

WesternAncestor

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IN THIS ISSUE

- Memories are made of this
- Helping the deaf to be heard
- Tidying up your family history records



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FAMILYHISTORYWA

Fellow of the Library Board of Western Australia
Member of Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations Inc (AFFHO),
Family History Federation (UK).

Address 6/48 May Street, Bayswater, WA 6053

Email secretary@fhwa.org.au

Website www.fhwa.org.au

Facebook  www.facebook.com/discussion.group

www.facebook.com/FamilyHistoryWA

Telephone (08) 9271 4311 (Enquiries during opening hours)

International + 618 9271 4311

ABN 98 749 329 203

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President	Garth Walter	0427 086 684	president@fhwa.org.au
Vice President	Chris Harris	0419 090 105	vp@fhwa.org.au
Secretary	Diane Thornton		secretary@fhwa.org.au
Treasurer	Neil Bradley	0491 769 224	treasurer@fhwa.org.au
Committee	Robert Atkins	0419 049 414	
Committee	Garry Keath	0417 996 678	
Committee	Edwina Shooter	0424 221 633	
Committee	Anne Giles		
Committee	Beth Perry		
Committee	Wendy White		

FAMILYHISTORYWA CONTACTS

Activities	Ian Simon	0416 122 144	activities@fhwa.org.au
AFFHO Representative	Peter Forrestal	041 777 1107	affho.rep@fhwa.org.au
Archivist	Vacant		archivist@fhwa.org.au
Awards	Garth Walter Beth Perry		awards@fhwa.org.au
Bookings Officer	Chris Harris Terri Usher	0419 090 105	bookings@fhwa.org.au
Bookshop	Lyn Watt	0413 179 576	bookshop@fhwa.org.au
e-News	Robert Atkins	0419 049 414	enews@fhwa.org.au
Grants	Vacant		grants@fhwa.org.au
Guest Speaker	Vacant		guestspeakers@fhwa.org.au
Co-ordinator			
Information Technology	Chris Harris	0419 090 105	it@fhwa.org.au
Journals Officer	Lyn Watt	0413 179 576	journals@fhwa.org.au
Legal Advisor	Bruce Havilah		
Librarian	Edwina Shooter	0424 221 633	librarian@fhwa.org.au
Library Rosters	Maureen Robbins		libraryrosters@fhwa.org.au
Membership	Mal Dennett	0428 941 063	membership@fhwa.org.au
Policy & Procedures	Robert Atkins	0419 049 414	policy@fhwa.org.au
Projects	Lyn Watt	0413 179 576	projects@fhwa.org.au
Property	Vacant		property@fhwa.org.au
Promotions Coordinator	Anne Oliver	0438 885 579	promotions@fhwa.org.au
Publications Officer	Lyn Watt	0413 179 576	publications@fhwa.org.au
Research	Ian Barnes	0417 004 839	research@fhwa.org.au
SLWA Family History	Marilyn Dimond	0449 570 194	
Treasurer's Assistants	Sally Warner		finance@fhwa.org.au
	Janet Gunstone		accounts@fhwa.org.au
Volunteer Liaison	Garry Keath	0417 996 678	volunteers@fhwa.org.au
Coordinator			
Western Ancestor Editor	Peter Forrestal	041 777 1107	westernancestor@fhwa.org.au

RESEARCH CENTRE OPENING HOURS

Monday 9:30am - 8:00pm

Wednesday 9:30am - 2:30pm

Friday 9:30am - 2:30pm

Saturday 1:00pm - 5:00pm

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INTEREST GROUP CONTACTS

CONVICT

convicts.sig@fhwa.org.au Bevan Carter

DNA

dna.sig@fhwa.org.au Christine Cavanagh 0408 937 267

EASTERN AUSTRALIAN

eastau.sig@fhwa.org.au Chris Harris 0419 090 105

ENROLLED PENSIONER GUARDS (EPG)

epg.sig@fhwa.org.au Graham McEwan 0418 919 167

EUROPEAN

european.sig@fhwa.org.au Ian Simon 0416 122 144

FAMILY TREE MAKER USER GROUP

ftm.sig@fhwa.org.au Chris Harris 0419 090 105

INDIA & SOUTH EAST ASIA

isea.sig@fhwa.org.au Liana Fitzpatrick 0414 412 035

IRISH

irish.sig@fhwa.org.au Ruth Walker

LEGACY USER GROUP

legacy.sig@fhwa.org.au Kaye Nind
Cathy Pinner

LONDON, SOUTH ENGLAND AND WALES

soe.sig@fhwa.org.au Peter Hamersley 0402 450 080

MILITARY

military.sig@fhwa.org.au Angela Heymans 0400 059 391

NORTH OF ENGLAND

noe.sig@fhwa.org.au Lyn Watt 0413 179 576

SCOTTISH

scottish.sig@fhwa.org.au Karen Tregenza 9341 4180

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN

sa.sig@fhwa.org.au Ian Simon 0416 122 144

TECHNOLOGY

technology.sig@fhwa.org.au Ian Dew

THE MASTER GENEALOGIST

tmg.sig@fhwa.org.au Neil Bradley 0491 769 224

Robert Atkins

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN

wa.sig@fhwa.org.au Terri Usher

WRITERS

writers.sig@fhwa.org.au Sandie Watts 0400 227 417

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JOURNAL PRODUCTION

Editor

Peter Forrestal
6/48 May St, Bayswater, WA, 6053.
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From the President

Garth Walter

Welcome to 2024. I hope you have all been enjoying the warm summer weather and having success with your research. I've been spending time with my family and building on our memories.

In the last *Western Ancestor*, I shared the findings of the meetings and workshops I have had with you all to develop a new strategy for FHWA. Your Management Committee and I will share this new strategy at the upcoming AGM in June. There is still much to do, as we carefully consider how to support the Western Australian family history community.

One of the difficult roles as President is sharing that we will have to increase our fees. One question I get asked often is 'Can we have a reduced membership fee for pensioners?' I normally find this a simple question to answer, as we keep our fees as low as possible so everyone can enjoy the same low concessional fee. Your Management Committee and Finance Team continually work hard over the years to keep fees as low as possible. I am proud that we were able to do this through the Covid times. However, unfortunately, with costs continuing to rise, we do need to increase the annual membership fees. Depending on the membership category, these rises will range from \$5 to \$15. They will take effect after the AGM in June. To help ease the cost burden on our members, we will also be introducing a 3-month and 6-month membership using only online payments. We will be sharing more information about these in the coming weeks.

Our engagement with the Ghosts Towns Project continues to grow. There are nearly 6000 members on the Facebook page and our project leaders are engaging with local councils, libraries and historical societies. We have also highlighted additional communities that will be joining the project. The data collection has been completed and training of volunteers is well under way; as is the research for, and indexing of, pilot towns. I'm looking forward to seeing more of us get involved in this exciting project.



Finally, over the summer period we have unfortunately seen the passing of Graham Bown, a past president, and Ruth Reid, a former Patron. Both are remembered fondly by FHWA members and our thoughts are with their families.



VicGUM is a not for profit organisation which provides technical support to its members with their use of family history software.

VicGUM members receive a monthly newsletter, connection to Gumnet (which is a members' only web based chat site) and ongoing technical support.

Our regular user group meetings for FTM and Reunion are held using Zoom. This allows any interested member to log in. Monthly events are also shared with members using Zoom. They will be recorded and will be viewable by members through the members' section of the website. For details of member benefits visit the website: www.vicgum.asn.au and join on-line

E: info@vicgum.asn.au

P: (03) 9807 2509

Suite 4, 318 Stephenson's Road Mt Waverley Vic 31491

From The Editor

Peter Forrestal

Banjo Paterson's 'Prelude' (featured on our back cover) might offer an idealised or long-gone view of Australia but it does celebrate the importance of story and the delights that come with sharing our stories.

It's a central part of what *Western Ancestor* sets out to do: tell stories to make sense of the past and the here-and-now. In this issue, there's 'Time to Remember': a story that Jon Cook has spent his life writing; there are obituaries of Ruth Reid and Graham Bown, which offer a glimpse of their lives and why they are important to us. And heaps more.

As I'm sure other editors do, I was musing about what we needed in the journal to improve it. I settled on the need for still more diversity in what we tackled. By the end of the week, as chance would have it, we had a memoir of a childhood growing up in French Cameroon and another that documented a story of the Lutheran Levitzke family, which came to South Australia in the mid-nineteenth century from Silesia to escape religious persecution. Through Natalie Peters' eyes, we document the Levitzkes' involvement in improving the lot of the Deaf Community in Western Australia over a hundred years.

There are moments of magic, too, in the latest issue. There's an entirely glorious bit of name-dropping in the French Civil Service in the Cameroon story. And then, four year old Andrée Hartley went to the local market with her mother (instead of one of the servants, as was usual). Andrée spoke to one of the local merchants in his Bantu language and then explained to her mother that he was from Bafia. Until then, she hadn't been aware that her daughter could speak the local dialect. There's a not dissimilar piece of magic in 'Le Grand Camion' which my wife, Elaine, told me about because of my interest in the deaf community. Thanks to the Levitzkes. I'll leave you to read that.

I wouldn't want our readers to think that serendipity played a part in editorial planning. However, I was so pleased with 'Le Grand Camion' that I'm keen to encourage our members to think about submitting fragments from their lives to the journal.

So, we are always looking for longer articles (1,500 to 3,000 words); shorter pieces (500 to 1,000 words) and fragments (150 to 300 words).




**We're
Searching
for
Volunteers**

**FamilyHistoryWA (FHWA) relies on its
volunteers**

To learn more about these opportunities
please contact the Volunteer Liaison
Coordinator by email:

volunteers@fhwa.org.au.

Time to Remember

Jonathan Cook

Memory's a funny thing, isn't it? We can't know at the time – any time, any event – whether we'll remember it or not, even if we're sure we will. And we remember the strangest little things, as well as the big ones. And we forget and mis-remember them too! Even when we're certain we will or do remember them well.

As you might too, I vividly remember the first Moon Landing, and watching 9/11 live on television, and the Meckering earthquake. These were significant events outside of our personal lives, yet ones that had great impact on the world or at least the place where we lived. It's the personal events that I'm talking about. My memories.

Of course, some things that happen to us we don't remember because we were too young and it's our family whose memory comes into question. I was born in Margaret River, in November 1944, not long before the end of World War

II. My father, Charles Noel Cook was Principal of the local primary school, and we had an extended family living there because of the War. I gather there were at least eight of us in the house. Margaret River, in those days, was hardly the thriving wine centre it has become now. It was an outpost in the south of Western Australia. Then, early in 1945, it was time for us to move to Dad's next school posting. We

departed by train (yes, there was a train then!), the whole family with all our possessions, lock, stock and barrel.

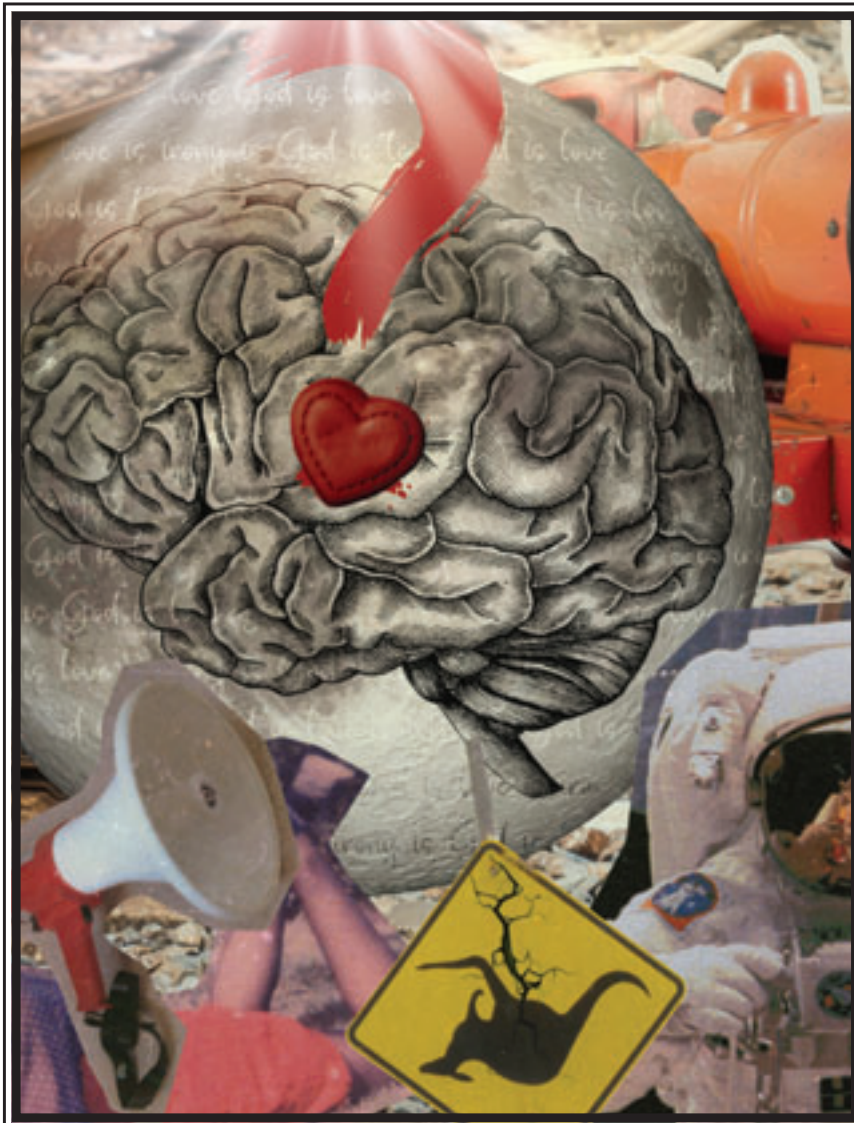
The problem was that it wasn't 'we' who left that day – it was 'them'. Two miles out of Margaret River, my mother called out 'Where is baby Jonathan?' My two older sisters looked guiltily at each other and simultaneously said 'She was supposed to be looking after him!' The cord was pulled; the train stopped. Then it actually reversed the two miles

back to the town station (seriously – back in those days that's what could and did happen, my family swears it!). And there, gurgling in his bassinet, alone on the platform, was baby Jonathan!

