it was equalled a few days later.

In 1843 the *Fairlie* was sold to Joseph Somes , of London. On 11 March 1852 she sailed from Plymouth with 294 convicts on board under command of Capt. Ed Pavey, arriving 3 July 1852 at Hobart and during the passage two convicts died. In 1848 she carried immigrants from London to Port Jackson, including the 56 statute lacemaker adults.

In 1865 she was transferred to the Merchant Shipping Co. Ltd., London and in 1866, aged 55years she was sold for breaking up, or to be used as a hulk.

by aukepalmhof

