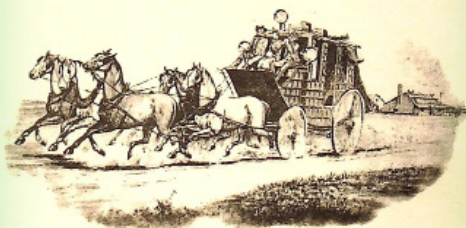




# THE ANCESTRAL SEARCHER

## The Ancestral Searcher



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# The Ancestral Searcher

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\*Family History ACT is a business name of The Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra Inc.

# From the President

Michele Rainger

Hello to all our readers, and welcome to our first edition of *The Ancestral Searcher* for 2026. This year is an important, and very proud one for this publication as we mark its 50th anniversary. The inaugural edition of *The Ancestral Searcher*, Volume I. No. 1, debuted in April 1976 as a modest, news-sheet style magazine intended to provide information to members, and as a means of publishing papers read at Society meetings.

Mrs E. (Ellen) McDonald was the Honorary Editor of the first issue, which consisted of 4 x A4 sheets, doubled, and printed on both sides, 16 pages in all, produced on a typewriter. It included a short history and extracts from the Society's Constitution, a list of financial members including addresses and phone numbers, snippets of information from the broader family history community, five members' queries and a small list of library books available for loan. Just 100 copies were printed of the first issue.

Volunteers initially endeavoured to produce three issues a year in sufficient numbers to satisfy members, affiliated societies and interested persons. This was increased to four issues per year in 1980. In all, 13 members of our Society have taken on the very important role of editing this journal. Over time, their dedication to creating regular editions and their creativity in keeping pace with changing family history practice, has transformed this journal from a simple black and white set of papers copied and stapled together, to a professional full-colour publication compiled using commercial publishing and printing technology. One that we can all be proud of!

The first edition may have seemed somewhat amateurish compared with today's professionally produced format, but members were justifiably proud of their journal's small beginning and confident of it soon reaching a degree of excellence comparable with other genealogical publications. Today *The Ancestral Searcher* continues to inform and assist across the

wide range of topics and issues that family historians deal with. Now it has a worldwide readership. I hope that our Family History ACT members will continue to support this publication and that it will continue to be as relevant and useful in the future as it has always been.

For this edition our Editor has focused on Biography. Defined variously as ‘the written life of a person’ and as ‘the story of the life of a person written by someone else’, biography is an important device in the family historian’s toolbox. But it is much more than a simple list of facts about a person. Writing a compelling biography involves meticulously researching a subject’s life to uncover not only what they did, but also the ‘why’ behind their actions, transforming facts into a narrative that reveals their character and context as well. Please enjoy reading the biographies within these pages.

## From the Editor’s Desk

Clare McGuinness

My epiphany of the quarter was after realising that members offered articles ‘to help me out’ or to ‘help TAS’. Lovely. But the epiphany was that writing an article is of greatest usefulness to the author. Some of the benefits are:

- \* a deadline to get that piece of research/work/story **done**
- \* clarifying your purpose/findings
- \* identifying gaps in your thinking/research/presentation
- \* reaching a wider readership for your ideas/work/announcement
- \* assistance from the keen editor and proofreaders
- \* pleasure of seeing your name/family in print

Authors in this publication have mentioned some of these benefits to me as they submitted their work. We are not an exclusive, academic publication, although some articles are quite that way. Articles are welcomed from everyone, especially first time authors.

May I remind you that June will feature DNA stories, and I hope that the challenge of preparing an article will benefit many of you.

# Patrick Murphy - convicts' son and nephew - Tipperary to Kiama

*Diana Heins*

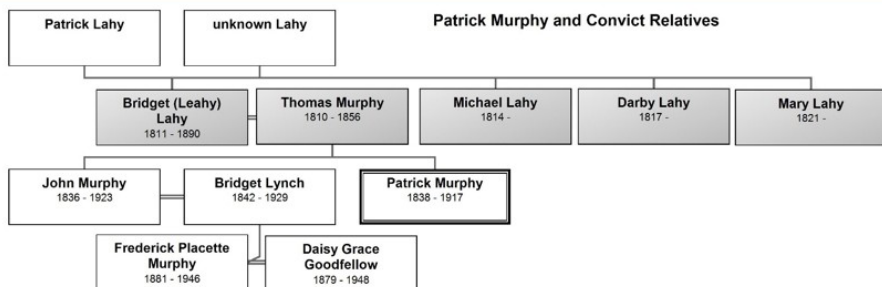
Patrick Murphy died alone in the sea wall reserve at Kiama in 1917. Murphy family researcher, Patricia Murphy, wrote that "it would seem from his Obituary in the paper he was well known and loved. I have always felt a great sadness for Patrick. Life for Patrick was stacked against him from the time of his birth. Patrick was a survivor against all odds and a loner by circumstance. With all his trials and tribulations, how he managed to keep on keeping on is a testament to him".

Patrick was the younger brother of John, my grandfather Frederick Placette Murphy's father. Patrick's

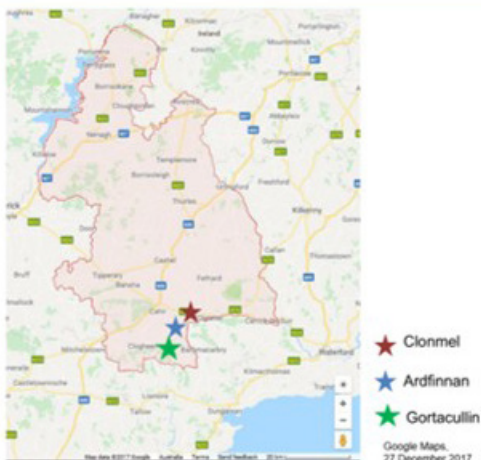
and John's parents, uncles and aunt were all Irish convicts. So that Patrick is not forgotten, here is his story.