That's a pretty significant event I reckon – but I don't remember it. Of course, I was only two months old at the time..... And these days, my siblings still say they should have just left me there and the train should have kept going. And, somewhat ironically, they add that my name should have been changed to Earnest (as Jack in

The Importance of Being Earnest is found abandoned in a handbag. Editor).

Of course, we may choose to remember some of our stories in ways to suit ourselves, and tell them in our own bright colours. After finishing my schooling, I went to the University of WA and then to Claremont Teachers College. It was 1965; feminism was vibrant, and I was in a College



Time to Remember (Cont.)

class with several strong-minded young women. Beauty contests were a target for their ire. So when the College decided to go ahead with its traditional annual 'Miss College' contest, they took serious umbrage. Their ironic response was to put in their own entry from our class ... me! I put up a fight; but had no chance. Stockings, a head scarf, make-up, Bohemian clothing and judicious padding, together with some voice training, had me looking and sounding passably female. Oh dear!

It seems that I also don't accurately remember lots of things in my mature sentient life. I've even learned that the more confident I am that I remember something well, the more likely I've got some of it wrong.

The public judging took place in the College hall. My gender was a well-kept secret. The judges included a very well-known Perth media personality, an attractive and vibrant woman. She conducted my interview, in front of several hundred College students. And it was immediately clear that she, like the audience, was suspicious about my gender, but not confident enough in her suspicions to front me with the obvious accusation. Imagine the embarrassment if I really were a young woman! In my memory, my answers were very cleverly witty and a bit teasing, and the judge clearly had a good sense of humour. So I got through it, to everyone's delight.

And I came second! Seriously!

Unfortunately for me, the aftermath was worse than ironic: my friends stole my clothes and I had to travel home by bus in costume. I will never forget the look on my father's face when he saw me; or his disbelief when I tried to explain what had happened. I choose to believe that he did see the funny side of it. I choose! I might add that the College never held the Contest again. I delight in thinking that my participation had something to do with that decision!

It seems that I also don't accurately remember lots of things in my mature sentient life. I've even learned that the more confident I am that I remember something well, the more likely I've got some of it wrong.

It doesn't matter whether our memories are accurate or not, their impact is what matters. They're lasting, true for

us and their accuracy is not the point. It's their power that lingers long and loud. Their truth for us as persons lies in what they mean to us - and time does not necessarily heal, or change things, or colour them either fondly or foully. How we remember things and what the memories mean to us is what matters. Nor is their size the potent thing! A slight, a wounding word, a little incident can have as much significance for us as the big things like weddings, and births and deaths and whether our team wins the premiership.

Still, I'm very sure I've got this little one right - the memory, which still haunts me; and I'm certain about its impact, which is of life-long significance. To me.

I'm 11, late in Term 1 of 1956, my first year away from local government primary schooling. My Mum said it was time I got some good Catholic education. I'd always gone to Mass with Mum on Sundays; we didn't eat meat on Fridays; and I went to Confession occasionally. But that was about it for my Catholicism, and Dad wasn't Catholic.

So I'm at St Louis, a very rigorous Jesuit school, and it's morning tea-time. We've just come out of the daily 'Religious Knowledge' lesson. It was taught by Father Brown, whom I remember well as genial and roly-poly, just like GK Chesterton's character, whom I was avidly reading at the time. I was good at my schooling, even if I didn't take much notice. 'Religious Knowledge' seemed to be based in going through the Catechism - a little book with lots of questions and answers; pretty boring; in the class not much discussion, and no argument at all. Most of the kids in my class had been there for three years already, so they knew the Catechism backwards, and just went through the motions in class. But it was still very new for me, even if meaningless. I didn't pay any attention to it and certainly didn't try to remember the questions or their answers.

But morning tea-time was always good: in the playground, mingling amongst my new friends, a toasted cheese half roll, no drama, a quiet non-eventful time. The big kids playing 'pitter-patter' in the quadrangle. But this day, Father Brown was on yard duty, and - thinking about it now - bored. And he spied me and called me over: "Come here boy." So I came. "A Catechism question for you boy: what is God?"

Were you a good kid aged 11? I was. Beaut family, never been smacked or hit in my life (except for a playground fight in Year 5 that I still remember well, I think; I hated it and I think I lost and it still troubles me). Mainly I loved reading stories and living them in my imagination, all sports especially running and swimming, listening to

Time to Remember (Cont.)

hit songs on the radio (the Top 8!!!) – especially Harry Belafonte and the Kingston Trio – and my Mum’s terrific food. And I was really good at my schooling, without ever thinking much about it at all. It was, like my life, easy.

So what could possibly go wrong? Well, Father Brown could spot me in the playground one morning tea-time and call me over and ask me a Catechism question: ‘What is God?’ That’s what! And I froze and my mind went blank. My mouth fell open, but nothing came out. And Father Brown said, ‘Hold your hand out son.’ He pulled his strap from beneath his priest’s black robe. The strap! All the teachers carried one. Typically about 18 inches long and 2 inches wide; several layers of stiff leather sewn together with raised ridges down the length. Truly, a fearsome thing for a young lad.

And in the middle of the playground in front of all the other kids, he struck me, twice, hard, across my left hand, with his strap. It really hurt! I was stunned and in tears. And then Father Brown said ‘God is love. Now remember that, boy!’

Oh the irony of it! Father Brown, I promise you, I did not – I do not – I will never – forget!

Many years later, my teaching speciality was Literature. Irony is so important in literature. However, I do wish I had learned what it meant a bit more gently.

Le Grand Camion

Elaine Forrestal

Louis is not yet two years old. He has one slightly deformed outer ear and a blocked canal, leaving him with almost no hearing in his left ear. But he speaks as much French as most two year olds in France, and equally good English. His father is French and his mother is Australian, with French parents and grandparents. They have all agreed to speak only French to Louis at home.

However, Louis goes to Day Care two days a week now, and to the house of his grand-mere all day on Fridays. Louis has a therapist who comes to his house regularly and does some tests to see how his language is progressing. Last week, she visited

him on Friday, while he was at his grand-mere’s house.

The therapist made sure she had Louis’ attention, then showed him a picture of a big truck.

‘This is a big truck,’ she said. Louis was familiar with this game.

‘Big truck,’ he repeated. The therapist smiled at Louis who immediately turned to his grand-mere.

‘Grand camion!’ he said, spreading his arms wide to demonstrate.

Not only did he understand the English words, he translated them into perfect French for his grand-mere to understand, too.



Why toilet paper? Why did consumers panic buy toilet paper?

CJ Eddington | Member # 14038



It is Economics 101. Economic goods have particular characteristics – they are either durable or single-use; substitutable/non-substitutable; expensive/cheap; non-storable/storable; luxury/essential.

Toilet paper has these five characteristics – single-use, non-substitutable, cheap, storable and

essential. All this means that you can only use toilet paper once and then you need more – you need to buy it often. No other product does what toilet paper does – it is non-substitutable; you have to have it. In modern toilets, even tissues do damage. It is relatively cheap (for most people) so you can buy extra. It can be stored in the pantry, garage, even under the bed for weeks with no ill-effects.

And finally, it is essential – you need it every day. So, there you go – when threatened with being locked in, people rushed to stock up on it.

But that's not all, there are two other features of economics that feed into how this was resolved.

Another economic principle is the relationship between supply/demand and price. Theoretically, as demand increases, the price should go up. But in the case of toilet paper, the supermarkets

maintained the regular price.

Here's where the third economic principle of rationing comes into play. Once supermarkets identified that consumers were buying more toilet paper than they needed, purchase limits were introduced.

And, overarching all of this, was the fact that nobody was at work, nearly everyone was home – so extra toilet paper was needed at home.

Product limit update
Thursday 19th March 2020

We're taking all necessary measures to meet the shopping demands of as many customers as possible. Limits for products are in place across the store, and will be updated as product availability changes. See the current list of product limits below:

No limits currently in place	1-pack limit per customer, per shop	2-pack limit per customer, per shop
Fresh Fruit & Veg	Toilet paper	Every other product category
Meat (excluding minced)	Baby wipes	
Deli	Antibacterial wipes	
Bakery	Paper towel	
Seafood	Serviettes	
Canned Fish	Rice (2kg and over)	
Drinks (ambient and chilled)		
Baby Food		
Yoghurts		
Easter confectionery & merchandise		
Wet Dog Food		
Wet Cat Food		

AS OF 19th MARCH
Chilled Fresh Milk (excludes flavoured milk)

We thank you again for your continued patience and support as we work through these challenging times together.

For more information and full terms and conditions, visit woolworths.com.au/updates




The Levitzke Legacy

100 years serving the WA Deaf Society 1921-2021

Natalie Peters | Member # 14995

I remember the hugs I received from Grand Uncle Ernie. A huge bear of a man, he would envelope my little girl's body with his strong arms and squeeze me so hard I thought one of my ribs might crack. Even though I knew I would be left feeling a bit winded, I welcomed these warm displays of affection. Always accompanied by a wide grin on his old, yet still handsome face, Uncle Ernie made me feel loved without a word ever being spoken. He communicated with demonstrative facial expressions, physical affection and the sign language used by deaf people. The noises which did come from his mouth were not words, more low guttural sounds emanating from deep in his big chest. Noises that were probably startling to strangers, but just a normal part of the symphony of talking, laughing, gesturing and signing that occurred at any Levitzke family get-together.

The family recently discovered a box of old family photos and papers, including a diary that Tom had started while on a ship sailing from Fremantle to the Eastern States. Tom (**Gotthardt**) and Mary (née **Sherlock**) **Levitzke** adored their healthy and happy baby, Ernie (born in 1904) who quickly grew into an active toddler. But they became concerned when little Ernie's speech did not develop. It became apparent that he could not hear. Why had their child been born deaf? Was there anything that could be done to help Ernie hear and speak? Tom travelled with toddler Ernie to seek medical advice and these diary entries were written to record each day's events and Ernie's welfare, to be sent as a report to Mary who had stayed behind in Perth.

Friday - fine and warm

Squeamish. Had cup of tea at 7. Ern and self had breakfast at 8.30. Then played with Ern and walked all over the place with him until 10.30. Both of us went on deck. Had a look at the birds... Ern to bed while I am writing this. Good night. I shan't be long.

Once Tom and little Ern arrive at their destination, staying with Tom's mother, the diary entries become more detailed with insights into Ernie and Tom's visits to doctors:



Tom & Mary Levitzke with their children Ernie (3) & Stanley (1) 1907.

Tuesday - sunny and beaut

Up at 7.30. Played until 10. Walked to doctor at 12 o'clock. He still thought there was hope. Made appointment for Wednesday at 2.30 to put Ern under gas and have a thorough exam. Came home. Had dinner. Took Ern to zoo and art gallery. Highly delighted at zoo. Screaming all the time... The Dr seemed afraid there's no hope of slight improvement but I think he will do all he can possibly do to get him right.

Wednesday - very cold

Up at 7.30. Played with Ern until breakfast. Ernie good breakfast. Myself a bit off with worry of Ern...



Ernie Levitzke, baker.

After dinner at 12.30 got on way to Dr. Got there at 2.30. Waited until 5. Dr performed operation. Stayed with Ern while he went under, then out. Both had fair teas. Ern played for an hour after, then in bed. Sleeping alright now. Good night.

Thursday - wet and cold

Had an hour at 10 playing with Ern. He was quite happy running all over the place with me and enjoyed himself chasing a pigeon in the barn for at least an hour. He was laughing. Poor Mother quite broke up as she had not heard Ern laugh so heartily before.

