

**MLMSS Safe 1/121 - Letters from Rev. Richard Johnson
to Henry Fricker, 30 May 1787 - 10 Aug. 1797**

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Golden Grove
at Sea May 30th. '87

My dear friend

I am duty bound to write to you at every opportunity. - I dropped you a line in great haste by the return of the Hyæna frigate. - Was informed soon after that she was going to Ireland to be stationed some where thereabouts & not to return to Portsmouth. - Had I known this a little sooner I w^d. not have put you to the annoying expense of the Letter so soon after I had left you. - I hope however you will excuse it - It is a token of my sincere esteem for & obligation to you. - May God render to you four fold for all your kindness towards me & mine. -

In my last letter dated May 20th. I informed you in very great haste how we had fared since we left the Mother Bank - Had both been sickly but upon the Recovery. - We had before then one or two rough gales, after which it become calm - this occasioned the sea

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to run high, & on this account when the wind ceased the ship rolled very much - all which together rendered it very unpleasant for some days. - But soon after the 20th. the wind changed gradually from the South West to the North from which last quarter it has blown for a week this last past. - This has made us sail with great rapidity, some days 150 Miles a day. -

This Morning the Captain called me up informing me that we were in sight of Land - the Isleland of Madeira, whether we shall call here of go in to Teneriff I am not yet certain, but of this I will inform you in the close of this Letter. -

We were rather dissatisfied with our removal from the Alexander to the Golden Grove at first. The Captain seemed to be close, unsociable & ill natured - & the ship's Company to be very profane. - But since then things are much more comfortable - The Captain behaves with Civility - We have prayer every evening in the great Cabbin - he has granted me leave also to preach once at least on a Lord's Day to the ship's Crew - Accordingly last Sunday I preached to them - My text was in Matt: 5:34 - designed to set forth the heinous evil of comon swearing - was pleased to hear that the sailors were

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satisfied & pleased with my subject - hoped I s^d. repeat or follow the practice throughout the Voyage. - Since then I have scarcely heard an oath from any of them. - May God convince them of the folly & wickedness of such a Conduct. -

I have been at times very dull & stupid in my Spirit since I came on Board - Have not such comfortable convenience for retirement as I could wish - this is sadly disagreeable at times, especially when I feel { would to God this was more often} a disposition & warm desire of soul to go & pour out my sins & sorrows before the Lord. - It is better however to have the disposition & want the opportunity, than just the contrary. - I hope likewise this will make me prize secrecy the more if it please God to bring me in safety to my place of destination. - You will I hope remember us kindly to all friends - I mention some that you may not forget them - M^r. Horsey & family - Wickendens - Am vastly pleased with their little present - tell them my little Cats are very well & vastly entertaining - Remember us also very kindly to M^r. Millard & family - I think myself greatly indebted

to them for their civility & kindness - to M^r. ^(&M^{rs}.) Mile & family - Owens - Lacey - Edwards - [?] - Peers - & to M^r. Eastman - w^d. have wrote to the last if I c^d. found opportunity - In short our love to all if they enquire after us - I love the dear people of God at Portsmouth - thank them for their favours & still solicit their earnest prayers to God for me & mine. MLMSS - Safe 1/121 - R. Johnson Letter 1 - [Page 4 of 4]

[Lower page writing]

Teneriff June 8th. We came directly forward here leaving Madeira to the Westward & arrived at Teneriff on the 3rd. ins^t. - Am sorry that I have neither room nor time to give you much information about Teneriff - Can only say that a great part of the Island is prodigiously mountainous - The Town of Santa Cruz, just by which we are at Anchor, is rather mean & shabby & not very large - The generality of its Inhabitants are Papists - very

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indolent & superstitious - We have seen as good deal of this amongst them - yesterday was Corpus Christi day, when we saw the grand procession of their Host. - Have also paid our respectful compts. to the Virgin Mary - she was very neatly ornamented & [?] decorated, with gold & [?]. - M^{rs}. J was so captivated with some parts of her dress, that I c^d. scarcely keep her from committing sacrilege. - Alass, alass - what superstition & Idolatory is this - God makes me thankful - My dear Mary desires most cordially to be remembered to you all - Had she staid much longer I am afraid you w^d. have got her into [?] - she is about ½ Baptist & ½ Methodist - Farewell - Yours very affly. R. Johnson.

[Cover]

M^r. Fricker
Bonfire Corner
Portsmouth Comon
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NB. July 10th. When I wrote this Letter I expected the fleet wd. have sailed before this - but have been necessarily detained & will sail to morrow - Adieu - God blessing on all -

Port Jackson New South Wales
Feb^y. 10th. 1788

My dear Friends

My last Letter to you was dated from the Cape of Good Hope, which together with many more I sent by a M^r. Davis, passenger on a Danish ship bond from [..?] to Portsmouth.

