

Across Great Divides – true stories of life at Sydney Cove

by Susan Boyer

Comprehension Questions

In answering the questions below, remember to check Notes & Sources' for each chapter, at the end of the book? The 'Notes & Sources' provide further details on people and events, and establish 'how we know' what happened.

Introduction: setting the scene

Who gave accounts of the voyages and the early days in Sydney Cove?

1. The end and the beginning

1.1 How did natives of Botany Bay react to strange 'floating islands' coming in from the sea? (pages 1 - 2)

2. First Encounters

2.1 What did Lieutenant King say about the natives watching the ship approach? (page 3)

2.2 Why were the natives surprised by Arthur Phillip's appearance? (page 5)

2.3 What did Watkin Tench do to open up communication with the natives? (page 6)

2.4 What question did the natives ask through gestures? (page 7)

2.5 What happened when the white men demonstrated the power of their weapons? (pages 9 -10)

3. Line in the sand

3.1 What happened at Manly Cove? (pages 11-12)

3.2 Why did Arthur Phillip draw a line in the sand? (page 12)

3.3 Why did Arthur Phillip consider the place he named 'Sydney Cove' a good settlement site? (page 12)

4. Strange comings and goings

4.1 What unexpected sight was reported by Watkin Tench before leaving Botany Bay? (pages 14 - 15)

5. Sydney Cove

5.1 What unusual scene did the natives of 'Warran' (Sydney Cove) witness? (pages 17 - 18)

5.2 Who were the two white men observed by the natives as they came ashore? (pages 17 - 18)

5.3 What happened in Sydney Cove on January 26th, 1788? (page 19)

6. Reflections

6.1 Name three young mothers who had sailed on *Lady Penrhyn*? (pages 20 - 24)

6.2 What difficulties did the female convicts aboard *Lady Penrhyn* suffer? (pages 21 - 26)

6.3 What were the crimes of the youngest and oldest female convicts? (page 23)

7. Different eyes – different sights

7.1 What did convict Ann Smith threaten to do? (page 27)

7.2 What would Susannah Holmes have been looking forward to as she looked ashore ? (page 29)

7.3 What experiences did Lieutenant Clarke complain about during his first few days ashore? (page 30)

8. Issues and challenges

8.1 What difficulties did the white settlers experience in the first days ashore in Sydney Cove? (page 31)

8.2 What scenes could the black natives have witnessed from a distance? (pages 33-34)

9. A night of revelry

9.1 What incidents did Arthur Bowles Smyth mention in his journal on 6th February, 1788? (pages 36-37)

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10. The governor's speech

- 10.1 What happened on the following day, 7th February, 1788? (pages 39 - 40)
- 10.2 Which two convicts does the author name as assembled to hear the Governor's speech? (page 40)
- 10.3 How were their outlooks different? (page 41)
- 10.4 What experiences did Arthur Phillip have to prepare him as leader of the fleet and colony? (page 43)

11. Strange appearances and disappearances

- 11.1 What strange creatures did the convicts report seeing? (pages 44 - 45)

12. Creatures, great and small

- 12.1 What strange creatures would the natives have witnessed coming ashore? (page 47)
- 12.2 What seed and plant cuttings had been brought on the First Fleet? (pages 48 - 49)

13. A beating for a beating

- 13.1 What happened to Elizabeth Needham? (page 50)
- 13.2 What was Major Ross's role in the colony? (page 51)
- 13.3 How did he cause problems for Governor Phillip? (pages 51 - 52)
- 13.4 What was Governor Phillip's solution to finding overseers for the convicts? (page 51)

14. View from the ridge

- 14.1 Who visited the white camp in February 1788? (page 53)
- 14.2 What would natives have witnessed at Sydney Cove after the arrival of the white people? (pages 55 - 56)
- 14.3 What was one of Lieutenant Dawes's assigned tasks in the Sydney Cove settlement? (page 57)

15. Beyond the boundary

- 15.1 What observations, about the natives, did Watkin Tench write in his journal? (page 60)
- 15.2 What had occurred involving convict Thomas Barrett during the First Fleet voyage? (pages 61 - 62)
- 15.3 How was convict, James Bloodworth, making an impact on the settlement? (pages 63 - 64)
- 15.4 What was William Bryant's crime and what role was he assigned in the settlement? (page 64)