Unfortunately, only a few, loose, small notebook pages of Tom's diary survive. I needed a magnifying glass to read the tiniest handwriting I have ever seen! What a treasure for the Levitzke family archives, giving Tom's descendants an insight into the heart and mind of a caring, tender and attentive father; a loving husband wanting to put his wife's mind at ease while separated from her little boy. It takes us back to the very moment when a dedicated, dynamic, driven love and care of those who could not hear took seed in the Levitzke family.

The doctors couldn't do anything to restore Ernie's hearing, and at the age of six, he was enrolled at a school for deaf children.

Sitting grandly on top of a hill, in the beachside suburb of Mosman Park, the stately two-storey WA School for Deaf Children was both a residential institution and a school for the deaf children of Western Australia. Attending the school meant children from the age of six had to leave their family and board at the school, with holidays at home - only '8 weeks at Christmas and 2 weeks at mid-Winter'.¹

What an emotional wrench this must have been for the young parents leaving the full-time care of little Ern in the hands of the educators at the school. It seems, however, that Tom and Mary continued to search for that which would provide the best and most successful life outcomes for their son. The WA School for Deaf Children, from its inception in 1896, embraced methods which aimed to achieve, 'academic, communicative and social competence to enable successful post-school life in a hearing world by deaf and hard-of-hearing students'.²

The school embraced a 'combination method' of language and communication education which had students learning finger spelling, lip reading, writing and reading.³ The sign language that Ernie would have first been taught focused on hand and finger positions which represented each letter of the alphabet. These finger spelling systems were invented to facilitate the transfer of words from an oral, to a sign language.

Over Ernie's lifetime the sign language that he used to communicate changed and developed into the formally recognised language we call Auslan today. An expressive, sophisticated and complex language that would play an important role in the lives and careers of Mary and Tom's descendants. And many descendants there are!

Mary and Tom had eight children:

Ernie - Ernest John Thomas - (1904-1988);

Stan - Stanley Albert (1906-1921) - died at 15 after complications with appendicitis;

Gus - Gustav William (1908-1942) - killed at 34 serving in the Australian Navy in World War II. The ship *Ceramic* was bombed with all passengers lost at sea but one survivor, who was taken as a POW by the Germans.

Auby - August Christian (1912-1964) born deaf;

Ivy Christine May (Ritchie) (1918-2007);

The Levitzke Legacy (Cont.)

Flo - Florence Mary Peace (Myatt) (1919-1999);

Jack - John George (1921-1990) my grandfather;

Richie - Richard Arthur Roy (1923-2013) born deaf.

Mary and Tom raised their large family in Midland, where Tom ran a successful bakery. Auby and Richie followed in their big brother's footsteps, boarding at the School for Deaf Children.

As the children grew into teenagers their friends were warmly welcomed into the Levitzke home, which became known informally in Perth as a 'Home for the Deaf'. With a tennis table on the front verandah and fresh baking from Tom and his capable apprentice, Ernie, it is easy to imagine why the young members of the Perth deaf community enjoyed spending time in the hospitable and lively environs of the Levitzke home. Above all, it was a place where communication with the language of moving fingers and hands was encouraged and embraced by all.

Stemming from the friendships formed at these social gatherings, a committee was set up to provide a more structured plan for the welfare of, and connections within the adult deaf community of WA. Prior to 1921, there were no formal facilities or premises for deaf people once they graduated from the WA School for Deaf Children.

On 9 July 1921, 12 deaf people met at the home of the Jeffrey family in Mount Lawley. Tall, handsome and athletic, the 17 year-old Ernie Levitzke was nominated as one of



Top: Ernie Levitzke signs alongside his wife, Vera.

Above: Jack Levitzke signing during The Deaf Society's 48th Birthday Celebrations.

the first committee members of The Western Australian Deaf Society. 'During 1921, monthly meetings were maintained with contact being made with other State societies for advice and guidance. A set of rules was drawn up and approved, fund-raising commenced and church services and gatherings held'.⁴ Members' homes were used for meetings but, by 1927, they were being held regularly in the premises of the School for the Deaf.

The first social for deaf adults was held at the Deaf School on 17 August 1927.

That year also saw the first publication and printing of *DeafNotes*, a newsletter produced by the Society to inform its members of upcoming social events, personal news of members and the ever-expanding offering of resources and services provided by the Society. It has come under the banner of

The Levitzke Legacy (Cont.)

different titles over the years including *The Golden West-Deaf News* and *Four Corners* and was published for many decades to help the adult deaf community of Western Australia stay connected and informed.

Recently, I immersed myself in the archives of these newsletters. I was doing research to complete a submission nominating my great grandmother, Mary Levitzke, for the Roll of Honour on the WA Women's Hall of Fame. Engrossed, I found myself taking a step back in time into the lives of my Levitzke family ancestors. The early newsletters read like a who's who of Tom and Mary's teenage and adult children. The newsletter was full to the brim of their news and showed how dedicated and involved they were with the success and progress of the Society.

Ernie's younger brother, Auby, leapt from the pages. It felt like the spirit of his playful, joyful exuberance had radiated into the silent storage room with me. I never had the privilege of knowing my deaf Grand Uncle Auby as he died tragically young, so unexpectedly of a heart attack, at the age of 52. He left behind his beloved wife, Norma (also deaf), and a young family of three hearing children.

The Society newsletters were abundant with advertisements notifying its members of the dates of upcoming productions and plays to be performed by Auby, together with his good mate Rolly McGrath; sometimes roping big brother Ernie, or little brother Richie, in on the act. Without the use of the spoken word these theatrical skits would have utilised sign language, dramatic facial expressions and mime to entertain the audience. Photos of Auby and his fellow performers wearing comedic costumes and gleeful grins pepper the newsletters.

The Levitzke Boys could be irreverent and funny, but you had better take them seriously on the sporting field! Participation in sports was yet another way that Mary and Tom encouraged and fostered friendships for their deaf children. They knew that participating in sporting teams would build up the communication between deaf youngsters and break down the barriers that can sometimes exist between hearing and deaf people.

It began with table tennis on the verandah in Midland, and followed with the formation of the first all-deaf lacrosse team in 1928. The Levitzke family name became synonymous with sporting achievement as Ernie's successes were well-documented in newspapers.



Auby and Richie Levitzke

Mr Tom Levitzke, of Midland Junction, can certainly be proud of the prowess of his son Ernie on the field of sport. This young athlete recently won a wealth of praise in the press for his sterling performances with the racquet during the interstate match with the visiting South Australian lacrosse team. Ernie has proved himself a star on the local football field, and also with his brilliant batting, bowling and fielding on the field of cricket is among the first rank of our local cricketers. Last summer, when boxing was at its height at White City, an alleged heavy weight boxer was introduced from the ring and a sum of money was offered anyone who could stay four rounds with this pugilist. Young Levitzke accepted the challenge, and soon 'dashed in and dashed around,' and his opponent just as quickly dashed 'out,' and lay comfortably on the canvas while the referee counted him out. This versatile youth has gained a deal of popularity with his mates of the various clubs, and

The Levitzke Legacy (Cont.)

is always a welcome addition to any party where the sporting fraternity congregates.⁵

‘One of the most likeable of our townspeople is Mr Ern Levitzke, of North Midland. This young gentleman, though unfortunately deprived of the power and blessing of speech and hearing, is an athlete of no mean order, and has had a try at almost every sport with outstanding success.’⁶

The Society Newsletter over the decades included many articles on the Levitzke family members’ participation in the Australian Interstate Sporting Carnivals for the Deaf. They, and their deaf team mates, brought home trophies for Western

Australia on many occasions: for cricket, table tennis, swimming, lacrosse and tennis.

It was Auby, however, who brought home the most wonderful prize of all! Having met Norma Montgomery from New South Wales while participating in one of the carnivals, he married her in 1949.

Norma and Auby attended many of the dances that were organised by the Society. Being deaf may mean you can’t hear the music but you can certainly feel it! The volume was turned up and speakers were maneuvered so the beat and rhythm vibrated through the dance floor; and a good time was had by all. In a newspaper article published in 1954, Flo, Auby’s hearing sister, talked about the square dancing lessons offered

by the Society. Flo and her husband Clive Myatt taught themselves set dances, then without music or the calling of steps, the deaf dancers took their time from Flo and Clive and thoroughly enjoyed learning square dancing.⁷

By 1934, these social gatherings were being held in Stanmore House at 292 Hay Street, East Perth. The purchase of this attractive two-storey, red brick residence, built in 1895 and now owned by the Perth Mint, was made possible by the amazing tenacity and hard work of a small committee including Levitzke family members.

Auby was employed as a collector for the Society in 1932, raising funds by doorknocking in the metropolitan area. Ernie became the Society’s first country collector in 1933.⁸ The



Jack MJ Occup Centre

The Levitzke Legacy (Cont.)

Levitzke brothers' efforts saw the society's financial position steadily improve and, by 1934, the Society was able to form a special building committee. Mary Levitzke was one of four women appointed to the nine-member committee. With a small loan, a grant from the Lotteries Commission and the balance from the Society's Building Fund, the WA Deaf Society had a permanent home.

And home it certainly became! Mary became the live-in caretaker of the Society in 1935 and, following a formal name change, its Matron. Then a widow, as Tom had died suddenly two years before at the age of 53, with her children ranged in age from Richie (12) to Ernie (31), Mary took on further responsibility. She became available seven days a week, all hours of the day and night, ready to care for a community whose voice was not always heard. Mary became the first formal link in WA between deaf people and the wider community. In 1954, she was described in the press as 'the Society's first on-the-spot guide, philosopher and friend'.⁹

Over the past 100 years, the WA Deaf Society has grown into a professional, dynamic, complex and important community service agency which employs many staff and works with a large budget. The premises moved from Stanmore House in 1983 into a building designed to suit the Society's purposes in Leederville. It included office space, recreation facilities, accommodation and corporate services as well as administration and fundraising. Clients could be assisted by community workers and offered help with sign language interpreting, resources and technology.



Top: Jack Levitzke (far right) inspecting the Deaf Society's new premises at 16 Brentham Street, Leederville. c1983.
Above: John Levitzke at work with his father, Jack Levitzke.

Recreational and social clubs and events were also supported.

So just how did the WA Deaf Society grow from these humble beginnings into the important community service agency it is today? After 14 fourteen years of continuous service, Mary retired from her role as caretaker and passed the baton to her fifth child and eldest daughter, Ivy.

The commitment of the next generation of Levitzkes to serve the Deaf Community of WA can be seen in the following:

This is only one of the activities of this energetic group of 60 to 70 people. Their programme for the year includes a list of sports meetings

which would leave the average person feeling tired.

Headquarters of the Society is at 292 Hay Street in an old house well-suited to its present job of providing rooms where members can go for a quiet smoke, a chat with their friends or a friendly game of billiards or table tennis.

There are monthly committee meetings and social gatherings.

The confidante is Miss Ivy Levitzke who lives at the club and who is used

The Levitzke Legacy (Cont.)

to visitors at all hours of the day coming to tell her their troubles. The only drawback she says, is that she finds it hard to drink her tea when she needs her hands for talking'.¹⁰

After four years of service, then becoming Mrs Ritchie and having a baby, Ivy entrusted the special job to her sister Flo (Myatt).

'She and her husband, Clive, and two children, Geoff (now 9) and Lois (now 5) moved into the Society headquarters and Mr and Mrs Ritchie took over the Myatt's Mt Lawley home. Much of Mrs Myatt's work is interpreting. Sign language is as much her native "tongue" as English.

She goes to hospitals where deaf and dumb patients must tell their doctors of their symptoms. She acts as interpreter in the various courts.

Her housekeeping includes looking after the games rooms of the society and entertaining for about 100 deaf and dumb people every few weeks. "I have a great helper in my husband," she said. "He does the gardening and helps me keep the place clean in his spare time. The children have made some wonderful friends. And we all enjoy thinking up new ways of entertainment."¹¹

I had a little chuckle to myself when reading the journalist's relaxed and easy description of Flo's list of jobs, and housekeeping involving catering for 'about 100' people every few weeks! Flo must have been exhausted when after ten years in the role she handed over the reins to her younger brother, Jack.

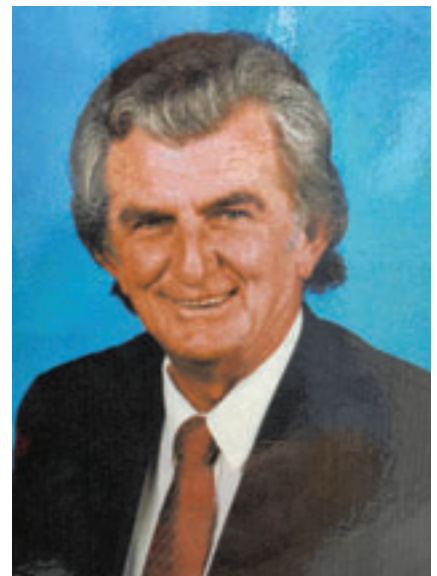
After serving on the Board of the Society from 1961 to 1964, Jack was appointed Superintendent in 1964 and moved into Stanmore House

with his wife Norma Hilda and their four children who ranged in age from ten to 19.

