

ced to Newcastle to take the command at that settlement. Ensign Villiers is appointed a magistrate for the county of Northumberland. By command of his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, James Finucane, Secretary. Head Quarters, Sydney, September 24th, 1808." On the 1st October the Charming Sally and on the 7th the Governor Hunter arrived at Sydney with coals and cedar, also some of the detachment of military that had been stationed at the river. A few days after the arrival of the latter vessel H.M. armed tender Lady Nelson with Lieutenant Villiers, the new commandant, and a detachment of military, and a number of prisoners, notably four runaways from Newcastle, on board, left Sydney Cove. Upon arrival at the settlement Dr. Charles Throsby gave up the command, and returned to Sydney in H.M. armed tender the Lady Nelson, which vessel reached Port Jackson on the 14th October, 1808.

had reached the river about the 20th October, 1808, and Spillers and Bosh, two of the vessel's seamen, crossed the river in a boat, in which they were accompanied by a lad aged 11 years. The object of their visit to Stockton beach was to see the remaining part of the wreck of the Dundee. Upon landing they were joined by Port Stephens Robert, whose head bore cuts from a fight with King Bungaree. The native appeared very friendly, and accepted a biscuit which the lad gave him. After travelling along the beach for some distance the native was seen to ship his spear at the water's edge and look intently into the water as if designing to strike at a fish that was seen to approach the beach. Suddenly the native turned and passed the weapon through Bosh's left arm, while without a moment's delay he struck Spillers on the head with his nullah-nullah. Spillers was walking leisurely along the beach with an axe in his hand, and might have defended himself had he been aware of the native's intention to attack him. Spillers fell senseless to the ground from the blow on the crown of his head. Bosh was some time before he could extract the spear from his arm, and, before he had effected the act, he was horrified on turning round to see Spillers extended on the sand, from the brutal violence of the native. The native had possessed himself of Spiller's axe, and Bosh, almost petrified with horror and astonishment, at once plunged into the water and swam for the settlement. Owing to a rapid tide he was carried fully two miles before he reached the shore. As soon as Commandant Villiers heard of the sad event he sent a boat over with an armed party. The dead body of Spillers was found frightfully mutilated about the head by blows from a nullah nullah and several ghastly wounds about the body from a barbed fishing spear. The child could not be found, and it was thought the native had taken him to Port Stephens, where the native's tribe was located. Commandant Villiers headed and organised search parties, but no trace of the boy

could be found. For several days the search was continued, but without avail. It subsequently appeared that the native to conceal his foul crime, had thrown the body into the sea, from whence the tide restored it within a few paces of the spot where Spillers had been murdered. On examination of the lad's body it was found that the poor boy's brains had been dashed out by the nullah nullah, a weapon the natives seldom use against each other, and is only carried as a weapon of defence. The weapon is formed by fixing to the end of a club a circular piece of very hard wood 8 or 10 inches in diameter, with a sharp edge and of a mushroom form.

FIRST INQUEST IN NEWCASTLE.

On the 22nd October, 1808, the first inquest was held in Newcastle on the body of John Spillers, killed by the native called Port Stephens Robert on the 20th. John Bosh deposed to the facts already stated before the coroner, the Commandant (Lieutenant Villiers). The settlement was shrouded in gloom by the fearful event, and nearly everybody was permitted to attend the mournful funeral, which was concluded by an address at the grave from the Commandant.

NEWS ITEMS OF 1808.

In June, 1808, five notorious characters absconded from Newcastle, and were arrested at the various outlying settlements, where they had hired themselves out to farmers. Their names were—John Fitzgibbon, Charles M'Mahon, — Fitzgerald, — M'Cordie, and J. Thompson. The two first-named were ringleaders, and received 250 lashes, while the others were punished with 200 lashes each. The Sydney bench of magistrates caused them to be returned to the river heavily ironed. While these runaways were escaping the colonial vessel Fly reached Kings Town with an account of the loss of three of her crew of five, who were murdered by the coast natives at Bateman's Bay. The murdered men were named Charles Freeman, Thomas Bly, and Robert Goodlet. They had landed with a cask for the purpose of obtain-

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TERRIBLE DOUBLE MURDER AT STOCKTON IN 1808.

On October 20th, 1808, a most tragic event happened on the peaceful shores of Stockton beach, whereby a Port Stephens native known by the name of Port Stephens Robert murdered a Newcastle sailor named John Spillers, and a little boy aged about 11 years, and also wounded a man named John Bosh. The Halcyon, colonial vessel,

ing water in the bay. Those on the vessel saw natives approaching the waterers, and discharged a musket as a signal. The three men succeeded in getting into their boat, but before they could put off from the shore a shower of spears killed them. Numbers of canoes then put off to attack the vessel, when the remaining two seamen cut the cable and put to sea. In November the vessel *Halycon* narrowly escaped shipwreck. On the 16th she left Newcastle with favourable weather as far as Broken Bay, where she was driven back to the river. Here her situation became alarming, owing to the gales and heavy swell. A boat put out from Newcastle to her assistance, and the boat crew saved the vessel from becoming a wreck. Unfortunately one of its preservers, Thomas Shirley (who had arrived in Sydney in the *Royal Admiral*), lost his life while returning to Newcastle from his beneficent errand.