16. The Kable's story

- 16.1 For what crimes were Henry and Susannah Kable convicted and transported? (page 65)
- 16.2 What happened to Susannah before sailing for Botany Bay? (pages 66 - 67)
- 16.3 What further drama were the Kables faced with after arriving in Sydney Cove? (pages 67 - 69)

17. Into the wild blue yonder

- 17.1 What mission was Lieutenant King given? (page 70)
- 17.2 Who accompanied him to Norfolk Island? (page 71)

18. Into an unknown wilderness

- 18.1 Where did the governor and a group of officers go in April 1788? (page 74)
- 18.2 What did John White report seeing? (page 75)

19. Friends and thieves

- 19.1 What positive interactions happened between some groups of black and white people? (page 78)
- 19.2 What negative experiences occurred between the black and white people? (page 79 - 80)

Across Great Divides – true stories of life at Sydney Cove

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Comprehension Questions

20. Frustration and progress

- 20.1 What negative event took place at the beginning of May 1788? (page 82)
- 20.2 What milestone occurred on 15th May 1788? (page 83)
- 20.3 What necessary work did convicts perform? (pages 83 - 84)

21. The rush-cutter incident

- 21.1 What happened to two rush-cutters to cause the governor to investigate? (pages 85-86)
- 21.2 Who did the Governor and his men encounter on their return trip to Sydney? (pages 86 - 87)
- 21.3 What conclusion did the white men draw about the rush-cutters' deaths? (pages 87 - 88)

22. Across the social divide

- 22.1 What happened on June 4th? (page 89)
- 22.2 What happened to the colony's small stock of cattle? (page 90)
- 22.3 What opinion did Major Ross express about the colony in a letter to England? (page 91)
- 22.4 What did a female convict say in a letter about some women's situation? (page 92)
- 22.5 What happened to Henry and Susannah Kable in July 1788? (pages 92 - 94)
- 22.6 What happened to a group of devious marines? (pages 94 - 95)

23. Across the racial divide

- 23.1 According to the author, on what did various racial interactions of July 1788 depend? (pages 96 - 99)

24. Rose Hill

- 24.1 What two steps did the governor take to avoid serious food shortage? (page 100)
- 24.2 What impact did the 'Rose Hill' settlement have on the Burramatta people? (pages 101 - 102)

25. An opportunity not to be missed

- 25.1 What plan did James Ruse put to Governor Phillip? (page 103)
- 25.2 Why did Governor Phillip agree to Ruse's proposal? (page 104)
- 25.3 What plan was Governor Phillip brewing? (pages 104 - 105)

26. Kidnaps and adoptions

- 26.1 How was a native man (Arabadoo) captured? (pages 106 - 107)
- 26.2 What did the captive think when he saw the officers gathered in the dining room? (page 108)
- 26.3 What new experiences did Arabadoo have during his first days at Sydney Cove? (pages 108 - 109)
- 26.4 What words did Watkin Tench use to describe Arabadoo? (page 111)
- 26.5 What 'extraordinary catastrophe' occurred during Arabadoo's time in Sydney Cove? (page 113)
- 26.6 Who was brought into the settlement to be nursed? (pages 114 - 115)
- 26.7 What happened to Arabadoo and what was the reaction of Governor Phillip? (pages 116 - 117)

27. Further into the vast unknown

- 27.1 How did Phillip and his officers try to assist a young woman on a journey westward? (pages 118 - 120)
- 27.2 How did Watkin Tench describe the country west of Rose Hill? (page 121)
- 27.3 What expedition was attempted by Lieutenants Dawes and Johnston in 1789? (page 123)
- 27.4 What was the result? (page 124)

28. 'A most unpleasant service'

- 28.1 What was Lieutenant William Bradley ordered to do and how did he feel about it? (pages 125 - 126)
- 28.2 What happened to the kidnapped men when they arrived in Sydney? (pages 127 - 128)
- 28.3 How did Bennelong react to his situation after Colbee escaped? (pages 128 - 129)