I was born in 1969 and have memories of visiting my beloved Nanna and Pop at Stanmore House. I hold hazy images in my memory of the home's grand, dark wooden staircase and the kitchen where Nan was always cooking for her family and catering for the many events held at the Society. I remember the workshop, named the 'Mary Jane Occupational Centre' which had been built behind Stanmore House, where Pop taught woodworking skills to young deaf people.

I loved the annual Christmas Party held in CS Harper Hall built next to Stanmore House to better cater for the large number of people who were now attending Society functions. Father Christmas would pay a visit and give all the children a present. I can recall the hushed, shocked tones of Jack's 12 grandchildren the year Pop dressed up as Santa to distribute the presents; 'That's not Father Christmas is it? That's Pop!' But just like his brothers before him, Jack loved nothing more than being with the deaf community, dressing up and communicating joyfully with fast moving fingers.

Another exciting and happy family get together I reflect on with pride is standing on a train station platform with Nanna and Pop, uncles and aunties and cousins waving goodbye to a train taking Uncle Brent (Jack's youngest son) and his young wife, Vicki, across the Nullarbor to live over East while they completed the University degree to become qualified as Teachers of the Deaf. After graduating, they brought their skills, insights and passion back to Western Australia to deliver education to



John Levitzke, Executive
Director of The WA Deaf Society.

deaf children all their working life, teaching in the same school that their deaf uncles were educated in all those years ago.

I also remember the front rooms on the bottom floor of Stanmore House which were partitioned into offices to create more space for the expanding number of staff members. Jack and Norma needed assistance. In 1976, another Welfare Officer was appointed. In 1976, a receptionist/typist was required. By 1978, it was clear that the Society needed an Executive Director to provide leadership. The job role required a unique set of skills from prospective applicants; financial, management and innovation expertise. Someone who knew what it would take to see the Society into a new era of visionary expansion. But also someone who knew the grass roots needs of the deaf community of WA on a personal level. Someone who could communicate with sign language and had heartfelt connections with individual members of the Society.



Top: Jack Levitzke receiving his OAM decoration from Queen Elizabeth II. 1988.
Above: Drisana Levitzke-Gray with her Great Aunt, Norma Levitzke (nee Montgomery).

‘Have a look at the job ads in today’s newspaper.’ Norma spoke quietly into the phone.

‘What ad? For what job? What are you talking about?’ replied her son, John.

‘Just have a look. You will know when you see it.’¹²

In 1978, John Frederick Levitzke was the 31 year-old father of four children, an accountant working at the West Australian Taxation Office and just about to become a partner in his own accounting firm. Perhaps Superintendent Jack had not informed his son about the new Executive Director role, knowing that John was just beginning a career of his own. But John, followed the whisperings of his heart and soul, his calling, and became the Executive Director of The WA Deaf Society. He was that unique person who could deliver and accomplish all that was required for such a position; the third generation of the family to serve the Deaf Community of WA.

‘When John commenced employment, the Society was a small concern, based in premises near the Perth Mint. The organisation employed only seven people and had an operation budget of approximately \$130,000. Only one Board member was deaf. Today, the Society is a professional, medium-sized, community services agency employing over 70 staff; with an operations budget of \$1.8 million; and a majority of the Board who were deaf. The Society has grown in number and expanded its services and finances under John’s leadership, guidance and direction.’¹³

This was written about my Dad in 2001, when he had been Executive Director for 23 years. For the first eight years of his career, John worked side by side with his dad, Jack. They had an amazing and amiable working relationship. Dad still reminisces about the many times he had to rein Jack in, when at conferences or important meetings, Jack would be leading colleagues down the garden path with a tall story, or a joke accompanied by a flourish of signing hands! But behind this jovial and joyful demeanor was always the seriousness of the job at hand: to ensure the deaf community of WA had services and resources available to them to participate fully in a hearing world. As the small community service grew to a larger concern, and Jack and John had to liaise more often with interstate organisations and business people, they always put the deaf first: ensuring they were strongly represented on the board and its committees. Their vision was always to empower people who are deaf in WA to achieve equality of opportunity and independence in all aspects of their lives. In 1993, John employed the first deaf person in a professional human

The Levitzke Legacy (Cont.)

service delivery role. Who better than Mary's great granddaughter, Patty Levitzke-Gray, born only months before Mary passed away, who took on the position of Community Worker.

One of the highlights and major achievements of John and Jack's collaboration was the selling of Stanmore House, CS Harper Hall and the JO Love Hostel in 1981. This enabled the planning and building of a new Community Centre in Leederville. These premises housed offices, a hostel for deaf people in need of housing assistance, recreation facilities - a bar, function rooms, squash courts, and a basketball court. It was a state-of-the-art hub for the thriving and connected deaf community.

In 2008, after 30 years of continuous service, John retired as CEO of the WA Deaf Society. His staff organised a magnificent retirement event for him, together with invited dignitaries, held in the Ballroom of Perth's Government House. Another, more informal event, was held in the rooms of the Society. I can still see in my mind's eye the huge throng of bodies that jostled and crowded around Dad as he entered the building for his retirement party. It was as if a celebrity had been spotted by adoring fans. Hundreds of the deaf community had turned up to farewell John. The love and connection and acknowledgment was palpable. My Dad was revered and respected by this community.

Leanne Potter, a teacher of the deaf, summed it up perfectly:

'In his position as Executive Director, John works at many differing levels. This includes negotiation

with professionals in Industry, Finance, Employment, Education, Interpreting, Public Relations, Community Service and Government. What is most impressive however, is that while working at this executive level facilitating change and grow very difficult in itself he has always been able to successfully supervise, empower and motivate his staff to do the same. While achieving the above, John has always maintained the trust, loyalty and esteem of the Deaf Community the people he serves. This is a particularly tremendous achievement.'¹⁴

And so eloquently put by Dr Harry Blackmore, a long standing Society Board Member, and a hearing son of deaf parents, 'John Levitzke is a quiet achiever, he does not seek the limelight, nor does he crave the plaudits of others - yet it is such fine men, who ennoble others and enrich the experience of those they serve, who merit the accolade of perceptive souls around them'.¹⁵

Mary's great granddaughter, Drisana Levitzke-Grey, was the recipient of the 2015 Young Australian of the Year and a year later became a member of the WA Women's Hall of Fame. Drisana is an Auslan advocate, an educator and a fierce promoter of 'deaf gain not hearing loss'.¹⁶

And yes, Mary now graces the Roll of Honour in that Hall of Fame. 'Mother of the Deaf' in perpetuity.

In the Society's Newsletter in 1969, Dr Harry Blackmore said

'Mary Levitzke was loved by all. Nothing was so difficult as to daunt her and nothing so slight as to go unnoticed by her. She fit an astonishing amount of selfless service to the deaf into 84 years of life.

No better demonstration of genuine concern for the deaf can be found than the fact that all her children carry on her interest. Her great contribution to the welfare of the deaf in WA over so many years is so significant that her influence and memory can never die.'¹⁷

The seed Tom and Mary planted grew into a flourishing family tree. Its growth so organic and natural, blooming profusely with contributions from all. Each generation nurtured a rich culture of language, tradition and service: and, to this day, the jokes and cheeky banter, too.

Notes

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Adieu Cameroon

Andrée Hartley | Member # 13632

It was humid and hot in the airport. The people moved around sluggishly, their clothes sticking to them, waiting for the announcement to board. Douala International Airport was offering an alternative to taking the boat back to France – a new means of transport. People milled around in the sole airport building which was cluttered with an assortment of baggage.

Children played tag, racing between the haphazard piles of crates, bags and odd-shaped parcels. Only Andrée sat obediently between her parents watching enviously.

An airport officer approached the **Marcoin** family. Was there a problem? He said that the family would not be able to leave on today's flight. Monsieur Marcoin was outraged. He had completed his three-year contract as engineer to the French government and the family was returning to Paris for the last time.

The official explained that Andrée seemed too lethargic and would need to be tested for encephalitis lethargica

(sleeping sickness) before permission to leave the country could be granted. Andrée's parents were alarmed and felt panic rising in their chests. If Andrée did have sleeping sickness, the family would have to remain in Cameroon. Whilst they had enjoyed their time in this exotic country with its varied and lush terrain, it was time to return home.

...

The family had come to Cameroon out of necessity. In the post-war Europe of the 1950s, jobs were hard to come by. *Grand-père Marcoin* and Georges Pompidou, an aide to Charles de Gaulle, were able to use their influence to obtain a position in the Colonial Service. Thus, in 1951, the family had boarded a ship in Bordeaux for passage to Douala. Before reaching Cameroon, they enjoyed brief glimpses of life in Africa as the ship stopped at all the French colonies along the coast of West Africa. At Dakar, for example, Andrée and Claire had a chance to walk around the port.

The first few days in the *case de passage* (halfway house) in Douala were bewildering with the heat, noise and unusual food. It was a relief to journey to the inland capital of Yaoundé, called the city on seven hills, where the climate

Left: Andree Marcoin c1952.

Right: Andree Marcoin and her mother, Claire.



Adieu Cameroon (Cont.)

was still tropical but cooler because of its altitude. There, the District Officer outlined André Marcoin's job and what it entailed. Life was carefree in the capital and parties were numerous. Members of the Royal family of Cameroon often attended and there was an ambience of gaiety that would disappear in the years leading up to independence in 1959.

André, Claire and Andrée soon set off for the small village of Bafia where they would spend much of the following three years. Claire set about making furniture out of the wooden crates that arrived with their luggage. Servants (all male) and a nanny for Andrée were employed. Soon they settled into a round of parties that represented normal colonial life. However, Claire always insisted that the servants return home in the evening in order to enjoy their own family life.

André travelled around the area meeting the local tribes. Sometimes Claire and Andrée accompanied him. In one village, they were the first white people that the locals had ever seen. The women brought grass for Claire to make a skirt but she had no intention of wearing a grass skirt and felt that they really wanted to see more of her white skin when in reality it was an indication of acceptance.

At times, André had to inform nomadic tribes that the French government had decreed that they should now remain in a certain region. Naturally this was offensive, and on one occasion, the chief stood with his

warriors around stamping their spears into the ground at each statement that the interpreter uttered. This was intended as an intimidating act and was very effective. André felt it was prudent to leave and returned later with another government employee. Happily, guns were forbidden.

André had a team of local men whom he guided in drawing up plans for public works. Andrée loved going to the Town Hall to pretend to work with them. She also often accompanied her father to the aerodrome that he was constructing in Bafia and a tunnel in a more remote part of the country.

The family spent some time in Yoko where the Meteorological Station was. Andrée did not like that house as the American missionaries next door had a pet monkey that used to nip her legs. The family had many pets of their own as Claire adopted any animal that looked in need of a home but these were always common domestic pets such as 'Timmy' the dog, 'Jemima' the goose and 'Minou' the kitten. Sadly Minou died from a snake bite.

The house in Bafia had a big ditch around it so that when ants were on the march, petrol was poured into it and set alight to prevent the ants from



Top right: Marcoin family travelling on a local 'ferry'.
Bottom right: Marcoin home at Bafia, Cameroon

Adieu Cameroon (Cont.)

entering the house. Snakes were common, too, but that did not stop Andrée from running barefoot in the grass – the nightmares about snakes came later, back in Paris.

Andrée did not like the nanny. She preferred to wait for Pascal to go to make the beds and then persuade him to wheel her up and down the veranda on her scooter. All the servants seemed happy to play with her and she loved them. Her parents did not know that she could speak their Bantu language of Bafia until Claire, instead of Pascal, took her to a marketplace in another town one day. One of the merchants spoke to Andrée in his language and then informed her mother that he was from Bafia. He had heard her speaking with Pascal on previous visits to the market.

Other children from expat families came to play; the families met at the river or entertained at each other's homes. The judge's daughter, Josée; the American missionary's daughter, Jeannie House; and Lena Papadopoulos were always welcome playmates. Lena's house had mounds of cocoa beans nearby and they were fun to play on.

There were annual trips home to France by ship. Once the family was not near a port and so went to the loading dock for cocoa beans that were being exported to Europe. The ship could not come to shore so the family sat in the net transporting one load of cocoa sacks onto the deck of the ship.

Claire caught up with friends on their holidays back in Paris. She told one who was a milliner that the people in Cameroon adored wearing hats. He suggested that she try to sell his fashionable Parisian hats for him. The slogan was « *Chapeaux Plique, c'est chic* ». The venture was a great success and led to the company venturing into Senegal a few years later.

