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**The Sydney Language Notebooks and responses to language  
contact in early colonial NSW**

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THE SYDNEY LANGUAGE NOTEBOOKS  
AND RESPONSES TO LANGUAGE CONTACT IN EARLY COLONIAL NSW  
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This paper<sup>1</sup> is about three antique notebooks which document the now extinct Sydney language<sup>2</sup>. The notebooks were written between 1790 and 1791, a time during which the ‘First Fleet’ of colonisers from Britain achieved their earliest sustained social interactions with the Aboriginal people of Sydney. They are eyewitness accounts which provide valuable insights into the unprecedented language and culture contact between Aboriginal people and the colonists.

The paper begins with an historical note about the forces which promoted the study of Aboriginal languages and led to the production of these remarkable notebooks. The next part pays tribute to William Dawes and his pioneering contribution to Australian linguistics. Dawes was the acknowledged author of the two most valuable notebooks for the purposes of comparative Australian linguistics. A descriptive introduction to all three notebooks is then provided, which aims to promote interest in the manuscripts. Authorship of the third notebook has been the subject of speculation and a small discussion is included here, suggesting an attribution. The final sections of the paper discuss some of the language contact induced phenomena recoverable from the notebooks and borrowings into both NSW Pidgin and Australian English from the Sydney language.

Except occasionally, to demonstrate the quality of the field-notes in the notebooks, or where relevant to a specific point at issue, I do not in this paper address

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<sup>2</sup>None of the First Fleet writers gave the language a name, nor did they provide a word for ‘language’. Much later, R.H. Mathews (1903) called the language Dharruk, but provided no source. Since then, linguists have often used *Dharug* to designate the language of Sydney or its ‘inland dialect’. The word for ‘people’ in the Sydney area, spelt variously but often as *Iyora*, has also been assigned as a name for the language, or for its ‘coastal dialect’.

the structural features of the Sydney language. For detailed description, see Troy (1992; to appear a), Osmond (1989) and David Wilkin's analysis to be published in a future volume of the *Handbook of Australian Languages*<sup>3</sup>.

## 1. Historical background<sup>4</sup>.

Governor Arthur Phillip, Commander of the First Fleet and founder of the British colony of NSW in 1788, was given general instructions by King George III to open communication with the Aboriginal people, to treat them with humanity and fairness and to use his interactions with them to the colony's advantage. (These instructions, incidentally, remained the same for all governors until 1825, when they were changed at the recommendations of the Bigge Reports. cf. Woolmington 1988:3.)

You are to endeavour, by every possible means, to open an intercourse with the natives, and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all our subjects to live in amity and kindness with them. And if any of our subjects shall wantonly destroy them, or give them any unnecessary interruption in the exercise of their several occupations, it is our will and pleasure that you do cause such offenders to be brought to punishment according to the degree of the offence. You will endeavour to procure an account of the numbers inhabiting the neighbourhood of the intended settlement, and report our opinion to one of our Secretaries of State in what manner our intercourse with these people may be turned to the advantage of this colony. (George R. 1787:485)

Therefore, in the very orders issued to the first Governor of NSW were instructions to organise and to promote language contact.

Phillip actively encouraged his officers to acquire a working knowledge of the language of the Aboriginal people<sup>5</sup>, and he was equally keen that Aboriginal people

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<sup>3</sup>Arthur Capell (1970: 24) announced that he was going to produce a monograph containing a description of the Sydney language. His source was to be a manuscript held in the Mitchell Library amongst the papers of John Dunmore Lang and which was evidence for 'the Dharruk dialect proper to Sydney'. Amongst the papers of Arthur Capell, now in the care of Peter Newton, is a manuscript containing Capell's comments on the language (Newton, personal communication 1985). Another linguist who has done some unpublished work on the notebooks is Nick Reid (personal communication, 1988/89).

<sup>4</sup>For further details see Troy (1990, 1992, to appear b, forthcoming). Newton (1987) also provides a detailed discussion of the history of language study in the Sydney district.

<sup>5</sup>It was believed for at least two years that there was only one Aboriginal language. Some speculation about the possibility of multiple languages was fueled by the inability of the local Aboriginal people to understand any but two of the items on the wordlist collected by the Cook expedition in 1770 at Endeavour River, north Queensland. The list had been included in the First Fleet's general papers. In mid April 1791, such speculation was confirmed when an exploring party accompanied by two

should learn some English. However, his attempts were frustrated by the Aboriginal population remaining shy of the settlement. In desperation, he captured three men, successively, in the hope that he could reconcile them to the colony and make them effective cross-cultural emissaries. The first captive, Arabanoo, died before making significant progress in English. One of the second pair of detainees escaped almost immediately. However, one man was held for several months before escaping and in that time became comfortable with the colonists and their lifestyle. He was the now legendary Bennelong, who through his great friendship with Phillip became the catalyst for the partial reconciliation between the Sydney people and the colonists. Bennelong returned to the settlement permanently and of his own free will, in late 1790. He was followed by a steady stream of Aboriginal people who were increasingly drawn to the colonists and their food resources as settlement progressed across the Cumberland Plain, devastating the natural environment.

A brief 'golden age' for language study commenced in the Sydney area, as the community of Aboriginal people establishing themselves within the settlement provided researchers with free access to information and opportunities to test their ideas through participant observation. Bennelong is named with sixteen other Aboriginal people in the Sydney notebooks, and it is certain that all of them provided significant input to the collection of linguistic information by the authors.

By 1792, however, the sustained cross-cultural interactions had created a contact-induced *lingua franca* which diminished official interest in the Sydney language. In April of that year, Collins stigmatized the contact register in disparaging terms, of the kind used many times since, by linguists and non-linguists alike, to describe contact languages:

Several of their young people continued to reside among us, and the different houses in the town were frequently visited by their relations. Very little information that could be depended upon respecting their manners and customs was obtained through this intercourse; and it was observed, that they conversed with us in a mutilated and incorrect language formed entirely on our imperfect knowledge and improper application of their words. (Collins, vol. 1, 1975:174)

By 1796, constant exposure to English and the colonists 'improper application' of the Sydney language had produced the recognisable ancestor of NSW Pidgin. This rendered largely redundant the colonists' painstakingly acquired knowledge of the Sydney language. Even Collins, who prided himself on his acquisition of the

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Aboriginal people from Sydney encountered what was believed to be another language group at the Hawkesbury River.

language<sup>6</sup>, was reduced to obtaining his ethnographic information using incipient NSW Pidgin.