## Arsonist's son

Patrick was born in County Tipperary, Ireland, in December 1838, at the end of the Tithe Wars. He was baptised on 6 January 1839; a calm day before the 'Night of the Big Wind' cyclone, which devastated parts of Ireland and England. Two months later, his father Thomas was convicted of sheep stealing and sentenced to ten years transportation via the barque *Blenheim* to Sydney. His mother



*Patrick Murphy's five convict relatives (shaded boxes).*



*Google Maps show Ireland on the left, and Tipperary on the right. Relevant places are starred.*

Bridget unsuccessfully petitioned to be also sent to New South Wales.

Patrick's parents, Thomas and Bridget (Lahy), had been born after the Napoleonic Wars (1815), the ending of which resulted in economic depression. They were teenagers during the 1820s, when population growth and increasing land rents created poverty and unrest. Tithe payments to the Church of Ireland on land used for crops had been resisted by Catholic tenants since the agitation of the 1760s and the Whiteboy Act of 1787 which mandated these payments to clergy.

Bridget Lahy and Thomas Murphy, Patrick's parents, married in 1835, during the Tithe Wars. These conflicts began in 1831, with refusal to pay

tithe, and escalated to attacks on clergy, their agents, and those who took over land vacated by evictions or bought confiscated livestock.

Patrick's older brother, John, was born in 1836, the same year as the Irish Constabulary was established. By 1837 there were 99 police stations in Tipperary. Anti-tithe meetings were held in several Tipperary towns. The year Patrick was born, 1838, increasing evictions and poverty led to the Poor Law, providing poor relief in workhouses funded from rates paid by land owners. Also in 1838, the Rent Charge Act changed tithes into a rent charge on land, payable to the clergyman by landlords instead of occupiers. This brought an end to the tithe protests, but not to Patrick's family troubles.

When Patrick was 18 months old, on 20 July 1840, his uncles, Bridget's brothers Michael and Darby Lahy, were tried for administering an illegal oath: they had required John Keefe not to mention their names as having broken the windows of the police barracks in Gurtnaculla Townland in Ballybacon Parish, County Tipperary. In consequence, on 28 July, Bridget and her sister Mary Lahy attacked Ellen Keefe and her daughter and burnt down their house in Gurtcullen. From the newspaper report, John Keefe was Mrs Hennessy's son-in-law, so Ellen was John Keefe's wife.

In 1827, in the *Tithe Applotment Books*, a Patrick Lahy occupied eight acres in four plots valued at £9/9/8, in Gortacullin townland. Considering the criminal events at Gortacullin in 1840, neighbouring land occupants and location of the police station, it is likely that this Patrick Lahy was Bridget (Lahy) Murphy's father. Patrick Lahy was a tithe defaulter, listed among the 32 land occupiers in Gurthaculleen townland in the *Tithe Defaulters List 1831*.

In the 1831 Census, there were 479 families in 458 houses in Ballybacon Parish. There were 354 tithe defaulters. Henry Palmer was the Church of Ireland clergyman for Ballybacon, Tubrid and Whitechurch Parishes on 18 June 1832, when his affidavit stated threatening messages had been sent

to the Vicar and his tithe agent and payment refused. Quarter Sessions and Petty session Magistrates advised "avoidance of collision with the Peasantry, who declared they would not suffer a distress to be made in their own cases or in that of others, where tithe was concerned".

On 29 July 1840, on the same page that the *Tipperary Free Press* lamented the poverty, hunger and miserable housing in the country, it reported Michael's and Darby's sentence of transportation for seven years. They were on the *Egyptian* in August 1840, bound for Hobart.

South Tipperary and the Poor Law Union of Clogheen, including Ballybacon Parish, were particularly poverty-stricken. In 1841, three quarters of the houses in Iffa and Offa West Barony in South Tipperary, were Class 3 or 4: one or two rooms, mostly with thatched roofs, often with dirt floors, some also housing animals. By 1853, Patrick Lahy was no longer in Gortacullen in Griffith's Valuation. The similar-sized plots were occupied by John and James Mansfield, adjacent to Hennessy land.

Patrick's mother Bridget and his aunt Mary were sentenced to transportation for fifteen years. It was a year later that Patrick, aged two years six months, John, aged five years, Bridget and Mary assembled at the Grangegorman

depot in Dublin prior to departure on the *Mexborough*, which carried 145 female convicts. The voyage to Hobart lasted 19 weeks, arriving on 25 December 1841.

If Bridget had committed arson to join her husband Thomas in Sydney, they would have been disappointed when Bridget's destination in 1841 was Hobart. After 1840, convicts were no longer sent to New South Wales.

Patrick and John were admitted on 4 January 1842, to the Hobart Orphan School, where they lived for more than four years, while Bridget worked during her convict sentence. From 1830, the Queen's Orphan School was at New Town, five kilometres north of Hobart. There were separate buildings for male and female orphans, so at least the brothers could have been together enduring the cold, miserable conditions.

Bridget was recorded on 31 December

1841 at the Hobart Cascades Female Factory. In 1844, she was working in Hobart for F. Piguénit, a former convict whose son William Charles was born the same year as Patrick's older brother John. William Charles Piguénit became the famous landscape artist.

Patrick was aged almost seven and John was nine-and-a-half when Bridget received her Ticket of Leave on 1 November 1845. Seven months later, the boys "were delivered to their mother, Bridget Murphy" on 2 June 1846. Her Conditional Pardon, recommended on 2 February 1848, was not granted until 4 July 1848. Three weeks later, on 28 July 1848, Bridget and her sons were passengers on the *Bangalore* from Hobart to Sydney. Thomas had received his Ticket of Leave on 11 September 1846. Thomas, Bridget, John and Patrick could be re-united after nine years.

