

THE ENDEAVOUR



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FAMILY HISTORY BOTANY BAY

Discovering Your Heritage

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Meetings

Face to face meetings are held on the first Saturday of March, June, September and December at the Research Centre commencing at 1.30pm. Zoom meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month (except January) starting at 7.30pm.

Library and Research Centre Messages and Bookings Only: 02 9523 8948

Port Hacking Community Centre 184 Gannons Road Caringbah South NSW 2229
Open: 10am-2pm: Mon, Wed, Fri, 1st & 3rd Sat. For bus route 978 & timetable, see:
<https://transportnsw.info/routes/details/sydney-buses-network/978/31978>

Annual Membership Fees

From 1 Jul 2024: single – \$45; family – \$60; distance single – \$23; distance family – \$30; membership renewals due 1 July each year.

Research

Volunteers from BBFHS will research family history relevant to the Sutherland Shire for non-members: minimum fee of \$30 (first hour) and \$30 per hour thereafter.

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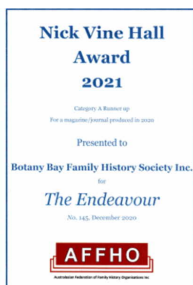
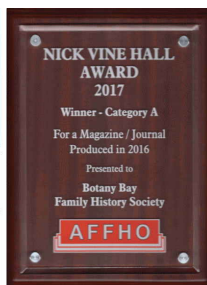
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CALENDAR



Members are advised to check latest details on our Events calendar at www.botanybayfhs.org.au or see your fortnightly BBFHS eNEWS

- Aug 23** Irish Interest Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom
- Aug 26** Family Tree Maker Interest Group: 1.30-3.30 pm on Zoom
- Aug 28** Bus Trip to NSW State Records at Kingswood
- Sep 6** **Annual General Meeting – 1.30 pm Research Centre, Saturday. Mel Hulbert. *DNA Painter (to be confirmed)***
- Sep 12 – 14** **NSW & ACT Conference, Wollongong**
- Sep 17** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.**
- Sep 18** Tour – to be announced.
- Sep 25** Writers Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom
- Sep 27** DNA Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom
- Oct 1** **Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom. Kaye Batchelor. *A Shaggy Dog Story***
- Oct 11** Scottish Interest Group: 2-4pm at Research Centre
- Oct 15** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.**
- Oct 16** Tour – Gale History Museum at Macquarie University
- Oct 18** English Focus One Day Seminar: Research Centre
- Nov 1** Technology Interest Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom
- Nov 5** **Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom. Fiona Brooker. *Across the Ditch***
- Nov 19** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom**
- Nov 20** Tour – Penrith Printing Museum.
- Nov 22** Irish Interest Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom
- Nov 25** Family Tree Maker Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom
- Nov 27** Writers Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom
- Nov 29** DNA Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom
- Dec 6** **Meeting – 1.30 pm Research Centre, Saturday. Tina Bean. *Dressing the Past***
- Dec 13** Scottish Interest Group: 2-4pm at Research Centre
- Dec 13** Last day Research Centre & Library is open
- Dec 17** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.**

Family History Botany Bay is a member of:



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Hello everyone. It's been a busy and exciting few months for our Society, and I'm delighted to share some highlights with you.

Technology Interest Group

Our brand-new Technology Interest Group is off to a flying start! Both the inaugural and second meetings were very well attended — thank you to everyone who came along and participated. Topics covered so far include:

- *Tagging Photographs*
- *ChatGPT and Claude*
- *Irfanview* (a great free photo editing tool)
- *Scams, Scamming and Scammed*
- *How to record family stories in a photobook* (Leonie Bell)
- *Cloud Storage*
- *Facebook for Family History*
- *Ghost Stores*

We'll be gathering again for a third meeting on 1 November. If you have a topic you'd like me to explore, or if you'd like to share your own technological knowledge with the group on any topic, please get in touch — I'd love to hear from you.

Our YouTube Channel

Leonie Bell has been working hard behind the scenes to get a YouTube channel up and running which can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/@BotanyBayFHS-1>. I think we can all agree that the short videos look great! Each month a new video is uploaded for you to enjoy and to learn from. Please remember to give our videos the thumbs up and to subscribe to our channel. Videos uploaded so far include:

- *How to start your family history*
- *10 reasons to join Family History Botany Bay*
- *What is probate?*
- *Family History Botany Bay timeline*
- *Not all source documents are equal*
- *Bass and Flinders in the Sutherland Shire*
- *Sydney Bricks*

Australian Interest Day

This was another very successful day. We had 28 members come along and enjoy a full program of fascinating talks:

- *Convict Trials* — Jennie **Fairs**
- *Deciphering a WW1 Soldier's Dossier* — Sue **Hewitt**
- *Push and Pull Factors of Immigration* — Jean **Campbell**
- *Gold Finders, Miners and More* — John **Levy**
- *Two Indexes and an Immigrant's Guide* — Pat **Fearnley**
- *Unravelling the Story of Ann (1773–1835), a Matriarch of Early Sydney* — Megan **Neilson**
- *Interpreting Information and Misinformation* — Jeff **Madsen**

A huge thank you to each of our presenters for sharing their knowledge and passion. Next up will be our English Interest Day, and I'm currently looking for speakers. If you've got a story or some research you'd like to share, please put your hand up and email me at president@botanybayfhs.org.au.

Family History Month Open Day

Finally, by the time you're reading this, our August Open Day for Family History Month will have come and gone. My heartfelt thanks to all the members who volunteered their time, skills, and smiles to make the day a success. We couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you all for your ongoing support, enthusiasm, and contributions — they're what keep our Society thriving. I look forward to seeing many of you at future upcoming events.

Jennie **Fairs**

BOTANY BAY FHS NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Botany Bay Family History Society Inc will be held at 1.30 pm on **Saturday 6 September 2025** at the Research Centre, 284 Gannons Road, Caringbah South. Only financial members can vote. Any financial member may be nominated for election to the Committee by any two other financial members. Nomination forms are available from the Secretary at botanybayfhs@yahoo.com.au.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

by John Levy

In this edition of *The Endeavour* I highlight three articles on one topic from the Writers Interest Group. This interest group, like our other Botany Bay interest groups, is there to help our members to develop their interests and abilities in a helpful and welcoming environment. You will see from the articles that their authors have just told a story from their point of view. They tell us about the topic in a way that helps us to be there with them in the moments they write about. And as our regular contributor Colleen **Passfield** says, “Just tell the story and then write it down as you have told it.” It is as easy as that. Come back later and review it and you may see ways where it may be improved. Show your stories to someone else for their input – this is where the Writers Group can help, but it may be anyone you think can help you: partner, child, friend – or me. In the books that I read, nearly all have a section at the end where the author thanks the people that have first read their story and offered suggestions for improvements and then thanks the editors that have further improved it. You don’t have to do it alone.

The writers group welcomes any Botany Bay member who wants to join!

- Builds confidence
- Gives you new perspectives
- Sharing and exploring ideas and techniques with like-minded people stimulates your imagination in a spirit of community and friendship
- Learn how others present their stories to provide you with inspiration
- Independent feedback on your work
- Participate and receive constructive suggestions on different aspects of the writing process

It is often easiest to write your own history first. It is the history that you know best and is often most meaningful and of interest for your family because they know you. It can be written in bite-size chunks, a piece at a time. If you look at the following articles by Dianne, Pat and Sally, this is what they have done – picked a small piece of their history, food, and written about it. Read their articles and see what they tell their descendents, stuff that you and I may know about but are often lost on our children and grandchildren – how many of them have had milk direct from the cow, one of Olga’s famous swivelling swans or lamb’s fry for breakfast?

So this is a call out to all members and to those in our other interest groups. I welcome your contributions to *The Endeavour* and am happy to work with you on any article you may care to write. The time to start is now!

FOOD

by Dianne Switzer (Member)

There was nothing better than the early morning wakeup call from Dad on a cold and frosty morning and walking down to the cow shed, where the old Jersey cow waited patiently in the bails, Dad sitting on the stool with the bucket between his legs as he started encouraging the milk to flow. The slightly warm squirt of milk straight from the udder into my mouth was a surprise and delight.

The milking finished, the cow was turned out and we would walk up to the meat house, where a separator was installed which was used to separate the milk from the cream. Mum would then turn the cream into delicious velvety butter or the yummiest ice-cream, using the cream and eggs from our many chooks.

My Dad slaughtered our own lambs, so there was never a shortage of lamb's fry, crumbed brains, chops and roasted meats, with leftovers often minced up for pies. For a change, Mum would chop the head off a chook, scald it, pluck the feathers and then prepare for cooking, once the internal organs were removed. They were cooked into broths; the chicken legs were delicious to snack on.

Apart from main meals, my Mum would cook biscuits and cakes, often making morning teas for the shearers when they appeared or visitors just turning up. Her brownies were one of my favourites. She also made our sandwiches and snacks for primary school. As a treat, sandwiches were sometimes filled with heaps of chocolate shavings. That only happened rarely, although sandwiches made with hundreds and thousands featured more often.

I really missed Mum's cooking once I went to boarding school, although the meals were mainly good and varied. The best parts were Mrs **Clark**'s roasts and her desserts. The caramel tart with marshmallow on top was to die for, steamed puddings with treacle and Mississippi Mud with elephant's dandruff was another – a concoction of chocolate blancmange with coconut on top. There were meals to turn your stomach, including bread and butter pudding and lemon sago, aptly named frog's eggs. The highlight of food at boarding school though, was having unauthorised midnight feasts in the broom cupboard.

Staying with my grandparents in the holidays was great fun. My Grandmother would cook the most delicious butterscotch pudding and put meringue on top. She cooked in an old fuel stove. My Grandfather ground his own wheat and porridge was produced from this. With lashings of cream and brown sugar on top, I have never had porridge taste so good since.

Nowadays I find food quite different with the many flavours, varieties and recipes from around the world but there will always be memories of wonderful childhood delights.

WHAT WE ATE – A CULINARY JOURNEY

by Pat Fearnley (Member)

As a child in the 1940s my first recollection of the food our family ate was the classic meat and 3 vegetables; in our case, fried lamb chops with home grown carrots, potatoes and peas. Due to rationing, home cooks became inventive, using substitutes such as mock cream and making the most of available resources to create meals.

Sunday lunch was roast lamb with potatoes, gravy and mint sauce, followed some days later by Shepherd's Pie that consisted of leftovers from the roast, put through the mincer, moistened with gravy and topped with mashed potato. The one meal I didn't like was fried beef rissoles or anything with white sauce with parsley. Chicken was expensive so we would only have it occasionally. Roast pork at Christmas of course. My Mother was an excellent cook and nothing was wasted as war time rationing persisted for a couple of years afterwards until about halfway through 1948. Households were also inconvenienced by frequent electricity blackouts when Mum would be cooking dinner at about 6pm and suddenly off went the power. I'm fairly sure it was as a result of not only strikes but also incapacity of the Bunnerong Power Station.

Australians seemed to be stuck for years in the rut of traditional bland, boring English cooking but early in the 1950s, with the arrival of many immigrants from Europe, changes gradually occurred as the newcomers opened cafes and restaurants and actually began to use garlic and herbs and spices to flavour food. Pizza, garlic bread – yes, bring it on!



No Names at Darlinghurst (photo: Fearnley family album)

Pasta at *No Names* in Darlinghurst after uni lectures, and which only closed in 2017 after 63 years, and the *Old Spaghetti Factory* at The Rocks are a couple that come to mind. Households bought refrigerators to replace meat safes, cookbooks other than the Commonsense Cookery book began to appear, the food revolution gained momentum and by the 1960s the name Margaret Fulton became familiar to us and more interesting recipes appeared in the newspapers and women's magazines.

And a dishonourable mention must go to devon rolls filled with cold mashed potato served as hors d'oeuvres. Why did we ever think they were a good thing?

Until I was about 11 or 12 I had never eaten anything other than home cooked food and it was a huge occasion when Dad took us into the city to have dinner at Cahill's, which was part of a chain of restaurants. I can still remember its dessert of sponge cake, topped with ice cream and their famous caramel sauce. Not long after that, we ventured into a Chinese restaurant. To my delight, my Mother embraced the changes, she experimented with dishes like sweet and sour pork and curried prawns that our family enthusiastically devoured.

She also experimented with a dessert intriguingly named Swivelling Swans – which were assembled using a choux pastry. They became a family legend and



Olga's Famous Swivelling Swans (photo: Pat Fearnley)

her Snowballs were always requested by my many cousins. They were little round versions of lamingtons cooked in gem irons and filled with cream.

We took to American cuisine as well. It was the time of drive-in movies and I remember that Mum would fill a billy can with boiling water, add frankfurts, butter some bread rolls and we would assemble them at the drive-in, drenching them in tomato sauce. And cheesecake – what on earth was that? It was wonderful, that's what it was and I became known as the Cheesecake Queen at our family BBQs, indulging in my and my father's sweet tooth and accumulating dozens of recipe books.

I became quite venturesome in my food choices and open to trying new things like avocados, olives, balsamic vinegar and hoi sin sauce, even, once only, in Noumea, snails. Other items of food bring back instant memories, such as Bombe Alaska which was the dessert at my first wedding, prawn rolls at Doyles Watson's Bay on a



Sunday outing, seafood cocktails that I still make today, my Crème Brulee that my daughter claims is better than she's ever had in a restaurant. It's great to think back on how Australia's tastes developed over the years to a time now when every nationality's cuisine can be sampled, but I'd better stop here as I'm beginning to salivate.



JOURNAL CONTRIBUTIONS – COPY DEADLINE

Please submit copy for the December 2025 journal as soon as you have it available but the deadline is **Saturday 1 November** – preferably by email to the Editor at bbfhs_eds@yahoo.com.au. Copy may also be left in the Editor's folder at the Centre, handed to the Editor or a committee member at a quarterly meeting or posted to 184 Gannons Road Caringbah South NSW 2227. Please include your name and state if you want any materials returned.

THE FOOD WE USED TO EAT

by Sally **Johnson** (Member)

In my childhood years, food was simpler. Our family ate a traditional country diet based around meat and three vegetables. There was less variety than we enjoy now, and almost everything was cooked at home. Food was very seasonal and very locally sourced.

I was brought up on a sheep and wheat farm near Albury. We ate a lot of mutton. My sister Catherine told me recently that she thought we had a roast six times a week: tea on Monday to Friday and lunch on Saturday. I reminded her that our Catholic family didn't eat meat on Fridays so it must have been only five times a week. And that it was never lamb. A leg of lamb wouldn't be big enough for our family. When my youngest sister Elizabeth was born in 1964, we became a household of ten for a few years until Grandma died in 1967.

Mutton featured in other meals too. Breakfast was often lambs fry or chops and gravy. Shanks were only used for soup. There was always a pot of soup on the wood stove, bubbling away with the meat, vegetables and pearl barley. It would be topped up with extra liquid for a few days. Dad always got the meat. For variety, sometimes the mutton was boiled and served with white sauce.

Mutton was supplemented by occasional rabbits, Murray cod or redfin if the fish were biting, and duck during duck season. Not everyone liked duck, but Mum had a few tricks up her sleeve when serving it out. She said there was a choice of chicken or duck. There was enough chicken for anyone who wanted it but there was also duck. Chicken was generally a special occasion meal: Christmas, Easter and birthdays. On Friday we ate smoked cod with white sauce and the usual vegetables, tuna casserole, spaghetti with tinned tomatoes.

We usually had a house cow for milk. As the milk cooled the cream settled in a thick layer at the top of the billycan or milk jug. As a result, a lot of our desserts were milk based: custard, rice pudding, bread and butter pudding, flavoured junkets, and home-made ice-cream. These were served with preserved fruit, apple pie, sago, roly-poly pudding or steamed puddings. A large dollop of cream accompanied everything.

Scones were common, especially if the bread bin was running low and cream was plentiful. Our scones were the smooth soft flaky variety made with cream, not butter. They were often made when the cream was starting to sour. We ate them with plum jam and cream, but also they would be part of a meal with cold mutton, tomatoes and cheese, which we still enjoy today.

Produce was always seasonal. Winter vegetables were only available in

winter, stone fruits only in summer. In winter we ate oranges and mandarins from our own trees. Susan reminded me that Dad ate an orange every night after tea.

In the summer we climbed into the large trellis that covered our back path to feast on grapes. Green grapes were nearest the gate and red grapes closer to the house. There were also watermelons and rockmelons bought by the bootload from a farm stall on the roadside outside Wodonga. We all have memories of the juicy watermelon dripping from our chins as we ate it in the backyard.

We went on family day trips to Stanley near Beechworth to buy apples by the case. Choices were limited. We usually had Jonathans or Red Delicious for eating and of course Granny Smiths for cooking.

We foraged for large black mushrooms on our property and fished for yabbies in the dams with a small piece of meat tied onto a length of string. The mushrooms were cooked in a saucepan and added to meals as a side or served on toast. The smell filled the house for weeks. I don't think we ever caught enough yabbies to make a meal; they were more of a novelty.

We were four miles (6.4 km) from our nearest town, Howlong, but we still had some home deliveries. Cliff **Dunstan** the local baker delivered bread from his van several times a week. Our order was usually some combination of two sizes of unsliced white loaves. A small was the size of a family loaf and a large was double size - two loaves baked in a long tin. When the two loaves were broken apart to reveal the soft interior, sometimes it was still warm, and sometimes it was partly hollowed out before it reached the kitchen.

There were also visits from Jimmy **Dinn**, Mr Dinn to us kids, a Chinese market gardener who delivered fresh seasonal vegetables and a small range of other grocery items. He had a market garden at South Corowa, 13 miles (21 km) away. I don't remember how often he came, maybe every fortnight or so, but always on a Friday. That meant that Friday was a good day to be home from school. Mr Dinn sat on a large trunk in the back of his big blue truck while helping Mum and Grandma select from his range. At the end of the shopping, he would open the trunk which was where he kept the best goods – lollies.

Other produce was sourced from friends and neighbours and shared freely when it was plentiful. Excess fruit was preserved in Fowlers Vacola jars or made into jam. Our kitchen cupboards were filled with home-made tomato sauce, pickles, chutney and jams.

A lot of staples were bought in bulk. I especially remember the large sugar bin we had at floor level in the kitchen cupboards. It held the contents of a full sugar bag. We used a lot of sugar. In addition to the preserved fruit and jam-making there was a lot of baking: a variety of cakes and biscuits and extras every

day during shearing season.

Another cupboard held the large square tin of honey supplied by the beekeepers who had hives on our property near the river. The tin was about 4 gallons (18 litres). For everyday use the honey was decanted into a large Fowlers Vacola preserving jar.

Food began to change significantly with the arrival of the first supermarkets in Albury in the mid 1960s. Australian versions of international meals began to



Preserved Fruits in Fowler's Vacola Jars (photo: mysliceoflife.com.au)

appear and in 1974 Mum joined the move by attending a series of cooking classes with the intention of introducing some variety into our meals. That's when we started to enjoy recipes such as beef stroganoff, Chinese dinner and a range of casseroles. We also discovered new desserts such as refrigerated cheesecake.

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The British Newspaper Archive at <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> is similar to *Trove* newspaper coverage here in Australia, except that it is **not free** to the general public. However, for Family History Botany Bay members it is **free at the Research Centre**, accessed via our paid subscription to the *FindMyPast* website. There are now over 90 million British newspaper pages that have been digitised and indexed and it is expected that an estimated 70 million more pages will be added in the next five years. Note that it is possible to search the Archive at home using the website address above to see a snapshot, but you will not be able to access the full article. What information can you find about your British relatives?

A Wells/Shaw Family Reunion will commemorate the 200 years wedding anniversary of convicts Thomas **Wells** (*Baring 1*, 1815) and Martha **Shaw** (*Brothers*, 1824) on the weekend of 12 and 13 September, **2026**. Thomas and Martha settled in Lower Portland Head, and their union produced eight children most of whom married and had large families. They plan to hold the celebration at the Female Factory in Parramatta where Martha lived in 1825 until her marriage to Thomas. For more details, please contact Beverley Murray at bafiggis50@gmail.com.

The Australian Catholic Historical Society has launched a YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@AustralianCatholicHistoricalSo>. It features videos of talks given to the Society and to other audiences, plus historical newsreels on Catholic events and personalities going back to 1920, documentaries, and fictional representations of Australian Catholic life.

Glen Innes & District Historical Society present four great new exhibitions in their Land of the Beardies Museum: *What's On Downunder*, *Communications*, *Beauty is only Skin Deep* and *The Grey Street Buildings and Their History*. Free cup of tea and biscuits, activities for the children, level access at rear – a really comprehensive large museum, open daily 10am - 2pm.

They have **extensive family and local history resources** – make an appointment, if possible, but when you are in ask for the Research Staff anyway, or you can email research@gleninneshistory.com.au and they can do it for you.



WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

is available at the Research Centre.
Please phone 9523 8948 to make arrangements.



Engadine Physical Culture group (left side) (Photo: Bain family album)

WHO DO YOU THINK THEY ARE?

by Helen **Bain** (Member)

I have been going through some old photos and came across this one from 1959 of the Engadine Physical Culture group which was held in the Engadine Congregational Church. In those days before the new Church was built it was more of a just a multi purpose hall.

My sister and I sat down one day to go through the 44 faces and came up with at least 20 names. The lady on the far right was our pianist. Our teacher, Miss **Scrivener**, isn't in the photo. I'd be very pleased if any member can confirm and add some more names. My email is helenbain88@yahoo.com.au



Engadine Physical Culture group (right side) (Photo: Bain family album)

- L-R Back Row: Joy Secombe, ???, ???, ???, Helen (Booth) Bain, Barbara Bower, ? Fleming, ???, ???, ???.
- Third Row: ???, ???, Lynette George, ???, ???, Carol McKenzie, Lynette Stamford, ???, ???, Judith Lundberg, ???, Beryl Wilson.
- Second Row: Gay Platt, Wendy Fry, Wendy Garlick, ???, ???, ???, Christine Lieber, ???, Anthea Booth, ???, ???, Judith Hampton, Jenese Bower
- Front Row: Sue Dennis, Janice Farlow, ???, ? Fleming, Joanne Lonregan, ???, ? Taylor, ? Taylor, Margaret Hampton



THE SAD AND VERY SHOCKING DEATH OF FIVE-YEAR-OLD HENRY WILLIAM BRACKEN

by Janet **Kendrigan** (Member)

The following sad story comes from the *Warrnambool Standard* newspaper, published Saturday January 19, 1889. Henry William **Bracken** was the second son of John Bracken who was the brother of my great grandmother Catherine **Ross** (nee Bracken) who was therefore Henry's aunt. He is my 1st cousin, twice removed.

THE FATALITY IN BANYAN STREET THE INQUEST VERDICT OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH

An inquest was held at the Warrnambool Court-House yesterday by the district coroner, Mr G.D. **McCormick**, concerning the death of the child, Henry William Bracken who was killed on the previous day.

A jury was empanelled consisting of: Messer's J. **Greening** (foreman), W. **Fletcher**, Walter **Davies**, J.P. **Arnoldt** and Michael **Coffey**. The jurymen first proceeded to view the body, which was lying at the parents' residence in Timor Street. On returning the coroner addressed a few remarks to them, pointing out that they were called on to hear evidence with regard to the death.

It seemed that a wagon was being driven through the streets when the deceased attempted to climb on the near hind wheel – the driver being on the other side and as the wagon moved on the child fell and was killed. From inquires he had made he did not suppose it was anything but an accident.

Evidence was then given as under: Dr. H.L. **Miller** said – I have viewed the body of the deceased, having been called in at a little after two o'clock on Thursday afternoon. The boy was dead when I arrived, and the body was lying on a bed in his mother's house. He was a healthy child of about five or six years of age. The head was very much smashed the upper part of the skull being broken off from the lower part and only kept together by the skin at the back. A large portion of the brain was missing, and the greater part of the remainder was reduced to a pulp. There were no other marks on the body. The injuries I have described were such as would be caused by the wheel of a wagon going over the head. In my opinion the cause of death was injury to the brain.

William **Barker** said – I am a mason. The deceased is my stepson, and he would have been five years of age on Monday next. I last saw him alive about 12 o'clock on Thursday, and I did not see him till after the accident.

Fred **Carnell**, a little boy seven years of age, was next called, and his statement as under: I was with the deceased on Thursday afternoon at between one and two o'clock. We were in Banyan Street and going down the cutting to get to the beach. We met Henry **Saunders** driving a wagon and Alf Bracken, [Henry's brother], said to him, "Give me a ride?" Saunders said, "Yes, jump up." Harry Bracken (the deceased) then climbed up on the hind wheel, and the wagon was then standing still. The man was standing on the road when we asked him for a ride. The wagon was loaded with potatoes. When the man had put on the brake he got into the wagon and drove on. Harry Bracken was on the wheel opposite to the side on which Saunders got up. Deceased commenced to climb up after the man got onto the wagon, but just before he started. I don't think Saunders could see Harry Bracken from where he was sitting. When the wagon started to go on Harry fell off the wheel, and immediately afterwards I saw him lying on the road with his head all smashed. I was on the other side of the wagon. To the foreman – I heard Alf Bracken ask Saunders to wait till we got up, and he replied, "I have no time".

Alfred Bracken, a boy of six years of age, made the following statement – "The deceased was my brother, and I was with him when he met with the accident. I saw a man driving a wagon in the cutting and asked him to give me a ride. He said, "Jump up." My brother tried to get up on the back wheel as it was in motion, and he fell off, and I saw the wheel go over his head. When I saw my brother climbing on the wheel I called out to the driver, "Wait, wait," but he did not reply. He could not have seen my brother from where he was sitting."

The jury expressed a desire to hear Saunders' statement. The coroner said that Saunders need not give evidence unless he liked. The latter, however, came forward, and said he wished to give evidence, and on being sworn he said – My name is Henry F. Saunders. I am a farmer residing at *Southern Cross*. I was going down Banyan Street with a wagonload of potatoes at about half-past two on Thursday and driving two horses. There were 25 bags of potatoes in the wagon. Before I got to the cutting, I saw a boy whom I believe to be Alfred Bracken sitting on the tail of the wagon. I stopped the horses when a little way down the hill for the purpose of putting on the brake. After I had done this Alfred Bracken (who had jumped off) said, "Give us a ride." I replied, "Jump up." He said, "Well, hold on." I replied, "I can't hold on till you get up." Just as I said this, I heard a crash under the wheel and some of the boys screamed.

I instantly pulled up and saw the deceased lying on the road on the off side of the wagon, with his head crushed. I was sitting on the near side driving. I had not previously noticed the deceased. After the accident I picked him up and carried him to his parents' place, which was pointed out to me by the boys. I afterwards went to the jetty and on getting my horses out I came back to give information to the police. I did not hear anyone call out, "Wait wait."

This concluded the evidence, and the coroner said it bore out the view which he first formed that it was unfortunately a very sad accident.

It appeared that Saunders was driving along, and as was very often the case, the boys came up to get a ride, and he did not notice the little fellow climbing up the wheel. There was a discrepancy between the statements of the two boys, who, however, had given their evidence very well and clearly. One of them, Alfred Bracken, said the deceased tried to climb up while the wagon was in motion, but the other boy, Fred Carnell, says he attempted it when the wagon was stopped. It seemed to him that the first-name's version was more likely to be correct, as he was nearer to the deceased than the other witness.

It was for the jury to decide whether anyone was guilty of criminal negligence, but the evidence of the boys went to show that the driver could not see

the deceased at the time of the accident. Alfred Bracken said he called "Wait, wait," but the driver could not hear him. Even if he had heard it, they were not to presume that everyone driving in the street was to stop when a little boy called out for him to wait.

The Coroners' Verdict at the Inquest was thus: "That deceased on the 17 January 1889 at Warrnambool died from injury to his brain caused by being accidentally run over by a wagon drawn by Henry Saunders, Signed: George D. McCormick, Coroner 18 January 1889.

What a shocking sight for these small boys, seven-year-old Fred Carnell and six-year-old Alfred (Henry's older brother), to have witnessed. Also to then tell what they saw to a courtroom full of people, Henry William Bracken is buried in Warrnambool Cemetery.



Henry Bracken's grave, Warrnambool Cemetery (photo: Ron M, Find a Grave member, memorial ID: 217208263)



SURVIVOR SYNDROME

by Glen O'Connor (Member)

Have you ever wondered what the odds were of you being born? The process of procreation over the previous known generations alone gives you odds of one in many trillions. Added to this are the historical events such as wars, diseases and personal choices which further extend the odds by a few million. I have read that the probability of you being born is the same as 2.5 million people rolling a trillion-sided dice at the same time and each coming up with the same number.

When researching my family history, I was aghast at the number of historical events that my direct ancestors were exposed to, with any one of those events easily capable of snuffing out my lifeline. Here are some examples.

My 3 x great grandfather John **O'Connor**, born in Ballyhaise, County Cavan, Ireland in 1783 was a soldier in the 11th Regiment of Foot (the Devonshire Regiment). In 1811 the regiment was being relocated from Guernsey in the Channel Islands to Gibraltar in two transport ships. In terrible weather one of the transport ships sank with only 23 soldiers surviving.

The following year the regiment fought under the future Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War in Portugal and Spain against Napoleon's armies. The regiment led the fighting in the Battle of Salamanca where they achieved battle honours in the victory. Out of a thousand soldiers, only 71 were left unwounded.

The regiment was exposed to further fighting during the war. As well, many soldiers succumbed to illness and disease. John was eventually given a medical discharge and pension on account of his severe asthma from dusty marches and general debility. To make my lifeline even riskier his son, also named John and my 2 x great grandfather, joined the regiment when he was 14 years old.

In 1838 the regiment was sent to Quebec to put down an uprising in the Canadian colonies. Although the fighting was not particularly severe, the harsh wintry conditions resulted in large numbers of casualties from frostbite and exposure. John managed to survive long enough to be recalled.

John, with his wife Ann, arrived with the regiment in Sydney in 1846, having sailed up from Hobart to put down a rebellion over pay and conditions by officers of the 99th Regiment of Foot based in Sydney. Not knowing what the outcome would be, the 11th marched up George Street from the quay with bayonets fixed and ready to attack their fellow soldiers when ordered. Luckily, sense prevailed and a battle was avoided.

Showing the perils of ocean travel, my 2 x great Grandfather William **Lattimore**, sailed with his wife as assisted immigrants to Sydney in 1838. Their

small ship travelled in company with a much larger ship also carrying assisted immigrants to Sydney. A ferocious storm in the Bay of Biscay off northern Spain hammered the two ships. The larger ship sank with the loss of all lives.

Another 3 x great grandfather William **Rees**, was a publican who ran the Mitre Tavern in a run-down area of Southwark, London. In an outbreak of cholera in 1832 this area was particularly hard hit. William and his wife Hannah died within a few days of each other leaving three orphan sons. How the sons survived is amazing as children were far more susceptible to the disease than adults. The middle son, George Rees my 2 x great grandfather, came to Australia during the gold rush. He and his family managed to survive life on the primitive goldfields around Mudgee and at Lambing Flat before he became a publican at Beechworth in Victoria in time to have known the Kelly family.

Another ancestor, my great grandmother Cecilia **Gerathy**, was 10 years old when she fell down a deep well on a rural property at Cathcart in the Monaro region. The water depth was well over her head but she kept her head above the icy water by holding onto weeds. No-one knew she was there. Her father later went looking for her and heard her cries. He lowered himself down by a rope which he tied around both of them but they still had to wait for further help to get them out.

My grandfather, Joe **Hely**, was an ambulance driver during the First World War. Ambulance drivers and stretcher bearers suffered appallingly high casualty rates as they were inevitably at the front lines bringing back the wounded. Somehow Joe managed to survive the fighting in Belgium and along the Somme River in France although he was badly gassed at Bullecourt. At Villers-Bretonneux in August 1918 his ambulance was the only one in his unit still functioning after fierce fighting during the Battle of Amiens. When his unit was stood down, he volunteered his ambulance to help other units move wounded soldiers under heavy shelling. His later award of the Military Medal was no doubt well deserved but his cavalier attitude to the lives of his future offspring was a worry, at least for me.

My own father joined the army and later the air force during the Second World War and served in the islands north of Australia including the notorious Tarakan. He survived many an ordeal but put himself at huge risk when he rushed into a burning building that housed a large amount of munitions which inevitably exploded. No, he was not rescuing anyone from the inferno, he was retrieving his shirt which had his two-up winnings in the top pocket.

I have an abundance of direct ancestors who encountered disease, accidents, injuries, even bushrangers but they survived when many of their siblings did not. You can add to this my own scrapes and near escapes from perils in my early life. And yet my circumstances are not that much different to those of anyone else. We are all survivors despite the odds being hopelessly stacked against you.

All of this makes you a very special person. Trouble is, so is everyone else.

BBFHS INTEREST GROUPS

by Barbara **Barnes** (Interest Groups Coordinator)

To all members, long timers, new why not give an interest groups are available to give your Family Trees and to with suggestions by fellow discussion and interaction also assists the Society's for community enjoyment. We yours! Please feel free to contact a coordinator for further information.



members and those in between, group a try? These smaller research assistance with break down brick walls participants. The during a group's session function to be a social hub all love stories. Let us hear

The group coordinators are:

Irish Interest – Elizabeth **Steinlein** (care of info@botanybayfhs.org.au)

Scottish Interest – Jean **Campbell** (jeanhcampbell47@gmail.com)

Writers Interest – Leonie **Bell** (LeonieNB65@gmail.com)

Family Tree Maker for Windows and Macs –

Pam Heather (pamheather@gmail.com)

DNA for Family History – John **Levy** (j.levy@bigpond.net.au)

Technology Interest – Jennie **Fairs** (fairsj@gmail.com)

UPCOMING PROGRAM

IRISH INTEREST:	Saturday 23 August 2 – 4pm
By ZOOM	Saturday 22 November 2 – 4pm
SCOTTISH INTEREST:	Saturday 11 October 2 – 4pm
At the Research Centre	Saturday 13 December 2 – 4pm
WRITERS INTEREST:	Thursday 25 September 1.30 – 3.30pm
By ZOOM	Thursday 27 November 1.30 – 3.30pm
FAMILY TREE MAKER	Thursday 26 August 1.30 – 3.30pm
FOR WINDOWS & MACS:	Thursday 25 November 1.30 – 3.30pm
By ZOOM	

DNA FOR FAMILY HISTORY: Saturday 27 September 1.30 – 3.30pm
 By ZOOM Saturday 29 November 1.30 – 3.30pm
TECHNOLOGY INTEREST Saturday 1 November 2 – 4pm
 By ZOOM
ENGLISH FOCUS ONE DAY SEMINAR: Saturday 18 October
 At the Research Centre

NOTE: Session dates are organised months in advance, so members are advised to check the latest details on our Events Calendar at www.botanybayfhs.org.au or see your fortnightly BBFHS eNEWS. You can book and pay the \$5 fee to attend an interest group meeting at <http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/payments.html>, preferably 24 hours prior to the meeting.

annie@acornfamilytrees.com.au

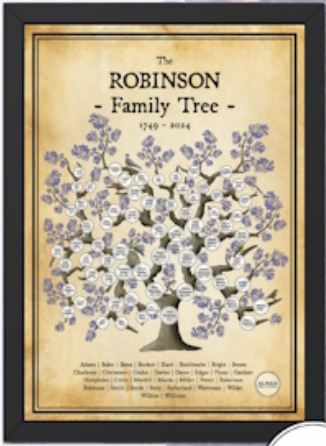
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PLEASE MENTION *THE ENDEAVOUR* WHEN CONTACTING

TELLING GYMEA'S STORY

by Kim **Hatherly** (Sutherland Shire Historical Society)

I was already hooked on — and a decade into — unravelling my own family history when, 30 years ago, I became curious about the families who pioneered my home district of Gymea. Who were the founding settlers? When did they arrive? Why did they come? Where did they live? What did they do when they got here?

While I was Gymea Bay born and bred, I could claim no earlier connection with the area — but I knew several older residents who could. As I sat and talked with them, making notes from the memories they shared, it became apparent that Gymea was far from the modern, post-war suburb many assumed it to be. My interviews with the 'old timers', plus written memoirs I discovered in the library's Local Studies collection and published in the Sutherland Shire Historical Society's Bulletin, set me up with a long list of names, places and events to begin researching.

Pre-internet, it was the era of placing entries in the GRD¹, snail-mailing leads (enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelopes for replies), spooling microfilm through, and flipping microfiche in and out of bulky readers. The then-Archives Office of NSW still had its City Reading Room at Circular Quay. In the then-Land Titles Office at Queens Square, an assistant threw his hands in the air when I casually enquired about Sutherland Shire land records and exclaimed "Oh, Holt-Sutherland!" (I would come to understand why!)

I started filling a ring binder with lists, notes, cuttings, letters, document copies and photos. The 'Gymea' folder sat on the bookshelves with my other family history folders, occasionally for years at a time as competing life events interrupted research, but at other periods regularly taken down to add updates when fresh sources and new access to records opened up.

With the advent of the internet came subscriptions to *Ancestry* and *Find My Past*, email contact with the descendants of Gymea pioneers, digitised record collections accessed on home computer, history-related websites, social media groups and – possibly the most significant development of all – the creation of Trove.² I could confirm some of the old timers' memories, or correct misunderstandings, with newly-available documentary evidence. Many early Gymea characters started to feel like my own family, so thoroughly had I traced their fortunes and so invested had I become in their stories!

I discovered that when Gymea's first permanent settlers arrived in 1886 they took up 99-year leases on land stretching from Kingsway to The Boulevarde, between Manchester and Sylvania Roads. They cleared scrub and erected fences,

built weatherboard cottages, dug wells, planted grape vines, set stone fruit trees and established bee hives. Three nights a week they crossed on the Tom Uglys ferry with horse and cart to deliver their produce to the city markets by 5.00am. In the 1891 census just 25 people can be identified as residing at what is now GyMEA, growing by the next census to around 90. The pioneers had emigrated from Germany, Italy, Mauritius, Ireland and England.

Initially my work was genealogy-based – all the skills and resources acquired in my personal family history research came into play in drawing up biographical portraits of the early GyMEA families, and identifying intermarriages and connections that often helped explain the families' relocation to the area. Before long, however, it became clear I'd need to expand my understanding of land records, because the unusual leasehold system of land tenure which prevailed in the now-Shire accounted for almost all GyMEA arrivals before 1901 and a large majority well into the 20th century. Since the Holt-Sutherland Estate leases had not been digitised, there were many trips to the old Land Titles Office³ at the northern end of Hyde Park and the new Land Registry Services office at the southern end, to obtain hard copies. Learning how to search for, identify and interpret these leases explained the lands department officer's earlier rolled eyes!

A diverse collection of arrivals emerged from the records. Experienced orchardists, vigneron, butchers and dairymen were joined by inner city escapees new to rural life who adapted with varying degrees of success. The daughter of a Maitland mayor, a member of the NSW Upper House and the Metropolitan fire chief built early weekenders. Australia's first female film executive, a Conservatorium of Music founding professor, former railwaymen, military nurses and prominent business people settled permanently. A renowned newspaper editor and a pioneering electrical engineer grew up at GyMEA. A champion jockey retired there and a once-highly successful poultryman departed under a cloud.

Having uncovered so many previously unknown residents and seeing how their lives and interactions created the communities of GyMEA and GyMEA Bay, the obvious final step was to share their stories in a community history. After all, what is a community if not a collection of families whose lives have intersected for a time? *The GyMEA Story: the history of GyMEA and GyMEA Bay* was published in 2025, based on research drawn from the holdings of National and State archives and libraries, the Shire's Local Studies and Historical Society collections and the records of GyMEA's own community organisations, plus newspaper accounts, land records, oral histories, interviews and personal memoirs. Most of the 300+ illustrations come from private family collections, never before or rarely seen.

Readers with personal or family connections to GyMEA or GyMEA Bay are welcome to visit <https://thegyameastory.weebly.com> or email gymeapast@icloud.com for information on ordering the book.

REFERENCES

1. Keith A Johnson and Malcolm R Sainty's Genealogical Research Directory was published annually between 1981-2007
2. Trove, the National Library of Australia's project to digitise and make freely available newspapers, journals, gazettes, maps and other historical documents, was launched in December 2009 and currently contains more than 14 billion digital items
3. Land Titles Office till 2000, then Land and Property Information (LPI)



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THE SHEARER, MY GRANDFATHER, ALEXANDER COBDEN

by Sandra **Holst** (Member)

There was much conjecture surrounding the shooting death of my grandfather, Alexander **Cobden**, on 5 September, 1927. He was thirty-eight years old.

Alexander had still been living with his wife, Alice Myrtle and three daughters in their small cottage in Broad Street, Wagga Wagga and left for work on that crisp spring morning, in his motor car, to a property in nearby Tarcutta. He was working as a shearer at the time, at *Possum Plain*, however he had spent many years working and learning the mechanics of farm machinery on a large sheep and cattle property called *Belmore Station*. It was here that he developed his passion for the motor car, and I wonder why he eventually ceased working on the station, which was owned by his sister, Sarah's in-laws, the **Cheney** family. As it was shearing season though, shearers worked in farms wherever they were needed. The Riverina district was also experiencing a harsh drought in 1927 which no doubt impacted agricultural industries and the subsequent prospects of employment.



Alexander Cobden's brother John and his family at the Wagga Wagga Show in 1912, 'the shearer' is sitting on the ground at the front of the carriage. (photo: Holst family album)

Alexander drove out of town as the sun rose behind him, the tufts of grass on the side of the road still wet with dew as he pulled the car to a stop. The alarm was raised when he did not arrive at work that day or return home in the evening.

A newspaper article in the *Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser* stated that after he had been reported missing, a Constable **Collins** of Tarcutta Police conducted a search near his abandoned car and found his body approximately 200 m away in the bush. He had died of a gunshot wound to the head. Alexander often snared possums and had been warned by a Tumbarumba policeman to cease as it was illegal. However, despite this caution, he persisted. His body was found at a place called Mates Gully which is where he often snared possums. Following investigations into his death, the family were told that he either took his own life or accidentally shot himself while climbing a fence. However, immersed in shock and grief, Alexander's large, extended family were not convinced of either theory, strongly suspecting the Tumbarumba policeman of foul play. Family letters held by my mother tell how they continually harassed the policeman until he was finally transferred to another region.

I would suggest that it was improbable Alexander would be snaring possums on the way to work and not on the way home. I also find it improbable that a policeman would shoot a 'possum snarer' at close range to the head. On the other hand, I find it possible that a rifle could have gone off in the direction of his head whilst climbing a fence. The sixteen-page dossier on the inquest into his shooting, which I obtained from the New South Wales Attorney General and Justice Department, states that his bank passbook showed no money left in his account after paying a bill for twenty-three pounds, a large amount of money which was possibly a payment on the house at Broad Street. The lengthy statement from the attending doctor indicated that due to the placement of his body when found and the angle of the gunshot wound striking his head, he was '99% sure' that Alexander did take his own life.

In Alexander's defence, there was a statement from his sister, Elizabeth **Galvin** pleading that he was "in good spirits" when she saw him the day before his disappearance. He was of a "cheerful disposition and seemed healthy (although he said he had been unwell the previous week) and was of temperate habits and made no threats to take his life". The family had been a little distracted and concerned at the time however, that their beloved mother Mary Jane, was gravely ill in a nearby hospital with a respiratory condition.

Within the Attorney General's report, there were two lists of Alexander's possessions that police had collected from his car and the shearing shed in which he was working. As well as the myriad clothes, tools, razors and tobacco, there was

a bottle of 'Dewitt' pills and a tin of 'Doan Ointment'. As the pills are used for muscular aches and the pain of neuralgia and the ointment is for dermatological conditions, I presume that he lived with chronic medical issues. I can only imagine the sadness my grandmother must have felt as she collected her husband's belongings from the police station. It broke my heart to see her tiny signature, 'M. Cobden', at the bottom of each list, verifying receipt of the items.

Possibly not wanting to lay any shame on the family name or indeed accept that he could have taken his own life, Alice Myrtle and her three daughters continued their lives believing that Alexander was the victim of a shooting accident. This is the story that my mother, Nancy Jean told us but because she was only eighteen months old at the time, she had no recollection of her father.



MARY DAVIS, *LADY PENRHYN, 1788*

by Christine Levy

Mary Davis was my 5 x great grandmother through my maternal grandfather – Victor Roy Dwyer. Roy was the son of Tilly Norris, daughter of James Norris. James' mother was Mary Ann Crabb, whose father James Crabb had married Charlotte Bishop, the daughter of Mary Davis (First Fleet, *Lady Penrhyn*) and Thomas Bishop, a Royal Marine Private (First Fleet, *Friendship*).



Mary Davis was born in Diddlebury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, England about 1761. On 12 March 1785, at the Lent assizes at Shrewsbury, Mary was convicted of breaking into the house of John Wills on 12 November, 1784 and *stealing a copper tea kettle to the value of 4s (shillings) and that, Joseph Owen received the goods knowing them to be stolen. On the same day, Mary, Ann, Joseph Owen and his wife Margaret burgled the house of Mary Burton and "feloniously did steal" a calico petticoat 3s, a linsey apron 2s, a linen handkerchief 1s, one cloak 6s, a pair of leather pumps (shoes) 3s, a pair of plate shoe buckles 2s, a pair of copper shoe buckles 6d (pence), and a silk hat 2s. Total value 23 shillings and 6 pence.*

Having been found guilty, she was sentenced to be hanged but was reprieved to seven years transportation on 28 December, 1785. After a stint in Newgate Gaol, Southwark, Mary was transported on the First Fleet. The *Lady Penrhyn* left Portsmouth on 13 May, 1787 carrying 104 female convicts in overcrowded conditions; it was outfitted to carry 70.

The First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay 20 January, 1788 and six days later they had disembarked at Port Jackson, Sydney Cove on 26 January, 1788.

Within 10 months of her arrival, Mary Davis was calling herself Mary Bishop, having taken up with Thomas Bishop, a Royal Marine Private. In March 1790, a pregnant Mary was sent to Norfolk Island, where her daughter Charlotte was born. After Thomas was discharged in late 1791, he went to Norfolk Island, having received a land grant of 60 acres at Grenville Vale. In March 1793 he relinquished the land and, with Mary and Charlotte, returned to Sydney. In June 1793 he was granted 110 acres at Hen and Chicken Bay but in December, 1793, he died. This land was called *Bishops Farm* and Mary sold it to brewer James **Squire** in 1794.

In 1800, Mary was employed by Governor **King** as housekeeper at Government House in Parramatta, receiving £20 a year – an excellent sum for a woman in those days. King had probably known Mary when he was Lieutenant Governor of Norfolk Island. In 1809, both Mary and Charlotte received 30 acre land grants at Bringelly, and Mary a town lot in Parramatta which she held until her death.

In 1828, Mary was the housekeeper of Joseph **Martin** in Parramatta. Her grandson Alexander Crabb lived with her.

Mary remained very close to Charlotte and lived with Charlotte's family at Kurrajong when Charlotte married Richard **Shrimpton** and then John **Pentley** and then Frederick **Allsop**, apparently to help Charlotte with her nine children. She died on 1 January, 1839 at Kurrajong, aged 78, and was buried at St Peters Church of England at Richmond. The grave was unmarked but when Charlotte died in 1851, she was interred with her mother. The First Fleet Association added a plaque in 1993 commemorating Mary.

***Roses from the Heart:** a collection of bonnets made by BBFHS members in memory of the female convicts, including their ancestors, transported to Australia, and their unsung contribution to our nation..*



BBFHS RESEARCH CENTRE AND LIBRARY

by Jean **Campbell** (Research Centre Coordinator)

The Research Centre first opened in August 2006. At first, it was open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays and 41 members were on Volunteer Centre duty each month for that year.

In 2025 there have been 36 members on Centre duty, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Research Centre is open on some Saturdays during the year as listed in the eNEWS. Until year's end, the Research Centre will be open from 10am to 1:30pm on the following Saturdays:

- **6 September** followed by in-person meeting in the PH Community Centre
- **11 October** followed by Scottish Interest Group
- **6 December** followed by in-person Meeting in the PHCC
- **13 December** followed by Scottish Interest Group

There have been a few building problems during the year. The double Fire Safety doors onto the veranda have been an issue for a while. There is now an opening bar on both doors, which work correctly. The other issue was getting into the building using the keypad on the outside wall. BBFHS has its own code that has to be entered. That has finally been working correctly too.

Six new computers were bought and installed this year, as the previous computers were having problems. We still have the following subscription sites: *Find My Past (and 1921 census)*, *Ancestry*, *The Genealogist*, *British Newspaper Archives*, *Biographical Database of Australia*, *Internet History Resources*, *Sydney Morning Herald Archives 1955 to 1995* and *John Grenham's Irish Resources*. Also added this year was *Newspaper Archives*, which covers newspapers worldwide. The ScanPro computer has been updated and is working correctly.

Also remember we are a Family Search Affiliate Library, which has access to FamilySearch's digital genealogical collections that are only accessible through a FamilySearch centre and not online at home.

We are still getting a lot of donations of Family History books and magazines. Next time you're in the Centre, see if any of them interest you! Quite a number of books have ended up on our Library shelves. Thank you to all who have donated material.

The NSW&ACT Association of Family History Societies is again holding this year's State Conference, hosted by the Illawarra Family History Group in Fairy Meadow. As well as in person it will be hosted on ZOOM on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September. This will be held in our Research Centre, both days and costs our members \$5 for both days. Please see the eNEWS for further details.

FIZZY DRINKS

by Colleen **Passfield** (Member)

Perhaps some readers may remember childhood days when a fizzy drink was a treat and Australia had a thriving local, soft drink industry and Marchants and Shelleys dominated the soft drinks market in Queensland and New South Wales. In the post World War Two days, the market was dominated by overseas operators and the local manufacturers were absorbed and disappeared. More recently, small independent companies have revived old time flavours and, despite health advice to reduce sugar intake, sugary drinks are experiencing a revival and nostalgia triggers childhood memories.

In Sutherland Shire, Berts Soft Drinks is a family operated soft drinks business that was established in the Shire in 1968 but can trace its roots back to 1893 when the Shelleys soft drinks business was established in Broken Hill. Despite the aggressive campaigns and takeovers in the post WW2 period by major companies behind Coca-Cola and Pepsi, the **Shelley** family have managed to maintain a presence in the local market place.



Berts Soft Drinks, 47 Alexander Road, Taren Point (photo: John Levy)

The most recognized soft drink brand in the world is Coca-Cola which was invented in 1886 in Atlanta, Georgia by a pharmacist John Stith **Pemberton**. Badly wounded in the American Civil War, Pemberton had been trying to develop a medicinal beverage to be sold through drugstores as pain relief for headache. Satisfied with a new product, he took a jug of syrup to Jacob's Pharmacy where it was sampled, pronounced 'excellent', mixed with carbonated water and placed on sale as a soda fountain drink. It was named Coca-Cola because of its two main

ingredients (coca leaves and kola nuts) and was immediately successful. In 1892, American business man, Asa Griggs **Candler** purchased the Coca-Cola formula and brand and formed the Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta and, by 1895, Coca-Cola was being sold nationwide. First imported into Australia in the early 1900s and in 1938 the Coca-Cola Company began production locally in a small building on the corner of Crescent and Dowling Street, Waterloo, New South Wales. By 1939, when WW2 broke out, plants were operating in a number of locations around Australia. Sales were slow as the drink was unfamiliar to most Australians but a decision by the president of the Coca-Cola Company, R.W. **Woodruff**, changed everything. He decided that the product should be available to all US service men and women wherever they were and whatever the cost. The US South Pacific headquarters was located in Brisbane and the factory began running 24 hours a day and was also supplying Australian men and women serving in the Pacific theatre.

In the post-war years, sales of Coke, as it became familiarly known, continued to grow and, by 1950, bottling franchises were granted to many soft-drink companies across Australia. An American advertising agency set up an office in Sydney to aggressively promote the drink and the brand became instantly recognizable. British Tobacco (Australia), which later became Amatil, began acquiring bottling franchises from smaller, local businesses and eventually securing the sole bottling rights for soft drinks in Australia.

In 1964, Amatil bought out Shelley & Sons, a family operated Marrickville based company with connections back to a soft drinks manufacturing business that was established in 1893 in Broken Hill.

Born in England in 1853, John Augustine Moore **Sheehy** arrived in Adelaide in 1857 with his parents and a younger sister. He worked in a cordial factory in Adelaide and, after his marriage in 1878, to Ellen **Higgins**, changed his name to Shelley. He and Ellen had 10 children, including two boys. Matthew (1879-1951) and his brother John (Jack) who worked with their father until his death in 1927 and the business was broken up.

Matthew took his share and, with his son Bert, left Broken Hill and headed, on his motor bike, for Sydney. They rented a small factory in Marrickville and set up a soft drinks business known as Shelley and Sons. Matthew brought the rest of his family to Marrickville where they rented a cottage in Roberts Street. All of Matt's four sons became involved in the business with John becoming manager under Matt's supervision, until Matt's death in the 1950s.

The business kept expanding and a 2.4 hectare site in Murray and Smidmore Streets was purchased and a new factory built. Shelley and Sons acquired other businesses and a second generation began working for the business including Arthur, Matthew's son. He started at the factory, aged 15, as a mechanic's assistant

and later worked in the engineer's department where he learned to weld and basic engineering.



*Original bottle capping machine
and original upright boiler -
Shelleys Cordial Factory,
Broken Hill
Sulphide Street Railway and
Historical Museum, Broken Hill
(photos: John Levy)*



Bert, Ernie and Fred made the soft drinks and Arthur moved up to the syrup room. Their father, Matthew, insisted that the recipes had to be memorized and nothing was written down. Until Amatil bought the company in 1965, it was not known that only five people knew the formulas – Arthur, his brother Denis and their three uncles. They gave Amatil the formulas but knew they had enough knowledge themselves to manufacture soft drinks.

Bert and Fred did not want to sell the business but, hit with a tax bill for \$30,000, they were outvoted by their other three siblings and the sale proceeded. In 1967, Arthur and Denis realised that their prospects were limited if they stayed with Amatil and approached their father, Bert, and asked if he would back them financially to stay in the industry. They had not been part of the negotiations with Amatil and had not signed anything to stop them starting up in the same business. Word came back to them that if that stayed in the southern suburbs, Amatil would not worry too much about them.



*Shelley & Sons, Marrickville, early 1950s
(photo: <https://www.facebook.com/Bertssoftdrinks>)*

The brothers set up a company and named it Berts after their father and it became a family affair with Arthur, Denis and their two sisters' husbands, John and Peter, also involved. Their father and mother, Mary, would often drive to the factory and have lunch with them. Bert died in 1979 and Mary died in 2001 and they were buried at Woronora Memorial Park.

In April 1968, the Shelley family purchased land in Alexander Avenue in Taren Point and started building a 13,000 square metre factory. Everything inside the factory was Australian made except for the bottle labeller, brought from overseas because none were made here. The first Berts Soft Drinks bottles came off the production line in October, 1968 and by the early 1980s they were supplying shopkeepers and had depots in Liverpool and Wollongong. They then decided to start doing contract packaging.

Currently the Berts Soft Drinks name continues through sales direct to the public and vendors (wholesalers) who supply small businesses. The business still follows some of the traditional recipes dating back to 1893 and is one of a few independent soft drink manufacturers in Sydney. Berts Soft Drinks is now, in 2025 managed by the 5th generation of the Shelley family.

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- ABC Landline: Bottling nostalgia: The Rise and fall of Australia's old-fashioned soft drink industry by Pip Courtney



Berts range of soft drinks and mixers
 (photo: <https://www.facebook.com/Bertssoftdrinks>)

BBFHS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

<https://www.youtube.com/@BotanyBayFHS-1>

Each month a short video of family history interest is uploaded to our new YouTube channel for you to enjoy and learn from. Please remember to subscribe and to give our videos the thumbs up.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM EDGAR SHORTER, 1810-1880

by Helen **Bain** (Member)

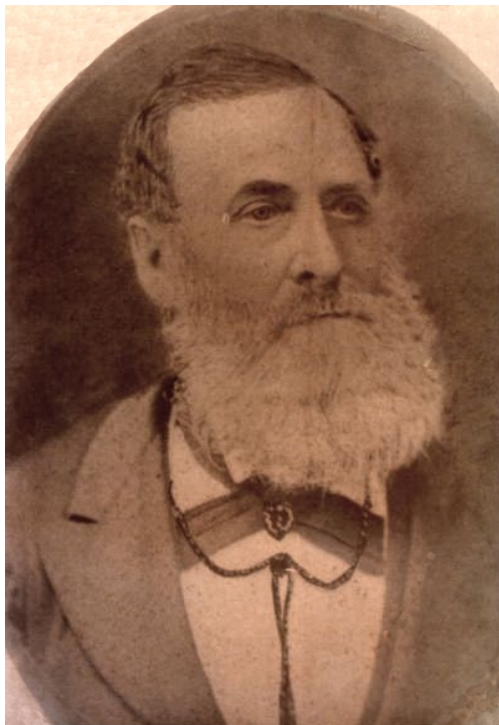
William Edgar **Shorter** was my great great grandfather. He was born in Great Yarmouth, England in 1810. Living in the centre of a town steeped in sailing tradition, it was not a surprise that a seaman's life appealed to him. At the age of 14 he was sent to the Royal Naval Asylum, where boys aspiring to be officers in both naval and merchant ships were educated. From there he was indentured as an apprentice officer and sailed with Captain Thomas Oldfield from 1824 to 1831. His indentures were duly signed and certified as satisfactory in 1835 and he visited Sydney as an officer on the barque *Patriot*.

After a voyage to Mauritius and other ports, he returned to Sydney in 1835 and decided to stay after he met Emma **Ashton** who, with her sister Helen, had set up a business at 12 Hunter Street, Sydney, trading as H M & E Z Ashton, Tobacconists.

And, on 21 March 1836 he married Emma Zeller Ashton, daughter of Thomas and Sophia Ashton, at her family home by the Rev **Garvey** of St Andrews Scots Church, Sydney.

The first three of William and Emma's 17 children did not survive childhood. They were living in Cumberland Street, Sydney, close to where the southern end of the future Sydney Harbour Bridge is located. At that time the area was a place of high infant mortality. It was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that Sydney child deaths were at a rate higher than that of some European cities.

Once they moved their home to *Rose Vine Cottage* in George Street Parramatta, most of their children survived.



William Edgar Shorter
(photo: Bain family album)

William worked for the Steam Packet Co. and captained the packet steamers *Rapid*, *Kangaroo* and *Australia* in the Parramatta River trade until late 1855. From there he worked his way through the ranks to become Deputy Shipping Master in Sydney Harbour and then to Shipping Master. He was later Commissioner for Affidavits and Taking of Oaths on Naturalisation on Foreigners and Justice of the Peace in 1880. He retained this latter position until his death in 1880 at his home on the corner Forbes and Liverpool Street, Sydney. Emma predeceased him in 1873 at the age of 54.

William discouraged his sons from a sea-going life, with most becoming members of various branches of the legal profession. This was possibly due to the death of his fourth son John Kimbell Shorter, who went to sea and died in Hong Kong. His youngest child, Arthur, had a short time at sea on a whaling expedition but was eventually persuaded to become a solicitor, articled to his eldest brother Tom. Consequently Arthur became a lawyer though a rather half hearted one.

Arthur Ashton Shorter was my great grandfather. Because the Shorters had such a large family I have large numbers of DNA matches at *Ancestry.com.au*.

p.s. The Ashtons originally came to Hobart, Tasmania as the superintendents of a ship load of free single females aboard the transport *Strathfieldsaye*. This was initiated by the Government of the day using a Bounty system in an attempt to adjust the gender imbalance in the Colony where women were outnumbered. Fourteen such migrant ships were planned to go to the Colony but that is another story. It is not known how the Ashtons were selected.

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- Trove newspapers. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>
- State Archives of New South Wales, <https://mhns.wa.gov.au/collections/state-archives-collection/>
- Margaret Booth (my Mother) who left me William & Emma's Marriage Certificate.

RESEARCH CENTRE OPENING TIMES

Monday, Wednesday and Friday – 10 am to 2 pm

Please phone 9523 8948 if going in after midday.

Centre closed after 13 December

When researching, please ask for help if you need it – it is why the Centre assistants are there and they love to help.

BBFHS EDUCATION PROGRAM

by Carol **Cronan** (Educator)

It has been wonderful to see so many enrolments for the classes that have been on offer this year and of course we are truly blessed to have so many talented presenters who are willing to give up their time and share their expertise.

At the end of May we had a packed Research Centre for Sue **Hewitt**'s class, Digging Deeper – Mining the Treasures of the Resource Centre. The attendees were in awe at the resources Sue revealed to them and Sue had participants on their feet working through activities to ensure they knew where to find these hidden gems. These treasures have been sitting in the centre for many years and go largely unknown by our members and yet contain a wealth of information for us family history seekers. The class was so successful that Sue ran it again on July 29.

John **Levy**'s class, An Introduction to DNA, saw eight very enthusiastic students keen to understand the fundamentals of their DNA results. As always John, with great clarity and patience, led us through the basic science behind the results and how to make sense of them. His willingness to spend individual time with each of us in the class was most appreciated.

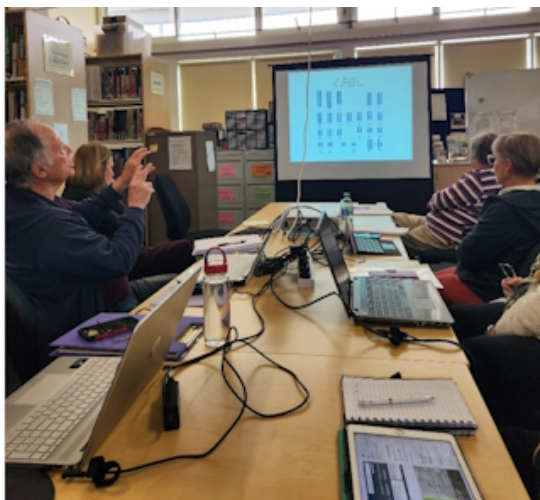
I would very much welcome hearing from anyone who would like to assist in organising or delivering a class or who has any ideas for topics to be presented. Any one on the committee can steer you in my direction.



Sue Hewitt's Treasures class (photo: Carol Cronan)



Sue Hewitt's Treasures class



John Levy's DNA class

(photos: Carol Cronan)



NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members. Please use your membership to attend meetings, interest groups, classes and the Research Centre (and please ask for help if you need it).

1976	Barry Moscrop	Cronulla
1977	Lynne Lewis	Caringbah
1978	Olive McLaren	Taren Point
1979	Anne Comber	Rockdale
1980	Alan Jenkins	Woronora Heights
1981	Keryn Jenkins	Woronora Heights
1982	Corey Grosvenor	Sylvania
1983	Andrew Britton	Burraneer
1984	Sandra Powell	Cunjerong Point
1985	Ken Diment	Kareela
1986	Gail Diment	Kareela
1987	Gerald Uncle	Miranda

THE LIFE OF A BRUSH MAKER

by Leonie Bell (Member)

Brush maker John Crocker **Taylor** looked around his workshop at his Exeter premises on The Bridge Street, surveying his hand-crafted brushes, brooms and mops with pride. A few dozen brooms were stacked neatly against the wall. Small brushes hung from wooden pegs. The air smelled of freshly cut timber from the broom handles, mixed with the mildly earthy and nutty scent of sorghum.

He had a choice of several crops for his broom fibres; rice straw, rice root, millet, piassava (an imported fibrous Brazilian palm), grass, sedge, and even twigs. John preferred broom corn sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*).

John was known as a brush maker, but there were other types of broom maker. In the countryside, the ‘broomsquires’ specialised in besom brooms constructed from heather or birch twigs, tied to a pole with a strip of ash wood. Besom brooms were not only used on floors, but were a brewer’s tool, used to whisk fermenting beer, whereas John’s products were intended for household use sweeping floors, or cleaning and scrubbing household items.

As he took delivery of a sheaf of dried sorghum stalks for his new brooms, he noted the pleasant aroma held no signs of mustiness, indicating well dried crops for the process of broom making.

He grasped a fistful of the stiff stalks, which were about 1 cm at the base but fanned out into multiple thin strands at the top. First, he needed to clean the sorghum by placing it in the cleaning machine. The timber box housed a rotating drum with nails hammered into it. As he fed the sorghum into the machine, he turned the handle to rotate the drum, removing the dirt and seeds.

Then he cut the sorghum into uniform lengths. A dozen stalks were placed on a wooden bench, at the end of which was a large cast iron knife, pivoted at one end, like a paper-cutting guillotine. With a powerful downward stroke the stalks were trimmed efficiently.

Next John turned to the wire winding machine. At the top was a drum wrapped with wire. The drum was rotated using a pedal mechanism. Mounted underneath the drum was a hollow tube into which he fed the broom handle, so that it poked out of the tube at both ends. A screw tightened against the handle to prevent it slipping. About 15 cm from one end, he hammered a tack part way into the broom handle. He pulled the wire down from the drum and over the broom handle, winding the wire around the nail a couple of times to fasten it to the broom shaft. He hammered the tack in over the wire to securely fasten it.

Taking a fist full of sorghum John spread out the fibres around the broom

shaft, underneath the wire which stretched down from the upper drum, placing his hands firmly on the broom shaft on either side of the wire. Using the pedal, he rotated the wire-drum, winding the strong metal strand around the stalks. As he worked, he fed more stalks onto the broom shaft, securing them each time with a turn of the wire. Once there were sufficient bristles on the broom, he gave the wire another half dozen turns around the handle. Finally, he cut the wire, tacked another nail into the shaft, wound the end of the wire around the tack a few times, then hammered it in fully to secure the wire.

John had made thousands of brooms and brushes. After gaining so much experience, he was able to craft around two dozen brooms per day. However, John wondered how much longer his trade would last. Already the Industrial Revolution sweeping the country had begun to make his trade uneconomical and inefficient, as machines were developed to facilitate the processes of broom making. He feared that eventually his skills would be no longer required.

John didn't live long enough to see his craft to become obsolete. He died in 1842 (cause of death 'decline'), aged about 56 years. John Crocker Taylor (Abt 1786-1842) was the second husband of my 4 x great grandmother Elizabeth **Kendle** (1803-1870), who outlived four husbands.

Source: 'Broom making', Heritage Village Museum. Watch their excellent short video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esUkGVeoqqU> on how to make a broom. The museum is located inside Sharon Woods Park in Sharonville, Ohio, USA.



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THE EARLY YEARS IN THE COLONY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

by Rhonda **McKinnon** (Member)

The following snippets were found in the *Australian Women's Weekly Special Bicentennial Souvenir* of January 1988. This edition contained a mock-up of the *Weekly* dated January 1820 where modern day writers used correct dates, people and places but 'took liberties with some of the trivial incidents'. The articles reflect on the social scene and scandals in the colony, remedies to maintain health and wellbeing and some updates of what was happening back in England. The *Australian Women's Weekly Special Bicentennial Souvenir* was donated to BBFHS library by member June **Wilson**, and can be found in Vertical Files Australia Folder.

These are some snippets:

*Elizabeth **Macarthur** Speaks Out* – Is Merino-breeder John Macarthur a 'venomous serpent'..?

The Young Victoria: a future Queen?

*Mary **Catchpole** an obituary* – a convict born 1762 in Ipswich, Suffolk, England.

Where is Justice? Vicars **Jacobs**, Gentleman of Sydney wrote that he did not have a fair hearing from the civil and military authorities of the colony. He wanted to record the harm done to him.

Religious dilemma – 'a fellow officer' wrote 'as a colleague of Surgeon Charles **Carter** of the *Hibernia*, who was accused of misbehaviour by Rev Richard **Hill**, I would point out that in a letter, dated 13 July 1819, Carter said he encouraged the convicts to attend divine service although he did not attend from a dread of catching cold by appearing without a hat.'

Shameful standard – 'Outraged' of Hobart writes, 'it is very well for our Lieut-Gov Mr William **Sorrell** to have enhanced the image of Van Diemen's Land, but what of his own [image]? Here is a man living with another man's wife, while his own wife and family live poorly in Britain. By successfully encouraging the immigration of free settlers, erecting handsome buildings and approving Mr Macarthur's efforts to have settlers improve their flocks, Mr Sorrell has won much acclaim. He speaks of prizes for bettering sheep; but there are no prizes for his attitude to Holy Matrimony. Would that he pursued the standard of fidelity which I share with my wife, mother of my 13 dear children. I am forwarding a copy of this letter to His Majesty's Government.



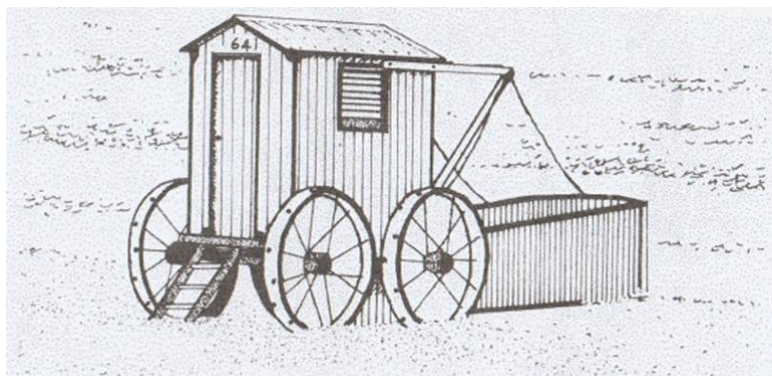
The new look for 1820 is the most flattering with a slim waist is dropped almost to the natural line and the full skirt is balanced by very puffed sleeves and elaborate ruching on the shoulder and bodice. The general shape is an elegant bell. The hat has a wide brim and the ensemble must be completed by a parasol for the proper effect.

A well-dressed man of today wears an elegant dark frock-coat and buff coloured trousers. The single breasted waistcoat has a small pocket to hold a fob and a watch. For travelling, a great-coat and cape of checked wool is added. London society is agog over the excesses of the ‘dandies’.

News from England – Up-to-date reports on events at home.

- Mr Samuel **Ware** designed a fine arcade for Lord George **Cavendish** to be named Burlington Arcade.
- Many of England’s children living in towns have been inoculated against small pox and is said to be less severe.
- Although the poor in England have suffered since the ending of the war in 1815, at no time has the landed gentry been wealthier or more engrossed in their country pastimes. Gambling is now carried on at cricket matches, at cockfights and at horse races along with an astonishing amount of ale drunk by English gentlemen.
- Sea bathing has become increasingly popular and resorts, especially those favoured by royalty. Especially popular is Brighton, visited each year by the Prince Regent who built the beautiful Pavilion there and Weymouth a favourite with the King before his Majesty became stricken by ill health. Bathing machines for the preservation of modesty (small sheds on wheels, in which the

occupants are pulled by horse to the water) were first seen at Scarborough in 1735



Bathing Machine

Collectors' Corner – An expert in antiques and fine furnishings, Mr Peter **Cook** advised Governor Macquarie on the disposal of his household goods prior to his retirement to Great Britain.

The Colony's Most Notable Pugilist – Young **Kable**, was matched against George **Glew** who claimed to be Champion of All England, at Parramatta. Kable proved his worth when he alone toed the mark at the opening of the 26th round. He won a pyrrhic victory, dying from punishment received. We are sorry to recount the introduction to the Colony of Displays of brutal courage.

Going Places – Miss Sarah **Cox**, who worked in the millinery shop of Mrs Elizabeth **Foster**, caused a sensation when she sued Captain John **Payne** for breach of promise. Sarah was represented in court by rising young William Charles **Wentworth**, who pleaded so skillfully that damages of £100 were awarded.

The First Lady of Annandale – Esther **Johnston** could have moved into Government House – Why did she refuse?

Wreck of Stolen Ship found – The wreck of the brig *Trial*, stolen from Watson's Bay, Sydney Harbour in 1816, has been found in a bay some 300 miles (480 km) north of Sydney. There was no sign of survivors so the fate of the convict woman Ann **Shortus**, who was smuggled aboard, remains unknown.

Bunyip Seen – A Bathurst grazier, Mr ES **Hall**, has reported the sighting of a monster in Lake Bathurst, backing up a previous claim by the explorer, Hamilton **Hume**.

Physician's Advice on breastfeeding and when to hire and choosing a wet nurse.

Teething, differing views on lancing the gums to facilitate the passage of each tooth.

For Summer Beauty a sure way to keep your face pale and prevent freckles. Make a mixture of horseradish, sour milk, rain water, lavender, cream, sugar, lemon and grapes. Blend them well together and apply regularly. To keep your hands white and soft, wash with 3 ounces lemon juice, 3 ounces white vinegar and ½ pint white brandy.

Home Hints:

- Fish bones in the throat often respond to a raw egg swallowed immediately.
- Mildew spots can be removed if buttermilk is poured on them and the article is laid in the sun.
- For iron rust, use salt mixed with lemon juice.
- The most delicate parts of a calf's head are the bit under the ears, next the eyes, and the side next to the cheek.

Cabbage tree palm hats – Settlers say they found a number of uses for cabbage tree palm, which so interested Captain James **Cook**. Natives eat the tender green head of the palm and settlers found that when boiled it could be accepted as a very tasty vegetable. The leaves are dried and strands split in preparation for bleaching in boiling salt water. The 'straw', when moist, is four-plaited into lengths from which a hat, said to equal the best imported straw, can be fashioned.

Meeting Place – Men and women who are alone, and desire to find a suitable mate, may advertise their needs in this paper as did Mr G.J.: 'I have been a soldier in the Colony for six years and I feel I will stay and possibly go on the land. I have not found a wife among the convict women. I am now looking for a free settler, aged to 30 years, of impeccable reputation and with the same hopes I have, namely a desire to do well in this new land and carve out, through hard work, a profitable future.' (Write to G.J.)



SEEKING READER'S IDEAS AND INPUTS

Do you have a great idea for something you would like to see in future journals? Have you had a recent good luck story in breaking those genealogical brick walls? What about a tip for other readers – a genealogical clue? A photograph you cannot date? A great new website you have discovered.

Share with other readers!

This article lists the new Library accessions. We remind members that there is a wealth of family history information accumulated over some 41 years in our Library. **Not everything is online!** Check out our library catalogue at <http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/library--research-centre.html>. You may be very surprised at what you find! **Come to the Research Centre and have a look.** Thank you for the donations from those members who are ‘downsizing’.

NEW SOUTH WALES

- The Good Old Days – From Barrington to Harrington and Around the Great Lakes. [AN.LH.2422.2LC]
- Sylvania Back Then – Aspects of Local History. [AN.LH.2224.3LC]
- Grafton and the Early Days on the Clarence. [AN.LH.2460.5LC]
- Wind Beneath his Wings – Lawrence Hargrove at Stanwell Park. [AN.LH.2608.6LC]
- Hawkesbury River History – Governor Phillip, Exploration and Early Settlement. [AN.LH.2756.2LC]
- The Parramatta Cemeteries – St. Patrick’s. [AN.SOU.5.2150.]

QUEENSLAND

- Rockhampton – A History of City & District. [AQ.LH.2422.2LC]
- This El Dorado of Australia – A Centennial History of Aramac Shire. [AQ.LH.4726.1LC]
- Blair Athol. [AQ.LH.4721.1LC]

OVERSEAS

- Pigot and Co’s National Commercial Directory for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire [E.SOU.15.1LC]
- The Parish Chest – A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England.. [E.SOU.3.17LC]
- Tracing Family History in New Zealand. [NZ.GUI.1.6LC]
- A Genealogist’s Guide to Discovering Your Italian Ancestors. [ITA.GUI.1.2LC]

GENERAL

- The Convict Valley – The Bloody Struggle on Australia’s Early Frontier. [G.CONV.HIS.48LC]
- The Convict Colony. [G.CONV.HIS.49LC]

Note: ‘LC’ indicates a loan copy, which can be borrowed; ‘CD’ a compact disc.

Compiled by Janette **Daly** (Librarian)

STUART ROSS WENHAM 1957-2017

PIONEER SOLAR ENGINEER

by Colleen **Passfield** (Member)

From the early days of our history, many curious Australians have become known as problem solvers and many of their inventions have been recognised throughout the world. In many reports of flight disasters there is mention of the black box flight recorder but its inventor, David **Warren** (1925-2010) is not widely known. A list of other notable inventions might include the cochlear implant, WiFi, spray-on skin (remember the Bali bombing aftermath), and the winged keel.



Stuart Ross Wenham

(photo: <https://reneweconomy.com.au>)

In 1974 a world changing project was established at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Professor Martin **Green** assembled a team of young researchers and set up Australia's first solar research lab which would lead to the development of the technology to produce the solar cells on more than 30% of Australian homes. Among the group were three PhD students, Bruce **Godfrey**, Andrew **Blakers** and Stuart **Wenham** described by Green as 'driven, inspired and passionate about the possibilities of pushing the technology to new levels'. In 1983, the team invented the Passivated Emitter and Rear Cell (PERC) a project which changed the course of history by increasing the efficiency of solar cells and established UNSW as a world leader in solar research and innovation. Stuart Wenham deserves the title of pioneer solar engineer.

Stuart Ross Wenham was born at Crown Street Women's Hospital Sydney on 15 July 1957, the son of Russell George Wenham (1918-2003) and his wife, June Ethel nee **Harding**. He grew up in Kingsgrove and attended UNSW graduating in 1981 and being awarded the university medal in electrical engineering. In 1984 he moved to the Sutherland Shire living for many years at Illawong and Menai and before his death at Cronulla.

In a career spanning more than twenty-five years, he became a pioneering

researcher and inventor of solar cell technologies that have been licensed to solar cell makers around the world. These have had a major impact on renewable energy generation. Some of the world's biggest silicon producers have signed agreements with UNSW to use his hydrogen passivation technology in production lines.

Stuart Wenham won many awards for his work. In 1999, with his former mentor, Professor Martin Green, he was awarded the Australia prize for Energy, Science and Technology for solar cell technology. In 2008 he was awarded the **Clunies Ross** Award for 'contributions to solar cell development and commercialisation.' He received the **Cherry** Award at the 34th Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Photovoltaic Specialists Conference in Philadelphia in 2009, the J J **Ebers** Award in 2011 and the UK Institution of Engineering and Technology's A F **Harvey** Engineering prize in 2013 for his breakthrough in hydrogenation.

At the time of his death, Professor Stuart Wenham was the director of ARC Centre of Excellence in Advanced Silicon Photovoltaics and Photonics, also the Director of Academic Studies in the School of Photovoltaics and Renewable Energy Engineering at UNSW. His daughter, Dr. Alison **Ciesla**, is part of the team which, inspired by him, will carry on his work at UNSW.

Stuart was a member of the Menai-Illawong Uniting Church and a well-known A grade tennis player. In September 2017 he was diagnosed with a malignant melanoma and after treatment had hoped to make a full recovery. His condition declined quite suddenly and he died on 23 December 2017. He was survived by his former wife Michelle, his partner Ran **Chen** and son Paul, his daughter Alison and her husband Mike. He was cremated at Woronora Cemetery.

A memorial service was held on 8 January 2018 at Sir John **Clancy** Auditorium at UNSW, Kensington. **Shi** Zhengrong, a PhD student of Green and Wenham in the early nineties, returned to China, founded Suntech Power and became the world's first solar billionaire. Shi, now a Shainghai-based investor and Adjunct Professor at UNSW, described Wenham as 'a great global solar leader who made solar affordable and accessible to everyone'.

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- Newsroom.at UNSW, <https://tinyurl.com/495tet7y>
- Newsroom.at UNSW – Louise Templeton, <https://tinyurl.com/495tet7y>
- Metropolitan Memorial Parks – Woronora Cemetery, <https://tinyurl.com/bd86948t>

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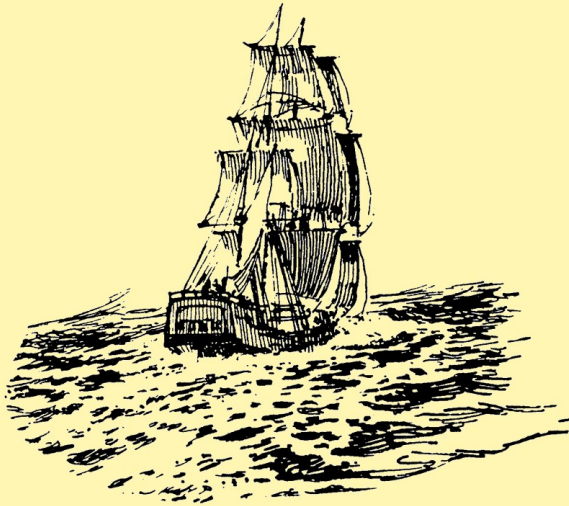
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