By slow degrees we began mutually to be pleased with, and to understand each other. Language, indeed, is out of the question; for at the time of writing this (September 1796) nothing but a barbarous mixture of English with the Port Jackson dialect is spoken by either party; and it must be added, that even in this the natives have the advantage, comprehending with much greater aptness than we can pretend to, every thing they hear us say. (Collins 1975, vol. 1:451)

There is no evidence that any other field studies of the Sydney language were produced until the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries when the language was almost extinct. The later studies (Ridley and Rowley 1875; Mathews 1903) are very brief and incomplete. Therefore, the Sydney language notebooks stand unique as the only known substantial records of the language still extant. (Some other linguistic data, of far lesser quality, is contained in other eighteenth and early nineteenth century manuscripts and publications (Newton 1987; Troy 1992). In 1982, Lois Carrington discovered a manuscript wordlist for the Sydney language which she has attributed to Henry fulton with a date of 1800 (personal communication 1983, 1992). Her remarkable discovery is the only recently discovered manuscript material for the Sydney language since the Sydney language notebooks were found.)

The intellectuals of the First Fleet made the first contribution to the analysis of Australian languages, and for their influence on later researchers can be considered the pioneers of the study of Australian languages. Preeminent amongst them was William Dawes.

## **2. William Dawes and his contribution to Australian linguistics.**

Second Lieutenant William Dawes (1762-1836), Royal Marines, Officer of Engineers and Artillery, arrived in Australia with the First Fleet in 1788 (McAfee 1981:2).

He was the scholar of the expedition, man of letters and man of science, explorer, mapmaker, student of language, of anthropology, of astronomy, of botany, of surveying and of engineering, teacher and philanthropist. (Wood, in McAfee 1981:10)

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<sup>6</sup>Hunter observed that 'Mr. Collins, the judge-advocate, is very assiduous in learning the language, in which he has made a great progress' (Hunter 1968: 269).

Dawes used the three years he spent in the colony, from January 1788 to December 1791, to develop his scientific and philanthropic interests while pursuing his main task of setting up and maintaining the observatory. He became very interested in the Aboriginal community and took advantage of their increasing presence in the colony, from the end of 1790, to make a scientific study of their language. Although not alone in his research, Dawes was soon acknowledged by his contemporaries as the leader in the infant field of Australian linguistics. Watkin Tench, who became one of Dawes' closest friends, testified to Dawes' superiority in the language. Although Tench recorded his own observations of Aboriginal language and culture, he wrote that Dawes was so far advanced in his language research as to eclipse the work of anyone else. Tench had hoped to publish with Dawes on 'the language of NSW', but the plan came to nothing.

Of the language of New South Wales I once hoped to have subjoined to this work such an exposition, as should have attracted public notice; and have excited public esteem. But the abrupt departure of Mr. Dawes, who, stimulated equally by curiosity and philanthropy, had hardly set foot on his native country, when he again quitted it, to encounter new perils, in the service of the Sierra Leona company, precludes me from executing this part of my original intention, in which he had promised to co-operate with me; and in which he had advanced his researches beyond the reach of competition. (Tench 1979:291)

Dawes' observations about the nature and structure of the language contain a unique level of detail and insight. Comments by his colleagues suggest that Dawes had significant input to all their studies and that he was a major catalyst in the propagation and use of knowledge about the Sydney language during the time he was in the colony. Dawes and his colleagues can also be considered to have had a formative role in the genesis of the uniquely Australian lexicon borrowed from Aboriginal languages which we now enjoy in speaking Australian English. Many of the words they borrowed to name the flora and fauna of Sydney and the material culture of the Sydney people have remained in use (see section 6 below).

Dawes' ethnographic observations also make him one of the pioneers of Australian anthropology. He documented the material and social culture of Aboriginal people in the Sydney district as well as their physical environment.

The friendly, easy relationships Dawes developed with Aboriginal people who lived in and around Sydney are well attested in the dialogues in his notebooks. His humanitarianism was endorsed in a statement on his character by Zachary MaCaulay, in 1796, who knew him as co-governor of the Sierra Leone Company.

Dawes is one of the excellent of the earth. With great sweetness of disposition and self-command he possesses the most unbending principles. For upwards of three years have we acted together, and in that time many difficult cases arose for our decision; yet I am not sure that in the perplexities of consultation and the warmth of discussion, we either uttered an unkind word or cast an unkind look at one another. (MaCaulay, in Curren-Jones 1930:48)

Dawes was more zealous than most other colonists in his desire to see Aboriginal people treated with fairness. This much is evident from his objection to Phillip's punitive expedition against the Aboriginal people, in 1790. Phillip assigned Dawes and Tench to a particularly odious task. They were to kill and bring back the heads of ten Aboriginal people as a warning to others against committing depredations against the colonists. Phillip's object was to punish and make an example of those who had killed McGuire, his gamekeeper. McGuire was known for his cruelty and antagonism toward Aboriginal people and Dawes regarded the matter as grossly unfair. Nevertheless, following negotiations between Phillip, Tench and Dawes about the severity of the example, Dawes finally agreed to Phillip's orders. The expedition found no Aboriginal people and on their return Dawes displayed open regret at having followed Phillip's orders in spite of the risk of court martial for disobedience. The incident contributed to Dawes being disallowed to renew his term in NSW and subsequently returning to England, in December 1791 (McAfee 1981:8). The Aboriginal people thereby lost one of their most valuable allies, and the colony a fine scientist who had hoped to settle there and continue his research.

### **3. The Sydney language notebooks.**

Between 1788 and 1791, Dawes collected in two small notebooks a thoughtful and linguistically sophisticated set of field data on what he called 'The language of New South Wales, in the neighbourhood of Sydney'. Australian linguistics owes a great deal to R.M.W. Dixon for facilitating their rediscovery, in 1972, from within the Marsden Collection, in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. Dixon's assessment is very favourable:

[Dawes] had a sound classical education and commenced a masterly grammar, gathering paradigms of verbs and sample sentences, written down with remarkable attention to phonetic detail...Dawes' careful description is invaluable; it is the only extensive work on the long extinct language of Sydney. (Dixon 1980:10).

Dawes' manuscripts are working notes revealing some of his techniques for eliciting and gathering material, attempts by him to analyse the grammar and phonology of the language, and an amount of incidental material he collected in daily

conversations with Aboriginal people. The conversations record a rare insight into the reactions of the local Aboriginal people to the colonists. Dawes' linguistic notes were influenced by his former language studies, his own first language (English), the level of fluency he was able to attain in the language and ideas that he developed as he studied the language. The last is illustrated by his acknowledgment that the sound system was unlike any he had previously encountered and therefore required him to develop his own orthography for transcription.