Four years after Thomas's Certificate of Freedom (of 9 January 1850), on



Queen's Orphan Asylum, New Town. Archives Office of Tasmania. [femaleconvicts.org.au](http://femaleconvicts.org.au)

21 September 1854, he bought one acre of land in Broughton Street, Longbottom, Concord; his son John had bought the adjoining one acre on 9 September. Thomas would have been familiar with the area, probably living at the Longbottom Convict Stockade and walking along Parramatta Road to the road gangs in the Blue Mountains.

### **Delinquent to swagman**

Tragically for Bridget and her sons, Thomas was killed by a falling tree at Longbottom in 1856. Unfortunately for Patrick, it was Thomas' 'eldest son and heir', who inherited the Concord land, Bridget giving up her claim on 9 September 1857. John was aged 21; there was no mention of Patrick, who was aged 19.

John Murphy's property was sold to Emanuel Neich in September 1857. John married Bridget Lynch at St Mary's Church, Concord in 1858. Later John and Patrick's widowed mother Bridget moved to live at Wharf Street, now Burwood Road north of Parramatta Road, Concord.

By the 1850s, Bridget's brothers, Michael and Darby, and her sister Mary, who had married William Prior in Hobart, were in Sydney. The family had connections with St Mary's Church, Concord. Thomas Murphy, Michael and Jeremiah (Darby) Leahy, had contributed to the church repair in 1854. In August 1871, John and Patrick Murphy signed the petition

opposing amalgamation of Concord into Burwood Municipality. However, by November 1871 they signed another petition against amalgamation, perhaps realising there could be extra costs resulting from amalgamation.

Despite this community involvement, Patrick's Lahy and Prior relatives appeared in court during the 1850s and 1860s. Mary Prior was in court in 1854, for stealing. Patrick's cousin Susan Prior, Mary's daughter, was associated with the bushranger Ben Hall around Boorowa in 1862. Michael Lahey was a witness in defence for John Murphy, residence Longbottom, accused of stealing cattle in 1866 and £55 in 1868. Michael Lahey was living at the bark huts on Liverpool Road south of Enfield. John Murphy was declared insolvent in 1868.

Patrick was convicted of destroying trees, firstly in July 1860, damaging nine trees belonging to the Government at Longbottom; secondly in October 1864, cutting down and carrying away a tree at Concord, the property of Emanuel Neich. Neich was the purchaser of John Murphy's land in 1857. He owned the Bath Arms Hotel on the corner of Parramatta Road and Burwood Road, where the inquest had been held into the death of Patrick and John's father Thomas in 1856.

Patrick appeared in court numerous times during the 1860s and 1870s. He was charged with threatening to

murder James Riddle of Longbottom in November 1860. While drunk, he interrupted the church service at Burwood Congregational Church in 1866. 'Patrick Murphy of Burwood' was assaulted and injured in December 1870. The August 1874 Wollongong Gaol entry was for obscene language; the January 1877 Sydney court record was for stealing.

By March 1877, Patrick had moved south of Sydney, to the Illawarra Coast; 'P.J. Murphy of Shellharbour failed to appear in court on a charge of drunkenness'. He was assaulted, while drunk, on the road to Bombo in November 1888 and his new moleskins stolen. At this time he was living at Dunmore, working for Mr Couch. Dunmore is seven kilometres north of Kiama, west of Minnamurra and Riverside Drive (the old Princes Highway).

Bridget Murphy, 'beloved mother of John and Patrick' died on 11 September 1890. During the 1890s, there were seven newspaper reports about Patrick's court appearances and confinement in Kiama lockup for drunkenness and indecent language. One punishment was fourteen days' exercise in Sergeant Brayce's garden.

In January 1910, Patrick was aged 73, described in the gaol report as five feet five inches tall, weighed eleven stone, with black and grey hair, and grey eyes. One of his eyes was

defective, possibly from his earlier assault on 17 December 1870. He was a labourer, could read only and was Roman Catholic, born in Ireland. He was in Wollongong Gaol for being drunk at Kiama on 6 January 1910. His address was Kiama. The sentence was 40 shillings or one month in gaol.

Paddy Murphy, who 'humping bluey' for many years, has had a regular "beat" on the South Coast and Robertson highlands, doing a bit of work between whiles on the farms and in the homes where he had found his friends and helpers has finished his wandering career, being found dead on Friday morning in the sea wall reserve.

*Kiama Independent*, 20 January 1917, p2.

On 18 January 1917, the New South Wales weather forecast was 'sultry and unsettled, with more scattered rains and thunderstorms, chiefly over the eastern half'. In Kiama there were light southerly winds; it was cloudy and the sea was smooth. When Patrick was found dead on Friday morning, 19 January 1917, the informant on his death certificate was a 'friend' John Happ, Beatrice Street, Auburn. John Happ was the son of James and Mary (Murphy) Happ, daughter of Patrick's brother John and his wife Bridget (Lynch). It seems there remained some family connection between Patrick and at least some of his Sydney relatives. There is a photo of a Happ family group, with a strange elderly man in

dark clothes and hat, holding a rolled paper. From the ages and clothes of the women and girls, this is probably sometime in the 1920s. But I would like to think that this could have been Patrick in happier times with some of his Murphy family relatives.