Andrée did not like being in Paris. For one thing it was so cold after Africa, like a 'Frigidaire', and on one occasion she had malaria... in France ! They went to Cannes to see if that would be warmer but it still felt cold. Andrée did miss Cameroon, however

...

After a nervous week, the result of the encephalitis lethargica test finally came back negative. The Marcoins were free to leave the country. The flight to Paris, with a stopover in Algiers, was enchanting ... one could see the villages where night fires burned and imagine village life that they had been part of. There was sadness at leaving but also the excitement of returning to Paris.



Top: Andree Marcoin surrounded by local children at a coffee plantation.

Above: Andree Marcoin in the company of American missionaries.

Beyond upstairs, downstairs – a glimpse of the life of female servants in Victorian Britain

CJ Eddington | Member # 14038

Three of my great-great grandmothers were domestic servants in the mid-1800s. Grace **Herd**, just prior to her marriage in 1851, was one of two house servants on a farm in Fife, Scotland. She was employed by William **Fraser** ‘a farmer of 120 acres’. Elizabeth **Seller** was recorded in the 1861 census as a house servant for Thomas **Cranswick**, who farmed 345 acres in Yorkshire. Also employed there, were three carters, a shepherd and a dairy maid. And finally, in the 1851 census, Eliza **Creek** was 19 years old, and the sole servant in the London household of John **McKerrow**, an artist.

It is difficult to know how long each of these women worked as servants. Certainly, upon their marriages both Grace and Elizabeth would have been managing their own households, but prior to that they may have been in service from, as young as 14 years old, to when they married at 22 and 21 years old, respectively. Eliza almost certainly earned a living as a domestic servant until 1860, when she migrated to Victoria.

Throughout Britain, domestic service was the largest occupation of women in the nineteenth-century. As soon

as a family’s income reached about £150p.a. it engaged a young teenager as ‘maid-of-all-work’ (general servant). She usually worked 14 to 16 hours daily at the most menial chores.¹

Employment contracts were for one year. These unmarried girls were often from rural families and chose employment

as a servant because it offered better pay than farm work. However, it wasn’t like *Downton Abbey* with a convivial downstairs and fellow servants. Usually, she was the only servant in a big household. It was lonely.²

In 1851, Eliza Creek, a country girl from Essex, was the only servant in the McKerrow household of eight people. She would have cleaned, emptied chamber pots, lit fires, washed clothes and helped in the kitchen. According to the Victorian author Mrs Beeton, in *The Book of Household Management*, the



Servant girls. Drawing by Kenny Meadows. *Illustrated London News* 24 March, 1849.

maid of all work was to be pitied.

‘The general servant or maid of all work is perhaps the only one of her class deserving of commiseration. Her life is a solitary one and in some places her work is never done.’³

Beyond upstairs, downstairs (Cont.)

London households were dirtier than rural homes and it created more work for the city servant. Victorian how-to guides advised servants in London not to set the table until guests were about to sit down, because the layer of dirt coming down the chimneys and in through the doors and windows would settle so quickly.

A day in the life of a general servant began at 6am (in winter this was well before dawn) with the lighting of fires and preparing breakfast. It ended after 9pm with tidying the kitchen and taking hot water up to the family's bedrooms. It seems that in households with only one servant, the mistress of the house worked alongside the servant. From the 18th century onwards, householders wishing for a male servant had to pay for a special licence, the same as for a dog or a carriage. About one guinea.

One of the biggest weekly tasks was the laundry. It is unclear, from the references, who was responsible for this. Washing day was always Mondays, but preparations began earlier in the week on either Friday or Saturday with sorting and mending. On Sunday, the items were soaked overnight in warm water and a little soap.⁴ Until 1853, soap was expensive. However, the repeal of the soap tax in 1853 increased supply and affordability.⁵

Come Monday, it was time to gather wood to heat the water; 20-40 gallons of water was heated in a copper. And then, by hand, it was time for the first, then second wash, boiling, rinse and wringing. Drying in wet weather was a challenge. And ironing pre-electricity was hot, heavy, dangerous work. It's interesting to note that washing was only done to body linen (garments worn next to the skin) as outer garments were too heavy to wash – they were brushed down.

Between the 1891 and 1911 censuses, the number of indoor domestic servants dropped from 1.38 million, to 1.27 million, a decrease of 8%. This drop accelerated after World War I. The relentless drudgery played a part in dwindling servant numbers and there were new opportunities in factories and shops where workers received something unheard of in domestic service – evenings and weekends off. However domestic service in Britain has not entirely disappeared, it has transformed into the cleaning lady, nanny, au pair and food delivery services.⁶

Grace Herd, William **Methven** and their infant daughter Janet sailed from Liverpool to Melbourne in 1854. Elizabeth

Seller and George **Perkins** sailed from Southampton to Melbourne in 1862. Both these couples settled in western Victoria and, in 1889, their children, John Perkins and Grace Methven, married. Finally, in 1860, Eliza Creek, with her younger sister Caroline, also sailed from Liverpool to Melbourne and settled in the goldfield town of Kyneton.

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3 'Servants: A life below stairs', *BBC News*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-19544309> [accessed 17 Apr 2022].

4 'Laundry in Victorian times: How to Wash Clothes—the 1877 way'. Think laundry day sucks for you? Let's do laundry the 19th century way, <http://www.dishwasherrequired.com/laundry-in-victorian-times/> [accessed 10 July 2023].

5 'The Soap Tax', 27 April 1833, *The Spectator Archive*. <http://archive.spectator.co.uk>article>the-soap-tax>, [accessed 13 February 2024].

6 'Who mops the floor now? How domestic service shaped 20th-century Britain,' *University of Cambridge*, <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/who-mops-the-floor-now-how-domestic-service-shaped-20th-century-Britain> [accessed 7 Sept 2023].

Getting to FHWA

By Bus

The 950 from the Morley Bus Station and the Elizabeth Quay Bus Station goes along Beaufort St and the nearest stop to May St is Chisholm College [just before Coode Street]. Also, bus number 48 goes from the Esplanade Bus Port to Morley Bus Station, via Guildford Road, and the nearest stop is the corner of Coode St & Francis St in Bayswater. The buses are now more frequent, and both stops are a 15 minute walk to FHWA.

By Car

If you are driving, Google and Apple maps will help you get there. Street parking and on-site parking is available at FHWA.

Please do not park your car in the bays reserved for units 1, 2, and 3 as these are used by other tenants.

Thank you for your co-operation.



Watermen and lightermen

CJ Eddington | Member # 14038

Two of my ancestors, Zachariah Clark and Thomas Hibbins were working in 1780s London with their lives centring on the River Thames. Zachariah lived in Bermondsey, on the Surrey side of the river, and was a coal merchant. He would have overseen the arrival and distribution of coal via the Thames from ocean-going vessels to river craft. Thomas was a lawyer living at various times, on both sides of the river. Although he didn't make his living directly from the river, he certainly would have crossed the river and bought goods that arrived by river.

The Thames was alive not just with ocean-going vessels but also smaller craft moving both people and goods. These were the watermen with their wherries and the lightermen with their lighters. Both watermen and lightermen lived within walking distance of the river; and watermen barely making a living.

Trade was centred on the Pool of London which was the part of the Thames east of London Bridge. Sailing ships came into London from the east and London Bridge formed a barrier to the movement of tall-masted ships further up river. Until 1750, when Westminster Bridge was built, London Bridge was the city's only way for pedestrians to cross the Thames. The first bridge had been built by the Romans in about AD 50 and was succeeded by a timber bridge built by the Saxons. This bridge was rebuilt in wood several times until the last was built in 1163.¹

Lighterman carry goods - they would lighten (unload) a vessel, moving cargo between the docks and the ships. 'Alight' is the word we still used today to describe getting off a train. Lightermen often specialised in the kind of cargo they moved - whether it was corn, timber, stones or groceries as their boats had been adapted to carry that kind of load. They offered their services to the master of the vessel and agreed on a price and then waited for a favourable tide to move the goods: as rowing against the tide was impossible. This arrangement was open to large scale theft, and so eventually led to the building of enclosed docks to better control access to the cargo.²

West India Docks, further east than the Pool of London,



Horselydown Old Stairs, South Bank, River Thames, London

were built in 1802 as the first enclosed docks. St Saviour's Dock, formed from a tidal inlet, on the Surrey side around Southwark has existed from at least the 1500s - but it wasn't enclosed. As an aside it is believed that Bill Sykes, from Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist*, fell to his death into the mud of St Saviour's Dock. It wasn't until 1828 that St Katherine's Dock on the Middlesex side near the Tower of London was built. The docks had a single entrance and the aim was to unload cargo directly from vessels into the warehouses. These docks eventually ended the need for lightermen.

The financial heart of the city was on the Middlesex side, in Westminster. There was continual movement of people and goods from the Middlesex to the Surrey side of the river. And, until 1750, there was only one bridge in this part of London. John Reed (1742-1816), a merchant, had warehouses near St Saviour's Dock, Surrey, and worshipped on the other side of the river, at All Hallows, Barking.³ He must have crossed the river many times using wherries, the taxi cabs of their day.

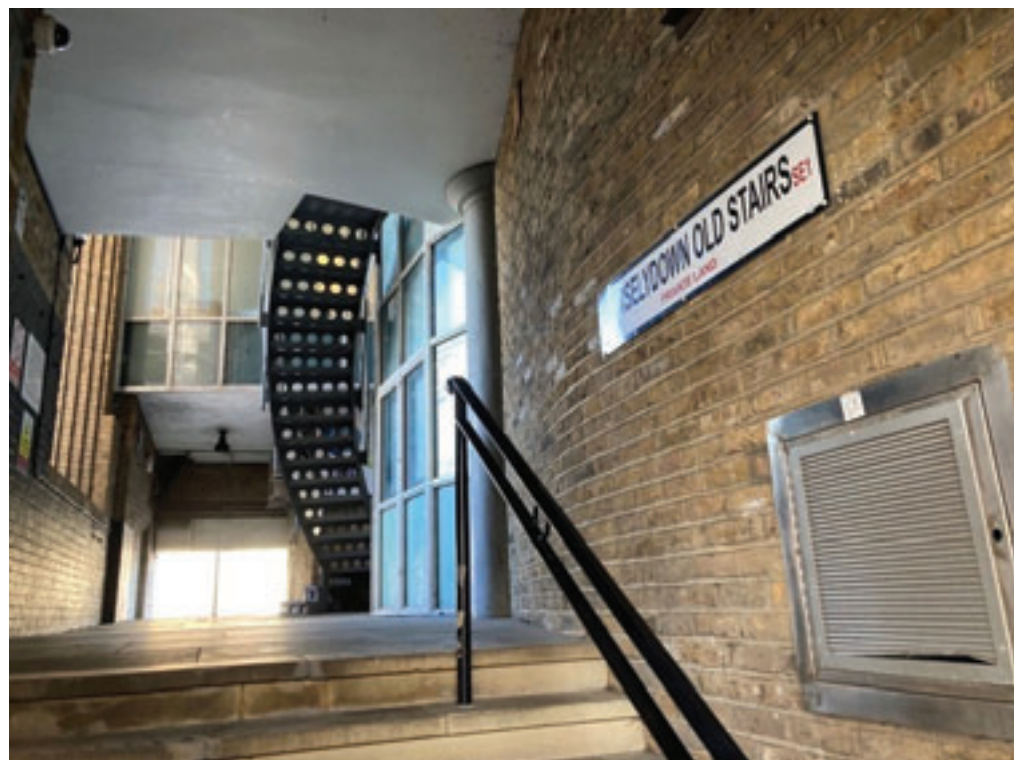
For nearly 100 years, waterman carried Londoners (and their luggage) across, and up and down, the River Thames. Thousands walked across London Bridge each day but,

Watermen and lightermen (Cont.)

equally, waterman had a never-ending stream of people waiting at stairs for the next wherry to move between the Surrey and Middlesex shores. The historic City guild of the Company of Waterman was founded in 1514: they joined with Lightermen in 1700 to form the Company of Watermen and Lightermen.

A 2010 survey of landing places along the Thames found that lots of these stairs from the 1700s still exist.⁴ The stairs went right down to the water's edge and, at high tide, the lowest ones would be under water. The stairs were always wet and care was needed to avoid slipping. Access to the stairs was often via a narrow lane leading from the surrounding streets. However, because waterfront land was so valuable, a passage or tunnel to the stairs was sometimes created through a building. This can still be seen at Horselydown Stairs.