The first notebook<sup>7</sup> is titled *Grammatical forms of the language of N.S. Wales, in the neighbourhood of Sydney, by --- Dawes, in the year 1790*. It contains twenty one verb paradigms set up on a classical model of present, past and future, first, second and third person, singular and plural, and an 'imperative mood' form. His use of the paradigms suggests that he assumed an inflectional analysis and did not recognise enclitics. The layout of his notes, their lack of polish, notes written upside down, crossings out and revisions, all indicate some spontaneity of recording as expected of field notes. He set up one page with the paradigm ready to fill in and kept the facing page for 'other inflexions of the same verb', adding example sentences and further insights into the workings of the language. Ten of the paradigms are fairly complete and are supplemented with sample sentences, grammatical comments and general observations. The other eleven paradigms have few entries other than the verb stem and almost no supplementary comment. The verbs in the paradigms are generally inflected for tense/aspect and have an enclitic pronoun, although some variation exists with extra productive suffixes and enclitic pronouns. An example of Dawes' verb paradigms is in Table 1.

Yen	To go or walk
Present	
Yenoó (or Yen&Èóó)	I go or walk
Yenioóm&È	Thou &c.
Yen@&ina	He
Yenángoön We	Ye

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<sup>7</sup>The original manuscripts are held in London. I have therefore worked from a hard copy made from the microfilm version held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Because the pages of the notebooks are not numbered and it is unclear whether the microfilm copy includes all the blank pages, I am not certain whether the page sequences are exactly the same as in the original. However, for ease of reference I have assigned page numbers to each of the notebooks beginning with the first page of text and ending with the last. On the microfilm, the notebook Dawes (1790) is first on the reel and pagination commences with the paradigm for the verb *Naa To see or look* and finishes pagination at page 45 which is headed *other inflexions &c*. The second notebook is Dawes (1790-91) in which pagination commences on the page containing Dawes' orthography and finishes on page 44, which begins with *Koréang....* The third notebook is Anon (1790-91) in which pagination commences with a list of *Winds...* and finishes on page 46 which begins *Gonan-goolie*.



Yeníla		They
	Past	
Yeniaouí		I did go or walk, or have gone &c
		Thou &c.
		He
		We
		Ye
		They
	Future	
Yenmaóu		I will go or walk
Yenmám&È		Thou
Yenmában		He
Yenmángoön		We
Yenmán°e		Ye
YenmaóuÈ		They
	Imperative Mood	
Yenma		Walk or go thou

Table 1: A verb paradigm from Dawes Notebook

The second notebook is titled *Vocabulary of the language of N.S. Wales in the neighbourhood of Sydney. Native and English, by Dawes*. The two notebooks appear to have been a pair, one for notes about verbal morphology and the other to record phonetic information, grammatical observations, texts and, above all, a large wordlist. The second notebook is less spontaneous than the first and may have been, in part, written up from rough notes or Dawes' journal<sup>8</sup>. The wordlist suggests some premeditation in that for the most part it is arranged in alphabetical order according to the first letter of each word. Quite probably Dawes had already had some working knowledge of the language before deciding to write his notebooks; the layout suggests he allocated a couple of pages to each word-initial sound and then wrote down items as he remembered or discovered them on the appropriate pages. However, he has once again left some pages blank, some with a few notes he began to make, which indicates the notebook functioned as a working record, not simply a final copy.

The second notebook begins with a table of the orthography devised by Dawes (Troy 1992)<sup>9</sup>. Although it is impossible to be sure of the sounds Dawes intended to

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<sup>8</sup>The location of his journal and any other linguistic notes, if they still exist, is unknown. It is unlikely that Dawes made copious notes then copied them into his notebooks unless he used an erasable slate. The uncertainty of supplies from England meant that all non-renewable resources, such as paper, were very valuable commodities in the colony.

<sup>9</sup>Some of the orthographic conventions Dawes used have been difficult to follow because I have been working from a copy rather than the original manuscripts; for example, distinctions between *i* and *È*

represent, his comments are a valuable guide in interpreting his data. The other First Fleet sources do not provide such a useful tool for the modern researcher. Dawes used the English spelling system modified with diacritics and with the addition of one phonetic symbol which is similar to 9. Dawes' use of 9 is not surprising as n with a tail like g was used to represent a voiced velar nasal as early as the mid-late seventeenth century (Pullum and Ladusaw 1986:104). Of the diacritics he used, the accute accent was in use in England as early as the sixteenth century while breve and over, under or side dots were in use by the mid eighteenth century (*OED*). Macron, however, is generally considered to be a nineteenth century symbol (*OED*); so it is interesting that it used in all three notebooks.

In interpreting Dawes' orthography it is useful to know that, being from Portsmouth, he spoke a dialect of south-eastern English which was the variety most akin to what is known as Standard English (SE) or Received Pronunciation (RP), the educated variety of England's focal point, London.

The southeastern dialect area is much closer to the standard RP, since its dialects – with strong influence from the central Midlands – provided the source for the standard. (Russ, in Bailey and Görlach 1982:39)

Dawes' well-educated, middle class background also suggests that his English was very close to SE. Furthermore, the SE of eighteenth century England is very close to modern SE (Russ in Bailey and Görlach 1982:24-28), except for some well-documented changes which can be taken into consideration in assessing his orthography; he may for example, have had post-vocalic r as part of his repertoire, as it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that 'nonrhotic pronunciations began to appear in prestige varieties' (Russ, in Bailey and Görlach 1982:25). It is reasonable to suggest that the sounds Dawes intended to represent by his orthography were based on his own speech, and its similarity to modern SE allows confident guesses about the nature of those sounds. For example, Dawes used orthographic 'a', 'aa', 'ã a', 'ãa', 'e' and 'ãu' to represent variations of what is likely to have been phonemic 'a'.

Tables 2 and 3 contain the consonant and vowel phonemes which can be reconstructed for the Sydney language using the Sydney language notebooks and later sources (Troy 1992).

bilabial	apical	laminal	dorsal
	alveolar retroflex	dental	palatal
			velar

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are not always clear particularly where Dawes used a diacritic above the symbol. The original manuscripts are much clearer than the microfilm copy.

stop	b/p	d/t		dh	dy/dj/tj	g/k
nasal	m	n		nh	ny	ng
lateral		l			ly	
rhotic		rr	r			
glide					y	w

Table 2: Sydney language consonant phonemes

	front	mid	back
high	i		u
low		a	

Table 3: Sydney language vowel phonemes

Following Dawes' orthographic table is a page of notes including a list of 'the four winds' after which the wordlist commences. The wordlist is English to Aboriginal with an occasional sequential relationship as, for example, when Dawes lists kin terms (p. 20) and parts of the body (p. 40). Within the list, Dawes speculates about translations and points of grammar. In one case he used, as a linguistic device, a translation with corresponding English morphology:

Kaadianmadiou<sup>10</sup> ... I kaadianed it (that is I put the shell on the womara) (p.11)<sup>11</sup>.