I will now proceed to give you a little account of our passage from the Cape to this place, & some other Circumstances that may not be unacceptable to you. -

We set sail from the Cape of Good Hope on Monday Nov^r. 12th. For about a week after we met contrary winds. This drove us back 3 or 400 hundred Miles - began from this Circumstance to apprehend & fear that our passage w^d. be long & tedious - Our Water, our Stock provisions, & exhausting; we ^ (were) detained by Calm & slowly going further from our port, these things rather

alarmed us. - Strict orders were given to come to the allowance of three pints of Water for each person for the 24 hours.

But God has been much better to us than we deserved or expected - About the 19th. of Nov^r. the wind changed into the Westward and continued more or less fair for us for several weeks, changing from the North to the West, round to the South, but seldom further to the Eastward, so that from the 19th. Nov^r. to the 7th. of Jan^y. we generally had the wind favourable for us and in that space of time we sailed about 6000 Miles.

The Weather was generally during this time fine, but cold

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& once . viz on the 1st. Jany. we met with a severe gale, which lasted about 24 hours. - Never did I see such an awfully grand sight before in my whole Life. - The different Elements seemed to be in the greatest tumult, threatening our dissolution every Moment. But through Mercy we had no great Misfortune & found little or no fear upon our Minds, & do assure you we ate our Roast Pig & Plumb pudding with great relish, though with no less difficulty, our plates, &c tumbling down, & we scarcely able to keep upon our seats. - I was just going to wish you had been with us to partake of our fare, but considering that you must at the same time shared of our fate, I think you were much better of at Bonfire Corner, than upon the Southern Ocean. -

On the 7th Jan^y. we first discovered Van Diemens Land, & towards Evening of the same day came near the Mainland & the Rock [..?] & other rocks w^{ch}. Cook makes mention of. In the night we saw a large fire on the Shore, but were not near enough to the main land either to see any of the Natives, or to discover the Nature of the soil, production of the Country, &c, - The next Morning about 10 O Clock we again lost sight of land, bearing away further to the Eastward. - From that time to the 19th Jan^y. we had a great many changes of weather, but in several the winds contrary. Out of sight of land again till the morning of the 18th. when we discovered Land again, which from the situation was judged to be what Cook named Red Point about a degree to the Southward of Botany Bay.

At 12 O Clock we came within sight of Point Solander, & in the Evening had a clear view of the Mouth or entrance into Botany Bay. - On the evening of the 19th. we bore off till about Midnight, when the fleet tacked & about 8 the next morning came to Anchor about a Mile within the Entrance of the Bay.

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The Commodore on the 25th Nov^r. quitted the Sirius & went on Board the Supply, armed Tender, which ship together with three of the Transports parted Company from us, & the next day the Supply parted from the other three Ships. - And {which is rather extraordinary } without coming in sight of each other again, the Supply arrived the Friday, the other three on Saturday, & we on Sunday, through Mercy in general well & healthy.

I shall not give you any particular account about Botany Bay as this is needless; the account which Captain Cook has given of it, is very just in general, both as to its situation, produce or production whether of Plants, trees, fishes, birds &c, & the Natives much the same as he describes them. The first I saw were six walking up the Beach which they did with some degree of quickness being caught by surprise or consternation. This was [..?]

first access into the Bay, A few days after I saw about thirty of them fishing - as we {myself with four others} came near them they came out of the water, joined in a Body together & stood till we came up with them. - As we came near them, they spoke us in a loud defiant Manner, principally uttering their words - Warra, warra, warra, w^{ch}. we judged to tell us to go away. When we came up to them, I laid some bits of Cloth round their heads & necks & also gave one of them a comb at which he seemed especially pleased & astonished. - Some of them began to dance & one of them offered me one of his fishing lines which I refused, the Governor wishing that nothing might be taken from them. -

For several days after we cast anchor we were quite uncertain where the Settlement should be formed. - The Bay has been investigated on every end & Side - Some parts seem little calculated for fertility being a black sand & as Cook mentions much resemble any Moors in England. - But other parts are more

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promising, & fully expected from the account I heard of these, both for ground & water, that we w^d. have settled there. - But during that time, the Governor with some others, went a few Leagues further to the Northward & upon their return, though several preparations were making for our settling near Point Solander, things

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took a sudden & unexpected turn, the Governor pitching upon Port Jackson, not Botany Bay for the place of our settlement. - Would proceed to give you some description of this place but my Paper being full & having many correspondents & especially having to write to my mentors, I must refer you to our [..?] there and his hand. - With a grateful Remembrance of your many favours & our [..?] Love to all f^{ds}. that remain -
Yours most affectionately R^d. & Mary Johnson.