The watermen in their wherries charged a minimum of 6 pence (6d) or 1 shilling (1s) for the shortest journeys deepening on whether they sculled or rowed. Longer trips cost more and the prices were published



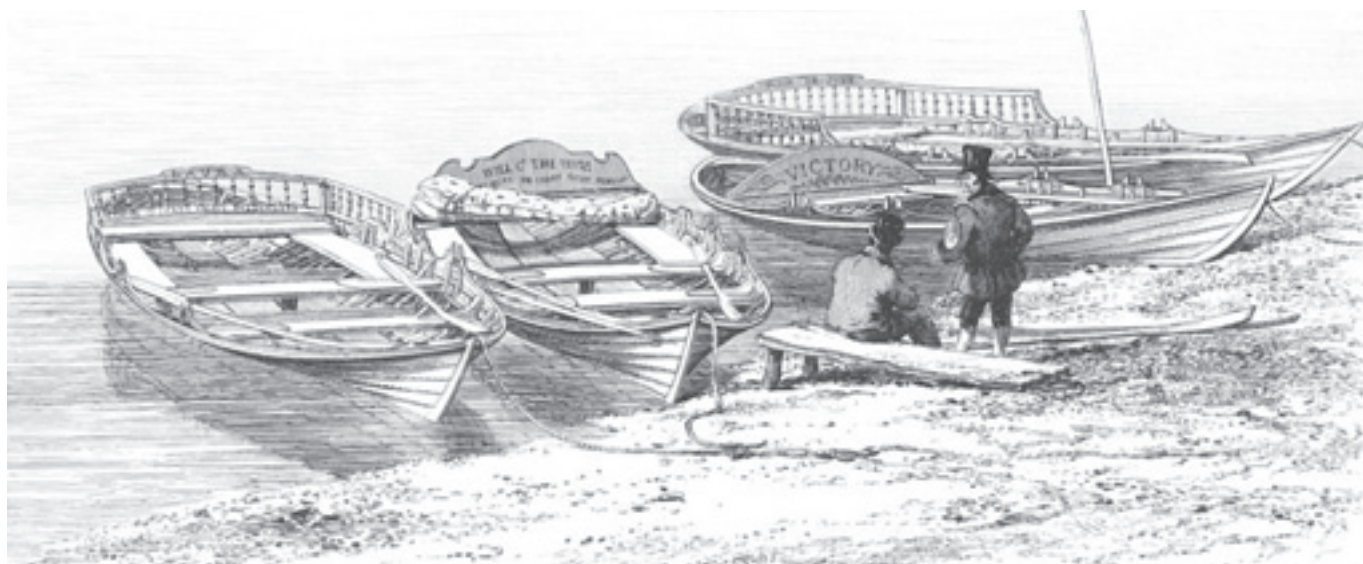
Above: Figure 2 - Horselydown Old Stairs. Looking back at the passageway from the street.
Below: Figure 3 - Thames Wherries, Richmond. Etching by E. W. Cooke.

in Mogg's Table of Waterman's fares 1828.⁵ Sculling was always half the cost of rowing. There were dozens of stairs on both sides of the river where the waterman waited to be hired.

Wherries were constructed of wood, bigger than a modern runabout and similar to old fashioned Australian surf lifesaving boats. They could carry five passengers.⁶ They were pointed at

both ends, to facilitate the landing at stairs on both sides of the river. The waterman's licence attached him to a particular place on the Thames.

The Company of Watermen influence on the Thames stretched from Gravesend to Windsor during the Regency Period. The demise of the watermen was inevitable: as more bridges were built their services were



Watermen and lightermen (Cont.)



No. 953.—VOL. XXXIV.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1859.

[WITH A SUPPLEMENT, FIVEPENCE

no longer needed. However, it took almost 70 years of bridge building and the advent of steam ships before they were out of a job.

It started in 1771, when a timber bridge was built at Battersea to replace a ferry that had existed at this location for many centuries. The bridge had 19 narrow spans and was a severe navigational hazard for river craft. The subject of a well-known painting by the artist Whistler, it became unsafe and was demolished in 1885. All the other bridges between Battersea Bridge, in the west, and London Bridge, in the east, were built during Queen Victoria's reign; most of them were opened by about 1860. Some were only footbridges, others only for trains.

The steam packet service between London and Richmond, begun in 1814, was the first of many that made the watermen's jobs obsolete.⁰⁷ The third group of river craft were the steamboat ferries. River travel became an increasingly popular mode of transport through the introduction of passenger steamboats in 1815. Services to London along the Thames

travelled from Gravesend, Margate and Ramsgate via Greenwich and Woolwich.⁸ *The Illustrated London News* masthead shows a variety of rivercraft on the Thames. In the foreground are the wherries, and, on the lefthand side, is a ferry (the paddleboat) which ran up and down the Thames. As this view is looking toward St Paul's Cathedral, it is further west away from the Pool of London and so no ocean-going sailing vessels are visible.

Given the conditions of the roads, it is no accident that royal palaces like Hampton Court Palace, the Tower of London, Richmond Palace, Greenwich Palace and Whitehall were built along the river. It was quicker to travel by water than road. People, horses, carts and goods were all transported both along the river and across the river. Royalty and the very wealthy had their own watercraft and didn't use wherries.

The growth of London's suburban railways led to a decline in passenger numbers on the river, and by the 1880s, the age of the rivermen was over.

Above: Figure 4 - *Illustrated London News* 1 January, 1859. Masthead.

Notes

1 <https://www.pla.co.uk/Travel/Tourists-visitors/Thames-Bridges/Thames-Bridges>

2 Stawell Heard, *A closer look at the Thames lightermen and watermen*, Royal Museums Greenwich blog, 18 Jul 2022, <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/blog/library-archive/closer-look-thames-lightermen-watermen>, [accessed 19 Nov 2023]

3 All Hallows Barking Church Parish Register, London, England.

4 Peter Finch, Access to the river Thames steps: stairs and landing places on the tidal Thames, 2010, https://www.riverthamesociety.org.uk/files/ugd/b82d51_8022d29106a34fe9abd6e1fae1091a0c.pdf [accessed 29 August 2023]

5 Mogg's Table of the new Watermen's Fares, accompanied by an abstract of the law relative thereto, as framed by the Court of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London. 1828

6 'Ferry service on the Thames.' *Jane Austen*. <https://janeausten.co.uk/blogs/landscape-and-property/ferry-service-on-the-thames> [accessed 5 Dec 2023].

7 'River'. *Transport for London*. <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/culture-and-heritage/londons-transport-a-history/river> [accessed 5 Dec 2023].

Audit your family tree

Terry Fox | Member # 9646

Unless you are a complete dinosaur and keep all your records in a shoe box, you are the administrator of a large relational database with thousands of data elements. For each person recorded, there is a minimum of five life events that we try to document: birth, baptism, marriage, death and burial. For each of those, we record the date and place plus any supporting evidence and photographs, where possible. These five events form the skeleton of a documented life; to this we add where possible the flesh in the form of descriptive events such as their wills, occupation or appearance in a census. Each of these supporting events has more data elements: date, place, reference, supporting text and perhaps photos or census prints. In all, there are usually between 20 and 50 data elements to a well-documented person.

How many people are in your tree? 100? 1,000? A tree of 1,000 will have between 20,000 and 50,000 data elements. Do the maths for your own tree. In those elements there will be errors, both factual and typographic. If you are 99% accurate, you are committing one error per 100 elements.

Recognising that these errors exist and will continue to be created, what can be done to eradicate and prevent them? To some degree, it depends on the database in which your data is recorded; some are more forgiving than others. Most of all, however, it depends on your tolerance of your own inaccuracy. 'Near enough is good enough' will not create a good record of your ancestors.

Prevention is better than cure; be hypercritical of your own input at the time of creation. The errors we create fall into the following classes:

Typos

These are the least important. Although annoying, they can be corrected at any time.

Incorrect dates

Errors come in two forms: incorrectly formatted dates and factually wrong dates. If you are not sure about the accuracy of a date, give one but hedge your bets and use c. (circa / about) or abt. (about). Most programs can handle a fuzzy date and create a timeline accordingly. These are important for consistency checking. It is interesting to note that *Ancestry*TM will challenge a wrongly formatted date but will permit a wildly inaccurate one.

Proprietary genealogical packages run on your computer seem to offer or impose more auditing; it varies from package to package. I recently imported a file from *Family Tree Maker*TM to *Legacy*TM and 37 incorrect dates were highlighted, including 31st February and 'at sea'. *Legacy*TM will not permit the creation of an incorrect date.

Inconsistent data

This is most important. Consider the practicality and likelihood of the fact before you record it. If you want to record an event of which you are unsure, label it as 'Hypothesis'. If your family in the 1800s was firmly based in Somerset and you discover a baptism with the same parents' name in Lancashire, which is more likely – another similarly-named family or that they trekked 250 miles each way over poor roads?

Think about a person's age when recording the fact; I have seen in an *Ancestry*TM tree a marriage at 8 years old with three children before age 15. Just looking at the timeline that *Ancestry*TM provides in a person's profile reveals such improbabilities, so train yourself to be critically observant.

Name: Mary ERRINGTON [1208]

Parents:	Life Events:	Robert ERRINGTON [218] (Abt 1745-1792) and Mary CLERK [229] (1726-1801)
Age: ~63		Abt 1759 - 5 Oct 1828
~14 Abt 1745	Birth of Spouse:	Joseph GRAHAM [747] (Abt 1745-1812). Died on 8 Dec 1812 in Hesham, Northumberland.
~8 Abt 1759	Birth:	Northumberland, Hesham: Joseph GRAHAM [747] (Abt 1745-1812) in Hesham, Northumberland. Hesham parish church C of E Wiveson: In Graham and Thos Errington. He was 'of Cooks House'.
~24 1761 Aug 10	Marriage:	Northumberland, Hesham: John GRAHAM [8218] (1784-1888) son of Joseph GRAHAM [747] and Mary ERRINGTON [1208]. Born in Hesham, Northumberland. Died on 2 Jan 1888 in Alncliffe, Northumberland.
~25 1764 Jan.	Birth of Son (91):	Northumberland, Hesham: Robert GRAHAM [8218] (1766-1812) son of Joseph GRAHAM [747] and Mary ERRINGTON [1208]. Born in Hesham, Northumberland. Died on 15 Dec 1812 in Hesham, Northumberland.
~27 1766 Feb.	Birth of Son (92):	Northumberland, Hesham: Hannah GRAHAM [8212] (1766-) daughter of Joseph GRAHAM [747] and Mary ERRINGTON [1208]. Born in Hesham, Northumberland.
~29 1768 Mar.	Birth of Daughter (93):	Northumberland, Hesham: William GRAHAM Sae [882] (1767-1841) son of Joseph GRAHAM [747] and Mary ERRINGTON [1208]. Born in Hesham, Northumberland.
~28 1767 Dec.	Birth of Son (94):	Died on 24 Oct 1841 in Southfields, Co Durham.
~31 1790 Jul.	Birth of Son (95):	Co Durham, Shetley: Joseph GRAHAM [1248] (1790-) son of Joseph GRAHAM [747] and Mary ERRINGTON [1208]. Born in Shetley, Co Durham.
~35 1794 Jun.	Birth of Son (96):	Co Durham, Shetley: Thomas GRAHAM [1249] (1794-1795) son of Joseph GRAHAM [747] and Mary ERRINGTON [1208]. Born in Shetley, Co Durham. Died on 7 Sep 1795 in Hesham, Northumberland.
~36 1795 Apr 15	Death of Father:	Northumberland, Hesham: Robert ERRINGTON [221] (Abt 1721-1792).
~36 1795 Sep 5	Death of Son (94):	Northumberland, Hesham: Thomas GRAHAM [1249] (1794-1795).
~37 1796 Aug.	Birth of Daughter (97):	Northumberland, Hesham: Mary GRAHAM [1250] (1796-) daughter of Joseph GRAHAM [747] and Mary ERRINGTON [1208]. Born in Hesham, Northumberland.
~46 1805 Jun.	Death of Mother:	Northumberland, Hesham: Mary CLERK [229] (1726-1801).
~66 1815 Dec 8	Death of Spouse:	Northumberland, Hesham: Joseph GRAHAM [747] (Abt 1745-1812).
~68 1828 Oct 4	Resided:	Northumberland, Shetley Field.
~68 1828 Oct 5	Death:	Northumberland, Hesham.
~69 1828 Oct 8	Burial:	Northumberland, Hesham.
	General Notes:	She received five challenges from her father's will.

Mary Errington's timeline

Audit your family tree (Cont.)

Check your own individuals via a timeline in your tree.

Beware of incorrect relationships

In the illustration, Mary Errington's timeline is wonderfully accurate. If only all the parish records were like those in the diocese of Durham in the period 1798-1813. I suspect that the bishop was a genealogist.

It is easy, especially in the earlier records, to infer an incorrect relationship. People did not move about so readily and thus in the same parish there were often multiple occurrences of the same name at the same time. This occurred when siblings each named their children for

their parents, as was the convention. If the baptismal record only gave the name of the father, frankly we are guessing. Similarly with burial records; unless the priest recorded age (rare before 1813) or 'senior' or 'junior' we just have to hope that they died in age order! Wills, when available, are very helpful in sorting out these relationships.