*Acknowledgement: thanks to Patricia Murphy for years of Murphy family research, especially in the New South Wales Police Gazette, New South Wales Criminal Court Records and Gaol Description and Entrance Books.*

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# My Ancestor, the Lord Mayor of London

Barbara Moore

In June 2017, I wrote an article for our society's journal, *The Ancestral Searcher*, about my success in researching my one and only great-great-grandparent who was not Irish, Elizabeth Ann Cumming, back to her birth in England in 1830. In recent years the availability of so many old and useful records coming online has allowed me to research Elizabeth's ancestors back twelve more generations to the 15th century and to my 15th great-grandfather, Ralph Astry, who became the Lord Mayor of London in 1493-1494<sup>1</sup> after having been the Sheriff of London from 1484 to 1485.

Ralph, the son of Henry Astry, was born about 1454 in Hitchin, County Hertfordshire, which was a flourishing town and the centre of the woollen trade and also the home of Sir William Hampton, a member of parliament who had made his money as a fishmonger. Not very much is known about Ralph's childhood but he successively became the apprentice, partner, and executor of Sir William Hampton. Becoming a fishmonger himself, Sir Ralph was also a member of the Livery Company Worshipful Company of Fishmongers.<sup>2</sup>

In the book "Genealogical Memoirs of the Families of Chester of Bristol,

Barton Regis, London and Almondsbury descended from Henry Chester, Sheriff of Bristol 1470"<sup>3</sup> are several pages of information about members of the Astry family. In February 1484, Ralph was appointed Sheriff of London and in the next year obtained a grant of Arms from Sir Thomas Holme, Knight King of Arms. He was elected Lord Mayor in 1493 and was knighted by King Henry VII in 1494. □ This event was described by Dr Claire Martin in her article about Dame Margery Astry:

*The Christmas of 1493-94 that Ralph enjoyed as mayor was marked by a royal feast held by the king at Whitehall for the mayor and all the aldermen. After the meal, the mayor, Ralph Astry, was brought to the king's chamber where he was knighted. They then went to view the sports and entertainments in Westminster Hall where the king and queen joined them with the ladies of the court and the ambassadors of France and Spain. At the end of the evening, the mayor and his company took two barges back to the city, arriving home at break of day.*

In 1471 Ralph married a wealthy widow, Dame Margery Ostriche, the daughter of Thomas Ostriche, a wealthy

haberdasher in London. Thomas Ostriche had been among the guests at the coronation of Richard III. □ Did Ralph also attend the coronation of Richard III? Was he in this painting of the Coronation Procession? □



Ralph and Margery's first son was born about 1481 but died in 1501. □ They had three more children, Thomas, (my 14th great-grandfather), William and Ralph. In the spring of 1493 Dame Margery, who had been married to him for twenty years, died. Shortly after, he married Margery Hill. □

Sir Ralph Astry died on 18 November 1494, just a few days after he stepped down from being Lord Mayor. □ At the time of his death he was a wealthy man having accrued land in Hitchin, County Hertfordshire, and in various other areas of England which was left to his four

sons, Ralph, William, Thomas, by his first wife Margery Ostriche, and Henry by his second wife, Dame Margaret. He was buried near his first wife in the Church of St Martin Vintry where the family worshipped.<sup>10</sup>



This church where the Astry family worshipped had been built about 1067, at the corner of Tower Street and Thames Street in London, shown above in the red rectangle. The added name "Vintry" was because the area was lined with "vintries". The name was derived from Old French for wine merchants (vintners).<sup>11</sup>

The interior of this church had been significantly rebuilt in the late 14th century. Sir Ralph Astry, when Mayor in 1494, had the roof replaced with timber, covered in lead and 'beautiful glazed it'. Eighty-six churches were completely destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 including the Church of St Martin Vintry. Unfortunately this church was one of many that were never rebuilt. Within the church the tombs of Sir Ralph Astry and his two wives, Margaret and Margery,

were lost in the fire.<sup>12</sup> The image below shows the modern site of the Church of St Martin Vintry.



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# Henry Stevens - An Unexpected Life

Nina Johnson

Hands up if you've never tried to link a famous person with a shared surname to your family tree. Well, that's some of you who deserve a gold star from the Genealogical Purists' Society. But have you missed out on some research fun?

It was more a matter of an interesting record, rather than fame, that prompted me to investigate if I could add Henry Stevens to my tree. Henry popped up when I finally started looking for the family of my x6 great-grandmother, Sarah Stevens. Her husband Thomas Frewen (1666-1731) was a landowner of Northiam in Sussex. Sarah was said to be the fifth daughter of Richard Stevens of Culham, Berkshire, Esquire.<sup>1</sup> For years Sarah and her father sat on my tree without even dates to bring them to life, a Stevens brickwall biding its time.

Most of the parish records relating to Richard Stevens Esq. were not to be found in Berkshire, but in the parish of Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. Expanding the Stevens tree beyond Sarah's 1673 baptism was tricky. The English Civil Wars and Commonwealth period of the 1640s-1660s played havoc with parish records. No parental

marriage could be found, let alone earlier records. I looked for court cases and wills, then lucked across this item in the Berkshire Record Office catalogue:

*Copy or petition of Henry Stevens for a grant of arms, 1694, with copy of the Stevens family pedigree, 1770; copies of orders to Henry Stevens, Waggon-Master General (1643-1644).*<sup>2</sup>

What on earth was a Waggon-Master General? Visions of Americans corralling their wagons came to mind. What sort of wagons would need a master general? Unbelievably, here in Canberra at the National Library there was a transcript of those intriguing letters<sup>3</sup> which included some background information.

Henry was never an American colonist. He had a comfortable English youth, born in 1599 at the manor of Easington, Oxfordshire where his father Richard was the steward.<sup>3</sup> In 1624 Richard bought that manor and also acted as steward of nearby Benson and Watlington manor courts.<sup>4</sup> Although Henry was the younger of Richard's two surviving sons, he was going to inherit Easington manor on his



*St Mary's Easington, Oxfordshire; author 2022*

father's death.<sup>5</sup> The life of a propertied gentleman appeared assured.