[Cover]

Mr. Henry Fricker
Bonfire Corner
Portsmouth Common
Portsmouth

Rec^d. this let^r. 22nd Apr^l 1789
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Sydney Cove, Port Jackson
In the County of Cumberland
New South Wales - Nov^r. 15th. 1788

My dear friends,

Am happy that another opportunity offers of writing to you to inform you of our health & welfare. - Have already given you at least two Letters since our arrival at Port Jackson & hope that before I write again I shall be favoured with a long Letter from you amongst the rest of my dear f^{ds}. in

England. - I most sincerely & anxiously wish & desire to hear from you - to hear how you do - how you go on - how my f^{ds}. Hausey & Miles do - what success in fishing - [...illegible]

Tis now near Ten Months since we first arrived at this part of the world - Have not however all this time seen much of the Country & therefore cannot give you any very particular description of it. - I travel much about home - with much Labour & no small cost we have got into our little Cabbage tree Cottage. - No small Curiosity it is I assure you, & c^d. it be placed upon Bonfire Corner but one day, I dare say it w^d. have as many spectators & admirers as ever had Lanardy's Ballroom. - Am happy however that it in some measure answers our purpose, though now & then in excessive Rains, we are all on a swim within doors. - My little Garden also begins to flourish & supplies
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us daily with some kind of vegetable or other. - As to the Country in general I confess I have no very great opinion of nor expectations from it. - The greatest part of it is poor & barren & rocky or requires a great deal of Labour to clear it of trees-roots, &c, &c to cultivate, & after all, the Corn in general that has been sown hitherto looks very poor & unpromising. - I think I can say none have given it a fairer trial than myself - have been at work in my little farm for a day together, burning wood, digging, sowing, &c, but do not expect to reap any thing nearly adequate to my Labour. - Others seem to be in the same predicament - & all almost, at least with but few exceptions, are heartily sick of the Expedition, & wish themselves back safe in old England.- I hope I have said enough to dissuade you from ever emigrating to this part of the world - you will act more wisely to stay at Bonfire Corner, & {one thing excepted} I sd. be most heartily glad again to see you, on that side of the Southern & Atlantic Ocean.

- And what is that? - Why the pity & concern I feel for these poor people with whom I am here connected. - Happy s^d. I be were I to live on Bread & Water, & so suffer the most severe hardships did I but see some of those poor souls begin to think about their latter end. - Am sorry to see so little good yet done amongst them. - They seem to be destitute both of eyes & ears. - They neither see nor will be persuaded to seek the Love, the Mercy & Compassion of God. - They prefer their Lust before their souls; yea, most of them w^d. sell their souls for a Glass of Grogg - so blind - so hardened - so so foolish are they. -

The Colony begins already to be a good deal dispersed. - About seventy or eighty are gone to settle in New Norfolk - this took place soon after our arrival - ships have been backward & forward, & the last particularly brings us a promising account of that Island as to wood, Gardener stuff &c. - Others have been lately sent
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to the top of this harbour to cultivate the ground. - Understand that I am sometimes to go thither to perform divine Service - the distance is 12 or 14 Miles by water which will make it very inconvenient, & unpleasant. -

Mrs. J. was delivered on the 16th. [..?] of a Man Child, but my Babe was still Born, & my dear Partner for some time was in the utmost danger. - Through Mercy however she was at length safely delivered, & continues to recover though but very slowly. -

I am yet obliged to be a field preacher. - No Church as yet begun of, & I am afraid scarcely thought of - Other things seem to be of greater Notice & Concern & most w^d. rather see a Tavern - a Play house - a brothel - any thing, sooner than a place for publick worship. -

Please to present our most cordial respects to M^r. Hausey & family - & tell his little Girl that Miss Puss has lately behaved so ill - & made such bad work in my Garden, that I was obliged to have a Court Marshal upon her; - that after frequent threatnings I was at length resolved she s^d. be

transported, & accordingly have shipped her off to New Norfolk. - Give our respects likewise to Miss Wickenden - & tell her M^r. Tom Puss is come to high preferment - tired of such poor fare as I c^d. give him, he took himself to the publick stores, where he feeds upon the richest dainties of the Country. - Our united Love & [..?] respects to all other enquiring f^{ds}. - Accept the same yourselves - from

your sincere fds. &c.

Rich^d. & M^y. Johnson

Our particular respects to D^r. Millard & family.

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[Cover]

M^r. Hen: Fricker

Bonfire Corner

Portsmouth Common

Hants -

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Port Jackson - New South Wales

April 9th, 1790. -

Dear friend,

Tis now a long long time since I have been able to write to or hear from you. - Am happy however to embrace this fresh opportunity of scribbling over a few Lines to you to inform you we are still alive & well, but have had many ups & downs, Changes & Visissitudes of Providence since we left England - & I can only tell you, that s^d. we be so fortunate as to set out feet upon English Ground again, I think it w^d. not be a little that s^d. induce us to venture a second time upon the deep & mighty ocean. I dont speak this by way of murmuring & complaining - I still believe this is God's appointment, & this is a sufficient argument to silence every objection or Complaint. - I will now give you a little information respecting our situation, w^{ch}, you will find not the most comfortable in the world. -

Tis now about two Years and three Months since we first arrived at this distant Country - All this while we have been as it were buried alive - never having an opportunity of hearing from our f^{ds}. - The Sirius frigate has once since that period been at the Cape of Good Hope, & this means we have had a little information of publick affairs, but this is very small.

