

The Crabtree Foundation (Australian Chapter)  
First Meeting  
*Ode on the Return of Governor Phillip From New South Wales*

Don Charlwood  
February 1975

I am greatly honoured to have been invited to this the first Crabtree Foundation dinner to be held in Australia. Paradoxically, I am not a student of that great ornament of English literature, but it was with feelings of delight — even of awe — that I found this week that my family had long been the possessor of an original copy of an ode of Crabtree's.

My family has had long links with printing. In 1851 my great—grandfather, Arthur Charlwood, brought to Melbourne the first press of sufficient capacity to print playbills. He also printed collections of colonial ballads and of unreadable Baptist sermons. Needless to say, a great many books and papers came with Arthur from England; only recently Professor Bartholomeuz of Monash University identified a prompt copy of KING LEAR that I found among Charlwood's papers, as having belonged to David Garrick. I suppose I ought not, in the circumstances, have been surprised when Brian Bennett — president of the London Foundation and happily with us this evening — identified an ode I discovered as being the work of Crabtree. . It is an ode written on the return of Governor Arthur Phillip from the Australian colony in 1793; it is simply marked J.C. and was printed by Arthur Charlwood before he emigrated from Norwich.

Phillip, you will remember, had left England in 1787 in command of the First Fleet, as it came to be called. This consisted of eleven vessels led by *Sirius* and *Supply*. Phillip was obliged by ill health to return to England after six years in the colony. I had been under the impression that his return went practically unnoticed. It is gratifying to find, then, that so notable a poet as Joseph Crabtree marked the occasion with this brief but heartfelt ode.

ODE ON THE RETURN OF GOVERNOR ARTHUR PHILLIP FROM THE COLONY  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Great son of Albion, bounteous welcome Home!  
Six years have passed since *Sirius* and *Supply*  
Bore thee, proud Phillip, far beyond the foam,  
There to follow noble Cook 'neath southern sky,  
Bearing Old Bailey's cargo to a far—off land,  
To that Bay dubbed Botany by percipient Banks.  
There, by arduous labour. of thy hand  
Thou now hast earnt a Mother Nation's thanks?  
to, in that harsh and unconforming clime,  
Where 'tis broad day when England is abed,  
Where Summer comes with cold and rain 'tis said,  
There a lusty Colony thou hast built,

Fashioned with long patience and paternal care  
From lost and violent souls out Newgate spilt.  
O we at Home do join thy fervent prayer;  
May all those men so stained and dark with guilt  
Learn gentle English ways to make them whole:  
May each one from his betters learn to bat and bowl.

J.C.