Dawes' keen observation of the language is evident in his grammatical notes; for example, he identified the accusative marker **-nga**:

P. Kolb@Èa wámi T\$arÈ9@a9a ... Kolby scolded Taringa ... Note K\$olb@Èa agent T\$arÈ9a-9a patient (p.26).

He was never afraid of uncertainty and often speculated about a translation, for example:

Karr\$in ... I believe signifies reddish hair or perhaps thick matted hair (p.11).

The main wordlist ends (p. 26) and the notebook continues with substantial textual data in the form of numerous sentences, small dialogues and grammatical comments, as well as 'A song of New South Wales' with no translation (p.41), and lists of 'tribal' names and flora and fauna of the Sydney area. Dawes also included a

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<sup>10</sup>     **gadyan**   **-ma**     **-dya**   **-wu**  
shell     VBLSR   PAST   1S.S

The bolded interlinearisations and bolded examples of lexical items use a modernised orthography (Troy, 1992 and To appear a).

<sup>11</sup>My thanks to Cliff Goddard for pointing this out to me. A *kaadian* (**gadyan**) is a Sydney cockle *anadara trapezia*. The Aboriginal people of Sydney used the shell to arm spears and knives and also as a scraper.

small comparative table of words used by the 'Coasters' (coastal Sydney district people) and the "BurubËrãa9ál" (inland people, Hawkesbury River district) (p. 41). The variation between items suggests dialectal difference, the inland dialect having a medial homorganic nasal cluster *-nd-* absent in the coastal dialect; for example: 'BurubËrãa9ál ... m\$unduru ... Coasters ... m\$unuru ... navel'.

There is a suggestion in the second notebook that the Aboriginal people believed Dawes was achieving results in his language acquisition. The affirmation (or perhaps fond hope on the part of Dawes) is found in example sentence he gave for **garaga** 'pronounce, mouth':

Kár&agãa ... To pronounce (as Mr. Dawes búdy&er&i<sup>12</sup> káraga Mr. D. pronounces well) (p.11).

Held with these notebooks is another, titled *Vocabulary of the language of N.S.Wales, in the neighbourhood of Sydney. Native and English, but not alphabetical*. Although SOAS catalogued this additional notebook as of anonymous authorship, they offered the suggestion that it was the work of Samuel Marsden, because all three notebooks were in his collection. Since Marsden did not arrive in Sydney until 1794, this would imply a later date for the manuscript. Based on a study of the handwriting in the manuscripts and comments by other First Fleet writers, I would attribute authorship to David Collins, Arthur Phillip and John Hunter.

There appear to be at least three different hands in the notebook, both 'rough' and 'fair'<sup>13</sup>, and none of them match that of William Dawes. The rough hand (pp. 27-28) is identical to that of Phillip. (Specimens of Phillip's hands are readily available in archival collections and most accessible in Jonathan King's (1985) book of documents *In the beginning...*) Evidence for authorship by Hunter and Collins and further support for Phillip is to be found in the journal notes of Philip Gidley King written between 1788 and 1790. In a published version of King's journal (King 1968[1793]) is a list of words which he claimed to have copied from a notebook used by Phillip, Hunter and Collins and lent to him by Collins. King wrote:

I shall now add a vocabulary of the language, which I procured from Mr. Collins and governor Phillip, both of whom had been very assiduous in procuring words to

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<sup>12</sup>**Budjari** 'good' became an important core item in NSW Pidgin (Troy 1985, 1990, forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup>Prior to the invention of typewriters it was common for literate people to have command of at least two styles of handwriting, a fast one for composing or note-taking known as the 'rough hand' and a slower, polished script known as the 'fair hand' which was reserved for the production of 'fair-copy' or the final, corrected form of a document.

compose it; and as all the doubtful words are here rejected, it may be depended upon to be correct. (King 1968:270)

He added that ‘the following vocabulary, which Mr. Collins permitted me to copy...was much enlarged by Captain Hunter’. The list copied by King is very similar to the list in the anonymous notebook. The vocabulary tallies well with the notebook and the orthographic conventions used are the same. Characteristic of both is a particularly salient use of hyphens between syllables, a style also used by Collins and Hunter, but not generally by Dawes. The evidence is therefore convincing that the notebook is the same as that lent to King by Collins.

The ‘anonymous’ notebook, with its neat wordlists, also looks to have been premeditated to some degree; but once again there are blank pages for further notes and evidence of the entries being made over a period of time, rather than it being simply a fair copy from rough notes. The first page of text contains a list of assignations for winds according to compass directions. The items provide examples of some of the problems encountered by colonists studying the Sydney language. In this case, the researchers were confused by the differences between English ideas about location and direction and Aboriginal notions of the same. Other evidence suggests that the names for the winds do not necessarily represent direction so much as the characteristics of the direction from which they blew. For example, *go-niey-mah* translated as ‘south-west wind’ is translated in several other places, and in other sources, as ‘stinky’. So, in answer to a question ‘what do you call this wind’ the reply was ‘stinky’, not the directional item the researcher was attempting to elicit.

The notebook proceeds on with a list of five ‘words used by the Natives in the Hawkesbury’ (p. 3), a list of names for various ‘tribes’ in masculine and feminine, (p. 5), a list of ‘names of women’ (p. 7) and ‘names of men’ (pp. 9-10) and a non-alphabetical wordlist English to Sydney language (p.8). A large list of place names, English to Sydney language (pp. 11-16), is followed by a recommencement of a semi-alphabetical wordlist English to Sydney. From page nineteen forward the wordlist is occasionally grouped thematically into, for example, verbs, environmental terms, fauna, insects, fish, birds, body parts, human and kin terms. The list continues but in Sydney to English and written in a mixture of hands (p. 29ff). A small list of numbers, one to four and ‘a great many’, is included (p. 45).

In all, in the three notebooks there are approximately one thousand lexemes, fifty-three single sentences and fourteen mini-dialogues. None of the dialogues contain more than six exchanges and there are no long texts. The single sentences are

generally given as having been obtained in the context of general conversation. A few sentences were clearly offered by Aboriginal people, or elicited by Dawes, to clarify a point of grammar.