Copying suggested data

Online family tree sites will offer suggestions about persons recorded in your tree. These will be either from factual events they hold or from other researchers' trees; both should be regarded with suspicion.

None of the online sites has yet

digitised all of the available data. Further, not all of the data is available to be digitised; there are gaps in the registers that are available and many registers are unavailable. Often an event went unrecorded; between 1837 and 1875 in UK failure to register births was not punishable. The vicar of Appleford in Oxfordshire noted in the 1600s that there were no records for the previous twenty years because the previous incumbent was permanently drunk. Add to this the fact that many of the transcriptions are poor. From this fragile base are recommendations made.

The online sites compare the trees held within them, note similarities and deficiencies to suggest inclusion

Register of Baptisms in the Parish of Chester St Street in the Year 1790					
Name	Birth	Baptism	Child	Names of Parents &c	P13T/2/62/274
Thos. Stables	May 16 1790	June 26 1790	1 son of	Thos. Stables of Samlton Brickmaker, native of Wickham, by his wife Sarah Lower, native of the Parish of Hockley	
Thos. Gibson	April 2 1790	July 1 1790	1 son of	Anth. Gibson of Plumley Husb. native of this Parish, by his wife Theresia Warr, native of the Parish of Easington	
Geo. M. Feazer	June 28 1790	July 1 1790	1 son of	Geo. Feazer Drift in the 35 th Reg ^t . Foot native of the Parish of St. Martins in the Fields, by his wife Eliz. Taylor native of Ireland	
Robt. Turnbull	April 21 1790	July 1 1790	1 son of	John Turnbull of Goston Husb. native of this Parish, by his wife Mary Rames native of this Parish	
Mary Walker	April 1 1790	July 8 1790	1 daughter of	Geo. Walker of Camperdown Hill, Essex native of the Parish of Litchester, by his wife Sarah Richardson native of the Parish of Walsingham	
Jane Atkinson	Feb. 8 1790	July 8 1790	1 daughter of	Geo. Atkinson of Plumley Husb. native of this Parish, by his wife Jane Robinson native of the Chapelry of Lamesley	
Mary Anderson		July 8 1790	1 daughter of	James Anderson a Soldier in the Northshire Light Dragoons, native of Hockley, by his wife Ruth Shields native of this Parish	
Thos. Whalley	June 20 1790	July 15 1790	1 son of	W. Whalley of Buxton Husb. native of the Parish of Hockley, by his wife Mary Lord native of the Parish of Hockley	
Lee Lewis		July 15 1790	1 son of	Thos. Lewis of Chester Husb. native of Bishop's Cleeve, by his wife Ann Lee native of Whithorn	
Matthew Smith	June 9 1790	July 15 1790	1 son of	W. Smith of Buxton Husb. native of the Parish of Gosforth, Northumberland, by his wife Ann Whalley native of this Parish	
Eliz. Clark	May 18 1790	July 15 1790	1 daughter of	Thos. Clark of Hockley Husb. native of Hockley, Northumberland, by his wife Hannah Clark native of the Parish of Hockley	
Ann Davison	May 18 1790	July 15 1790	1 daughter of	Thos. Davison of Hockley Husb. native of Hockley, Northumberland, by his wife Ann Davison native of the Parish of Hockley	

Extract from the Register of Baptisms, Chester St Parish, Durham 1790.

Audit your family tree (Cont.)

of whole new branches to your tree at the press of a button. This is very tempting but potentially dangerous; as my Gran used to say: 'Never buy a pig in a poke.' You are allowing a person of unknown ability to contribute to your tree. By all means examine the recommendation but do your own research to verify each person before adding them manually to your tree.

Commercial databases fall into two main categories: on-line or local to your computer. Those on-line such as *FindMyPast™*, *Geneanet™* and *Ancestry™* seem more tolerant of error than those that run locally. *Ancestry* will permit a person born 300 years ago to be shown as living. *MyHeritage™* seems to be the exception to this and does a thorough consistency check either on demand or when a tree is uploaded. I was mortified at the number of inconsistencies reported, with children born after the death of a parent or when parents were in their 60s.

I use *Legacy™* which does consistency checking on family relationships and warns of these if they appear to be wrong. Many of these checks can be modified by the user; as an example, one can select the age at death around which warnings are flagged. Every perceived error is flagged on the record and it can be seen what these are by hovering the cursor over the error flag. The flag remains until the perceived error is corrected or is overridden.

Legacy Checks

Family history records often have inbuilt or legacy checks, such as those in this illustration. In addition to these, you can perform your own.

Run master lists such as Location from time to time and verify that there are few duplicates because of mistyping.

If a person has more than one spouse, check that they are in the correct order.

Check that the children are recorded in the correct order and allocated to the correct spouse when there are

multiple marriages.

Get a buddy! If you find during research that another person has a branch of your tree within their tree, contact them but do your due diligence on them first. Assess the quality of their tree – do they quote or append valid sources? Have they precise or vague dates? Do they adduce family photos or vital event certificates? How many people do they have in their tree? If you like what you see then write to them and propose collaboration for a while. The first part of that is to agree on what is consistent and the fact that someone else has verified your content will give you increased confidence in its validity. If you share DNA this confidence is enhanced. This collaboration usually leads to an increased tree, as your new partner will have access to a different set of records.

When you have done all this, your tree won't be perfect. It will however be much improved.

Exclude from Potential Problems

Exclude the following potential problems from the Potential Problems list for this individual:

Warnings Problems Standardisation Gaps LDS

- ☒ Warn if born when parents are under 13 years old
- ☒ Warn if married under 13 years old
- ☒ Warn if death after 120 years old
- ☒ Warn if birth after 20 years of marriage
- ☒ Warn if born when mother is older than 50 years old
- ☒ Warn if burial date is more than 30 days after death
- ☒ Warn if both spouses have the same surname
- ☒ Warn if children born before marriage of parents
- ☒ Check sort order of children

Save Cancel Help Clear All Select All

Legacy checks

Vale Graham Bown (1940 - 2024)

It is with great sadness we record the passing of Graham Charles **Bown** (Member # 136) on 5 January 2024. Graham was a Life Member and Past President of FamilyHistoryWA (FHWA). His interest in Western Australian (WA) history assisted many people as he undertook such projects as the WA Cemeteries Index and burial registers held in the West. He was also involved in the recording of marriages, shipping and the early Colonial Secretaries records and in the writing of *First Families of the Swan River Colony*.

Graham was born to Harold and Gladys (nee **Taylor**) Bown on 26 February 1940 at Concord West, an inner western suburb of Sydney. When Graham was 12, Harold was transferred with his work and the family moved to Perth. Graham met and later married Lois **Hoare** at the South Perth Methodist Church on 1 December 1962. They had two children: Lee-Anne and Craig. He was father-in-law to Leigh and Mandy. Pa to Teagan, Tori, Daniel, Lauren and Tayla. Great-Grandpa to Neveah.

As a young 16 year old, Graham commenced studying at the University of Western Australia and graduated from there with a Bachelor of Education degree and a Teacher's Certificate from Claremont Teachers' College. In later years, he studied at the WA Institute of Technology and gained a Graduate Diploma in Administration.

Eric Alcock, a university friend, spoke at Graham's funeral about their uni life and how Graham was always meticulous and well-organised. Eric reminisced about their long friendship and Graham's years as a maths teacher. He taught at many schools including Collie, Port Hedland, Northam, Bunbury, Kwinana and Newman.



After 40 years of education, Graham retired in 2000 as Principal of Lakeland Senior High School. At the time, was the longest serving high school principal in the state. He became a life member of the WA Secondary Principals' Association in 1983; a Fellow of WA Institute of Education Administration in 1989; and a Fellow of the Australian Council of Education Administration in 1998.

While teaching, Graham applied for a one-year teacher exchange to Great Britain. To his surprise, he was allocated

a position in Northern Ireland (NI). It was 1976, and with the unrest there, Graham and Lois arranged for their two young children to stay with family in Western Australia. However, after being there for a short while, they were encouraged to let their children join them and they were reassured that, if they felt unsafe, they could all return to WA. Lee-Anne and Craig flew by themselves to NI and the family was reunited.

At Graham's funeral, Craig shared memories of his Dad and mentioned living in Newcastle, a quiet coastal town in County Down.

Amongst other things, we discovered Craig and Graham were huge Dr Who fans. Ron Gleeson, the best man at his wedding, also spoke and said he met Graham and Lois at the Methodist Church. Their friendship had remained strong and he shared stories of their lives over the years. It was evident from the eulogies how loved and respected Graham was in all spheres of his life - family, teaching and genealogy.

In 1981, Graham joined the Western Australian Genealogical Society (WAGS), only two years after the

society was founded. He became a active member and in 1984 was the inaugural convenor of the Computer Users Group, now called the Technology Group. He was also a member of the Convict Special Interest Group, Swan River Pioneers (1829-1838) Special Interest Group (SRP) and the South of the River house group.

Graham was especially involved, mainly as a projects officer, with the SRP group since its inception in 1993. He brought his knowledge of early Western Australian history to both the SRP and Society members. As well as all the research Graham did for this group, he was a regular attendee at their annual Foundation Day Dinner and the MC many times.

The FHWA website, acknowledges Graham as transcribing, compiling and indexing at least twelve different datasets:

- Karakatta Cemetery Headstones
- Fremantle Cemetery Headstones
- Colonial Secretary's Office - Inwards Correspondence 1829-1835
- Colonial Secretary's Office Inwards Correspondence - Letter transcriptions Vol 1-2 & 4-8
- Convicts Justitia Hulk Woolwich 1814-1822
- Albany Deaths and Burials Index (1816-1991)
- Reverse Marriages Index 1829-1857
- Passengers WA arrivals and departures - Swan River Colony 1826-1838
- Swan River Colony Quarter Sessions Indictment Files Cons 3472 (1830-1836)

- Swan River Colony Quarter Sessions Minute Books - Cons 3577/2(1830-1834)
- Western Australian Criminal Court Record Books - Cons 3422-1 (1830-1840)
- Swan River Colony Quarter Sessions Minute Books - Cons 3577/1 (1830-1836)

Graham served on the FHWA management committee culminating with his appointment as President for two years (2011 - 2013). As President, he represented the Society in 2012 at the Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry in Adelaide. In recognition of Graham's long-standing service to the Society and genealogy in WA, he was awarded life membership at the AGM in June 2017. At the society's 40th anniversary celebrations in April 2019, Graham outlined the many changes that had occurred over the years and entertained us with a number of his genealogy quips.

In 2013 Graham was awarded the 'Gem of Time' by the Friends of Battye Library for his contribution to the recording, collection and preservation of Western Australia's history. The citation states his wide knowledge and willingness to help people; and mentions the Friends of Battye Library publication of the *Colonial Secretary's Office, Western Australia CSO 1829-1830* for which Graham painstakingly transcribed the microfilm held in the State Records Office of WA. Graham was the author of many publications held in the Battye Library and the FHWA Library including *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, January to December 1833.

Apart from genealogy, Graham kept active in other areas. Along with Lois, Graham was an active



member of Probus where he held the position of President at the Probus Club of Bannister Creek. They both loved travelling and visited many places around the world including Africa, Antarctic, Europe, North America and New Zealand. Graham had always wanted to visit the Amazon and plans were in place but unfortunately were curtailed due to COVID. Safaris to Kenya and Tanzania whetted his desire to be a guide at the Perth Zoo. Consequently he became a Perth Zoo Docent which included being a volunteer guide, tour leader and visitor helper conducting walking and zebra car tours at the zoo; and of course, being President of their association.

Graham's funeral service was held on 15 January 2024 and was attended by society members including our current president and three past Presidents. Many people will continue to benefit from Graham's huge contribution to genealogy. The list of his achievements is vast and his legacy will live on through our society. We thank Graham for everything he has done, and, our thoughts and prayers are with Lois and their family.

Liana Fitzpatrick | Member #9810
(Life Member & Past President)

Vale Ruth Reid (1921 - 2024)

Ruth Amelia Reid AM Cit WA, member # 3300 and former Patron of FamilyHistoryWA, sadly died on 3 January 2024 at the age of 102. This tribute on behalf of FHWA reflects our personal contact with her, particularly over the last ten years.

Ruth was born in London in 1921 and grew up in the Wandsworth area. The daughter of Thomas **Fish** and Nora (nee **Ingram**), she worked in London during and after the Blitz. Later, in 1943, she was invited to Brighton for a weekend visit by her great friend Doreen who had moved down there with her mother. In her memoir (published for her 100th birthday), she writes: 'I accepted their invitation and arranged to go down to Brighton and I have been thankful all my life that I chose that weekend.'

Because that's where she met Gordon **Reid**, her future husband, at a farewell party. He was a navigator in Bomber Command and was among 20 other Australian airmen who had been training around Brighton and were heading off to various stations around the country. Over the next 18 months or so their friendship grew, and they eventually married in June 1945. He left for Australia in September that year, but she didn't reach Sydney until March 1946. The *Daily Mirror* featured a photo of their reunion.