It was fortunate for us however that the Sirius has had a Voyage to the Cape, for otherwise we s^d. have been very precariously situated. - Our stock of Provisions brought from England, is nearly exhausted, & as to flour - we s^d. have been without any for some Months had it not been for the supply we rec^d. by her from the Cape - This Providence appears still greater as she was very nearly cast away by Dieman's Land as she returned here. - Had this been the Case our situation here must have been deplorable. -

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We have been anxiously looking out for a fleet for a long time, but hitherto none has appeared, & 'tis now generally conjectured that the fleet expected is either lost or taken by some Enemy. - Our hopes now are almost vanished, & every one begins to think our situation not a little alarming. - This is increased by the following Melancholy Providence - The Sirius was intended to be sent off about this time to Canton in China for the purpose of taking up some Vessels & bringing us a

supply of Provisions - But previous to her doing this, she together with the Supply Tender, was sent to Norfolk where she was driven ashore upon the Rocks or Reef, & foundered. - Fortunately no lives were lost, & it is hoped the greatest part of the Provisions will be saved. - The Supply returned here on the 5th inst. with this News. - This cast a further Damp upon every Countenance. - A Publick Council was called by the Governor on the same evening to see what measures had best to be adopted in consequence of the loss of the Sirius, & the present scarcity of Provisions 'till a supply arrived here either from Europe or elsewhere. - In Consequence of this Council the greatest part of publick work is to be dropped. - All Boats belonging to individuals are to be made use of for the publick. Officers are to superintend this fishing Business in their turn, amongst whom I am to take an active part; sometimes to go down this Harbour, & sometimes to Botany Bay. - Others are to be employed in raising Vegetables, Potatoes &c. &c - & some are to shoot for the publick, & whatever is caught, either Fish, fowles, or Kangaroo is to be served out in lieu of Salt provisions. - Several Hogs have been already killed, & sold to Government at 1d. per lb, & this likewise served out in the room of salt provisions. - As an individual I am as well off as Most. Have plenty of Vegetables, Potatoes, &c., w^{ch}. I feel of essential service, & w^{ch}. are chiefly the fruits of my own hard labour. - Had not we something of this to help out, you may judge how we s^d. now do upon the Pension of 2 lbs. of Pork - 2½ lbs. of flour - 1 lb. Rice - & a pint of pease per Week. - This is the utmost allowed us, & when served fish &c the Pork stopped, -

The Supply is going to Batavia in the course of a very few days, where she is to take up some Vessels & purchase provisions]
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[pro]visions for the settlement. - This supply we hope to receive in about six or seven Months, if it please God no misfortune attends her. - Two Persons are going from hence to England by whom I shall send my Letters. - One of these is the Commissary who will take up more Vessels at the Cape in Case a fleet has not yet touched there. - Such is our state of affairs as a Colony. - As to my family, we are in a thriving way - Mrs. J. has had a second Child. - The first was a Boy, but still Born. - The latter is a Girl, a sweet Babe about five weeks old - Have had baptized already - Had you been here you s^d. if you pleased have stood as sponsors. - Have given it the name of Milbah Maria, {Milbah a name amongst the Natives}. - Have a Native Girl under my Care - Have had her now about 11 Months - She was brought in here with three others dreadfully afflicted with the Small Pox. The two men died - Abaroo { the name of the Girl} & a Boy, {Nanbarry} recovered, the latter is with the Surgeon General. - Three more have been brought in by force, one of which died of the above disorder after he had been in the Camp several Months & had become reconciled to the Camp - a second made his escape - & a third O-gul-[-?], or Benelong {for they in general have many names} is still at the Governors & has become very communicative & affable. - Have taken some pains with Abaroo {about 15 Years old} to instruct her in reading, & have no reason to complain of her improvement - she can likewise begin to speak a little English, & is useful in several things about our little Hutt. -
Have taught her the Lord's Prayer &c - & as she comes better to understand me, endeavour to instruct her respecting a supreme Being &c. - Wish to see these poor heathen brought to the Knowledge of X'tianity, & hope in time to see or hear of the dawns of that time when these shall be given for our Lord's inheritance, & the uttermost parts of the earth for his Possession.- But little apparent fruit yet amongst the Convicts, &c - Oh that they were wise - but, alas! Nothing seems to alarm or [-?] them. - Trust I have been in some degree faithful, & believe that God's word will not return to him void. - I need not tell you I am in great haste - the scribble & the inaccuracies of the above lines testify it - Have much to do before the Supply sails - On Monday I am appointed to go a fishing, so therefore
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it is impossible I s^d. satisfy the wishes of all my f^{ds}. Must beg you to communicate the Contents of this Letter to my f^{ds}. at Lymington, Boldre, Priestlands, & the Isle of White, with our united & cordial Love to every one that enquires after us - And be sure not to forget to remember us to our dear Portsmouth f^{ds}. - Our hearts are with you - We often talk of you - pray for you, & wish you prosperity of Body & Soul. - Know not when I shall be able to repay you for past favours - These however I trust I bear in grateful Remembrances & hope sometime to make you some small return, - Dont fail to let me hear from