#### 4. Records of cross-cultural relations in the notebooks.

The information in the notebooks was obtained from Aboriginal people who were gradually being incorporated into the colonial society in Sydney. As noted above, seventeen people are named in the manuscripts, including the famous Bennelong and two children, 'Nanbarry' and 'Boorong' (or 'Abaroo'), who were also well-known in the colony and often mentioned in other First Fleet sources. They were wards of the colony, having been orphaned in an epidemic which swept through the Aboriginal population in 1789. Other names make their only appearance in Dawes' notebooks, never mentioned by any other First Fleet source.

The Aboriginal people named were the first to establish permanent relations with the colonists. Through their interactions with the colonists they also became the core group responsible for the inception of the contact language in Sydney that was the incipient stage for NSW Pidgin (Troy To appear b, forthcoming).

Embedded in the conversations and vocabulary that Dawes recorded is ample evidence that he enjoyed companionable social interactions with the Aboriginal people. His notes contain a broad range of everyday expressions, from terms of endearment to those of admonishment. Dawes seems to have conversed at all levels from the esoteric to the pragmatic and was able to record many kinds of human contact. For example, the following entry from his wordlist suggests that he shared intimate moments with his Aboriginal friends.

Putuwá .. To warm ones hand by the fire and then to squeeze gently the fingers of another person. (Dawes 1790-91:21)

He may not have performed this action himself, but it is an item more likely to have been collected through participant observation than through simple elicitation.

Dawes referred often to a young Aboriginal woman, he usually called Patye<sup>14</sup>, with whom he had a close friendship. Two pieces of evidence suggest that Patye, at least occasionally, stayed in Dawes' hut. In the first, Dawes recorded a short dialogue

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<sup>14</sup>An abbreviation of "Patyegara" (**badyagarang** 'eastern grey kangaroo *macropus giganteus*'). He noted: 'T\$agarán Túba Patyegará9 Kanm\$a9nal ... The names of Patyegará9' (Dawes 1790-91, p.4).

in which Patye complained that that she couldn't sleep because the candle was still burning.

D. M@ÈnyÈn bial na9ady@ÈmÈ?<sup>15</sup> Why dont you sleep?  
P. Kandãul\$in<sup>16</sup> ... Because of the candle. (Dawes 1790-91:36)

Another time, Patye corrected herself for asking Dawes to remove the blanket instead of the candle, which again suggests she was sleeping in his hut.

Taríadyaou<sup>17</sup> ... I made a mistake in speaking. This Patye said, after she had desired me to take away the blanket when she meant the candle. (Dawes 1790-91:30)

Patye's presence in Dawes' hut does not necessarily imply any physical intimacy because Dawes shared the dwelling with several other officers, accommodation in early Sydney being at a premium<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, Dawes was strongly influenced by the evangelical ideas of John Thornton who proposed the 'domestic experiment'. Thornton's experiment aimed to provide salvation for non-Christian 'uncivilised' people by installing them in the homes of 'civilised' people where they could be exposed to enlightenment. Followers of his ideas believed that by taking people into their homes, especially children, and 'educating' (on the assumption that they were not already being educated in their own societies) them they could turn those people into highly successful participators in 'civilised' society<sup>19</sup>. It is very likely that Dawes was following Thornton's ideas in having Patye live with him, rather than developing a relationship of concubinage with her.

Whatever the nature of their relationship, Dawes and Patye were often together and his notes suggest that he believed they shared the ease of confidantes. He felt free to comment to her about personal issues. For example, he told her that she should not stand around naked in the cold as she was used to doing. She briskly replied that she was near the fire to get warm and that if she had clothes on it would take longer for her skin to absorb the heat.

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<sup>15</sup>D. 'Dawes', **miny-in** 'what-ABL', **biyal** NEG, **nanga-dya-mi** 'sleep-PAST-you'.

<sup>16</sup>P. 'Patye', **gandal-in** 'candle-ABL'.

<sup>17</sup>**daraya-dya-wu** 'mistake-PAST-1S.S'.

<sup>18</sup>This is not to say Dawes and Patye did not seek privacy elsewhere to pursue a more intimate relationship. Many First Fleet officers successfully developed sexual liaisons with convict women in spite of the lack of privacy in the colony (Kociumbas 1992:24-25).

<sup>19</sup>My thanks to Niel Gunson for taking the time to share with me his knowledge of evangelism in the eighteenth century and for explaining the ethics of the First Fleet intellectuals and Dawes in particular.

At this time Patyegara<sup>9</sup> was standing by the fire...naked, and I desired her to put on her cloaths, on which she said Goredyú tágarÈn<sup>20</sup>the full meaning of which is "I will or do remain longer naked in order to get warm sooner, as the fire is felt better without cloaths than if it had to penetrate thro' them." (Dawes 1790-91:29)

Dawes felt easy enough to make the personal remark (albeit probably in jest) that her skin would lighten to his shade if she repeatedly washed herself. In retaliation she threw her towel down in a fit of mock pique (suggested by Dawes's use of 'as' in the following passage) and claimed that she could never become white.

Tyerabárrbowaryaou<sup>21</sup> :I shall not become white:...This was said by Patyegará<sup>9</sup> after I had told her if she would wash herself often, she would become white at the same time throwing down the towel as in despair. (Dawes 1790-91:19)

On a more serious note, Dawes learnt from Patye that the Aboriginal population was becoming increasingly alarmed by the permanence of the colony and by the use of guns to enforce what the British believed were their rights to the land.

I then told her that a whiteman had been wounded some days ago in coming from Kadi to Wãar@a<sup>9</sup> & asked her why the black men did it.

Ans<sup>r</sup>. G\$ulara ... (Because they are) angry.

D. M@ÈnyÈn g\$ulara eóra?<sup>22</sup> Why are the b.m. angry.

P. Inyám 9alawí w.m.<sup>23</sup> Because the white men are settled here.

P. Tyérun kamarÈgal<sup>24</sup> The kamarigals are afraid.

D. MÈnyÈn tyérun k-gál? Why are the k- afraid?

P. GãunÈn<sup>25</sup> ... Because of the Guns. (Dawes 1790-91:34)

Dawes' conversations with Patye added much to his field notes and he checked his ideas about the language with her. For example:

On saying to the two girls to try if they would correct me "9yínÈ, Gona9úlye, 9ia, Na9ady@i9un." "Patye did correct me & said "BÈal Na9adyi9un; Na9ady@Ènye. Hence Na9adyi9un is dual We, & Na9dyínye is Plural We.<sup>26</sup> (Dawes 1790-91:30)

2. Piyidy\$en@Èna (1)/ w.mana (2)/ 9yÈn\$arÈ (3)/Pãundã@ulna, P\$undãunga. = A white man/ beat us three/ we three (3)/ Pãundãul, Poonda (& myself understood).