Whether Henry spent his first 40 years managing manors, living it up or working in Oxford is unknown. He did fit in two marriages and fathered at least two sons. His path changed with the onset of the English Civil Wars. In 1638 he had been appointed a freeman of Oxford with the patronage of the Earl of Berkshire.<sup>3</sup> This connection led to a radical life change once King Charles I moved his Court to Oxford in 1642 away from London, dominated by Parliament. Probably on the recommendation of Lord Berkshire, Henry Stevens was appointed the King's Waggon- Master and Commissary General of Army for the County of Oxford.<sup>4</sup> His rank was Captain in the Regiment of the City of Oxford<sup>3</sup> but his responsibilities were wider. The Waggon-Master General organised supplies and their distribution. He commandeered carts and animals to transport weapons and food for the Royalist armies. For example, in

November 1644 Captayne [sic] Stevens was ordered to search granaries and houses in Wiltshire, seize provisions, and arrange transport of the same to the Royalist army in Marlborough. Tickets were left with the owners of the provisions for later reimbursement.<sup>3</sup>

It was all downhill for Henry after the surrender of King Charles to the Scots at Newark, Nottinghamshire, in May 1646. Being on the losing side of the Civil Wars, Henry was liable to a large fine for delinquency.<sup>4</sup> No doubt he also had debts with loss of income from his properties during the years of upheaval of the wars. As expressed on the 1770 Stevens pedigree "His services...in support of the King so injured his Fortune" that the manor of Easington was mortgaged in 1649<sup>6</sup> and later sold. The family pedigree did not mention that Henry's life ended in a debtors' prison in 1655.<sup>7</sup>

However, that same pedigree chart did include my known ancestor Sarah Stevens. With that plus

the evidence of some wills and Chancery court proceedings I could claim that Waggon-Master General Henry Stevens was her grandfather, and my x8 great-grandfather.

Despite being a defendant in Chancery suits<sup>6,7</sup> relating to his father Henry's debts, my x7 great-grandfather Richard Stevens Esq. eventually prospered. Did restoration of the monarchy in 1660 lead to some compensation from King Charles II to the Stevens family? Or maybe it was just Richard's work and connections as a London barrister that allowed him by 1665 to own a substantial property in Henley-On-Thames.<sup>8</sup>

That is where most of his large family, including daughter Sarah, were born. The manor of Culham Court in Wargrave, Berkshire was then purchased in 1679.<sup>2</sup> The Stevens family were clearly wealthy gentry again.

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# Richard Walker - A convict of character

David Le Roy

As he sat aboard the hulk *Retribution*, Richard Walker was contemplating what brought him here and how his family would now survive. Having been arrested by Bank of England investigators for forgery he would be tried in the Old Bailey and was facing the death penalty.

With government finances depleting at a fast rate during the Nine Years War, they had to find new avenues to borrow money and finance the growing national debt. Following a crushing defeat of English forces by the French they were looking to establish England as a global power. As a consequence, in 1694, the Bank of England was created, initially a private institution with the power to raise funds through the issuing of bonds.

Following the end of the war in 1697 the English Government became highly reliant on credit, paper instruments and public confidence to fund continuing military operations. As a result, forging Bank of England notes became a capital offence, punishable by death. By 1725 further restrictions were enacted with the

act of 'uttering', or knowingly passing on forged notes, also considered a capital offence. The issuing of low denomination £1 and £2 notes in 1797 saw large numbers of these being forged and circulated across the country.

At the start of the 19th century, the Bank of England changed its approach to prosecuting serious forgery cases. There was a time when the Bank was no longer able to pay out gold in exchange for bank notes. This was known as the 'Restriction Period'. During this time, more than three hundred people were executed for counterfeiting Bank of England notes, prompting the bank to seek alternative solutions.

In May 1801, a law drafted by the bank's solicitors, Freshfields, introduced the possibility of a plea bargain. This allowed those accused to plead guilty to possessing counterfeit notes in exchange for a sentence of 14 years' transportation, rather than facing the death penalty. If the plea were accepted, the capital charge would be dropped.<sup>1</sup>

Richard Walker was born on 26 November 1768 to Joseph and Esther Walker (née Bywater). By 1813 he was married to Mary Dorothy Martin, and they were bringing up a family of five children. Working as a Surgeon and Apothecary brought Richard into contact with many people.

The Bank of England retained their own teams to investigate individuals accused of forgery. Following information received from Davenport Sedley, a servant at Newgate gaol, Richard was arrested and sent to trial at the Old Bailey on 4 June 1813. They charged that, on 26 December 1812 he knowingly had a forged 2/- note in his possession. A plea deal was offered and Richard plead guilty to knowingly having a forged 2/- note in his possession while not guilty to having forged or disposed the note. These pleas were accepted and he was sentenced to be transported to Australia for 14 years.<sup>2</sup>

While awaiting transportation Richard was held in custody aboard the hulk *Retribution*. While he was there his family's situation became strained with no income to support their needs. His wife, Mary, wrote to the Bank of England seeking aid and Richard wrote to them as well as the Secretary of State (Lord Sidmouth) seeking mitigation of his sentence. These requests were

noted, but apparently not actioned by the bank. In December 1813 Richard advised the bank that his wife was 'now confined to bed these ten days with rheumatic gout' and the Bank Governors and Directors bequeathed her £5.