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29. Teachers and students

- 29.1 What did the white men learn from Bennelong? (page 131)
- 29.2 What did convicts Isabella Rawson and William Richardson begin around this time? (pages 132 - 133)

30. Impatient for news

- 30.1 What began to preoccupy the white settlers? (pages 134 - 135)
- 30.2 What did Governor Phillip do to thwart the threat of starvation? (page 135)

31. Survival tactics

- 31.1 Who sailed for Norfolk Island in March 1790? (page 136 - 137)
- 31.2 What did Esther Abrahams and Ann Inett have in common? (page 138)

32. Crucial decisions

- 32.1 What survival measures did Governor Phillip impose in the autumn months of 1790? (pages 139 -140)
- 32.2 What devastating news did Watkin Tench report about *HMS Sirius* shortly after? (page 142)
- 32.3 What announcement did the governor make in April 1790? (page 143)
- 32.4 According to one letter, what affect did their circumstances have on the marines? (pages 143 -144)
- 32.5 What did a return to the mainland from Norfolk Island mean for Ann Inett? (pages 144 - 145)

33. The escape

- 33.1 How did Bennelong manage to escape in May 1790? (page 146)
- 33.2 What were the conditions in the colony when Bennelong escaped? (page 147)

34. Thoughts of freedom

- 34.1 What was John Wilson planning? (page 148-149)
- 34.2 How does the author know what John Wilson was planning? (see notes, page 288)

35. Letters and questions

- 35.1 What made Watkin Tench's 'heart and mind overflow' in June 1790? (pages 150 -151)
- 35.2 What news did the colonist hear? (page 152)

36. The Second Fleet -1790

- 36.1 When the 'Second Fleet' arrived, what was the condition of the transported convicts? (pages 153 -154)
- 36.2 Who was the young Irishman on *Neptune*, and what role was he given on Norfolk Island? (page 155)
- 36.3 Why were the Macarthurs arriving in Sydney? What did they suffer en-route? (page 156)
- 36.4 What were Elizabeth Macarthur's early impressions of the colony? (page 158)
- 36.5 What frightening incident occurred in the harbour weeks after the Macarthurs arrived? (page 159)

37. Mayhem at Manly Cove

- 37.1 What happened when John White met Bennelong and Colbee in September 1790? (pages 161-162)
- 37.2 How did Governor Phillip approach the natives, and why didn't he recognise Bennelong? (page 163)
- 37.3 How does Henry Waterhouse's account show his apprehension? (pages 164 - 167)
- 37.4 What happened to Governor Phillip and with what result? (pages 166 - 168)
- 37.5 What thoughts did Phillip express in his account of the spearing incident? (page 169)

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38. Making Amends

- 38.1 Who did Lt. Dawes, Rev. Johnson and Boorong meet on the harbour and what was said? (page 170)
- 38.2 What did Maugoran say and learn about the white settlers? (pages 170 - 171)
- 38.3 What happened when officers met Barangaroo with Bennelong? (pages 172-174)
- 38.4 What happened after Bennelong returned to Sydney? (pages 175 -179)

39. Pemulwuy

- 39.1 What disturbing incident occurred in December 1790? (pages 181 - 183)
- 39.2 Did McEntire reveal what he had done to prompt Pemulwuy's actions? (page 183)

40. Retaliation

- 40.1 What was Governor Phillip's reaction to Pemulwuy's attack on McEntire? (pages 184 - 187)
- 40.2 What was Tench's reaction to Governor Phillip's proposed actions? (pages 185 - 187)

41. Conflict and bungles

- 41.1 How did Dawes feel about his involvement in the punitive expedition? (pages 188 & 194)
- 41.2 Who did Tench and his military party meet in the Botany Bay area and with what result? (page 190)
- 41.3 What disaster struck Tench and his men on the second Botany Bay expedition? (pages 191 - 193)
- 41.4 What was the outcome of both expeditions? (pages 193 - 195)

42. Growth and adjustment

- 42.1 What positive news and trying conditions did Tench report in the summer of 1791? (pages 196 - 197)
- 42.2 What did Elizabeth Macarthur write about in her letters to England? (pages 197 - 198)
- 42.3 How did Daringa and Barangaroo react to the public flogging of a convict? (page 199)