1. PiyÈdya9ála (1)/ whitemána (2)/ 9al\$ari (3)/ P\$undã@u9a. = A white man(2)/ beat us two(1)/ we two (3)/ P\$os\$onda (& myself understood) (4).

<sup>20</sup>gara-dya 'increase-PAST', dagar-in 'cold-ABL'.

<sup>21</sup>dyara-babuwa-ya-wu 'fear-white-PAST-1S.S', dabuwa 'white clay, white'.

<sup>22</sup>miny-in gulara yura 'what-ABL angry people'

<sup>23</sup>inyam ngala-wi whiteman 'because sit-3PL non-Aboriginal people'. On my copy ngalawi is unclear, therefore this is a guess at the form.

<sup>24</sup>dyaran Gamari-gal 'fear Gamari-people'.

<sup>25</sup>gan-in 'gun-ABL'.

<sup>26</sup>nanga- 'sleep'.



The difference between speaking of we two & we three as above expressed was obtained 27 Nov<sup>r</sup> by Patyegara<sup>9</sup> first speaking to one as mark'd 1 and afterwards as mark'd 2, when asking her why she did not speak in the same way the 2nd time as the 1st she said it was because she had forgot that Pãundãul was with them, and explained herself very clearly. (Dawes 1790-91:35)

There is evidence that, as Dawes was learning the Sydney language from Patye, so she was learning English from him. One anecdote suggests that Dawes was teaching her to read.

Wúrãul. W@urãu lbadyaóu<sup>27</sup> Bashful. I was ashamed. This was said to me by Patyegaráng after the departure of some strangers, before whom I could scarce prevail on her to read 25<sup>th</sup>Sept<sup>r</sup>. 1791. (Dawes 1790-91:26)

Some insight into Patye's motivation for cooperating with Dawes in his linguistic endeavours is found in a short dialogue in which Dawes asked her that very question.

D. M@Èny!Èn 9y@Èn!È bÈal piab@unÈ whiteman?<sup>28</sup> ... Why don't you (scorn to) speak like a whiteman?  
P. Ma9abun@È9a bÈal<sup>29</sup> ... Not understanding this answer I asked her to explain it which she did very clearly, by giving me to understand it was because I gave her victuals, drink & every thing she wanted, without putting her to the trouble of asking for it. (Dawes 1790-91:33-34)

Evidently Patye saw her connection with Dawes in very pragmatic terms. Hers was a sentiment that the historical records suggest was shared by the wider Aboriginal community in their dealings with the colonists.

As testimony to the richness of the Sydney notebooks, and Dawes' data in particular, it is possible to recover enough information to construct a grammatical outline of the Sydney language. In 1988, in the absence of any available modern description, I commenced such an analysis myself (Troy 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1989d). Using the three notebooks, additional information from other First Fleet sources, the manuscript of Henry Fulton and later publications, particularly those of William Ridley and John Rowley (1875) and R.H. Mathews (1903)<sup>30</sup>, I have

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<sup>27</sup>**wurulba-dya-wu** '?-PAST-1S.S', I am not sure of a translation for this sentence. However, variations of *wuru* are given in a number of sources as a perjorative usually translated as 'go away'.

<sup>28</sup>**miny-in ngyini biyal baya-buni waidiman**  
what-ABL 2S NEG speak-PRIV non-Aboriginal person

<sup>29</sup>**manga-buni-nga biyal**  
take-PRIV-1S.O NEG

<sup>30</sup>The later sources contain alternative lexical forms which are suggestive of dialectal variation which it was note above was suggested in the coastal versus inland comparative vocabularies collected by First Fleeters. The later sources may have recorded mostly data for the inland dialect as opposed to the mainly coastal dialect data collected by First Fleet sources. Capell (1970) speculated about the

compiled a wordlist of about one thousand items, undertaken an analysis of the orthographies in order to enable comment on the phonology of the language and completed a grammatical analysis (Troy 1992, To appear a, forthcoming). The primary purpose of my investigations, however, was not to describe the Sydney language in and of itself, but to obtain such a description for use in my PhD research into the inception and development of NSW Pidgin. I also hoped to uncover any evidence within the manuscripts for the development of contact language in Sydney; the Sydney language was of course the first Aboriginal language involved in the creation of that pidgin.

The integrity of the data became clear as I searched both for interference from English and for any developing contact language. To my disappointment, I found only a little, in spite of the fact that the Aboriginal people who were sources for the data had experienced significant exposure to English. Some items that caught my eye as suspicious, on a preliminary inspection of the data for earlier works (Troy 1985 and 1990), proved to be misleading similarities between either English or NSW Pidgin forms. One entry that caused me some excitement on first perusal was 'B&Èrong or m&Èro9 ... Belonging' (Dawes 1790-91:3). I hoped that I had found the first use of the NSW Pidgin possessive form **blongentu** (from English 'belonging to'). However, as David Wilkins argues convincingly in a forthcoming paper<sup>31</sup>, the item is **-birang**, an associative nominal case suffix.

## 5. The development of contact language in New South Wales.

In spite of the high quality of the data in the Sydney language notebooks, all is not lost for the contact linguist. Within the notes lurk the uncertainties and misunderstandings on behalf of the recorders which provide insight into potential input to any developing contact language in Sydney. For example, if people in Sydney believed, as did Dawes, that *birong* meant 'belonging', this would be a powerful reinforcement for any incipient use of **blongentu**. A shared similarity of form and meaning between languages providing input to a pidgin is a powerful force for the borrowing of that form into the pidgin. That is, if Aboriginal speakers and colonists alike recognised the similarity between Sydney *birong* and English *belong*, then the item could easily be borrowed into incipient NSW Pidgin.

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possibility of dialectal variation in the Sydney area. Contact-induced interference may also be responsible for some of the differences between the First Fleet and later material.

<sup>31</sup>My thanks to David Wilkins for allowing me to cite his paper, see bibliography for details.