In September 1813, Davenport Sedler wrote to the bank expressing concern that, while he provided information which was used to apprehend Walker and also George Barnes, he had not been compensated for this information while Walker and his wife have received assistance. He offered further services in relation to finding out about the network of a bank printer named Thomas Foss, who was in Newgate at the time.

On 28 February 1814, Richard was one of 200 convict prisoners who set sail from Spithead under Alex Scott. The voyage called into Madeira and spent ten days in Rio de Janeiro. The voyage was otherwise unremarkable aside from there being two deaths and a birth. Before reaching Rio one of the soldiers, Andrew Johnston, died from an 'intermitting fever'. While in Rio one of the convicts, James Brown (aka White), attempted to escape but was believed to have drowned. On 30 September, a daughter was born to the family of Quintin Owen, a private of the detachment.<sup>3</sup>

Richard arrived in Australia on 16 October 1814<sup>4</sup> and was immediately assigned to Windsor. □

By December 1814 Mary was writing again to the Bank of England, now from aboard the transport ship, *Northampton*, with her children. She wrote that, while the captain allowed her son to work aboard the ship, she was still not in a position to be able to clothe him properly and was seeking assistance. She was given £5.<sup>6</sup>

Compared to her husband's voyage, Mary's was not as uneventful. The ship was commissioned to take female convicts as well as the wives of previously transported male convicts to the colony. It was one of the first to have a Surgeon Superintendent appointed for the voyage and set sail from Portsmouth on 1 January 1815. On 18 February it was captured by an American ship off the coast of Madeira. However, after they discovered the nature of the cargo (female convicts) they allowed her to proceed on her way.

The vessel called into Rio de Janeiro on 8 March and, after the company had been allowed to go ashore, three of the wives refused to re-board and hid themselves. As a result, the ship remained in port and did not depart until 18 March.

The *Northampton* arrived in Sydney on 18 June 1815 suffering the loss of ten women (four of whom were convicts) and children.<sup>7</sup>

In 1811, Governor Macquarie had commenced construction of a hospital in Sydney. This hospital was opened in March 1816 and some of the staff working there were convicts. It is likely that Richard worked there from this date<sup>8</sup> and, in 1817, met the Governor who had promised

CERTIFICATE OF FREEDOM.

No. *27551*  
 Date, *2 June 1827*  
 —  
 Prisoner's No.  
 Name, — *Richard Walker*  
 Ship, — *Annuletshire*  
 Master, — *Scott*  
 Year, — *1814*  
 Native Place, — *London*  
 Trade or Calling, — *Surgeon & Apothecary*  
 Offence, —  
 Place of Trial, — *Middlesex 40*  
 Date of Trial, — *2 June 1813*  
 Sentence, — *Fourteen years*  
 Year of Birth, — *1768*  
 Height, — *5 feet 4 inches*  
 Complexion, — *Ruddy*  
 Hair, — *Black to grey*  
 Eyes, — *Hazel*  
 General Remarks — *Had a Conditional  
 Pardon No 1521 now  
 Annuletshire & travelled.*

Picture 1 - Richard Walker, certificate of freedom. Source: Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867

to consider a pardon. Shortly after, Richard found himself working as a clerk in the Commissariat, and in 1819 wrote to the Governor asking him to consider him for pardon. This was duly approved and a conditional pardon was granted on 31 Jan 1820, with an absolute pardon granted on 2 June 1827. Both noting his calling as 'Surgeon and Apothecary'.<sup>9</sup>

Richard remained working in the Commissariat as a clerk, rather than return to his former life as surgeon/apothecary. The 1822 muster confirmed Richard remained with the Commissariat and, in 1828, was merely listed as a lodger and living at the residence of Samuel Evans in Princes St (which was located in The Rocks). Evans was married to Richard's daughter, Emma and had also been transported to the colony for possession of a forged note.<sup>10</sup> He was freed by servitude in 1827 and worked as a hatmaker.

Mary died on 21 October 1823 and was buried on 23 October at Sandhills Cemetery.<sup>11</sup> Some time between the hours of nine and ten o'clock on 27 June 1832, Richard was in the backyard of the house in Cambridge St where he was living. He fell to the ground and was carried to bed, speechless. With his condition deteriorating, some time between two and three o'clock Thomas Mosher, a poor cobbler who

lived at the same address, went to Surgeon Hosking and requested his attendance.

On 28 June 1832 an inquest on the body of Richard Walker was held at the Black Dog Hotel in Cambridge St. Mosher alleged that he had gone to Surgeon Hosking's shop seeking assistance and, upon being informed that he was unable to pay him at that stage, Hosking declined to attend, alleging his 'business would not permit him.' A coroner verdict of 'died by the visitation of God' was handed down and the jury unanimously expressed their indignation, in the severest terms language could convey, that had the assistance required been afforded to Walker in all probability he would have recovered. They requested the Coroner represent this opinion through 'the proper medium'.<sup>12</sup>

The following day, the *Sydney Gazette* published a letter to the editor which Hosking had penned, expressing concerns at the aspersion cast on his character by the Coroner's assertion. He further argued that he considered no coroner's jury has the 'right to call in question the motives of any medical man for not doing what they may consider to be his duty' and called the opinion 'uncalled for, unjustifiable, and unwarrantable'. He noted that he understood that Walker was deceased by the time

Mosher had returned home and any medical assistance provided would not have been of any assistance.<sup>13</sup> Richard Walker was buried in St Phillips Church of England on 29 June 1832.<sup>14</sup>

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Picture 1 - "Richard Walker, certificate of freedom. Source: Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867."

# Finding the real Mary Rowe

*Jenny Burgess*

From my earliest research days, I knew I had a First Fleet ancestor, John Rowe, my x4 great-grandfather, who married Isabella Manson (*Lady Juliana*). They married six weeks after Isabella arrived. A previous family researcher had given me pages of documentation showing John and Isabella had two sons, John and Joseph and daughter Sarah b 1799, my ancestor. Sarah had a turbulent life.