[Upper page writing]

you, if in nothing else, here remember I stand Creditor. - I long to hear from you - Much more to see you, but when or whether ever this shall be God only knows - & if we never see each other here again, I trust we shall soon meet in a better world when we shall part no more for ever. - Am with real X'tain esteem & affection
Your truly obliged f^d. & well wisher
Rich^d. Johnson -

[Cover]

Mr. Henry Fricker
Portsmouth Common
Portsmouth
England -
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Port Jackson New South Wales
Augst. 21st. 1790 -

Dear Sir

Mr. Locke, in his Book on human Understanding, has one Chapter which he intitles Causes & ^ (Their) Effects. And it is generally believed & acknowledged that there is never an effect produced but what must arise from some preceeding Cause -

It sometimes however happens that the effects produced are not such as might be expected. -

i will only mention one thing more & then I will come to an Explanation of this Business, & i.e. That the great difficulty generally found in investigating Causes & their Effects is to find out the proper Cause, & when this is properly understood the effects that follow are generally Natural & Easy. -

Now to explain Myself - I have both upon the passage & since our arrival here wrote to you repeatedly. This I did for two Reasons. - 1st. Because I promised I w^d. do so, & you know that he that promises is a debtor - But 2^{dly}. My esteem for you & the obligation I shall feel myself under to you for the Civilities I have rec^d. from you during our stay at Portsmouth. - These are the Causes or Reasons of my troubling you with one Letter after another. - But what are the effects or Consequences that might be naturally expected ? Why surely therefore I should have the satisfaction & hap^{ns}. of receiving Letters from you by the first Conveyance - But in this I have found myself sadly disappointed, & not less grieved - What can be the Cause of Reason of your silence I know not; if in any thing I have affronted or offended you I am ready
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to beg your pardon & remember our Saviours direction, Matt. 18: 21, 22. - If I do not hear from you in Consequence of this Letter you cannot, you must not expect to hear any more from me. -

Having already filled one side of my sheet with a long preamble I think it time now to tell you of our health, & to give you a little information respecting us as a Colony with the same freedom as I have hitherto been wont to do -

Have lately seen & recd a printed account of this settlement, which I am free to declare is much too flattering. - The generality of these latecomers find it so, & I believe [^](there are) very few of them if any, but who wish themselves back again in old England. -

As an individual, & as flattering myself that I believe there are not many here who understand Agriculture better, I must declare it is my opinion that the soil is nought, & the Colony never likely to answer the wishes & expectations of government.

All the officers soon after our first arrival here had each two Acres of ground given them with two Convicts each to clear & cultivate it. - I have taken very great pains in this, & after great Labour have got it into Cultivation. - Have had two Crops of Wheat, Barley, & oats, but in many parts I have not got my seed again, & at best I have not received above two fold, of any of the above kinds of grain. - At Rose Hill, where the soil is esteemed much superior than it is here, the greatest produce that has been raised is from six to eight fold, last Year not so much, & according to the present appearance it will be less still the Year ensuing, & I fear unless Manure ^{c^d}. be obtained, in the Course of a Year or two hence, it ^{w^d}. be so run out & impoverished as to produce nothing at all -

Indian Corn & Potatoes seem to ans^r. the best of any thing. & if Manure ^{cd}. be got. might turn to some little account; the first of these may be grown all the Year, but those set from about this time 'till Jan^y. produce the greatest increase - Indian Corn is set in Sep^r. & ripe about March following. -

Vegetation has been for some time greatly at a stand, but in the Course of about a Month it will be so quick, that the greatest part of

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garden seeds, as Cabbages, Turnips, Beet &c, are no sooner sown & spring up, but they run to seed. - February is the best time to sow turnips, as then vegetation becomes more moderate. -

Have at times taken great pains in my Garden & in general am as well off for Vegetables as most of my Neighbours - Last Year I cut I suppose not less than a thousand Cucumbers; & some that I left for seed have been 16 or 18 Inches long, & a foot or more in Circumference. - Have also raised some Melons - very good flavoured - Water Melons & Pumpkins too have been raised here - very fine & large. - All these are put into the ground in the Course of next Month.

At our first landing I put in some Pips of Oranges, Limes, & Lemons - There are some of them now two foot high, & seem to be very promising. - Some Guavas too are likely to come to perfection, only I think the Climate is not quite hot enough for them. - Strawberries we had last summer - not bad. - The Governor brought out one Root of this, ^{w^{ch}}. has so increased that now there are scarcely any, but who have them in their garden. The vines I think will do in time - better if the Climate was hotter, but as these do not require the most rich soil, we are in hopes of seeing these turn to some account, & I promise you, if ever wine be made here, & not prohibited from being exported, I will send you a specimen, & perhaps may drink your health in a Bumper of New

Holland wine. - Add to this, I have raised some Tobacco, & am persuaded this w^d. grow here tolerably well, provided any s^d. be found who knew how to order & cure it. - Garden Pease do pretty well, but Beans will not [..?] at all, they come up & even bloom exceeding well, but whether it be some insect or what ever else be the Cause, they seldom pod well or come to any perfection. -