43. Life and death

- 43.1 What significant events occurred for Bennelong during 1791? (pages 200 - 201)
- 43.2 What did Governor Phillip learn about Bennelong's familial expectation of him? (page 202)
- 43.3 What did David Collins learn about Bennelong's beliefs? (pages 202 —203)

44. Forward Planning

- 44.1 What plan was Governor Phillip formulating for himself? (page 204)
- 44.2 What incentive did Governor Phillip offer to convicts? (page 204)
- 44.3 What plan was Pemulwuy devising and how do we know? (page 205 & notes, page 293)

45. New territory

- 45.1 Who went on an expedition westward from Sydney in autumn 1790? (page 206)
- 45.2 How did Tench describe the terrain west of Rose Hill, and its effect on the white men? (page 208)
- 45.3 Who did they meet and what did Colbee tell the visitor about his white companions? (pages 208 - 209)
- 45.4 What were Colbee and Ballooderry amused about during the journey? (pages 209 -210)
- 45.5 Who did the explorers meet at the river and what did he/they demonstrate? (pages 211 -214)
- 45.6 How did Tench describe the people who helped him cross the river a month later? (pages 215 -216)

46. Great escapes

- 46.1 Who escaped in March 1791 and how did they do it? (pages 217-220)
- 46.2 What place did another group of escapees give as their destination? (pages 221-222)

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Comprehension Questions

47. Family matters

- 47.1 What decision was George Johnston facing? (page 223)
- 47.2 How had Sydney changed while he and Esther were at Norfolk Island? (page 224)

48. Arrivals and departures

- 48.1 What outrage did David Collins feel about the arrival of the Third Fleet? (page 225)
- 48.2 What choices were convicts given regarding their future? (page 226)
- 48.3 Who would be leaving on *HMS Gorgon*? (page 226)
- 48.4 Who had arrived on *HMS Gorgon*? (page 227)
- 48.5 What did the arrival of *HMS Gorgon* mean for convict, Ann Inett? (page 228 & 229)
- 48.6 Who accompanied the Kings to Norfolk Island as a servant? (page 229)

49. Nanberry and Ballooderry

- 49.1 What kind of interactions was Nanberry experiencing as the foster-son of John White? (page 230)
- 49.2 What enterprise did Ballooderry begin and what caused trouble for him? (pages 231 - 232)
- 49.3 How did Governor Phillip react when Ballooderry became very ill? (page 232 - 233)
- 49.4 Who attended Ballooderry's funeral and how did Maugoran react to his son's death? (page 234 -235)

50. Maugoran's family

- 50.1 How had Maugoran's sons adjusted to the Sydney settlement of the British? (page 236)
- 50.2 What decision did Boorong make and how did her guardians react? (pages 237 - 238)

51. More goodbyes

- 51.1 What did the departure of *HMS Gorgon* mean for Elizabeth Macarthur? (pages 239 - 240)
- 51.2 Where did Watkin Tench go before departing the colony and with what intention? (page 241)
- 51.3 Whose stories did he include in his journal? (pages 242 - 244)
- 51.4 Why would William Dawes have mixed emotions on leaving Sydney Cove? (pages 245 - 246)

52. A time of transition

- 52.1 Why was David Collins feeling despondent in December 1791? (page 247)
- 52.2 What news arrived with the *Royal Admiral*? (page 248)
- 52.3 What reactions would there have been to Governor Phillip's announcement? (page 248)
- 52.4 What did Elizabeth Macarthur, Esther Abrahams and Susannah Kable have in common? (page 249)

53. Pondering the known and the unknown

- 53.1 As Governor Phillip compiled his report, what progress would he have noted? (pages 252 - 254)
- 53.2 Who would govern after Arthur Phillip left and how would he administer differently? (pages 254 - 255)
- 53.3 What progress had convicts James Bloodworth, James Ruse and the Kables made? (pages 255 -258)
- 53.4 What developments had occurred in Boorong's relationship with the white settlement? (page 261)
- 53.5 What developments had occurred in Nanberry's relationship with the white settlement? (page 262)
- 53.6 What venture was Bennelong about to embark on with Governor Phillip? (pages 263 - 264)
- 53.7 For Arthur Phillip, what question remained to be answered? (page 261)