

(Copy as near as I remember)

Missloop Bathurst. Aug^t. 18th. 1822^{563 A / ac}
(ought to have been 19th)

Dr Sir

It is unfortunately my lot to report to you one of the heaviest misfortunes that have fallen to our share, since the commencement of the Service upon which we are employed. Yet it is rendered still more bitter to me from the conspicuous part I have taken in the affair - in short I have the misfortune to report to you the loss of 11 of your crew in consequence of the launch capsizing about 2 hours ago, near that part of the North shore opposite Sydney Cove. ~~Her crew consisted of~~ ~~John King~~, ~~Wm Anderson~~, ~~Jas. McMurty~~, ~~Saml. Parker~~ & ~~Wm Bondell~~, ~~Your Steward Robinson~~ was also in the boat on his way to Parramatta. The Boat was on her passage to Parramatta to bring down your baggage, & as I considered it a good opportunity to obtain the Soundings of the Harbour above Sydney Cove I had determined upon beating her up against the strong ~~westerly~~ wind which was then blowing from the westward. Her crew consisted of John King, Wm Anderson, Jas. McMurty, Saml. Parker, Wm Bondell, & your Steward Robinson was also in the boat as a Passenger - with the topmast struck, & Main tacks triced up, we made our first board, & on tacking about 200 Yards from the North shore, the wind increased considerably in a squall, & the boat laid off more than was necessary. I immediately ordered the jib sheet to be let go, & kept the helm hard alee, but having no way through the water she would not come to the wind sufficiently fast, & the water came in over her lee gunwale. The Order was instantly given to let go the head halliards, yet was twice repeated before the unfortunate man Anderson, whom I had stationed at head rope, got hold of it. The boat was then half full of water, & in another instant filled entirely, & was instantly carried to the bottom by the 3 large stones with which she was ballasted - ^{carrying with her} King & Mr. Murty who must have been entangled in some of her ropes, for they were not seen by any of us - Poor Robinson struggled for a moment or 2, as if entangled also, & then disappeared. ~~to see~~

~~no more.~~ Parker & Bondell reached the worst part of the North shore with difficulty. & it was the assistance of the Almighty alone which enabled me to do the same, being so totally exhausted that I had not strength to crawl up the rocks. It was then that ~~we~~ I felt what I never experienced before, in witnessing the disappearance of poor Anderson, who had contended with the element until within 50 yards of the shore, when nature was quite exhausted, & he sunk to rise no more, without our being able ^{to} offer him any farther assistance than reiterated words of encouragement - for the water was very rough & the short hollow swells broke over our heads at every stroke while swimming on shore. - The accident had been seen from Davis' Battery, & immediate information being given to the Dockyard, 2 boats came off quickly to our assistance, but unfortunately too late to effect any good towards saving the valuable lives of the 4 poor fellows that are drowned - I cannot find words to convey to you the bitterness of my regret ^{on} this melancholy occasion - but it is one of those lamentable & unfortunate accidents which no human foresight or precaution can avert when the Almighty is pleased to visit us with calamity - with kind regards to Mr. King & the inmates of Vineyard Cottage, where I anticipate you are residing. I remain D. Sir
Your unfortunate
J. S. Roe.

5 PM.

To Capt. King. Huskisson Bathurst

Mr. Bidwell desires me to say that the first cutter arrived safely about 2 o'clock with part of your baggage. -