You see I am quite a farmer, & I have to tell you that I have a prospect of being still a much greater. - Am going to have 400 Acres laid out as Glebe land to the Church, for which I w^d. not give 400 pence, having already paid more attention & spent more time than I wish upon such matters. - Have other ground to dig & cultivate w^{ch}. I think of greater Consequence - & w^{ch}. more immediately concerns my own Sense of duty, -

Have been very much employed since the arrival of this last fleet - These came in here in a most deplorable situation. - Near 300 MLMSS - Safe 1/121 - R. Johnson
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died upon the passage, & since their arrival I have buried above 100 more. - Numbers yet sick, some likely to die, & others never to appearance will be fit for any employment. - Never did I see such a scene of Misery in my day - in every sense truly wretched, naked, filthy, dirty, lousy, & many of them utterly unable to stand, to creep or even to stir hand or foot. - Have been a great deal amongst them, 'till I have come home quite ill. -

[Upper page writing]

Through Mercy we are tolerably well, except that I fear we have by some means or other caught the Scotch Fiddler, which at times makes us dance & caper about the room more than I cd. wish. - Hope however soon to be cured of this filthy disorder. - My dear Milbah grows every day more & more engaging. - Mrs. J. desires to join in Xitian respects to you ^{^(all)}; the Rev^d. M^r. Horsey, Miles, ^{^(Offington)} & Edwards - M^r. & Miss Wickenden, M^r. Pears &c. &c, - I need not tell you that I expect to hear from you, this will be always thankfully rec^d. & ans^d. by

Dear Sir, you very affec^{ly}. & sinc^{ly}. Rich^d. Johnson -

By no means in the world forget to remember us kindly to D^r. Millard & family.

[Cover]

Mr. Henry Fricker
2 Bonfire Corner
Portsmouth Common
Portsmouth
England.

Per Favour of M^r. Alt.

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Letter 6 - [Page 1 of 4]

Port Jackson New S:Wales
March 18th [17]91 -

Dear Sir,

I cannot but wonder what's the Matter that I never yet heard from any of my Hampshire friends since we left England, & s^d. I not hear from them by the next fleet, I believe I shall not take the Liberty of directing any more Letters to that part, least I s^d. be thought impertinent. -

I cannot however suppose that I s^d. be so soon forgotten by every one, Mr. Stradling excepted, & think that some how or other they have miscarried. - At all events however I am unwilling to let this ship sail without dropping you a line to convince you that though so far distant, we do not forget you, & to inform you of our welfare. -

I shall however let this letter serve for the whole & beg that if any enquire after us, you would remember us to them in an affectionate Manner. -

Wish I c^d. give you a pleasing account of our situation here, but must confess, I think I meet with things worse than I expected, bad as I might naturally expect them. -

In about every aspect things are truly wretched & uncomfortable, & when it will be better with us, God only knows. -

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We have been once reduced into great worldly straits as a Colony, but it pleased God in Mercy to send us a reasonable & gracious relief & supply -

Since then things have appeared dark & gloomy - We have been visited with a most severe drought for nine or ten Months - our gardens & fields looked very unpromising & have turned out but very indifferent -

Water began to grow very scarce & very bad - Many people have been ill on this account & what has tended to increase their illness, has been the very great heat of the weather - The Hottest day in England is quite moderate to what we have repeatedly felt it here - Birds, unable to bear the heat, have great Numbers, dropped from the trees & expired.

Justly does God in his Judgments visit us - we are truly a wicked people - sin abounds of all kinds & amongst all ranks too much God & religion set little store by -

Hope the Lord has hitherto enabled me to be faithful; but confess I at times am ready to sink under my many & great discouragements - I have great need of faith & patience, & am convinced at times, that I have not so much as at other times I have been ready to imagine. -

We are now on a pretty friendly intercourse with the Natives - Numbers of them are coming into the Camp daily, or rather are in Night & day - This intercourse was principally brought about by means of a little

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Girl, which, if I mistake not, I mentioned to you in a former letter - For some time this Girl made good improvement in her Book, & began to be very partial to her; but since they have come in in common she has not behaved so well or so complying - Once & again, she has been off in the Woods for some time, but believe she finds things better in Camp & with us than amongst her Countrymen - Hope that good will come out of all this, though appearances accept very dark. - Have wrote home to some of our great ones & I hope good ones too; upon the propriety of sending

out Missionaries - Hope to see some come out soon, & hope you & our dear f^{ds}. with you, will help forward this blessed & important work with [your] prayers. -

Mrs. J. is through Mercy very well - we have an increase of one in our family - a sweet little girl just turned a twelve month -

I beg your acceptance of the enclosed - One thing I have sent you is what the Natives call a Barrin, which the females whilst young wear as a fig leaf -

Have also sent you two or three fish Hooks & one line - The Hooks made of a kind of pearl fish shell & the line of the inner Bark of a small shrub ^ (or Creeper) - Wish I had some thing to send you more worthy of your acceptance. -