1. In 1814 aged 15, Sarah Rowe married John Purvey, who was 20 years her senior. Her widowed mother may have thought this provided some security for Sarah. They had one son, James, before Sarah moved to a second relationship with Edward Yardley, living at Lower Portland Head.

2. Her daughter Mary Yardley was born in 1818. In July 1820, Edward was taking produce to Sydney on the boat *William Brampton* when it sank in rough seas near Sydney Heads. If Sarah had been married to Edward Yardley she would have been entitled to his farm and a comfortable life, but she was still married to John Purvey.

3. Thomas Crump Jnr owned the boat and obviously came to console the grieving widow, resulting in my ancestor Isaac Crump being born in August 1821. Sarah had Mary and Isaac baptised on the same day at St Matthew's Church Windsor. Thomas didn't stay around.

4. Sarah, with three children, formed a new relationship with Edward Hewitson. Their first son Richard died aged two. Sarah then had Edward Hewitson in 1826, Sarah Hewitson in 1829 and William Hewitson in 1831. Sarah died in 1833 from pregnancy complications.

5. After my research on Sarah, I concentrated on Joseph and John. They appear on the 1805 muster but on no further musters or censuses. Many trees have Joseph and John married and dying, but with no paper proof of their existence after 1805. However, I doubt the validity of that research.

The 1805 Muster shows Isabella Manson with two boys and two girls, I have mentioned the two

boys and Sarah above, but who was this second girl, who other researchers had named Mary? I searched Ancestry public member trees in the early 2000s for a Mary Rowe finding many trees had Mary married to Charles Herbert. There are several Mary Row/e's who were convicts; they were eliminated.

I spent a lot of time near Ballina with a fourth cousin who descends from Mary Yardley, I descend from Isaac Crump. We research together. Not sure why, but my cousin had ordered Dr CJ Smee's book on colonial births<sup>1</sup> from the State Library in Sydney, sent to the Lismore Family History Library at Goonellabah, which she could borrow for a short time. We were sitting together looking at marriages, when we found Mary Carroll BC (born in the colony) married to Peter McCardle, also known as Peter Carroll on 4 March 1811 at Windsor. Both signed with an 'x'.

I remember we clapped our hands together, because this had to be our Mary. With a marriage date for Mary the next step was to find children. The first child on NSW BDM and the parish register for Windsor is Francis (male) Carroll born 27 Oct 1815. A second child Joseph born 15 Dec 1817 appears

on NSW BDM as McCarroll. When people could not read or write, they would not have known what was being written by the Minister.

Siblings Francis and Joseph Carroll, who were enrolled in the Liverpool Orphan school in 1826 were thought to be Mary's children, but research at State Records, NSW (now Museums of History), showed these children's mother was Bridget. Bridget's son Francis Carroll died in 1827 at the Liverpool Orphan school.

The 1822 NSW Muster shows Mary Carroll was living in Sydney with children 'Francis age seven and Joseph age five'. Mary has left Peter before the 1828 census. Mary and Joseph Carroll were living with a William Brown at Richmond. Peter Carroll was living in Sydney. There was no Francis. Mary's trail was getting cold.

The family lines of John and Isabella Rowe became entwined with the lines of Joseph Craft (*Albermarle*) and Sarah Robinson's (*Earl Cornwallis*) children, Joseph born 1809, Edward born 1812 and Phillis born 1825. Edward Craft married Mary Yardley, Isaac Crump married Phillis Craft, and Joseph Craft had children with a Frances Carroll from 1836. Who was this Frances?

Many Ancestry public member trees had Peter Carroll born 1772 in Louth, Ireland, who died 1831 in Windsor, and Ann Pickett (1795-1836) as Frances's parents.

There is no better research than looking at the early parish registers. Peter and Ann Carroll had Mary Ann in 1815, so it was not possible they also had a Frances in 1815. Joseph Craft and Frances Carroll married in 1840. To us, it meant Frances was free to marry. A check of marriages at NSW BDM showed Frances Carroll married James Douglas in 1832 at Scots Church, Sydney. When I viewed the original marriage on the Parish Register for Scots Church, there were two important points. Peter Carroll was a witness at the marriage, meaning Frances was not a Francis. Frances could not be the child of Peter Carroll and Ann Pickett, because that Peter Carroll died in 1831.

It is also time well spent looking through the early parish registers of the Newcastle Anglican Parish online, if your ancestors were Anglican, and your early families lived in the area. For the areas not online, there are reels up to 1905 at the National Library and many State Libraries. Looking through the Lower Hawkesbury baptisms, I found a baptism for a James

Aughty/Haughty with parents James Aughty and Mary Carroll. With Isabella Rowe and daughter Sarah living in this area, could this be her? Sarah had died in 1833. Had Mary left William Brown and moved to Mangrove Creek? There were no further children for James Aughty and Mary Carroll. A check of NSW BDM showed James Aughty the son, married widow Elizabeth Pike in 1859. James died childless. His death transcription lists his mother as Mary Rowe, further proof that Mary Carroll was Mary Rowe.

Joseph Carroll was noted as living at Mangrove Creek. *Government Gazette* notices show James Rowe and Joseph Carroll were granted permission to cut timber in the Gosford area between 1854 and 1870. Joseph is also mentioned at the inquest into the death of Joseph Foulkes in 1853. Isabella Manson had been his housekeeper after John Rowe died. Isabella died in 1847 and from that time Joseph lived with James Rowe. I know there is a relationship with Isabella, but there is no baptism for James. At his Inquest Joseph Folkes/Foulkes was recorded as being on crutches. He had taken a boat up the creek to visit William Craft but had fallen out of the boat and was injured. Joseph then went to stay with Joseph Craft, the husband of

Frances. James Rowe described Joseph at the inquest as his father-in-law, meaning step-father. He brought the injured man to his house, but Joseph died shortly after. James Rowe, Joseph Carroll and William Craft gave evidence at the inquest.