Dawes' notes are also an invaluable record of one colonist's attempt to grapple with the problems caused by the lack of a *lingua franca* for cross-cultural communication. They are a record of second-language learning in the earliest colonial Australian context. The data contains inconsistencies, suggesting that Dawes' knowledge of the Sydney language was incomplete. The recoverable grammar and lexicon show a lesser degree of complexity than would be expected of an Aboriginal language; certainly this is to some extent the product of Aboriginal people simplifying their language to facilitate Dawes' comprehension.

Although in general Dawes' material does not betray contact interference, in that it is not culture-specific, is free from calquing and is not suspiciously English-like, there are a few sentences which contain a mixture of English and the Sydney language. For example:

*Bye and bye patabángoön Dawes, Benelong.*

**Bye and bye bada-ba-ngun Dawes Benelong.**

soon eat-FUT-1PL Dawes Bennelong

'Bye and bye we Dawes and Benelong shall eat.' (Dawes 1790:39)

*P. Mr. D. Kamabaou Haswell wÈnd@ayÈn.*

**Patye Mr. Dawes ga-ma-ba-wu winday-in**

Patye Mr. Dawes call-VBLSR-FUT-1S.S window-ABL

'Mr D. I will call Haswell from the window.' (Dawes 1790-91:33)

The only clearly identifiable contact-induced lexical items are coinages by Aboriginal people for items specific to the culture of the colonists (Table 4), and borrowings into the Sydney language (Table 5).

Contemporary observers noted the way in which Aboriginal people coined words to label the colonists and their cultural artefacts. For example:

Their translations of our words into their language are always apposite, comprehensive, and drawn from images familiar to them: a gun, for instance, they call *Goðroobeera*, that is—a *stick of fire*.—Sometimes also, by a licence of language, they call those who carry guns by the same name. But the appellation by which they generally distinguished us was that of *Béerewolgal*, meaning—*men come from afar*. (Tench 1979:292)

Of our compass they had taken early notice, and had talked much to each other about it: they comprehended its use; and called it "*Nāāā-Mòro*," literally, "*To see the way*";—a more significant or expressive term cannot be found. (Tench 1979:227)

COINAGE

MEANING

DERIVATION

<b>barawalgal</b>	non-Aboriginal person	<b>barawal</b> ‘very far’, <b>-gal</b> ‘people’
<b>dalangila</b> <sup>32</sup>	window glass	<b>dalang</b> ‘tongue’
<b>djarraba</b>	musket	<b>djarraba</b> ‘fire stick, giver of fire’
<b>garadi</b>	non-Aboriginal surgeon	<b>garadyigan</b> ‘healer, clever man, sorcerer’
<b>garani</b>	biscuit	?
<b>garrangal</b>	jacket	?
<b>gunya</b>	house or hut	<b>gunya</b> ‘artificially constructed shelter’
<b>marri nuwi</b>	the ship <i>Sirius</i>	<b>marri</b> ‘big’, <b>nuwi</b> ‘canoe’
<b>mati</b>	pettycoat	?
<b>namuru</b>	compass	<b>na-</b> ‘see’, <b>mur</b> ‘path’
<b>nananyila</b>	reading glass	<b>na-</b> ‘see’
<b>nanyila</b>	telescope	<b>na-</b> ‘see’
<b>narang nuwi</b>	the ship <i>Supply</i>	<b>narang</b> ‘little’, <b>nuwi</b> ‘canoe’
<b>ngalawi</b>	house	<b>ngalawa-</b> ‘sit’, <b>-wi</b> ‘them’
<b>ngunmal</b>	palisade fence	?
<b>wanyuwa</b>	horse	? <sup>33</sup>
<b>wulgan</b>	a pair of stays	?

Table 4: Contact induced coinages in the Sydney language

Many of the core lexical items borrowed into NSW Pidgin from Aboriginal languages are from the Sydney language. Of the items on Table 4, several became core items in the lexicon of NSW Pidgin: **marri** ‘very, great, many’, **nuwi** ‘boat, canoe, ship’, **gunya** ‘house, hut, hand-made shelter’, **garadyi** ‘Aboriginal doctor, sorcerer’, **mur** ‘come, go, walk’, **narang** ‘small, a little, younger’. All the borrowings in Table 5 became part of the lexicon of NSW Pidgin (Troy forthcoming).

<u>BORROWING</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
<i>bisket</i>	biscuit
<i>bread, breado</i>	bread
<i>breakfast</i>	breakfast
<i>buk</i>	book
<i>hand kerchyera</i>	handkerchief
<i>jacket</i>	jacket
<i>kandaul</i>	candle
<i>potatoe</i>	potato
<i>tea</i>	tea

<sup>32</sup>On this list three items **dalangila** ‘window glass’, **nananyila** ‘reading glass’, and **nanyila** ‘telescope’ appear to share a common suffix or clitic **-nyila** for which a number of analyses are possible, based on comparative evidence. The form is most like Dharawal (a neighbouring language) *-nyila* ‘3SG.OBJ’ (Eades 1976:52). However, the association of 3S.O with ‘window’ is tenuous. It is also possible that the second part of **dalangila** ‘window glass’ is the nominal **gili** ‘light, spark, candlelight’, and refers to the glass which could be seen as something sparkling and reflecting light. Openings in dwellings are frequently associated with the human mouth and the obvious connection between **dalang** ‘tongue’ and ‘mouth’ reinforces the likelihood of this item having ‘tongue’ as the stem form.

<sup>33</sup>This may be **wuna-wu** ‘throw fast-1S.S’ literally ‘I throw fast’ referring either to the great speed which a person can make a horse travel or possibly the speed at which a person can be thrown from a horse! A later word for ‘horse’, from the Sydney area, was **yaraman**, which Ridley (1875) claimed was derived from *yarra* a word he also translated as ‘throw fast’, i.e. **yara-** ‘throw’ **man-** take.

<i>tougar</i>	sugar
<i>whiteman</i>	non-Aboriginal person
<i>winda</i>	window

*Table 5: Borrowings from English into the Sydney language*

(Spellings and meanings are as given in the source, although it is possible Aboriginal speakers accorded some items a wider range of meaning.)

That Dawes' data does not contain much evidence for mixing of English and the Sydney language is not surprising, because his object was to record and acquire a working knowledge of an Aboriginal language, not the jargon developing through contact between colonists and Aboriginal people. Other First Fleet writers were not as thorough as Dawes in their attempts to record the language. The language notes of Watkin Tench, for example, are pervaded by preconceptions created by his English-speaking background. The noun phrases he recorded all adhere strictly to English word-order. The three examples below are not entirely at variance with what we know of the Sydney language, but evidence from Mathews suggests that the numeral **bula** should be enclitic to the head noun. Mathews observed that in 'Dharruk' number is indicated with three nominal suffixes, singular  $\emptyset$ , dual *-bulla* and plural *-dyarralang* (Mathews 1903:155). All the lexical items in these phrases (except **barrabugu** 'tomorrow') became part of the core lexicon for NSW Pidgin which suggests they were very salient in cross-cultural communication in early colonial Sydney. (The translations below are also from Tench.)