We beg our united love & respects to all enquiring f^{ds}., & remain as ever,
Your truly aff^{te} f^{ds} - R^d & Mary Johnson -
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Have also sent you a small Kangaroo skin, if you think it worth you acceptance. - You will take your choice of the Hooks & lines, & then send the other two one to my f^d. Miss Wickendens, & the other to my old Hostess M^{rs}. King if alive, if not, to M^r. Etty. - The above small Box will come in a Box to a M^r. Dawes at Portsmouth, & ^ (he) will send it to you -

[Cover]

M^r. Henry Fricker
Bonfire Corner
Portsmouth Common
Portsmouth
England -
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Letter 7 - [Page 1 of 6]

Port Jackson New S: Wales
Oct^{br}. 4th. 1791

My Worthy & dear friends

I have received your very kind & affectionate Letters the last dated Feb^y 21st. 91 for which I thank you, & fearing least putting off too long, I s^d. not be able to write at all, I have begun this only to answer yours & some others, though I do not imagine the Gorgon will return yet for some time. -

I observe what you say as to the doctrine preached in St. Peter's Portsmouth Common, & cannot but lament that any. ah that many very many of My Brother Clergymen go aside so much from the principles & fundamental Doctrines held in our established Church, & so flatly contradict those very Articles which they have subscribed to. - But, blessed be God, I trust I see things in a different light, & however stigmatized by the name of Methodist, Enthusiast, &c, I am not ashamed of the precious gospel of Jesus; have long since come to the Apostle's Resolution 1 Cor: 2: 2, well knowing that whatever doctrine does not tend to humble the sinner & to exalt the Saviour, is Anti christ. -

But I rejoice to hear at the some time, that whilst some thus are pulling down {or rather are attempting to do so} this spiritual Building, others there are in different parts of England as well as

elsewhere, who are building up the Church of God, & I hope & trust their Numbers will increase still more & more, & finally that God will still smile upon our establishment to the bringing of many from darkness to light & from the power of Satan to God. -

But I beg your pardon - I had almost forgot I was writing to a Baptist - I must therefore draw in a little for perhaps I may be carrying things too far -

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But I know my good friend too well, & however we may differ about Circumstantial, I am persuaded we most cordially & fully agree in the Essentials of X'tianity, & I am persuaded, that, let but sinners be wrought upon & be turned from the error of their ways to God whether it be in a Church or a Meeting; a store house or Barn, a Cathedral or a Chapel, my friend I will rejoice. -

There is one part of your Letter astonished or surprised me a little & that is the idea which you & others have formed of my returning to England as early as ^⁽ⁱⁿ⁾ a year or two - I may probably expressed in my letters to you & others that I am sick of my situation, & in many respects I am sorry that I am compelled to be in the same mind ^^(still) {for never surely was a Man or Minister, more exercised & tried with the wicked & ungodly ways of sinners; & few I believe have met with more or greater trials in worldly matters considering My station & office} - But after all, I assure you I have no immediate intentions of returning to Europe - I am persuaded that I am where God aims & intends me to be, & "till I see my way home more clearly than at present, I think it is my duty to abide where I am. -

I have still cause to lament & complain - with Isaiah 59: 1 - But I hope & trust that I have not laboured wholly in vain, & I trust in time, in spite of all oppositions & obstacles, God will make bare his holy arm in the Conversion & salvation of the souls of Men. -

Our Colony begins to increase greatly - last Sunday I preached I suppose to not less than six or eight hundred, & I have since heard that one at least went away sorrowful & heavy hearted, & some others rejoicing in the Son of God manifested towards them - I endeavour always to adapt my discourses to the state & Capacities of my people - generally my sermons are upon the awful strain, as was the Case last Sunday - Texts Pro^v. 19: 21 first part - 1 Pet 4: 18 - but I know this is not the only way of working Conviction upon the Conscience, & see it needful & find it precious work at times I trust, to speak of the great & inestimable Love of Jesus in dying for sinners, &

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in inviting them to come to him, to believe in & to rest upon him for life & salvation. -

After being here for more than four years you may reasonably suppose that we have by this time become more settled - in some respects I am happy to inform you we are so, as we have lately removed out of our old Little Cabbage tree Cottage, &, are now in a house as comfortable & convenient as I can wish - My garden too is in a flourishing state; but, yet in some other respects, & especially in my publick line, I am little better off than ever - no Church is yet built or even begun of, & the only places that we can procure for the purpose of publick worship, is in an old store-House, a Barrack &c. - I have frequent promises & assurances made me however, that in a little time a Church shall be built both here at Sydney & at Parramatta or Rose Hill. -

Rose Hill lies at the head of this harbour, distant from this Cove, about 12 or 14 Miles. - At first I used to go up, perform publick duty & return on the same day - this I found more than I cd. well go through; & after some time obtained a Room {a miserable one it is indeed, but trust I have at times found it a spiritual Bethel} where I sleep on the Saturday & Sunday Evening, which gives me an opportunity of visiting the Convicts in their Hutts, & I declare to you that I have found more pleasure at times in doing this, than in preaching &c. -

