Historical description of convict Thomas Richardson

Sheet 2

Thomas's time on the ship was finally over — eight long months of living in hot, damp, stinking and overcrowded conditions had now been replaced by clear, blue skies and fresh air. Though the convicts were weak from the lack of food, most of them clambered up to the top deck or sat along the bowsprit to witness the *Lady Penrhyn* pull into what would be named Sydney Cove. Thomas stared silently as the British flag was raised above the topsails. It waved in the wind as if it was waving to him to join it. He felt exhausted and weak but excited about his future.

As he disembarked the tall ship, the touch of the crystal-clear, blue water and the sandy mud between Thomas's toes made him catch his breath. 'I know that as long as I do what I am asked, I will be all right,' he thought to himself.

Not long after his arrival, Thomas was set to work clearing land for the new convict settlement. The meagre tools that he had been supplied with made it twice as hard to work and left him feeling exhausted. The scraping of the tools in the soil and the sound of axes on the trees constantly filled his ears.

Eventually, land was cleared, tents and wobbly shelters made from solid branches and thick mud were built very hastily, and Thomas's life as a convict in Australia had begun.