*Bul-la Mur-ee Dee-in.* (Tench 1979:177)

**bula marri dyin**

DUAL INTENS woman

'two large women'

*Mùr-ree Mùl-la.* (Tench 1979:185)

**marri mula**

INTENS man

'a large strong man'

*Bùlla Mògo Parrabùgò.* (Tench 1979:188)

**bula mugu barrabugu**

DUAL hatchet tomorrow

'two hatchets tomorrow'

## 6. Sydney words in Australian English.

Returning now to the earlier notebooks, it can be observed that the Sydney language contributed many borrowings into early Australian English (see Table 6; Troy 1985, 1989a, 1990), a small number of which are still part of contemporary

Standard Australian English<sup>34</sup>. Many of the borrowings were also part of the core lexicon of NSW Pidgin, and may in fact have been secondary borrowings into Australian English via the pidgin.

Aboriginal place names in the Sydney district, for example *para-matta* ‘Rose Hill’ now Parramatta, are also recorded in the notebooks, especially the third, which contains a lengthy list (Anon 1790-91: 11-167), though without translations. Many names still in use have folk etymologies, such as Parramatta which is supposed to mean ‘eels abound’ or ‘plenty of eels’ or ‘*para* = fish, and *matta* = water’ (Morris 1982: 340).

<u>SYDNEY</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>ENGLISH</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
<b>dingu</b>	dog	dingo	Australian native dog
<b>warigal</b>	dog	warrigal	dingo, wild
<b>bubuk</b>	owl	boobook	boobook owl
<b>warada</b>	sceptre flower	warratah	warratah
<b>wamarang</b> <sup>35</sup>	scimeter, sword	boomerang	boomerang
<b>bumarit</b>	scimeter, sword	boomerang	boomerang
<b>gunya</b>	house, hut	gunyah	temporary shelter
<b>giba</b>	stone, rock	gibber	stone, rocky outcrop
<b>dyin</b>	wife or woman	gin	Aboriginal woman/wife
<b>manuwi</b>	feet, leg	mundowie <sup>36</sup>	foot, footstep
<b>ngalangala</b>	a war club <sup>37</sup>	nulla-nulla	Aboriginal war club
<b>wamara</b>	spear throwing stick <sup>38</sup>	woomera	spear thrower
<b>bugi</b>	swim, bathe	bogey	swim, bathe
<b>yilimung</b>	small parrying shield	hieleman	bark shield
<b>garabara</b>	dance	corroboree	Aboriginal dance ceremony
<b>garajun</b>	bark fibre fishing line	kurrajong	kurrajong tree

*Table 6: Borrowings into Australian English from the Sydney language (Spellings and meanings for Australian English from The Australian National Dictionary.)*

<sup>34</sup>Dixon, Ramson and Thomas (1990) is a popular account of borrowings into Australian English from Australian languages generally.

<sup>35</sup>The **wamarang** and **bumarit** were different kinds of sword-like weapons which could be used for fighting hand to hand or could be thrown. The word 'boomerang' is probably a combination of the two words. Ridley (1875) and Mathews (1903) both recorded words in the Sydney language similar to the modern form.

<sup>36</sup>The borrowing may be from the inland dialect of the Sydney language which has medial *nd*, as mentioned above.

<sup>37</sup>The club had a head shaped and painted like the underside of a mushroom, hence its name which also meant 'mushroom'.

<sup>38</sup>Two kinds of spear throwers were noted in First Fleet sources. The **wamara** was about three feet long and made from a split wattle, with a hook at one end and a Sydney cockle at the other both secured with gum, the throwing spear had a hole at one end into which the hook was fixed to secure the spear for throwing. The sharpened edge of the Sydney cockle attached to the end of the **wamara** was used as a cutting edge. The **wigun** was made from heavy wood and also had a hook to hold the spear but rather than being armed with a shell at the other end it was rounded for digging the fern-root and yam out of the earth.

The notebooks also provide an etymology for the famous Australian call 'cooee' which was an early borrowing into Australian English from the Sydney language<sup>39</sup>. 'Cooee' can be analysed as an interjection or exclamation **ga!** similar to English calls for attention such as 'hey!' or 'hoy!'. When shouted **ga!** underwent some phonetic alteration producing the call **gawuwi!**. Dawes observed that from 'some distance' one calls 'Kai? ... What do you say?' (Dawes 1790-91: 11) and that 'kaouw@È' is 'calling to come' (Dawes 1790-91: 15). **Ga!** could also be verbalised with **-ma:-**

*Ca-mar or K\$a-m\$a*

**ga-ma**

call-VBLSR

'To call.' (Anon 1790-91:19)

*kamabaou*

**ga-ma-ba-wu**

call-VBLSR-FUT-1S.S

'I will call.' (Dawes 1790-91:33)

## **Conclusion.**

The Sydney notebooks, and particularly those of William Dawes, provide us with a window onto the language scene in Sydney during the first three years of British colonisation of NSW. The contribution of Dawes to the study of Australian Aboriginal languages has not been widely recognised. This paper has attempted to redress that wrong by highlighting his contribution to the foundation of Australian linguistics in its earliest phase. His research into the language of the Aboriginal people of Sydney was recognised by his contemporaries as unequalled. Successive generations of linguists, both amateur and professional, have built upon the research tradition begun with the scholars of the First Fleet. In addition to providing the means with which to rediscover the Sydney language, the notebooks resurrect the personalities of some of the Aboriginal people who were the first to experience extended contact with the colonists from England. The mini-dialogues, given ostensibly as linguistic data, record some of the reactions of Aboriginal people to that contact. This paper has demonstrated that within the Sydney language notebooks is a

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<sup>39</sup>My thanks to Komei Hosokawa who first pointed out to me a similar interjection in Yawuru of the Broome district. Many thanks also to Cliff Goddard for discussing this point with me and bringing to my attention the Western Desert call *paa!* which sounds like *pau!* when shouted and *awa!* which becomes *awai!* A common call, recorded in many sources for many language groups, in NSW and Victoria was *yakai!*

rich collection of data valuable not only to the study of Aboriginal languages but also to the study of language and culture contact in early colonial Australia.



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