Another Clergyman came out in the Gorgon, who is Chaplain to the New S. Wales Corps - his name is Bain - who informed me that he saw you at Portsmouth - He has preached on shore two Sundays, but I have never heard him, being elsewhere employed at the same time. - I wish rather than hope that he may prove a fellow Labourer in the same blessed Cause - As yet he is greatly caressed by our great ones, & I fancy, is not suspected of being a Methodist. - I have need of wisdom, & I hope my good f^{ds}. will not cease daily to pray for me. -

I have received many Letters from Portsmouth, & s^d. be glad, had I time, to write to every one of my f^{ds}. in

[Cont. in margin]

return, but am sorry that I cannot for want of time. - I will however if possible write to your two worthy pastors to whom we beg our united Love & Respect & rejoice to hear of their united efforts in the work of the Ministry, & for the success which God is pleased to give them. - You see what a scribbler I am - But I assure you this letter has been begun for some days, though altogether it ought not to have been [.....indecipherable]

...your sincere f^d. Rd. Johnson. -

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[Lower page writing]

P.S. I am going to take a trip to Norfolk next week, & shall return here about Christmas. This Excursion will prevent me from writing to a Number of my f^{ds}. You must therefore give my respects to Me^{ssrs}. Horsey & Mile & also our dear f^{ds}.

[Upper page writing]

Wickendens at Portsmouth; & tell them to take the will for the deed - farewell -

[Cover]

M^r. Henry Fricker
Portsmouth Common
Portsmouth
Hants. - England -

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Banns of Marriage
No. 573

Revd. Richard Johnson ... of this Parish ... Batchelor
and Mary Burton ... of the Parish of St. Mildred Poultry London ... Spinster ... were
Married in this Church ... by Licence
this fourth Day of December in the Year One Thousand Seven
Hundred and eighty six ... by me ... Henry Foster Minister

From engraving of J. Greenwood Engraver, Hull.
St. John's Church, Hull at which the Rev. Richard Johnson was Curate after his return from NSW.
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Sydney, New S. Wales
Augst. 10th. [17]97 -

My dear Friend,

I thank you for your kind Letter of the 27th. of Sept. '96 - It gives both Myself & M^{rs}. J. great Pleasure to hear that you & yours are well. May our gracious Lord continue to you this inestimable Blessing, 'till having lived to a good old age, you are taken to that blessed world of spirits, where there will be no pain or sickness for ever. -

With Pleasure I can likewise inform you that M^{rs}. J. & my two young ones are well, myself but midling, but I bless God, I am still able to go on in the discharge of my Duty, & trust I still feel the gospel of X, & precious to my Soul. -

The Path I have for many years had to tread, has been rough & thorny, & am often led to wonder how I have got on at all - & hence am led to adore the Wisdom, Power, Faithfulness, &c, of God, whose Promises I trust I can say have been verified - "When thou passest through waters I am with thee &c

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'Tis now more than ten years since we left England - a long time to be banished from my f^{ds}. & what is still more painful, from the Enjoyments of the Means of Grace w^{ch} I one enjoyed. This Consideration often leads me to reflect upon David;s Case in the 42 Psalm - S^d. God spare my life I still hope however once more to enjoy with you those inestimable Privileges, intending, s^d. God be pleased in his Providence to open a way for me, to return home. -

Since the arrival of Gov^r. Hunter, w^{ch} is near two years, my situation has been much more comfortable than for some time before. - His Excellency sets a becoming Example in regularly attending public worship, & wishes as much as he can, to promote & establish the Principles of Morality & Religion - but I am sorry to add, few seem to be influenced by his Examples. - Our Congregations however are much larger than before his arrival, & bad as things yet are, I still nope that out of all this Confusion, God will bring some order. -

Have just now been up with the Gov^r. - found
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him alone & reading a sermon - He showed me the Book, & believes the subjects were very important - I only mention this to show you that his Excellency is disposed to promote Virtue & Morality in the Colony. -

It gives me pleasure to hear that all f^{ds}. with you are well - & I beg you will present our X^{tian} respects to all that enquire after us - I w^d. have wrote to some of them, but c^d. not find opportunity. -

Besides the Duty of my particular office I have for some time had to perform the Duty of a Magistrate - a most unthankful, troublesome office - from Morning to Night am I more or less

pestered with one Complaint or another - S^d. wish much to give up this duty, as it is almost too much for my Health & Spirits, but in my present Situation, I consider it my indispensable Duty. -

I have heard lately that my f^d. Wm. Dawes is now settled at Portsmouth - I wish you w^d. inquire whether it is so, & if so, give my love to him, & beg him to write by the first opportunity. -

M^{rs}. J. unites in love & best wishes - excuse this sad scribble, & believe me to be,
yours most affectionately

R^d. Johnson -
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Letter 8 - [page 4 of 4]

[Cover]

M^r. Henry Fricker
Bonfire Corner
Portsmouth Common
Portsmouth.

Note: Came to hand 14 July 98.

[Transcribed by Jacqueline Lamprecht]