Gordon and Ruth moved to Canberra where he worked at Parliament House. Later he studied in London and Oxford, and had an academic career in Adelaide and Perth, before being appointed as the 26th Governor of Western Australia in 1984.

By 1985, the fledgling Western

Austalian Genealogical Society had grown sufficiently to incorporate themselves as a not-for-profit Association. The Committee invited the Governor to become Patron, and he accepted the invitation. He held the role from March 1986 until he died in 1989. Gordon and Ruth Reid visited the organisation a number of times during his patronage and were well-regarded. Following his death, Ruth became Vice-Patron.

In June 1996, Ruth was asked to become Patron of the Society and was warmly welcomed when she accepted. She was an active and interested Patron until she retired in 2019. Ian Simon, FHWA President at the time of her retirement wrote: "She has been a constant support since 1986 attending events and promoting the society. Our sincere thanks must be extended to Ruth for her enthusiastic and interested support."

We first met Ruth during one of the many functions, hosted by FHWA, that she attended. It became obvious that she was ready to leave and we offered to drive her home. She was a lively conversationalist and we enjoyed chatting to her. She had the need to find a UK service document, so we were able to explain to her the process of obtaining such a thing, which, at the time, was quite tedious. She was grateful and had no difficulty in asking for further help when trying to obtain other documents. We got into the habit of offering to pick her up and take her to functions in May Street. She used to tease us saying that the only reason we picked her up was to enjoy the free parking space reserved for the Patron outside the office.



A few years ago, she mentioned that she had been writing a memoir about her life growing up in England and her time at Government House. Because we had experience in publishing books for clients, and were also editors of the *Western Ancestor* at the time, we suggested that FHWA readers might enjoy some of her stories about her time at Government House. She was delighted, and in 2020 and 2021, we transcribed and published three articles about that side of her life.

As her 100th birthday was approaching, we also transcribed her handwritten notes about her early life. This was published in a booklet *Ruth Reid Remembers* which she made available to friends and family at her 100th birthday celebration.

That occasion became more special when the then-Patron of FHWA (Kim Beazley) dropped in to congratulate Ruth. He gave an excellent speech before she seized the microphone and gave a spirited impromptu address in reply. She was in fine form.

Sadly that was the last time we saw her. Vale Ruth Reid. We were privileged to know you.

Mike Murray | Member # 6777 &
Lesley Silvester | Member # 6778

Ghost towns of the West

Ian Barnes | Member # 9003



We are refocusing our ‘Where in the West?’ competition to join with FHWA’s long-term project, *Ghost Towns of the West*. Once again, we are delighted that local independent publisher, Fremantle Press, will sponsor the competition by offering a prize of three of their books (value \$100) which the winner can choose from the Fremantle Press catalogue. On this page, we feature covers of three of Fremantle Press’ new releases in which we feel our members might be interested.

The last of our ‘Where in the West?’ buildings was St John’s Lutheran Church in Perth. The winner of the Fremantle Press books was drawn by lot and the winner was member Graeme Lee # 14536.

For the new competition, *Western Ancestor* editor, Peter Forrestal, will be drawing lots to determine the winner from the first dozen correct entries emailed to westernancestor@fhwa.org.au from our members.

Ghost Towns of the West

We think it may be unreasonable to expect members to recognise places that no longer exist, so we will offer a greater range of clues to the identity of the town than previously.

Our first ghost town in this series came into being to service the timber industry of our south-west forests and so it had a mill, a siding, houses, and a school. All that remains is the hall and a building, currently used for a different purpose. Originally, it was regarded as an excellent example of a local school. This photo is of the RSL hut and recreation area.

Believing that Woop Woop exists may help you find it.

Explore the latest offerings from Fremantle Press with three exciting new releases featured on the following page.

New releases from Fremantle Press



“
Volunteers do not
necessarily have the
time; they have the
heart.”

-Elizabeth Andrew.

Volunteering Opportunities

If you are looking for an opportunity to give back to FamilyHistoryWA (FHWA), share your knowledge and experience with others, or socialise with other like-minded family historians there are heaps of opportunities available.

Property Officer and Property Assistants – Help maintain FHWA facilities so that members and the community can access our services and resources.

Membership Assistant – Be part of a small social team that meets at May Street on Fridays and assists with a variety of membership tasks, from processing applications to handling renewals.

Activity and Event Support Volunteers – Volunteer for a single event or for several during the year. Be involved by preparing material for an event, setting up, answering questions, and sharing your love of family history with visitors. No prior experience is necessary!

People of WA's Ghost Towns Project Volunteers – The roles in the project include researchers, indexers, proofreaders, team leaders and writers.

Other opportunities that may interest you include Library Volunteers, Editorial Team Members and the FHWA Project Volunteers.

Contact Garry by email (volunteers@fhwa.org.au) today to express your interest.

FRONT COVER IMAGE

FHWA, Ian Barnes, Fluid Ink Graphic Design

BACK COVER IMAGE

Poem of Banjo Paterson is out of copyright.

BOOK REVIEW IMAGES

Fremantle Press.

ARTWORK AND IMAGE CREDITS

Where in the West? binoculars: dgim-studio – Freepik

Page 300 collage: Fluid Ink Graphic Design

FHWA Membership

PER ANNUM

Joining Fee (once only)	\$15
Single Membership	\$80
Joint Membership*	\$120
Student Membership (full time)	\$40
Internet Membership (for those living outside WA)	\$55

Affiliated Society Membership	\$100
Institutional Membership	\$100
Corporate Membership	\$250

*Two people at one address who receive one journal only.

Journal Subscription only (includes postage) **\$45**

Western Ancestor

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Contributions

Please email to westernancestor@fhwa.org.au, or post to The Editor, 6/48 May St, Bayswater 6053, or place items in the Editor's box in Unit 4 at FHWA. Preferred in MS Word, or similar format, as an email attachment. Send images separately, not embedded in the document. For more details, see Contributions and Copyright under 'Journal' at www.fhwa.org.au

Closing Dates for Contributions

March issue: 20 January

July issue: 20 May

November issue: 20 September

Family Research Notices

Members may place two small 'genealogically related' notices per year in the journal free of charge. Additional placements in the same year - \$10 each. Non-members may place similar notices for \$10 per placement.

Research

Our research team will carry out limited research for non-members at \$40 per hour or \$25 per hour for members living outside the Perth metropolitan area. A non-refundable deposit of \$20 must accompany all enquiries. Members living more than 500 km from Perth can access two hours free research per year.

Contact research@fhwa.org.au

Advertising Rates (Full Colour)

One eighth page \$50; Quarter page \$100;
Half page \$200; Full page \$400.

For details about advertising, please contact the Editor at westernancestor@fhwa.org.au

[10% Discount given if booking advertising space in two or more editions.]

[20% Discount for members.]

Management Committee

The Management Committee now meet on the FOURTH Tuesday of each month at 4pm. Members are invited to submit suggestions or questions, in writing, to the Secretary at least ten days prior to the meeting.

AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

Albany Regional FHS Inc

Albany Public Library, York Street, ALBANY WA 6330
www.albanyfamilyhistory.org.au
albanyfamilyhistory@gmail.com

Australind FHS Inc

Australind Library Complex, Mulgara St, AUSTRALIND WA 6233 (Tel: 9796 1050)
www.australindfhs.org
alindfhs@iinet.net.au

Busselton FHS Inc

First floor, City of Busselton Community Resource Centre, 21 Camilleri Street, BUSSELTON WA 6280 (Tel: 9752 3979)
busseltonfhs.com.au
secretary@busseltonfhs.com.au

Collie FHS Inc

Miners Institute Building, Throssell Street, COLLIE WA 6225
c.f.h.s@westnet.com.au

Esperance FHS Inc

Esperance Museum, cnr James & Dempster Strs, ESPERANCE WA 6450
efhs@westnet.com.au

FHS of Rockingham & Districts Inc

Suite 8, Ground Floor, Lotteries House, 6 Civic Boulevard, ROCKINGHAM WA 6168
fhsrd.org.au
fhsrd.sec@gmail.com

Geraldton FHS Inc

The Geraldton Cultural Trust, 321 Marine Terrace, GERALDTON WA 6530
geraldtonfhs.wordpress.com/
gfhsssecretary@gmail.com

Mandurah FHS Inc

Corner of Third Avenue and Jack Ireland Park Road, MANDURAH WA 6210 (Tel: 9586 9760)
mfhs.org.au/
mfhs@westnet.com.au

Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 Inc

PO Box 2672, ELLENBROOK WA 6069 (Tel: 9296 9520)
www.swanriverpioneers.com
swanriverpioneers@gmail.com

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Albany History Collection

Albany Public Library, 221 York St, ALBANY WA 6330
library.albany.wa.gov.au/programs-collections/albany-history-collection/albany-history-collection.aspx

Army Museum of WA Foundation

Artillery Barracks, 2 Burt Street, FREMANTLE WA 6160
armymuseumwa.com.au

Bassendean Local Studies Collection

46 Old Perth Rd, BASSENDEAN WA 6054
library.bassendean.wa.gov.au/local-studies.aspx

Birtwistle Local Studies Library

Armada Shopping Centre, Shop 64/10 Orchard Ave, ARMADALE WA 6112
library.armadale.wa.gov.au/birtwistle-library

Broome Public Library

PO Box 44, BROOME WA 6725
<https://www.broome.wa.gov.au/Community/Broome-Public-Library>

Bunbury Museum and Heritage Centre

1 Arthur St, BUNBURY WA 6230
bunburymuseum.com.au

Capel Districts Cemeteries Project

Ron Maidment Archive Room, Forrest Road, CAPEL WA 6271
capeldistrictcemeteriesproject.com.au

MEMBERSHIP AND SOCIETIES

City of Belmont Museum

213 Wright Street, CLOVERDALE WA 6105
www.belmont.wa.gov.au/discover/places-to-go/ruth-faulkner-library-and-belmont-museum

Carnamah Historical Society & Museum

10 Macpherson St, CARNAMAH WA 6517
www.carnamah.com.au

Claremont Community Hub

327 Stirling Hwy, CLAREMONT WA, 6010
<https://www.claremont.wa.gov.au/places/community-hub-and-library>

Fremantle Local History Collection

Walyalup Civic Centre, 151 High St, FREMANTLE WA 6160
www.fremantle.wa.gov.au/fremantle-history-centre

Inglewood Library

895 Beaufort St, INGLEWOOD WA 6052
www.stirling.wa.gov.au/leisure-and-culture/libraries-and-hubs

Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society of WA

61 Woodrow Ave, Yokine, WA, 6062
<https://jhgs.wa.org.au/>

Joondalup Local History Collection

102 Boas Ave, JOONDALUP WA 6027
www.joondalup.wa.gov.au/category/community-and-libraries

City of Kalgoorlie Boulder Local History Archives

Boulder Town Hall, 116 Burt St, BOULDER WA 6432
mailbag@ckb.wa.gov.au

Nedlands Local Studies Library

60 Stirling Hwy, NEDLANDS WA 6009
www.nedlands.wa.gov.au/community/libraries/local-history.aspx

Relationships Australia

Level 2, 156 Railway Pde, WEST LEEDERVILLE WA 6007
www.relationshipswa.org.au/services

Tuart Place

24 High St, FREMANTLE WA 6160
www.tuartplace.org

Victoria Park Library

27 Sussex St, EAST VICTORIA PARK WA 6101
www.victoriapark.wa.gov.au/Around-town/Facilities/Library

Vincent Local History Centre

99 Loftus St, LEEDERVILLE WA 6007
library.vincent.wa.gov.au/local-history-centre.aspx

Wanneroo Regional Museum

3 Rocca Way, WANNEROO WA 6065
www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/wannerooregionalmuseum

Yorgum Link Up

176 Wittenoom, East Perth, WA, 6004
<https://yorgum.org.au/services/link-up/>

York Research & Archival Centre

Sandalwood Yards, Cnr Avon Tce and Ford St, YORK WA 6302
www.theyorksociety.com

HOUSE GROUPS

Eastern Hills

easternhills.hg@fhwa.org.au | Jennifer Gibson

Kalamunda Area

kalamunda.hg@fhwa.org.au | Heather Simon

Kelmscott

Colleen Fancote

Northern Suburbs

northsuburbs.hg@fhwa.org.au | Olive Sampson

South of the River

sor.hg@fhwa.org.au | Louise Clarkson

Prelude

I have gathered these stories afar
In the wind and the rain,
In the land where the cattle camps are,
On the edge of the plain.
On the overland routes of the west,
When the watches were long,
I have fashioned in earnest and jest
These fragments of song.

They are just the rude stories one hears
In sadness and mirth,
The records of wandering years—
And scant is their worth.
Though their merits indeed are but slight,
I shall not repine,
If they give you one moment's delight,
Old comrades of mine.

A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson