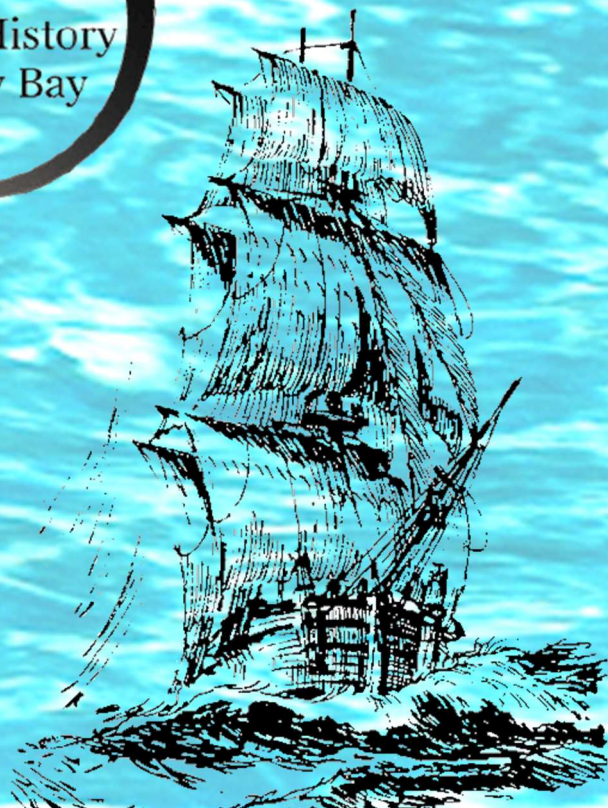
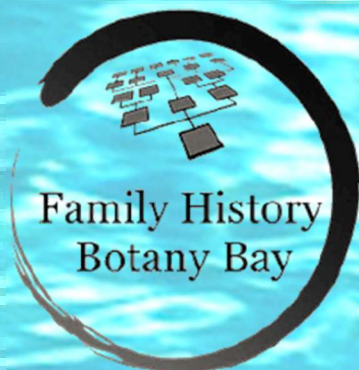




THE ENDEAVOUR

Issue No. 168, September 2026, Price \$6.00, Published Quarterly

ISSN 0814-9828 (Printed), ISSN 2208-3278 (Digital)

FAMILY HISTORY BOTANY BAY

Discovering Your Heritage

Internet: <http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au>

Email: info@botanybayfhs.org.au

Mail Enquiries: The Secretary
Family History Botany Bay
184 Gannons Road
Caringbah South NSW 2229

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2025-2026

President	Jennie Fairs	
Vice President	Richard Linklater	
General Secretary	Anthony Wright	
Treasurer	Brenda Connors	
Ordinary Members	Jean Campbell	Carole Goodyer
	Maree Kirkland	

OTHER OFFICE BEARERS 2025-2026

Editor	John Levy, bbfhs_ed@yaho.com.au	
Tour Director & Assistant Editor	Leonie Bell	
Librarians	Janette Daly	Pamela Heather
	Maureen Murray	Kate Anderson
Webmaster	Pat Fearnley	
Education Officer	Carol Cronan	
Public Officer	Doug Parkes	
Research Centre Coordinator	Jean Campbell,	
	botanybayfhs@yaho.com.au	

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, selected Sat. For bus route 978 & timetable, see: <https://transportnsw.info/routes/details/sydney-buses-network/978/31978>

Annual Membership Fees

From 1 Jul 2025: single – \$45; family – \$60; distance single – \$23; distance family – \$30; membership renewals due 1 July each year.

Research

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

CONTENTS



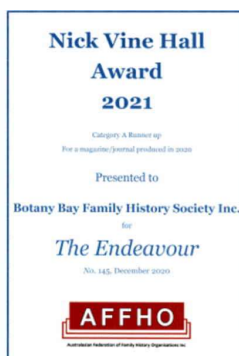
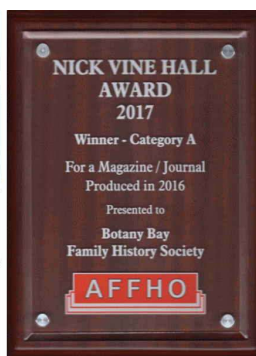
	Page
The Famous Alexander Selkirk	6
Researching Salvationist Ancestors	11
Angels of Mercy, Part 2	20
Margaret O'Neill and her Sampler	30
Three Generations of Publicans	33
Tragic Tales 3. Burials in Woronora Cemetery	40

Regular Features

Calendar	2
President's Page	3
Library Acquisitions	4
New Members	5
FHBB Research Centre and Library	19
FHBB Interest Groups	38
FHBB Education Program	39

Advertisements in this Issue [PLEASE MENTION *THE ENDEAVOUR* WHEN CONTACTING]

NSW & ACT Family History Conference	5
Joy Murrin – BDM Transcription Services	18
Martin's Green Thumb Gardening Services	32
2SSR 99.7FM Sound of the Sutherland Shire	48



CALENDAR



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

- Aug 25** Family Tree Maker Interest Group: 1.30-3.30 pm on Zoom
- Aug 29** Australian Interest Day – Research Centre – presentations TBA
- Sep 5** **Annual General Meeting – 1.30 pm Research Centre. Saturday.** Speaker: Matt Murphy – *Gold: The Remarkable Story of Edward Hargreaves*
- Sep 16** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom,** Topic: *Basics of DNA Testing for Family History*
- Sep 17** Tour – Sydney Harbour Bridge Pylon Museum
- Sep 18-20** NSW & ACT Assoc'n of Family History Societies – Annual Conference – live streamed at the Research Centre
- Sep 24** Writers Interest Group: 2-3.30pm on Zoom
- Sep 26** Irish Interest Group: 2-4pm on Zoom
- Oct 5** Labour Day Public Holiday – Research Centre closed
- Oct 7** **Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.** Speaker: Andy Macqueen – *French Explorer Francis Barrallier*
- Oct 10** Scottish Interest Group: 2-4 pm at Research Centre
- Oct 15** Tour – Richmond History Walking Tour
- Oct 17** Technology Interest Group: 1.30-3.30 pm on Zoom
- Oct 21** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom,** Topic: *Basics of Breaking Through Walls*
- Oct 24** English Interest Day, at Research Centre, details TBA
- Nov 4** **Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.** Speaker: Diane Sillato - *Yells, Bells & Smells: The Anzacs in Malta*
- Nov 7** DNA Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom
- Nov 18** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom,** Topic: *Basics of Source Citations*
- Nov 19** Tour – Museum of Chinese in Australia
- Nov 21** **Irish** Interest Group: 2-4pm on Zoom
- Nov 24** Family Tree Maker Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom
- Nov 26** Writers Interest Group: 2-3.30pm on Zoom
- Dec 5** **Christmas Meeting – Research Centre. Saturday. Panel Discussion with Long Term Members** Time to be advised
- Dec 12** Scottish Interest Group: 2-4 pm at Research Centre
- Dec 16** **Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom,** Topic: *Basics of Sharing Your Research*

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



It was wonderful to come home from overseas and find our Research Centre back to normal operation following the recent closure for the new roof. My thanks go out to the hard-working volunteers who laboured on the project to remove the library and then restock it.

Restocking the library has been a great opportunity to do a complete stocktake of our collection, allowing us to remove outdated books and non-working CDs – especially those whose content is now available online – and to clean up the many duplicated microfiche donated when members have downsized.

The decision was also made to remove the very outdated XP computer. However, like all new computers available for sale today, our new bank of computers does not have a CD player installed. To get around this, we've purchased a portable CD player which will remain permanently connected to Computer 6 for your use.

And although the bulk of our microfiche holdings are now available online through NSW State Records, Ancestry or other subscription sites, there are still plenty of gems worth viewing using the Pro Scan. Did you know we hold microfiche of the NSW Telephone Directory 1889-1926, the NSW Property Identification List (ex-Water Board), a large selection of NSW Electoral Rolls, East India Company Register Records 1808-1851, the NSW Probate Index 1800-1982 as well as a large collection of Australian and Overseas microfiche stored in the filing cabinets at the back of the Research Centre?

Sadly, our Research Centre is very under-utilized even though it contains a wealth of material not available elsewhere. Why not pop in and acquaint or reacquaint yourself with what is available?

For Your Diary:

The NSW/ACT Association of Family History Societies State Conference will be held 18 to 20 September 2026. We will again provide live streaming of the Saturday (10am–3pm) and Sunday (10am–12.30pm) sessions in the Research Centre. If you would like to attend, please have your name added to the Attendees List at the Research Centre.

Jennie Fairs

This article lists the new Library accessions. We remind members that there is a wealth of family history information accumulated over some 42 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’.

AUSTRALIA

- Joadja Creek – The Shale Oil Town and its People 1870-1911. [AN.LH.2575.1LC]

OVERSEAS

- Black Potatoes – The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845-1850. [I.HIS.12.5LC]
- A Letter from Ireland – Stories from your Irish Ancestors, Vol. 3. [I.HIS.1.25LC]
- Researching Irish Land Administration Records. [I.SOU.17.1LC]
- Clans and Families of Ireland – The Heritage and Heraldry of Irish Clans and Families. [I.HIS.1.14LC]
- The Alderman One-Name Project. [E.GUI.6.4LC]

GENERAL

- Tracing Your Army Ancestors – A Guide for Family Historians. [G.MIL.BRI.SOU.26LC]
- Angels of Kokoda. [G.MIL.A.HIS.53LC]
- Heroes of Tobruk. [G.MIL.A.HIS.54LC]
- Unravelling – The Life of Elizabeth Fulloon, Superintendent of the Parramatta Female Factory, 1824-1827. [G.BIOG.7.FUL.1LC]
- Legacy Family Tree, Version 9 Unlocked. [G.COMP.2LC]

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

Compiled by Janette **Daly** (Librarian)

JOURNAL CONTRIBUTIONS – COPY DEADLINE

Please submit copy for the December 2026 journal as soon as you have it available but the deadline is **Sunday 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.

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).

2009	Glenda Lewis	Engadine
2010	Vanessa Hayes	Wareemba
2011	Denise Martel	Kogarah Bay
2012	Jock Martel	Kogarah Bay
2013	Neil Gould	Carrs Park
2014	Helen Gould	Carrs park
2015	Glenda Chapman	Miranda
2016	Kathy Davis	Caringbah South
2017	Mark James	Caringbah
2018	Judith James	Caringbah
2019	Sally Anderson	Geurie
2020	Jeanette Barker	Cronulla



NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc
Port Macquarie

Annual Conference 2026

THE PAPER TRAIL & BEYOND: FAMILY HISTORY IN THE DIGITAL AGE



The Annual Conference will be on 18, 19 & 20 September 2026.

It will be held in Port Macquarie, on the Mid North Coast of NSW, at Panthers, Port Macquarie. A variety of interesting speakers on a number of family history topics has been arranged.

FHBB will again provide live streaming of the Saturday (10am–3pm) and Sunday (10am–12.30pm) sessions in the Research Centre. If you would like to attend, please have your name added to the Attendees List at the Research Centre.

For the program and speakers, visit the Conference website at
<https://www.portmacconference2026.com/>

THE FAMOUS ALEXANDER SELKIRK

by Glen O'Connor (Member)

I occasionally hear of a family historian who has found a famous ancestor shining brightly from a bough in their family tree; or even an infamous ancestor lurking somewhere in the tree's darker shadows. Or unearthed someone with at least an air of minor importance.

Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison was no doubt pleased when he discovered he is a great nephew of Dame Mary Gilmore, the famous Australian poet and social reformer. The English actor Harry Lloyd was probably excited when he found out he is a direct descendant of Charles Dickens, as are other descendants living in Australia. Many people in Australia have claimed to be descended from a British monarch or have other royal connections dating back as far as King Edward I. One study in 2003 claimed that 16 million men living at that time were direct descendants of Genghis Khan.

I've carefully examined all the potential candidates on the stained and mildewed cupboard shelves and in the dank and dusty drawers of my distant family tree and have discovered not a single person of historic noteworthiness. Even the convicts failed to get much of a mention in the local press when they were being sentenced to transportation. None of my ancestors managed to live next door to someone famous, let alone in the same street. They may have seen someone famous but that was as far as they got in the celebrity stakes. Maybe I'm being unkind to them and perhaps there was in fact one or more who brushed up against fame or notoriety.

I've been taken down some wrong way streets before. I had an uncle marry a lady who claimed she was a direct descendant of that distinguished explorer and navigator, Captain James Cook. To be honest, she looked more like Mrs Cook. I immediately opened a new research project at a rate approaching the speed of light, tracking down each of her genetic branches back five generations. Not a Cook to be found, nor anyone remotely connected to Whitby or other places along the Cook trail. So, unless she or a forebear sprang from some past illegitimacy, there was a complete lack of navigational skills.

Luckily, I managed to wed someone who could provide a verifiable connection to fame so lacking in my unfortunate family. I speak of no other than Alexander **Selkirk** (no not my wife, her ancestor). There were a few generations of sons named Alexander Selkirk but the Alexander I'm looking at was the one born in 1676 in the seaside village of Lower Largo in Fife, Scotland, which we happened to visit by coincidence some years ago while driving along the coast

from Edinburgh to St Andrews. Naturally, Lower Largo is now famous as the birthplace of Alexander Selkirk. They even have a statue of him.

Alexander was 17 years old when he married local girl Janet **Small** in 1693. Around 1700 and after a run-in with authorities, he said goodbye to his wife and two small children and joined the exodus of seamen looking to find their fortunes at sea, legally or otherwise.

At the age of 25, Alexander found himself as the navigator and later the master of a 16-gun ship named *Cinque Ports*, which together with a 26-gun ship named *St George*, were under the command of that well-known maritime adventurer, William **Dampier**, a licensed privateer with previous voyages to the Spanish East Indies and the Australian continent under his belt but who had been recently sacked from Queen Anne's Royal Navy for being too piratey.

William clearly enjoyed attacking and looting Spanish and French shipping and towns and it just so happened that in 1703 Britain was at war with both of those countries. The two ships sailed around Cape Horn and up the coast of Chile with the aim of intercepting the *Manilla Galleon*, a large Spanish ship travelling once or twice a year from The Philippines to Mexico with great wealth on board. Along the way, the would-be looters found Spanish ships and coastal settlements to attack, sometimes successfully but mostly not.

The official story is that Alexander got cold feet when he believed his ship was so unseaworthy from the passage around Cape Horn that it would soon sink. When the ship pulled into a small uninhabited island 630km off the Chilean coast for fresh water and other supplies, Alexander said he would not continue to sail in it unless necessary repairs were carried out. The ship's captain had died mid voyage and his promoted replacement, the very young and unpopular Thomas **Stradling**, had by now tired of Alexander's complaints and so dropped Alexander off on the island with some weapons, tools, clothing, bedding and a bible, saying he could try his luck on the island instead. The ship then sailed off, hoping to catch up with Dampier's ship. As it turned out, the *Cinque Ports* fell apart and sank further up the coast. The few survivors of the wreck, including the captain, spent four years in Peruvian prisons before being released and returned to Britain.

An alternative story that passed its way down through my wife's family is that Alexander was the first of the crew to come down with some tropical sickness. Fearing it would spread to the rest of the crew and not knowing its severity, Alexander was quarantined on the island with a promise that the ship would return and pick him up in seven days or so if he survived but this did not happen because the ship was lost. The captain probably had no intention of returning anyway.

In any event, Alexander was most unhappy with his predicament. He stayed close to the coast hoping to see his ship return. He found it very hard living off the shoreline crustaceans, other shellfish, seals and plants while avoiding the constant pounding of the shoreline from the Pacific Ocean. During later exploration inland, he discovered a menagerie of wild animals including goats, cats and birds, as well as rats. After building a shelter, he set about taming the goats and cats. The goats provided him with milk, meat and clothing and the cats kept the rats away. Native fruits and vegetables, such as wild plums and turnips, added to his diet.

Alexander lived in hope that a passing ship would stop at the island looking for fresh water. He frequently climbed to a lookout high among the dead volcano peaks where he had a signal beacon ready to fire. One day, he saw a ship anchored



Alexander's Island Today (photo: Alamy)

off the beach and he hurriedly lit the beacon and clambered down to the shoreline. To his dismay, the ship was a Spanish galleon and he was forced to retreat and hide to avoid capture. A second ship stopping at the island also proved to be Spanish.

After four long and lonely years on the island, salvation finally arrived when two British ships, the *Duke* and the *Duchess*, made a landing for supplies in February 1709. The *Duke's* captain, Woodes **Rogers**, was amazed by Alexander's tale of survival, as was the ship's pilot, none other than William Dampier, who confirmed Alexander's identity. Alexander in turn was amazed that Scotland had merged with England in 1707 to form the Kingdom of Great

Britain, otherwise known as the United Kingdom.

Alexander quickly returned to his privateering life aboard the *Duke* and for a time was second mate and later the ship's master. He returned home to Scotland in 1712 with about £800 in booty. His family had long ago given him up for dead and were astonished when he turned up during a church service wearing gold and fine clothes.

Alexander's ordeal as a marooned seaman gained attention soon after he arrived home. Not only did he publish his own account of his adventures, Woodes Rogers and fellow crew members passed on his story and also gave detailed accounts that were soon published to much acclaim. Alexander had become a celebrity.

In 1719, Daniel Defoe published *The Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (that is in fact the much-reduced title). Clearly, the book was primarily based on Alexander's experience but there were quite a few other survival tales he could also have drawn from. Defoe felt the subject of his story needed a much longer duration on the island and so Mr Crusoe was given a 28 years ordeal.

Alexander and Janet produced a further three children until Janet's presumed death. He then took up with another local girl, Sophia **Bruce**. They were married in London in 1717. Alexander enlisted in the

Royal Navy and was soon serving as an officer on *HMS Weymouth* patrolling the west coast of Africa. Crew members contracted yellow fever after landing for supplies. The fever quickly spread through the ship with many casualties. Alexander died in December 1721 at the age of 45 and was buried at sea.



*Statue of Alexander Selkirk erected at Lower Largo showing his goatskin ensemble
(photo: Wikimedia Commons)*

The island made famous by Alexander was known as *Isla Mas a Tierra* and today is a mere 2½ hour plane ride from Santiago, due west from Valparaiso. It was renamed *Robinson Crusoe Island* in 1966 by the Chilean president, presumably to attract tourists. It has a population now of 800. For some reason, another island in the same archipelago but 180km away, was renamed *Alejandro Selkirk Island*.

There are claims that Daniel Defoe's book was the first true British novel. Whether it was or not, the book certainly helped make Alexander famous.

As a postscript, I discovered that one of my great great grandfathers once ran an American bowling saloon in a tent at the Lambing Flat goldfields next door to a butcher shop run by Frank Gardiner who was sometimes supplied with meat by Ben Hall. Of course, those two were not notorious bushrangers then so I don't know whether this connection really reaches the heights of fame.

REFERENCES:

- *Alexander Selkirk, an Account of His Living Alone Above Four Years in a Desolate Island*. Richard Steele, 1713, <https://tinyurl.com/42dmhrjt>
- *Selkirk's Island: The True and Strange Adventures of the Real Robinson Crusoe*. Diana Souhami, Harcourt, New York, 2001
- *In Search of Robinson Crusoe*. Tim Severin, Basic Books, 2002
- *Two Extraordinary Travellers*. BBC Scottish History, <https://tinyurl.com/3bt927rh>, 2014
- "Remote Possibilities" Chris Moss, The Australian, <https://tinyurl.com/2kt8ka7r>, 2019



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.

RESEARCHING SALVATIONIST ANCESTORS

by Leonie Bell (Member)

The Salvation Army was formed by Methodist minister William **Booth** (1829-1912) and his wife Catherine (1829-1890) in London in 1865 as the East Christian Revival Society, later known as the East London Mission, and formally adopting a military-style organisation as The Salvation Army in 1878. From the outset, social work went hand-in-hand with preaching the gospel to the poor.

Converts John **Gore** (1846-1931) and Edward **Saunders** migrated to South Australia in 1880 and decided to start a Salvation Army Corps (church) in Adelaide. Their first gospel meeting was held under a tree in the Adelaide Botanic Garden. The picturesque pulpit was a green grocer's cart. After some initial success, they appealed to London to send Officers (ministers) to command the work. In 1881 Captains Thomas and Adelaide **Sutherland** arrived in the South Australian capital. Lined up to meet them at the wharf were 68 converts and followers. Thomas would have made quite an impression in the colony in his scarlet jacket (ex-British Army), navy-blue trousers, and spike-topped white helmet, while his wife wore a princess robe-style dress with a small bonnet. They brought with them 12 Salvation Army uniforms. Within 3 years Australia boasted 32 Officers, 12 Corps and 3,600 Soldiers (church members). The work soon spread to Melbourne and to all states of Australia.

Generals (head of the worldwide Salvation Army) are elected by the High Council of The Salvation Army every five years. Australia has contributed two Generals; 1986–1993 General Eva **Burrows**, AC (1929–2015) and 1939–1946 General George **Carpenter** (1872–1948). For a short Australian history and timeline see Salvos Online (See URL below).



General Eva Burrows, 1992
(photo: Salvation Army Museum)

William Booth sent two Salvation Army officers to New Zealand in 1883, Captain George **Pollard** and Lieutenant Edward **Wright**, together with three Australian Salvationists. Between them, they established The Salvation Army in New Zealand. By the end of the year, they had pioneered 11 new Corps and rapidly expanded throughout the country.

Originally The Salvation Army in Australia was governed as a single Australian Territory including Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Java (now Indonesia). In 1921 this split into the Southern Territory consisting of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australian and Tasmania. The Eastern Territory looked after New South Wales, Queensland, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. Later this was broken into additional territories: New Zealand Fiji, Tonga and Samoa Territory, Papua New Guinea Territory, Indonesia Territory. The two Australian territories were reunited in 2019 into the Australian Territory.

The Salvation Army has two Heritage Centres in Australia. Melbourne houses the Army's archives and a museum in the city centre and is best for records covering the Southern Territory. The Melbourne collection heavily focuses on The Salvation Army's ministry during wartime. It also is the site of Australia's first film studio built in 1898, which you can see in situ. The Limelight Department was formed to spread the Gospel in innovative ways using film. In 1900 they launched what is arguably the world's first multimedia show '*Soldiers of the Cross*'. This production toured the country until 1920, using a mix of 200 glass lantern slides, 13 film clips, oratory, hymns and live music. The glass slides are held by the National Film and Sound Archive and can be viewed online. (See URL below)

The Sydney Museum has recently moved from Bexley North to a new home at Auburn and is best for records of the Eastern Territory. The museum features a collection of musical instruments, photos, recordings, uniforms, memorabilia, and even a hand



*The Salvation Army Museum at Auburn
(photo: Leonie Bell)*

embroidered Salvation Army Crest which once adorned the jersey of Founder William Booth. It also has a collection of hundreds of books on Salvation Army history, which are available for researchers to use. Unfortunately, the museum will not conduct research on your behalf, but visitors are welcome to come in and talk to Don Callaghan, the Sydney Museum Specialist, who may be able to give you some pointers in the right direction.

What else can a researcher access? The bad news is that much of the Archive material is subject to privacy laws and Salvation Army policy. They will not provide information about ancestors who were in children's homes or other social welfare homes. The 100-year privacy rule applies to many records.

If your ancestors were soldiers (church members) it's also bad luck because the Army does not possess records of church membership. They do however have two Cadet Registers recording the names of Cadets (trainee officers) who trained in Melbourne from 1898 to 1921. The Punt Road Training Home in Richmond, Melbourne burnt down in 1900, and was replaced by a new college in Victoria Parade. One volume lists Cadets alphabetically, the other lists them by Training Session year. There is currently a project in progress to index the names, the year they entered college, the Corps they came from and their first Corps appointment. The registers contain other interesting information about their birthplace, appearance, health, occupation, next of kin and even whether they played a musical instrument or sang. Whether the museum will release this information to you will be dependant again on privacy laws. You can view the partially completed index at the Auburn location.



*Former Salvation Army Training College, 55 Livingstone Rd, Petersham
(photo: courtesy of The Salvation Army Museum Australia)*

The Sydney Training College was located in Petersham for many years, later moving to Bexley North. Each Training Session from 1921 (the first Sydney session) to 2018, has a file with graduation booklets, photos, and ephemera. The contents of the files vary, and you can enquire at the Sydney Museum (Auburn) regarding these files.

Another museum project has been to index a list of all Corps, both existing and defunct, in the Australia Eastern Territory, with the dates of every Officer appointed to that Corps. Since at one stage New Zealand and New Guinea were in the Eastern Territory you may find limited information about them in addition to NSW and Queensland. The Auburn Museum has computers available for researchers to view the index document. You can find reference to your ancestral Salvation Army Officers' postings with a simple word search of the document.

The museum has a database of hundreds of digitised photos of Salvation Army Officers and historical Corps buildings. Buildings are not known as churches, but as Citadels, Garrisons or Salvation Army Halls.



*Old Salvation Army Congress Hall, Goulburn St, Sydney
(photo: courtesy of The Salvation Army Museum
Australia)*

The War Cry is the official Salvation Army newspaper, which was sold on street corners and in pubs to create income to support the work of the Army, preach the Gospel to the unsaved, announce promotions and Corps appointments, and disseminate information about the Army's work at home and abroad. The content is fairly eclectic. Often names are included, but at other times it may refer simply to 'lads and lasses'. For example, I have an article which clearly refers to the 'Hallelujah Wedding' of an ancestor in Parramatta in 1886, without actually



*Interior Old Salvation Army Congress Hall, ca 1912, Goulburn St.
(photo: courtesy of The Salvation Army Museum Australia)*

naming them. The date and location are corroborated and confirmed by their wedding certificate. A Hallelujah Wedding is a unique Salvation Army event where the wedding vows are incorporated into a normal Salvation Meeting at which the gospel is preached and an altar call made calling sinners to repent.

The War Cry also provides a snapshot of social conditions of the era, particularly in the UK and Irish editions. The UK editions 1875-1989 are now available on the British Newspaper Archive website (available at our Gannons Rd Caringbah Research Centre), together with another early publication the Social Gazette 1893-1909. Since the *War Cry* spreads news of the worldwide ministry you may also find reference to your Australian ancestors. For example, the Melbourne's Prison Gate Brigade ministry is featured with a photo in the UK *War Cry*, 2 July 1884. You can read more about the UK edition in a fascinating blog (See URL below).

The Sydney Museum has pdf copies of all Melbourne and Sydney editions of *The War Cry*, available to peruse on their computers. The format is a series of pdfs for each year, therefore not as easy to search as Trove, so you need to do a word search of each individual document.

The Salvation Army Historical Society produces a quarterly newsletter *Under the Tricolour*. Sydney Chapter Membership is currently only \$10 per year. It holds four meetings per year, usually located at Hurstville Corps, hosting a guest speaker. An Adelaide Chapter meets at Ingle Farm and they also publish a quarterly newsletter. Brisbane also has the Historical Society of Salvationism.

The Australasian Journal of Salvation Army History contains journal articles and a wealth of interesting items.



*Opening of the East Maitland Salvation Army Hall, 1927
(photo: courtesy of The Salvation Army Museum Australia)*

For information about New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa see the Heritage Centre & Archives in Upper Hutt. They hold artifacts, photographs, files, uniforms, *The War Cry*, periodical and historical publications, memorabilia, music and instruments, corps histories. The Centre is open by appointment.

Further afield, The International Heritage Centre comprises two modest museums, one in London opposite the Denmark Hill railway station, and another in Nottingham, at William Booth's birthplace. The London site also houses the reference library and archive. You can access the catalogue online, and a selection of digitised photos and publications, including British Staff Promotions and Changes lists from *The Officer/The Field Officer* periodical, 1893-1913.

There are dozens of Salvation Army Facebook pages showcasing contemporary ministries, but it's tricky to find the historical ones. Follow The Salvation Army Australia Museum Facebook page. (See URL below)

Check out gravestones. Salvationists don't die but are 'Promoted to Glory'. They are sometimes buried in the Independent, Methodist or Baptist sections, but occasionally cemeteries have Salvation Army sections, including Rookwood Cemetery which features some attractive Salvation Army monuments in Carpenter Avenue Zone F. Rookwood is the resting place of John Gore, (Plot: Independent B, Zone F/438). Gore was not only the first Salvationist to preach on Australian soil, but in 1924 was the first Australian officer to receive the Order of the Founder, which recognises Salvationists who have rendered distinguished service.

And of course, finally, Trove is a good place to search for Salvation Army ancestors. Many country and city newspapers carried descriptions of Salvation Army events and meetings. There are numerous accounts of brushes with the law or with grumpy residents who disapproved of their 'raucous' open-air meetings.

RESOURCES

- **The Salvation Army Museum Australia:**
Sydney: 166-170 South Parade Auburn (entry from Park Rd). Open 9-2pm Tuesday to Friday and other times by appointment. Contact them before arriving as they may be unexpectedly closed for the day. Email: Don.Callaghan@salvationarmy.org.au
Melbourne: 69 Bourke St Melbourne. Open 9-3pm Monday to Friday. Email: Barry.Gittins@salvationarmy.org.au
- **The Salvation Army Historical Society**
Sydney Chapter President: Don Callaghan. Postal Address: C/- Rockdale Corps, PO Box 68, Brighton-le-Sands, NSW, 2216. Email: don.callaghan@salvationarmy.org.au
Adelaide Chapter Secretary: President: Roger Allen, 0452 451 146
- **Salvos Online:** <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-story/our-history/>
- **The Salvation Army Australia Museum Facebook:**
<https://www.facebook.com/TheSalvationArmyAusMuseum>
- **The Australasian Journal of Salvation Army History:** AJSASHistory@gmail.com
- **International Heritage Centre (London):** <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/about-us/international-heritage-centre>
- **New Zealand Heritage Centre & Archives:** <https://archives.salvationarmy.org.nz/>
- **Brief History of The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga:**
<https://archives.salvationarmy.org.nz/our-history/>
- **British Newspaper Archive blog:**
<https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2026/04/07/war-cry-salvation-army/>

- **Historical Society of Salvationism.** [AJSA History@gmail.com](mailto:AJSAHistory@gmail.com)
- **National Film and Sound Archive:** Glass slides of Soldiers of the Cross.
<https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/soldiers-cross>
- **Trove Account of the Punt Road Training Home Fire 1900: FIRE AT RICHMOND.** The Argus 1 Oct 1900, p. 7. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article9558084>



joy in family history
JOY MURRIN
family history services

Accredited
NSW Transcription Agent
Since 1995

PO BOX 278, OATLEY NSW 2223
P: (02) 95851187 F: (02) 95851486
E: joy@joymurrin.com.au

Services include:

- ♥ New South Wales
Births to 1912 Deaths to 1982 Marriages to 1962
- ♥ England/Wales
- ♥ Scotland
- ♥ New Zealand
- ♥ Victoria



Secure Online Ordering
www.joymurrin.com.au
Services | Knowledge Centre | Events

<http://www.joymurrin.com.au/>

PLEASE MENTION *THE ENDEAVOUR* WHEN CONTACTING

Your Journal Contributions

All journal contributions – large or small – are welcome. Email your input to bbfhs_ed@yahoo.com.au, leave it in the Editor's folder at the Research Centre or hand it to the Editor or any Committee member at our quarterly meetings. Please add your name and contact details.

FHBB RESEARCH CENTRE AND LIBRARY

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

The Research Centre re-opened on Monday 1 June, after Sutherland Council put on the new roof and updated the building. The building is quite different inside, with new floor coverings in the kitchen, corridor and hall and with painted white walls and doors. New air conditioners have been put into the Research Centre, with different ducting and switches.

Books have been put back on the shelves, CDs and microfiche are back too. The printers and computers have all been updated and all furniture has been put back in place. Thanks so much to everyone involved in this huge movement of resources.

Thank you so much to all the Centre Volunteers, who are back assisting members and visitors. There have been quite a few members calling into the Centre, since we reopened.

We also had some visitors into the Centre from Kogarah Historical Society, who heard about the close liaison between family history and local history and were impressed with all our resources.

After re-opening, we held the **Irish Interest Day** in the Research Centre. That was another successful meeting, with 20 members present, who heard a great variety of information about Ireland and the Irish in Australia. August was Family History month and there were quite a number of events in the Centre. There was an **Australian Interest Day** on Saturday 29 August, which was also very popular. There is one more coming up: Saturday 24 October is the **England Interest Day**!

There is an **updated LIBRARY CATALOGUE online**, available on the FHBB Website. The items are listed in shelf order with the microfiche & CD collection integrated with the books. A Descriptor column has been added to:

- Clarify what the book is about if the title isn't informative
- List major names in the books about families (see also the FH book index in the Members Lounge)
- Show the classification of the item e.g. cemetery records/transcriptions, ethnic group

Our Library Collection is a great asset to members. It consists of over 4000 items, specifically selected for its value to the genealogist and family historian. It includes books, CDs, microfiche, maps, journals and journal articles. We would like to see our members take greater advantage of it. (*Thanks Sue Hewitt*).

ANGELS OF MERCY – PART 2

By Colleen **Passfield** (Member)

Mmilitary nursing in Australia dates back to the Boer War of 1899 to 1902 when nurses from New South Wales and Victoria accompanied Australian troops to South Africa. After Federation in 1901 the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) was formed. It was a reserve organisation which mobilized nurses when war broke out.

During World War I over 2,000 nurses joined the AANS and almost 3,500 served in World War II. During WWI and WWII, women who were not trained nurses joined the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) to work as nursing assistants, ward orderlies and other non-medical tasks. From these, the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS) was formed in December 1942.

After WWII, some AANS nurses and AAMWS members served in the peacetime army and, in 1949 the Royal Australian Nursing Service (RAANS) was incorporated into the Australian Regular Army. In 1951, the RAANS and AAMWS merged to form the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC); serving with distinction in conflict zones and peace operations around the world.

In May 2026, at Woronora Memorial Park, a statue which honours Australian War Nurses from all conflicts, was unveiled. It is located to the left of the main entry gates in Linden Street, Sutherland. It joins other memorials in honour of nurses from the Boer War and WWI.

South African and Great War

Ellen Julia (Nellie) **Gould** was born in Wales in 1860 and in 1884 came to New South Wales to visit relatives. In 1885 she began a two-year training course at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. She became matron and superintendent of Sydney Hospital in 1891 where her skill as an administrator and teacher was recognised. In 1899, she was asked to help form an Army Nursing Service Reserve attached to the New South Wales Army Medical Corps and in May 26 nurses were sworn in with Miss Gould as Lady Superintendent.

In 1900 Nellie Gould, Penelope **Frater** and Julia Bligh **Johnston** arrived in South Africa as part of a group of 14 members of the newly formed New South Wales Army Nursing Service (NSWANSR) to join with the NSW Army Medical Corp. Lady Superintendent Nellie Gould was their matron and Sister Johnston her deputy. Nurses from other colonies soon followed until about 60 Australian nurses were scattered in small groups throughout South Africa.

On arrival, members of the NSW group were split up and sent to various British makeshift hospitals where the conditions were appalling and British military prejudice, disease and heavy workloads made life difficult. In early 1902, Gould, Johnston and Frater were posted to 31 British Stationary Hospital in Transvaal which was situated on a bare hillside. Many of the 2,000 troops stationed there were sick from typhoid and yellow jaundice as well as those who were wounded or victims of accidents.

All nurses who served in the full war were awarded the Queen's (Victoria) South Africa Medal and the King's (Edward VII) South Africa Medal.

Later in 1900 the three women returned to Sydney and continued in the peacetime Army Nursing Service and could be called up for duty in time of war. When war broke out in 1914, each enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) where Gould was now classified as a Principal Matron and was sent to Cairo to set up No2 Australian General Hospital to receive casualties from Gallipoli.

Working in France in April 1916, Gould was awarded the Royal Red Cross for her distinguished nursing service. Her health began to suffer from her heavy workload and she returned home in 1920 and was awarded a war service pension.

Ellen Gould was an excellent nurse, an able administrator and highly professional woman of vision and energy. She had a great influence on the development of professional nursing in Australia and was involved in founding the Australian Trained Nurses. After her retirement, she lived with her good friend Julia Johnston in Miranda, NSW, died in hospital in Neutral Bay and was privately cremated in 1941.

Julia Bligh Johnston was born in 1861 on Spring Hill Farm near Windsor, NSW, began nursing at the Hawkesbury hospital but completed her formal training in 1888 at Launceston General Hospital. In 1899 she was recorded as Senior Sister at Sydney Hospital and chosen by Nellie Gould to be her deputy in the NSW Army Nursing Service Reserve beginning a lifelong professional and personal association.

For service in WWI Johnston was awarded the Royal Red Cross medal, the Anzac Star 1914-15, George V Great War medal 1914-19, the Victory medal and a Palm Leaf (Mentioned in Dispatches). Sister Julia Bligh Johnston died in June 1940. She was cremated at the Northern Suburbs crematorium and ashes placed in the AIF Memorial Wall at Woronora.

Penelope Frater was born in 1869 in the New England area of New South Wales. In 1891 she began training to be a nurse at the Sydney Hospital where she worked in both the Men's Medical and Surgical wards. When Nellie Gould

formed the NSW Army Nursing Service Penelope joined them. Gould had been in charge of Penelope's nurse training at Sydney Hospital and probably all of the recruits that Nellie accepted had trained under her there.

When WWI broke out, Sister Frater enlisted and gave her address care of her sister and mother at Oaklands in the Sutherland Shire. She sailed to Marseilles to be part of the British Expeditionary Force at the 3rd Australian General Hospital and in 1917 was appointed Head Sister, returning to Australia in October 1918. Penelope lived in Sutherland and died in December 1939 a few months after the outbreak of WW2. She was cremated at Woronora Memorial Park.

Another WW1 nurse was Edith Blake (1885-1918) who died while serving. Born in Sydney, Edith trained at the Coast Hospital (Prince Henry). She tried to enlist twice, unsuccessfully, in the AANS. In 1915, she was one of a group of Australian nurses selected for service with the British Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing service.

On 26th February 1918, Edith was aboard the *HS Glenart Castle* sailing down the Bristol Channel for France when it was torpedoed by German U-boat UC-56. Of 182 people on board only 29 survived. All the nurses on board, including staff Nurse Edith Blake were declared to have drowned. She was the only Australian nurse killed by enemy action in WW1 and on a hospital ship that should have been protected under the terms of the Hague Convention of 1907.

World War 2

The AANS was mobilised again when war broke out in 1939. In December 1942, to incorporate the growing number of VADs, the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS) was formed. About 8,500 women joined the service and served in Australia and overseas including Borneo, Bougainville and New Guinea and many died while serving.

Some AANS nurses and AAMWS members served in the peacetime army and joined with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan in 1946. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, many casualties were evacuated to hospitals in Japan where Australian personnel cared for them.

In 1948, in recognition of their service to Australia, the title 'Royal' was granted to the AANS and in 1949 the RAANS was incorporated into the Australian Regular Army. In 1951, the RAANS and AAMWS were merged to form the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC) and adopted the Latin motto Pro Humanitate, meaning 'For Mankind'.

Many army nurses have lost their lives during service. During WWI, at least 29 AANS nurses and 3 VAD members died while serving. During WWII,

72 AANS nurses, one VAD and 8 AAMWS members died. The lives of some of them and others who survived have been commemorated at Woronora Memorial Park. Opened in 2015, the Woronora Military Memorial, located to the left of the main entry gates off Linden Street, Sutherland, records the names of military figures who served our country in times of war and peace. Plaques here record the names of Ellen Gould, Julia Bligh Johnston and Penelope Frater.



Plaques for the three nurses in the A.I.F. Memorial Wall at Woronora Memorial Park. The current lettering is almost unreadable on site but has been restored with AI (ChatGPT) (original photos: John Levy)

In May, 2026, a new Military Nurses Memorial, to honour all Australian War Nurses in all of Australia's conflicts, was unveiled. The new memorial statue recognizes all Australian nurses who have served our nation with courage, compassion and dedication.

In 2016, a life-size bronze statue was unveiled by Marie Bashir, former governor of NSW, to honour Matron Alice Cashin and all nurses who have served their country. For almost 80 years her grave in Woronora Memorial Park had remained unmarked until 2015 when reported by Fairfax Media. A niece realised that Cashin might be her great-aunt and found her medals which were donated to the Anzac Memorial. The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association officially dedicated and unveiled the Alice Cashin Memorial to honour the WWI heroine. The statue is located near Alice's grave in RC Monumental Section 1, Grave 332.

Alice Cashin (1870-1939) was the first Australian to be awarded a Royal Red Cross plus the bar for bravery during WWI. She trained as a nurse at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney and moved to England to pursue her career. When war broke out, she signed up with the British Red Cross and in 1915 joined the Queen Alexandria Imperial Military Nursing Service. In 1917 Alice was Matron on the hospital ship *HMHS Gloucester Castle* which was torpedoed in the English Channel. Alice refused to leave the sinking ship until all her 399 injured men and 33 nurses were safely on lifeboats.

Alice also served in France and Egypt, where she was mentioned in dispatches, and from 1917 was Matron in charge of a 400-bed military hospital

in England. She returned to Australia in 1919 and lived in Marrickville where she became a member of the Marrickville Anzac Memorial Club where she was extremely popular and known as the Queen of Marrickville. Alice died in November 1939 and after a Requiem Mass at St Brigid's Church Marrickville was buried at Woronora Memorial Park.

Lavinia Jean Russell (1909-1942) was born in Hurstville and trained at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst, then trained in midwifery at Crown Street Women's Hospital in Surry Hills. In January 1941 she enlisted in the AANS for overseas service. In July Russell was attached to the 2/10th Australian General Hospital (2/10 AGH) and later the 2/13 AGH which arrived in Singapore in September.

As the Japanese advanced heavy casualties were pouring in and the situation was becoming desperate and the evacuation of the AANS nurses was proposed and on 10 February, despite their protests, the nurses began to leave. On 12 February Jean and the remaining nurses were ordered to leave and were ferried out to the *SS Vyner Brooke* a small coastal steamer.

On 14 February as the boat neared Sumatra, it was attacked and sank near Bangka Island (further details below). Some nurses escaped but Jean was reported as missing believed drowned, her body never recovered. On the gravestone of her parents in Woronora Memorial Park, her death is recorded 'Drowned near Sumatra 14th Feb. 1942 Aged 32 years' (Plot RC V 0063, Find a Grave memorial ID: 181020488)

On Australia Day, 2001, the Hurstville City Council dedicated a flag and erected a plaque in memory of two local heroes who served their country with valour – Private John Hamilton VC and Lieutenant Lavinia Jean Russell

During WWII, some 5,000 Australian nurses served in the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Britain, Asia, the Pacific and Australia. Seventy-eight died while serving near the front lines, on hospital ships and in prisoner of war camps. According to the Australian College of Nursing, some died through accident or illness but most as a result of enemy action or while prisoners of war.

The sinking of the *AHS Centaur*, and the attack on the *SS Vyner Brooke* were particularly costly. In each case only one nurse survived to testify at the investigations and war crimes tribunals in the post war period.

Australian Hospital Ship Centaur

AHS Centaur was a merchant vessel, built in Scotland on the Clyde River, and launched in 1924, employed on a run between Fremantle, Western Australia, and Singapore and placed under government control when war broke out in 1939.

After the Japanese entered the war and bloody fighting in Papua during 1942, *Centaur* was converted into a hospital ship equipped to carry 252 patients from Port Moresby to the mainland. Around her freshly painted white hull was a thick green band broken in places by large red crosses and, at night, the vessel was brightly lit up. *Centaur* kept her civilian crew but her medical staff were from the Australian Army Medical Corps and women from the Australian Army Nursing Service.

Having completed two trips with patients from Port Moresby to Brisbane and replenishing in Sydney, on the afternoon of 12 May 1943 *AHS Centaur* steamed from Sydney bound for Cairns with 332 aboard, mostly doctors, nurses and army medics from the 2/12th Australian Field Ambulance, injured and recovering patients and ship operators. Before dawn, on 14 May, while most people were asleep, *Centaur* was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine off Moreton Island, Queensland. The torpedo struck the port side hitting the oil fuel tank which ignited a massive explosion and a fire quickly began to roar across the ship as water rushed through the gaping hole in her side. Many of those, not killed in the explosion or fire, were trapped as the ship started to go down bow first and then broke in two. There was no time to send a distress signal as, in just three minutes, *Centaur* was gone.

Of the 332 aboard only 64 survived and were discovered 36 hours later, despite being close to land. Of the 18 doctors and 11 nurses on board, only one nurse, Sister Ellen **Savage** survived. Although badly injured, Sister Savage gave what help she could to the injured survivors, keeping their spirits up when ships and planes passed without seeing them. For her 'conspicuous gallantry' she was awarded the George Medal.

Media coverage led to public outrage, as attacking a hospital is a war crime under the 1907 Hague Convention. When Japan denied responsibility, several later exchanges were made but lack of progress saw the British Government inform the Australian Prime Minister in 1944 that no further communications would be made. No one was ever tried for this war crime. Investigations conducted between 1944 and 1948 included interrogation of commanders of subs operating in Australian waters, their superiors, officers and crew who had survived the war but it could not be established, beyond reasonable doubt, who was responsible and the *Centaur* file was closed on 14 December 1948.

Since the end of WW2, many efforts have been made to locate the wreckage of the *Centaur* to provide some solace to family and friends of those who died and possibly solve some questions about the attack. Finally, on 20 December 2009, *Centaur* was located about 30 nautical miles off the southern tip of Moreton Island off Queensland's south-east coast. The wreck is now protected

by the Australian government's *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* and is a memorial to the lives that were lost.

Steam Ship Vyner Brooke

SS Vyner Brooke was a British-registered cargo vessel that normally operated between Singapore and Kuching with a crew of 47 and usually carried just 12 passengers. She was requisitioned by the Royal Navy as an armed trader.

On 12 February 1942, *Vyner Brooke* was one of the last ships carrying evacuees to leave Singapore after the Japanese invasion. In addition to her crew the ship carried at least 181 passengers although possibly more than 300. Among the passengers were the last 65 Australian nurses in Singapore. Late in the afternoon of 13 February, *Vyner Brooke* was attacked by Japanese aircraft without serious casualties. She then made a run for the Banka Strait heading for Palembang in Sumatra.

By daylight on 14 February, she was just inside the strait and dangerously exposed and, not long after 2pm was attacked by several Japanese aircraft. Crippled by several bombs, within half an hour she rolled over and sank bow first. The nurses rushed to treat the wounded before abandoning the ship with the rest – helped into lifeboats or clinging to rafts. Twelve Australian nurses died at sea, including Lavinia Jean **Russell** from Hurstville who was reported as missing believed drowned, her body never recovered.

Approximately 150 survivors made it ashore on nearby Banka Island which had been occupied by the Japanese and were immediately taken captive.

Only a few hours after the ship sank, strong sea currents took the first *Vyner Brooke* lifeboat with survivors, including Australian Army nurses, to Radji Beach. During the night they were joined by many other survivors including civilians, up to 60 Commonwealth servicemen, and merchant sailors. Later the same night, near Radji Beach, a second lifeboat drifted ashore with badly injured Australian nurses. From this lifeboat Sister Vivian **Bullwinkel** and a New Zealander Sub-Lt Jimmy **Miller** walked along the beach to the main camp to obtain assistance to carry the wounded nurses there. The more seriously wounded were later carried further down the beach to an uninhabited fisherman's hut.

As conditions deteriorated, the children in particular suffering from exposure and little food, a delegation of senior military officers was appointed to surrender the group to the Japanese. While they were away, civilian men, women and children, and some injured who could walk began the journey towards Muntok. The nurses knew it was their duty to stay and look after the wounded.

Soon after, the senior officers returned with about 20 Japanese soldiers. They attempted to surrender those remaining on the beach to the Japanese but they were ignored. Everybody was divided into four groups, men into two groups, the nurses and one civilian woman who stayed with her injured husband and the wounded at the back of the beach and in the fisherman's hut.

The men were taken behind a nearby headland and shot or bayoneted to death. There were two survivors who, although badly injured, became prisoners of war and later reported what had happened. The 22 nurses and the civilian woman were ordered to form a line and walk into the sea. When the water was about waist high, the Japanese began firing and all were killed except for Vivian Bullwinkel. The Japanese then bayoneted the wounded as they lay on the beach.

The Japanese intended to leave no witnesses but there were four survivors: Sister Vivian Bullwinkel; Eric **Germann**, an American civilian; Ernest **Lloyd**, a British sailor; and Private Cecil **Kinsley**, a British soldier. Bullwinkel had been wounded in the diaphragm and lay on the beach playing dead until the Japanese left. The wounded Kinsley had drifted to shore, saw it all and also feigned death until he made contact with Bullwinkel who tended his wounds. They hid in the jungle for several days but, unable to find food surrendered to the Japanese. Kinsley died soon after. Although badly wounded, Bullwinkel survived and became a prisoner of war with civilian internees and 32 nurses in camps in and around Palembang in Sumatra and where she was reunited with Nurse Betty **Jeffrey** (1908-2000). They both returned to Australia in late 1945. Jeffrey, while a POW, kept a secret diary which was published in 1954 as *White Coolies*. The film *Paradise Road* directed by Bruce **Beresford** and released in 1997 was based upon the memoir.

Only 24 of the original 65 nurses returned to Australia in 1945 and Vivian Bullwinkel gave evidence to a military enquiry about what had happened on Radji Beach. Although the sinking of the ship and loss of life was eventually reported, the true nature of the atrocities was heavily managed by the Allied authorities, suppressing the details of the massacre, seen as too devastating for public morale and to spare the relatives of the nurses. Sister Bullwinkel's report was heavily censored and she was ordered by the Australian government to refrain from speaking about the rapes and the sexual assault of the nurses prior to their execution during her testimony at the War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo in 1946. All of Sister Bullwinkel's statements to war crimes investigators in 1945 were culled six years later along with every other investigation file that did not result in a trial.

No one was ever convicted in connection with the atrocity as investigators found it hard to locate any soldiers who were present as most had been killed during the war. An officer, Captain Masaru **Orita**, from the unit based at Bangka

Island, was brought to Tokyo to stand trial but committed suicide before he could be interrogated.

Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel (1915-2000) retired from the army and devoted her life to the nursing profession and honoring those killed on Bangka Island. With Betty Jeffrey, she worked tirelessly to raise funds to create the Australian Nurses Memorial Centre, which opened in Melbourne in 1949. She was a member of the Council of the Australian War Memorial and later President of the Australian College of Nursing. In 1975, she was also involved in the mass airlift of Vietnamese orphans to Australia and US.

In later life, Sister Bullwinkel was tortured by the secrecy imposed upon her and wanted the truth told. Several books were written about her but she became increasingly frustrated as only ever permitted to tell part of her harrowing story. But she did confide in at least two people. In 2017 journalist, Tess **Lawrence**, published an article revealing that most of the nurses had been “violated” before they were shot walking into the sea. In 1991 Patricia **Hicks**, an Army Captain, met Sister Bullwinkel at Leeuwin Officers’ Mess and asked her about an upcoming biography. Her reply was, ‘I’m waiting for them to print the truth. They won’t print the truth’. When asked about this, she said, “We were tortured and raped before being walked out to sea and shot”

Vivian Bullwinkel married Colonel Francis West **Statham** in 1977 changing her name to Vivian Statham. She died of a heart attack on 3 July, 2000, aged 84, in Perth, Western Australia.

Since her death, military historians, writers, journalists, family historians and media outlets have combined to reveal the truth about the massacre. In 2025 *Sister Bullwinkel The untold, uncensored story* by Lynette Ramsay **Silver** was published. Silver is an Australian historian and author who has written a number of books dealing with Australian and military history. Some of these books such as *Angels of Mercy: Far West and Far East* and *Sandakan* relate to the same period of military history. Referring to her latest book she has said: “Vivian wanted a voice ... I am proud ... to be able to give it to her”.

The dress that Vivian was wearing when shot is on display at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. In 2020 the Australian College of Nursing launched an appeal to raise funds to erect a three-metre-high statue of Australia’s most famous nursing sister and in 2023 it was unveiled in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial. The Australian College of Nursing has also established a scholarship in the name of each of the 21 nurses who died, a living memorial that has gained corporate support.

There is now a Memorial on a remote headland overlooking Radji Beach where a Commemorative Service is held each year, attended and supported by a group known as *Muntok Nurses and Internees* which posts on Facebook.

No doubt the reveals in Lynette Ramsey Silver's latest book will revive interest in this period of Australia's military history and, hopefully, allow the courageous Vivian Bullwinkle to finally rest in peace.

Lest we forget.

REFERENCES

- ABC – Compass, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ew62y_RrdIw
- ABC – The Drum, <https://iview.abc.net.au › collection › 2359>
- Australian Boer War Memorial, <https://www.bwm.org.au/>
- Australian College of Nursing, <https://www.acn.edu.au/>
- Australian Department of Veterans Affairs, <https://www.dva.gov.au/>
- Australian Dictionary of Biography, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/>
- Australian Nurses Memorial Centre, <https://australiannursesmemorialcentre.org.au>
- Australian War Memorial, Canberra, <https://www.awm.gov.au>
- Facebook/ Muntok Nurses and Internees, <https://tinyurl.com/3waswejj>
- Fairfax Media
- Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/>
- Friends By The Beach Podcast, <https://www.cronullarsl.com.au/podcasts>
- Hurstville City Council
- Marrickville Heritage Society, <https://marrickvilleheritage.org.au>
- National Archives of Australia, <https://www.naa.gov.au/>
- National Library of Australia, <https://www.library.gov.au>
- National Register of War Memorials, <https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au>
- NSW Electoral Rolls
- NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, <https://www.nswnma.asn.au/>
- Ryerson Index, <https://ryersonindex.net/search.php>
- St George & Sutherland Shire Leader
- Trove, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>
- Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org>
- Woronora Memorial Park, <https://www.smcnsw.org.au/woronora/home>
- Yuki Tanaka, Japanese historian

As well as the books by Nurse Jeffrey and Lynette Silver mentioned above, other books written about the attack on the *Vyner Brooke* and the experiences of the survivors include *Sisters under the Rising Sun* by Heather **Morris**, *On Radji Beach* by Ian W **Shaw** and *Back to Bangka* by Georgina **Banks**. There is also another biography of Sister Bullwinkle titled *Sister Viv* by Grantlee **Kieza**.



MARGARET O'NEILL AND HER SAMPLER

by Sally **Johnson** (Member)

Around 1986 my mother's youngest sister **Thelma Russell** moved from Sydney to Mollymook on the south coast of New South Wales. When she was packing up and cleaning out her cupboards, she was also clearing the remnants of her mother's personal belongings. Among them was a cross-stitch sampler that had been folded and moved from house to house for over 100 years.

This sampler is not elaborate in any way. It is worked in wool on an open canvas fabric which gives a solid chunky appearance. There are five simple alphabets and one set of numerals with each row separated by a band of pattern. The alphabets are followed by details of the girl who worked the sampler: **Margaret O'Neill, Cooma 1873**. Across the bottom is a row of three large medallions, filling the space, but out of proportion with the lettering above.

Margaret O'Neill was my maternal grandmother's mother. She was born in 1858 in Nimmitabel in the Monaro region of NSW, the daughter of parents who both came to Australia from Ireland as free settlers and married in 1855. Patrick O'Neill was the eldest in his large family and the first to arrive in Australia in 1842 at the beginning of the Irish potato famine. Mary **Shanahan** arrived in 1854 with her mother and four adult siblings following the death of her father. They joined her eldest brother Martin, a convict who had served his time. Both families were farmers.

In 1873 Margaret was 15 years old. There is no indication of how long she spent working on her cross-stitch sampler. Was it a school "fancy work" project? I imagine that she had limited access to threads as she has used only five colours. The first five rows are worked in an olive green and two shades of purple. Then the colours change suddenly to vibrant blue and orange. Maybe the colour change marks a time change as well, an unfinished project picked up and finished after a break of several years.

Only a few years after completing her sampler, at the age of 19, Margaret married her first husband, Michael **Hilley**. They had four children before Michael died in 1884. Margaret re-married in 1889, to George Joseph **Kershaw** and had five more children. When she died at the age of 90, Margaret had again been widowed, this time for ten years.

Margaret's sampler must have travelled with her from her childhood home and accompanied her throughout her life. The sampler remained folded, probably cherished, through two marriages, the birth and rearing of nine children, and a

total of fifteen years of widowhood. As a result of being hidden away the threads have retained their colour, and the sampler has been preserved in its original condition while also showing signs of age.



Margaret O'Neill's Sampler (photo: Sally Johnson)

Margaret died at her home in Cosgrove St, Adaminaby in 1948. At this point the sampler passed to my grandmother, Martha Kershaw Russell, the eldest daughter of Margaret's second family. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the great Snowy Mountains Scheme was under construction. Eventually the tunnels and dams were completed and Lake Eucumbene began to fill. Adaminaby was one of the towns to be submerged under the lake so a decision had to be made. In 1958, my grandmother and her two youngest unmarried daughters, Lucy and Thelma,

moved to Sydney rather than relocate to the new town. The sampler went with them.

As the youngest daughter in her family, and living with her mother, Thelma eventually became the custodian of some of the family treasures. She had no children and was conscious that these items should go to the next generation. So, the sampler was passed on to my mother, Edna Russell **Salmon**.

Mum wanted to put the sampler on display so she investigated the best ways to conserve and preserve it for the future. She eventually had it framed and hung it in her new home in Howlong, the first time it had ever had a life out of the cupboard. After Mum's death in 1998 we divided our parents' belongings between seven surviving children. I expressed an interest in the sampler so it came to live on my bedroom wall where I admire it often. It is now 153 years old and still shows the creases from the many cupboards it has inhabited over those years. It reminds me of all our untold family stories, especially those of the females who helped grow the many branches of our family tree.

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a lush green garden. A large, mature tree with dense foliage stands on the left. In the foreground, a lawn is being watered by a sprinkler, with a fine mist of water spraying upwards and outwards. The overall scene is bright and verdant.

MARTINS GREEN THUMB
WE DELIVER WHAT YOU NEED
MARTIN PASSFIELD
GARDEN MAINTENANCE/MOWING/LANDSCAPING
4/65 KAREENA ROAD
MIRANDA 2228
0438406228
mpassfield5@optusnet.com.au
Pensioner discount available

PLEASE MENTION *THE ENDEAVOUR* WHEN CONTACTING

THREE GENERATIONS OF PUBLICANS

by John Lunney (Member)

My paternal great, great grandparents, James and Isabella (nee **Bracken**) **Lunney** emigrated to Australia from Fermanagh County, Northern Ireland in 1855, along with their one year old son William Robert. They sailed aboard the *Conrad* from Enniskillen, Fermanagh County, Northern Ireland arriving in Moreton Bay, Queensland on 15 November 1855. They emigrated as free settlers under an assisted passage.

Nothing is known about what the family did in Australia between arriving in 1855 and when James acquired his first hotel licence in 1864 for the Royal Hotel in Inverell which had been built and began trading in 1862. The hotel was located at Black Flat which is now a residential area (Medora Street) on the opposite side of the Macintyre River from Inverell's CBD. The hotel's licence was sold to Mr **Crimmins** in 1875, although James still owned the hotel. It burned down in March 1881, by which time it was owned by Isabella as James had died in 1878. The hotel was never rebuilt.¹

In July 1869 James acquired the Free Mason's Arms Hotel which had been built in 1866 by G.R. **Miller** on Otho Street near the intersection with Byron Street. When James took possession, he added a ballroom and renamed it the Telegraph Hotel in recognition of the arrival of the telegraph in 1868.² A ball was held for 100 guests in November 1869 to commemorate the opening, which received press coverage. The Telegraph also received favourable coverage in a Sydney weekly newspaper. It remained a landmark on this central location until 1913. In 1914 the hotel became Hotel Inverell and a second storey was added. (The original hotel was brick which was probably unusual for Inverell at that time). The hotel no longer exists. The site of the old hotel is now the Commonwealth Bank on the ground floor, with the name Hotel Inverell visible on the outside wall of the second floor.

The 1860s and 1870s were tough pioneering times to be living in the bush. Innkeeping was particularly vulnerable to violence and crime with transient populations seeking their fortunes with gold, silver or tin being discovered in various regions, or simply towns being established and growing. One such incident was the apprehension of a bank robber, Henry **Chandler** in Lunney's pub (the Royal Hotel) where he had been tracked by police after the circulation of a large amount of cash, which was unusual for the times, in a public house in the region. He was confronted and arrested after a fight with two policemen from

Warialda and the senior constable from Inverell. The robber drew his revolver which “left the patrons dumb stricken...with hair erect.”³

There were instances of fraud where a horse was sold by a “reverend preacher” visiting towns to raise funds by selling the horse at an inflated price, then stealing it at night and re-selling the horse in another town the next day, then repeating the deception in other towns.⁴ Violence wasn’t far away either, with criminals being apprehended and a man injured in a knife fight on another occasion.⁵ The bushranger Captain Thunderbolt (Frederick **Ward**) also frequented the Inverell district between 1866 and 1870. He was a superb bushman and horseman who bailed up mail coaches, robbed stores and stole horses. The *Armidale Express* said that “Thunderbolt always knows where the police are, and the police never know where he is. It is a well known fact that Thunderbolt has more friends than enemies.”

Inverell is now known as the “Sapphire City” but in 1870, tin was discovered in the area surrounding Inverell, particularly to the south of the town. James was involved in tin exploration from early in 1872 as part of a consortium in the Elsmore, Newstead, Middle Creek and Cope’s Creek lease from the Inverell Company. In August 1872 James had a company (Lunney & Co.) which had (presumably) leases on land at Pine Ridge where shares had surged from £105 to £550. According to Elizabeth **Weidemann**⁶ these details were mentioned so it was likely that this was one of the companies floated at this time. Such speculation from the tin rush meant many of these companies failed due to “over capitalisation, poor management and the worthlessness of the ground hastily selected.” Weidemann states that while few miners made fortunes, many tin miners had steady employment earning considerably more than farm and station workers and almost three times that of their gold mining counterparts.⁷ James was also involved in leases in Two Mile Creek as Lunney, Sweetland & Co. The leases appear to have been lucrative, but it is not known whether James made a lot of money from these ventures. James had a minor shareholding (400 shares at 10s each) in the Sydney Tin Mining Company Ltd from April 1872;⁸ and a larger shareholding in the Inverell Tin Mining Company Ltd (3,233 shares at £1.00 each) from September 1873.⁹

In July 1875 James opened the Australian Hotel on Byron Street. It was a wooden two storey structure. It burned in November 1875 and the main building was destroyed. The fire attracted considerable interest from the press throughout the state’s northwest. It was immediately rebuilt.¹⁰ The Australian Hotel is the only one of the three hotels that James owned or was licensee that still exists today. The present-day Australian Hotel was built on the original site in 1909.

On 6 August 1878, my great grandfather William married Matilda **Booth** from Singleton at St Augustine's Church of England in Inverell.¹¹ They lived in Inverell where he was a baker and successful pig breeder until he purchased the Welcome Inn in Gilgai, a village near Inverell. The hotel licence was in his mother Isabella's name until she died in November 1881.

My grandfather, William Robert Jr was born in Gilgai on 30 May 1882.¹² By 1884 the family had left the hotel business and moved to Singleton where William Sr commenced work at the railways in August 1884, then continued railway work at Murrurundi from 1890, Eskbank (Lithgow) from 1897 and finally Eveleigh from 1912 until he retired in 1920 at the age of 66.

On 28 May 1920, the licence for the Madeira Hotel on Devonshire Street, Surry Hills was transferred to William Sr. In September 1920, the hotel was included in hearings by the Licences Reduction Court into there being too many hotels in the area. The *Evening News* reported that the hotel was well presented and one of the oldest hotels in Sydney. It was owned by the estate of David **Moon** and had been in the Moon family since the 1870s. Tooth & Co. were represented as mortgagees. William Sr testified that he had paid £1,183 to buy the licence and had "invested his last shilling" in the hotel.¹³ He must have been successful in convincing the court as they held the licence for another two years.

My grandfather, William Jr had moved to Lithgow with his parents when he was 15 years old. He was a sportsman, excelling in rifle shooting, athletics, cricket, swimming and cycling, winning many awards. He was also an adventurer, leaving Australia at 21 with a friend from Lithgow (Harry **Young**) in May 1903 aboard the German merchant ship, *Ostara*. They left from Newcastle and sailed to Valparaiso, Chile which took 72 days. They arrived during a revolution "in which 123 people were shot in one night!" The ship continued to Europe, encountering gales and mention of ships lost at sea. What they were probably referring to was a maritime strike in Valparaiso and the development of a revolutionary labour movement in 1903, which saw ongoing violence in the city. It was reported that he was away nearly three years.¹⁴ He returned home in September 1905 aboard the sailing ship *Glenesk* from Glasgow.¹⁵

William Jr and his wife Janet (nee **Ross**) were married in Lithgow on 8 July 1911. They left Lithgow where William worked in the Small Arms Factory and moved their family of five children to Sydney in early 1921, so that William Jr could assist his father at the Madeira Hotel.

Tragically my grandmother Janet died in July 1922 which resulted in their six children being split up and fostered with other family members for almost two



Newly Renovated Exchange Hotel 1930 (photo: Lunney family album)

years. They were reunited in 1924 when William Jr acquired the licence of the Exchange Hotel at 443 Hunter Street Newcastle. According to my aunt Merle, William's eldest daughter, William Sr and William Jr had a 50-50 share in the hotel. William Jr held the licence for 7 years until the death of his mother, Matilda in 1931. Later that year William Jr moved back to Sydney with his children and William Sr retired. The Exchange Hotel no longer exists, its name changed to the "Blue Peter" then ceased to be a hotel, and is now a real estate office.

In February 1932, William Jr was granted the licence of the Elswick Hotel on the corner of Parramatta Road and Rofe Street, Leichhardt. It appears that father and son may have had a 50-50 share in this hotel as well.¹⁶ The licence was transferred only four months later in June 1932. Unfortunately, (according to his daughter Merle) William Jr displayed his masonic paraphernalia in the hotel and his patronage declined significantly. He learned from a competitor publican who visited him one day, that many of the Elswick customers were from a working

class Catholic background and were now at his competitor's pub!¹⁷ This apparently sealed his fate with the business no longer being viable while he was the publican. A surprising error from an otherwise astute man! It was also the height of the Great Depression.

William Jr did not return to the hotel industry. In September 1933 he was recommended to the Iluka Maclean Fishermen's Association to act as their guarantor in Sydney to receive their fish consignments.¹⁸ This was done to save rail freight costs of their shipments. The two associations banded together to secure a better rail freight deal. The Sydney Fish Market at this time operated at the Municipal Markets in Haymarket, near Central railway station. He remained in this role until he retired during World War II.

REFERENCES

1. *World of its Own: Inverell's Early Years 1827-1920*. By Elizabeth Weidemann, Devill Publicity, Inverell, N.S.W., 1981 (page 69)
2. *ibid.* (page 69)
3. *ibid.* (page 70); *Sydney Mail* 3 November 1866.
4. *The Armidale Express and New England Examiner* 12 October 1872.
5. *ibid.* 27 September 1878.
6. *World of its Own: Inverell's Early Years 1827-1920*. (page 79)
7. *ibid.* (page 80)
8. *NSW Government Gazette* 19 April 1872.
9. *ibid.* 2 September 1873.
10. *World of its Own: Inverell's Early Years 1827-1920*. (page 95).
11. New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au>, Registration number 3465/1878.
12. *ibid.* Registration number 19883/1882.
13. *Evening News* 6 September 1920.
14. "The Diary of a Sailor", *Lithgow Mercury* 19 June 1914.
15. "Return of a Lithgow Boy", *Lithgow Mercury* 29 September 1905.
16. *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 13 August 1932 and *Lithgow Mercury* 10 August 1932.
17. Interview with Merle O'Connor 14 June 2004.
18. *Daily Examiner (Grafton)* 19 September 1933.

Family History Botany Bay is a member of:



FHBB INTEREST GROUPS

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

The FHBB interest groups give research assistance and help break down brick walls with suggestions by fellow participants. The discussion and interaction during a group's session facilitates social engagement. Please feel free to contact a coordinator for further information.

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

ENGLISH INTEREST DAY: Research Centre	Saturday 24 October, details TBA
IRISH INTEREST: By Zoom	Saturday 26 September 2 – 4pm Saturday 21 November 2 – 4pm
SCOTTISH INTEREST: Research Centre	Saturday 10 October 2 – 4pm Saturday 12 November 2 – 4pm
WRITERS INTEREST: By Zoom	Thursday 24 September 2 – 3.30pm Thursday 26 November 2 – 3.30pm
FAMILY TREE MAKER FOR WINDOWS & MACS: By Zoom	Tuesday 25 August 1.30 – 3.30pm Tuesday 24 November 1.30 – 3.30pm
DNA INTEREST: By Zoom	Saturday 7 November 1.30 – 3.30pm
TECHNOLOGY INTEREST: By Zoom	Saturday 17 October 1.30 – 3.30pm

NOTE: Session dates are organised months in advance. Members are advised to check the latest details on our Events Calendar at www.botanybayfhs.org.au or see your fortnightly FHBB eNEWS. Please 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.

FHBB EDUCATION PROGRAM

by Carol **Cronan** (Educator)

Our June class, A beginners Guide to Photo and Scanner use for Genealogy, was a full house. Richard **Linklater** took members through a variety of options and all present were amazed to discover what those old photos could do to add life to their family story. Despite the cold weather our July class was also very well attended. Jeff **Madsen** led us through the intricacies of SDT Explorer which is New South Wales' Spatial Digital Twin (SDT) Map Viewer (<https://beta.portal.spatial.nsw.gov.au/explorer/index.html>) and how this tool can be used to discover the places our ancestors lived and worked. The class was very practical, and several participants were amazed at the discoveries they made. As always Jeff was a font of information with suggestions as to how to find that elusive property or location that appears in some early colonial document. Thank you, Jeff and Richard, for your generous sharing of time and knowledge.

Our U3A class is the last formal class scheduled for 2026 but the usual wide offerings of specialist interest days, Interest group meetings and our monthly guest speaker offerings continue.

This will be my last report as Education Officer and I wish to thank the committee for their support and advice and the many members who have participated in the classes that have been offered over the last six years.

I would also ask you all to consider proposing a short workshop or longer class that you might be prepared to offer to our members. We have such enormous expertise in our society and there is always plenty of help available if needed to run the class. Sharing what we know is one of the best legacies there is.



WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

is available at the Research Centre.

Please phone 9523 8948 to make arrangements.

TRAGIC TALES 3, 1895-1930.

BURIALS IN WORONORA CEMETERY

By Sue Hewitt (Member) and Maree McKinley (Life Member)

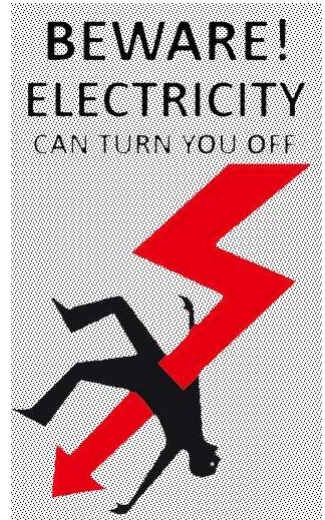
This article describes more tragic tales, following our article in the June edition of *The Endeavour*.

Today we do not give a second thought to the convenience that electric light and electrical appliances afford us in our daily lives. However, many accidental deaths occurred in the workplace prior to government safety in industry laws.

From 1842 gas lighting illuminated Sydney's streets until 8 July 1904 when the new electric arc-lamps were officially switched on to light the way in public places. At the Pyrmont powerhouse, the Lord Mayor of Sydney turned on the steam to set the engine and generators in motion, and the Lady Mayoress turned on the electric current with a switch key. The new lights were 50 times as strong as their gas-powered equivalents. There were promises of extending the service to the suburbs.¹ However, in the 1920s, the St George and Sutherland Shire areas were still in the dark. A small privately run generator had been in use at Cronulla in 1919 but it proved to be fairly unreliable.²

During the time of this study, the novelty and urgency of having electricity put a huge demand on a small number of private providers. Residents and business people of Bexley, Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale had a long wait if the Municipal Council of Sydney were to extend their services to the St George area. By the end of 1920 the St George County Council was constituted to fill the demand. The Commissioners for Railways would supply the electricity in bulk to the Council's receiving station. Council would then supply to consumers at a cost that would cover interest on the capital (of £100 000), maintenance charges and a sinking fund.³

In post-war Australia, getting the poles and wires in place and electricity sub stations built as quickly as possible was important if it was to compete economically with the world. While standards, codes and trip switches for the safety of electricity users and for those in the workplace are in place today, that



was not always the case. All the men featured in this section of workplace accidents were electrocuted. George Vincent was part of the brigade painting the street poles. Gill and McBean were both working in private buildings, while Ikin fell to his death after touching a live wire. Lack, Strom, Du Mughn and Wailes worked in various electrical substations.

On The Job - The Workers

About 1908 **George William Vincent**, his wife Emily nee **Campbell** and their two children, moved from the Rockdale area to Enmore. In July 1916 George, a painter by trade, took up an opportunity offered by the Sydney City Council to paint the new wooden power poles erected for street lighting.⁴ On 16 July, George was high off the ground, painting a pole in Ramsay Street Five Dock when he came into contact with a live wire and was electrocuted. By the time George's mates had retrieved his body entangled in the wires, he had died from shock.⁵ George was 34 years old. Another tragic accidental death happened to George's eldest son. On the night of 23 August 1931, William Frederick George Vincent of Ultimo, a boilermaker and married man was cycling along City Road, Darlington. Coming at William on the wrong side of the road, a truck hit him and he toppled off his bike. He died from his extensive injuries.⁶

James Gill, born in Manchester England, was well known in the St George area and lived with his family at 13 Empress Street Hurstville.⁷ His wife was expecting their seventh child in November 1924.⁸ James was as an electrician with the St George County Council which began supplying electricity to homes and businesses in the St George area in the early 1920s. Selwyn and Prudence **Blackett** lived in a cottage in The Avenue, Hurstville and were having problems with their electricity supply. An inspector visited the Blackett's home and disconnected the service. Later, while in one of the rooms in her house, Mrs Blackett heard a humming noise. On 23 April 1924 she called James Gill, who had previously connected the electricity meter, to investigate. On that afternoon, James was on the roof when Mrs Blackett called to him to come down for a cup of tea. James replied that he would be down shortly but did not appear. Mrs Blackett went to call him again (his tea was getting cold) and saw James face down on the roof unresponsive to her calls. She called the police and Dr **Thomas** who found James pinned by his arm under a sheet of the metal roofing. The Coroner's verdict was accidental death through shock when he came into contact with a live electric wire.⁹ Mr **Thompson**, an electrical engineer gave evidence to the coroners' court. He suggested that precautions were not taken and that while the St George County Council licensed their electricians, the government should issue licences to all electricians.¹⁰

Born in St Peters, **Henry Kitchener Ikin** scored his middle given name

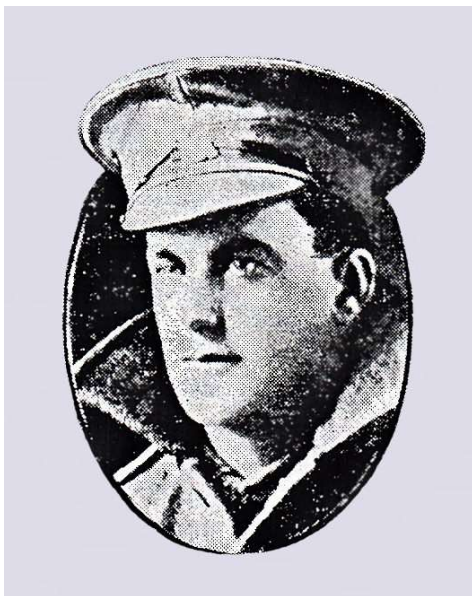
because his father, James Edison Ikin served with 1st Kitchener's Fighting Scouts during the Boer War.¹¹ In 1925, 22 year old Henry¹² lived in The Avenue Hurstville, and worked as a block and tackle labourer for the government railways.¹³ On 5 November, he was working on the St Johns Road railway crossing site at St Peters, installing overhead wire standards. This work was part of implementing the electrification of the Illawarra Line, replacing steam trains with trains using overhead wiring for their power source. Henry, 32 feet [9.75 metres] above the ground, inadvertently touched a live wire, burned his hands and plummeted onto the railway tracks, hitting his head on a sleeper. The coroner's verdict of accidental death due to shock, possibly meant that Henry was dead before he broke his neck and fractured his skull in the fall.¹⁴ Sixteen months later, the Railway Commissioners awarded £250 to Henry's mother, Charlotte Ikin, a recent divorcee.¹⁵ She was a 'partial dependent' on her son's income.¹⁶ Henry was a descendant of Obadiah Ikin, Second Fleet soldier and saddler, and his wife Sarah.¹⁷

Frederick Harold Strom started work as a junior electrician in 1907 with the NSW Railways.¹⁸ He lived at Sans Souci, married **Dulcie Wilson** in 1913 and their only son was born the following year. During 1918 Frederick worked in the electrical department at Eveleigh Workshops. Early on the morning of 1 February 1918, Herbert **Smith**, a railways night watchman, found Frederick stumbling along the permanent way near Redfern Station. Smith caught hold of him and said, "What's the matter mate?" Frederick collapsed into Smith's arms and with help managed to get him to Redfern Station where someone recognised Frederick. At Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Frederick was treated for severe burns to his arms and hands and shock but survived the ordeal.¹⁹ Dulcie probably worried every day when her husband left home for work and Frederick probably assured her that he would be quite safe.

A few weeks before his 34th birthday in February 1926, Frederick was working in the new Hurstville sub-station recently built for the electrification of the Illawarra line. On Friday 5 February, Fredrick was up a ladder in the sub-station working near a 30,000 volt electric cable which 'burst into flame'. The cable insulation in the 1920s was made of oil impregnated paper and covered by a copper sheath, a highly flammable product. If the insulation was compromised the cable would short circuit producing intense heat and igniting anything near it. Within the confines of the sub-station, Frederick toppled from his ladder, crashed to the ground, broke his arm and suffered severe burns to his face and body.²⁰ He was admitted to the St George District hospital but died the next day.²¹ Dulcie's claim for compensation went before the court in June 1926. She was awarded £500.²²

Another railway employee,²³ 39 year old **Finley Ralph Lack** met his death while working at Sutherland substation. On the morning of 5 October 1927, Finley was up a ladder cleaning some insulators. He was working near a cable that he believed to be ‘dead’ and as he reached over it, with a tool in his hand, he came into contact with the 33,000 volt cable. The jolt he received propelled him eight feet [two and a half metres] to the ground. Dr **Sandbrook**, the attending doctor, found Finley badly burned, in shock and with significant blood loss from a head wound. Two hours later he died in St George District Hospital.²⁴ Finley, from Norwich in England, had started working for the railways in October 1912, six months after he arrived in Australia.²⁵ He was married to Florence nee **Oke** who received £800 compensation from the Railway Commissioners. The couple had no children. Florence died at the age of 94 in 1987.²⁶

Raging storms, gale force winds and torrential rain have been a factor well before an awareness of climate change. On 18 April 1927, such a storm hit the Greater Sydney area. Hurricane force winds blew ‘at times of more than a mile a minute’. The aftermath left a trail of devastation, fences flattened, trees uprooted, roofs torn away and wires brought down. The clean-up and repair began the following day. **Harrie McBean** was a plumber by trade and was called to a house in Haberfield which needed its storm-damaged roof repaired. The previous day’s violent winds had torn some of roof away, exposing electrical wires in the ceiling space. On the roof, Harrie slipped and fell on some live wires and was killed instantly.²⁷ Harrie was married to Frances Harriet nee **Wescombe**, and lived in King Street Arncliffe with their three surviving children. In July that year, the Workers’ Compensation Commission heard the case for Frances’s claim against contractors Thomas Franklin and Sons Ltd. She received £850. Harrie McBean had served in the AIF late in the war, assigned to the 2nd Field Squadron Engineers which supplied support to the Australian Mounted Division in Egypt.



*Harrie McBean AIF 4514 (photo:
Australia’s Fighting Families,
Section G)*

Lancashire born, thirty two year old **Horace Du Mughn**, worked as an electrician for the Railway Commissioners at Marrickville's power station. While at work on 16 August 1928, there was an explosion 'as if a heavy field gun had been fired', followed by a blinding flash, then windows in the building smashed. Du Mughn's eyebrows and hair were burnt off and he suffered severe burns all over his body. Later, in hospital he told his father, Samuel Du Mughn that he went to earth the wires so that if anything happened the current would run to earth. One of the wires slipped into the 11,000 volt cubicle and caused an explosion, the flames setting fire to his clothes. He fell down the stairs, rolled on the ground and someone threw an overcoat over him.²⁸ He remained conscious while his injuries were being dressed and asked that two of his fingers to be left out of the bandages so he could have a smoke.²⁹ Du Mughn died on 19 August 1928 leaving his wife with their young son under three years old.³⁰



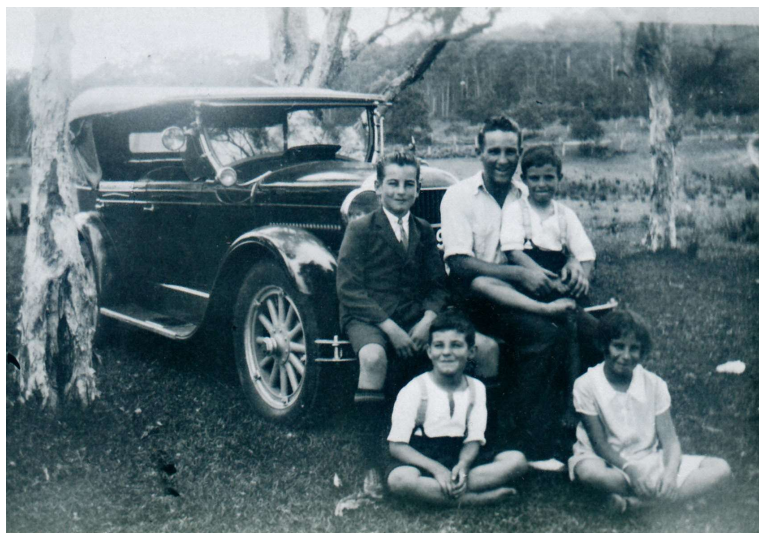
Horace Du Mughn (photo: Du Mughn family collection with permission)

On 29 March 1929, *The Propeller* reported an accident that happened to Brighton Le Sands resident, **William Henry Wailes** while he was working in a City Council electrical substation at Mosman. It stated that on the previous Tuesday 26 March, William, an electrician, was temporarily blinded and lucky not to lose his sight when a fuse blew out in his face. He was taken to the Mater Misericordiae Hospital at North Sydney suffering dreadful burns on his face and also his body. If his family read the newspaper that morning, their grief would have been overwhelming, because William, married man, father of five, a son and brother had died the previous evening. The accident was actually caused from the shock of 10,000 volts of electricity when his head came into contact with live wires. William's wife, Olive (Adolphine) Wailes, buried her husband on the Saturday morning after his death and took their five children, William (Bill) aged 15, Frederick aged 10, Dorothy 9, Harold 6, and little Leslie aged 3, home to 42

Gordon Street Brighton Le Sands.³¹

William Wailes was 36 years old. Born in Pymont he married Olive, nee **Berger** at the Methodist Parsonage in Redfern in 1913.³² William had provided a home in Gordon Street for his growing family.³³ The year he died heralded the official beginning of the depression years, though many families had already been struggling to make ends meet. Without her husband's weekly wage, Olive had difficulty providing for her children. Fortunately, they had somewhere to live.

Young Bill Wailes found employment in a local hardware store in



William Henry Wailes with his sons Frederick, Leslie (youngest), Harold and daughter Dorothy (photo: courtesy of Lyn Wailes)

Rockdale and this went a little way to boosting the family's income. Harold recalls those times and 'despite all the setbacks...you get used to being without...make the best of it and still find time to partake of some hilarity and enjoyment.'³⁴ Sunday mornings sometimes found the children on the beach waiting for the fishermen to drag their nets in from the bay in order that they could collect the small fish that escaped from the net and so indulge in a meal of fresh fish. Harold was an enterprising young lad and had an arrangement with his neighbour to provide manure for the garden. At sixpence a bag he would scurry around the streets collecting horse manure to maintain his end of the arrangement.³⁵

For about two and a half years Olive battled on. As Christmas 1931 approached, Olive went to see her sister Mrs Emma **Acland** at Rockdale who gave her some items to put under the Christmas tree for the children. On her way home that stormy night, she got off the tram in Bay Street. She went to cross the road to find shelter when a car, which had turned into Bay Street from Moate Street, passed at that precise moment. Olive was found on the ground and although she had no apparent external injuries she had already died.³⁶ It was Tuesday 22 December 1931 just three days before Christmas.



Headstone, William Henry Wailes and Adolphine (Olive) Wailes, Woronora Memorial Park, Sutherland (photo: John Levy)

Bill, Fred, Dot, Harry and Leslie were now orphaned and the chances of remaining together were slim. They had supported each other physically and emotionally after their father's accident but with their mother's death came the beginning of many years of separation. Bill continued to work and boarded with friends of the family, Fred now 13 was to live with his aunt Emma Acland and her family, and Dorothy lived with her aunt Freda **McCalley** and family. Harold aged 9 lived unhappily with two different families before finding himself, at the age of 14, in a Boys' Home for a month after which time he was taken in by an elderly childless couple. They were paid a government allowance and Harold was expected to perform menial and often physically taxing chores about the home when not at school. The youngest child, Leslie went to live with his paternal grandparents at Saratoga on the Central Coast³⁷ and appears to be the only one

of the five children to live outside the St George area. The siblings did not see each other again until they were adults.

REFERENCES

1. TTEG Reference Material *A Brief History of the Sydney County Council, Engineering Manual Vol 1*
2. *Sutherland Shire, a history to 1939*, by Maryanne Larkin. Sutherland History Press, 1998
3. *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 10 Dec 1920 p4; Earnshaw, Beverley: *The Birth of St George County Council* in Kogarah HS Newsletter Nov/Dec 2010
4. *Construction and Local Government Journal* (Sydney) 23 Jun 1916 p13
5. *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 21 Jul 1916 p1; buried Woronora Anglican section NN grave 4 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/181151702>
6. *Sydney Morning Herald* 9 Sep 1931 p7; buried Rookwood Anglican section 9 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/189772537>
7. *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 2 May 1924 p3
8. NSW BDM Index, birth of Norma R Gill 48634/1924
9. *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 25 Apr 1924 p4 and 9 May 1924 p3; NSW State Archives Collection, Registers of Coroners' Inquests, NRS 13660-10-190 Series 4 No.127516; buried Woronora Anglican section 3, grave 618 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/175736702>
10. *The Labor Daily* (Sydney) 8 May 1924 p8
11. UK Military Campaign Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1949, www.ancestry.co.uk
12. NSW BDM Index 7180/1904 Henry KI WHITE s/o Charlotte E White
13. NSW State Archives Collection, Railway Personal History Cards-NRS-19333
14. *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 6 Nov 1925 p4; *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 Nov 1925 p13; buried Woronora Methodist section 1, grave 106 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/154785854>
15. NSW State Archives Collection, Divorce papers James Edison Ikin and Charlotte Emma Ikin NRS 13495-11-[13/13201]-1348/1923; *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 8 Apr 1924 p3
16. *Sydney Morning Herald* 8 Jun 1927 p12
17. Thom, Grahame Obadiah Ikin, *The Story of a Shropshire Soldier and his family in Australia*.
18. NSW State Archives Collection, Railway Personal History Cards NRS-12922
19. *Evening News* (Sydney) 1 Feb 1918 p5
20. *The Labor Daily* 6 Feb 1926 p5; *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 12 Feb 1926 p8
21. Buried Woronora Anglican 2A grave 649 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/181119925>
22. NSW State Archives Collection, NSW Railway Personal History Cards NRS-12922; *Daily Telegraph* 30 Jun 1926 p5
23. NSW State Archives Collection, NSW Railway Personal History Cards NRS-12922
24. *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 7 Oct 1927 p3; *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 Oct 1927 p12; buried Woronora Congregational section QQ, grave 5 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182198258>

25. State Archives Collection, Inward Passenger Lists NRS 13278 [Reel 2062]. *Seydlitz* ship arrived Sydney 13 Jan 1912
26. *Sydney Morning Herald* 1 Oct 1987
27. *The Propeller* (Sydney) 22 Apr 1927 p1 and p3; Buried Woronora Primitive Methodist section DD grave 9 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/180774944>
28. *The Sun* (Sydney) 29 Aug 1928 p6
29. *The Telegraph* (Brisbane) 17 Aug 1928 p4
30. Buried Woronora Anglican section 2B grave 287
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/181553864>
31. Buried Woronora Anglican Monumental section 4 grave 575
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/156227301>
32. Marriage and Death Certificates courtesy of Lyn Wailes
33. State Records Probate Packet 183548
34. Unpublished life story of Harold Wailes
35. *ibid*
36. *The Propeller* (Hurstville) 25 Dec 1931 p2; Ancestry.com, NSW State Archives Collection, Registers of Coroners' Inquests and Magisterial Inquiries 1834-1942, NRS 343, Case No.1899
37. Correspondence Lyn Wailes to Sue Hewitt, April 2004



Tune into Your local Radio Station, 2SSR 99.7 FM
for the best mix of Music, Shire News, Reviews and Interviews
Totally operated by volunteers for the local community

Volunteers are always welcome for behind the scenes/admin work

PLEASE MENTION *THE ENDEAVOUR* WHEN CONTACTING



Find us on
Facebook

Follow Botany Bay FHS on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/39uzkb2b>

FAMILY HISTORY AIDS – SALES TABLE AT FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS OR AT THE RESEARCH CENTRE & LIBRARY

(Prices current at January 2026, subject to change without notice)

Split catalogue: A – P odd quarters, P – Z even quarters

	Price
Resource Directory for Victoria	\$25
Resources on the Internet – BBFHS	\$5
Scotlands People	\$15
Scottish Research Guide – BBFHS	\$ 5
Sewerage Records – Suzie Zada	\$ 5
Social Media For Family Historians – Carole Riley	\$15
Some Early Residents – Sutherland Shire – BBFHS	\$15
That elusive digger – tracing Australian Military Ancestors	\$10
The madness of the “Mac” Surnames	\$15
The new findmypast.com.au	\$10
The War to End War – Neil C. Smith	\$15
‘Til Death us do Part – causes of death 1300-1948 – Janet Few	\$10
Tracing Mining Ancestors	\$10
War on the Veldt. Boer War 1899-1902 – Shauna Hicks	\$15
What Was the Voyage Really Like – Shauna Hicks	\$10
Writing Interesting Family Histories – Carol Baxter	\$10
Your Family History Archives – Shauna Hicks	\$10
HANDY GUIDES –	
Danish Genealogy	\$5
DNA for Genealogists, 1 page	\$5
Irish Given Names, 2 pages	\$10
Online Newspapers – British Newspaper Archives, 1 page	\$5
Online Newspapers – Historic Newspapers, 1 page	\$5
Online Newspapers – Papers Past (New Zealand), 1 page	\$5
Online Newspapers – Trove (Australia), 1 page	\$5
Scotlands People, 1 page	\$5

ADVERTISING RATES

Size	Annually (4 issues)	Single issue
Full page	\$160	\$49
Half page	\$80	\$29
Quarter page	\$40	\$19



©2026 Family History Botany Bay and the authors. No article from this Journal may be reproduced without written permission of the author(s), although articles may be copied for personal use. Requests to reprint articles should be directed to bhfhseeds@yahoo.com.au.

This Society accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed by authors of articles published in this Journal. The Society cannot vouch for the accuracy of offers of services or goods that appear in the Journal, or be responsible for the outcome of any contract that may be entered into with an advertiser.

The Editor reserves the right to edit articles.

Australia Post Print Post Number: 100001135