I have bought death transcriptions and investigated the deaths of many Mary Carroll's, with no proof that any were our Mary. My fourth cousin called a couple of years ago, saying, "look at the death for a Mary Card in the Gosford parish registers for 1847 and NSW BDM. I think its Mary Carroll". This death for Mary is three months before the death of Isabella Rowe. There were no Card families living in the area at the time. Another close cousin who has studied ancient script, and also descends from Sarah with links to Frances Carroll, looked at the entry and agreed that

the word is Carol, not the correct spelling but the correct age, place and relationship to be our Mary Rowe.

Last year, I was checking the deaths for a Joseph Carroll and found a Joseph who died at Parramatta in 1904. The only way to know if he was the son of Mary Rowe was to purchase the death transcription. It did list his father as Peter Carroll and mother as Mary Rowe.

Long hours of research with original documents, have provided the answer. Mary Carroll, nee Rowe, is the daughter of First Fleeter John Rowe and Isabella Manson.

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# The Plunkett Twins

Grahame Thom

Some years ago I read a very well researched and written biography about John Hubert Plunkett 1802-1869, by Dr John Moloney. It included brief references to his older twin brother Christopher George. Then recently I came across more information about Christopher that indicated their varied lives. I just had to find out more about Christopher.

Christopher's and John's ancestors were an Irish catholic family going back hundreds of years in County Roscommon, Ireland. They were members of the Irish landed gentry.<sup>1</sup>

Christopher George Plunkett was born on 1 June 1802, at Mount Plunkett, County Roscommon, twin son of George Plunkett and Ellen O'Kelly. His twin brother was John Hubert Plunkett. They had two sisters, Margaret Isabella born in 1795 and Kate Amelia born in 1813.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1825 and 1850 Ireland experienced severe and worsening economic stress. Many of the landed gentry were adversely affected financially. Falling rents, mass tenant insolvency, and the inability to collect arrears undermined estate incomes.

Some landlords became heavily indebted or bankrupt. In January 1839 the High Court of Chancery in Ireland considered action taken by Cornelius Crotty against Christopher George Plunkett and others. The Court took into account several prior actions in 1830, 1832 and 1838, and decided to auction in Dublin, on 11 April, several Plunkett estates in the County of Roscommon.<sup>3</sup> Later Crotty owned Mount Plunkett. The Plunketts had suffered financially and several responded by leaving Ireland.

Earlier, John had obtained an appointment as Solicitor-General in the Colony of New South Wales. He arrived in Sydney on 14 June 1832 aboard the ship *Southworth*, sailing from Cork with his wife Maria and sister Kate. He made a significant contribution to the colonial administration while Attorney-General of New South Wales (1836 - 1856), and as a member of the Executive Council (1842-1856). He died in East Melbourne on 9 May 1869.<sup>4</sup> He had no children.

When their father George died, he was described as a "highly respectful and much esteemed gentleman".

George died on his way home from Dublin in December 1834. Their mother Elly Eliza died at her residence Bedford Lodge, Clontarf, near Dublin on 15 January 1853.<sup>5</sup>

In Sydney, the twins' sister Kate Amelia Plunkett married Francis L. S. Merewether at St Mary's Church, on 17 March 1840.<sup>6</sup> Francis later became a prominent public servant as Postmaster-General, then a member of the Executive Council.<sup>7</sup>

In June 1850 several colonial newspapers expressed concern about nepotism in the Colony of New South Wales. Included as an example was the following<sup>8</sup> :-

*We append the following by way of illustration, and leave the facts, without comment, as affording another link to the long chain of government patronage with which both the Crown and its dependencies are so invidiously trammelled. Attorney-General Plunkett his nephew, Mr. George Plunkett, clerk in the Crown Solicitor's Establishment; his nephew, Mr. William Plunkett, clerk in the Sheriffs Department; his nephew, Mr. Cain, in the Custom's Department; his cousin, Mr. John Moore Dillon, Criminal Crown Solicitor; his cousin, Mr. Shields (late Surveyor of the Corporation of Sydney), Engineer to the Railway Company.*

This may be one of the reasons why

Christopher, John's brother, sailed to Victoria to live soon after arrival in Sydney.

It is said that Christopher had a good education and joined the army in his early life.<sup>9</sup> In 1834 he was appointed a magistrate for County Roscommon and on the death of his father the same year, became the head of the Mount Plunkett family. Christopher married Elizabeth Anna Jessie Kelly in Ireland in the 1820s.<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth appears to have died sometime before 1850.

Christopher then married Anne Sproule on 28 January 1850 in Athlone, Ireland. Anne was said to be a cousin of the Countess of Argyle and a great-grand niece of Oliver Goldsmith.<sup>11</sup> At about the same time Christopher resigned as a magistrate.<sup>12</sup>

In September 1850, Christopher, Anne and Christopher's daughter Maria sailed to Sydney via Adelaide on the ship *Jane Morrison*. They arrived in Sydney on 23 October.<sup>13</sup>

Two weeks later, after meeting his brother John and his wife, Mr C. Plunkett, Mrs and Miss Plunkett, sailed from Sydney on 10 November 1850 on the brig *Prince of Wales* for Melbourne.<sup>14</sup>

It did not take long for Christopher

to obtain an appointment, possibly with John's help. Christopher George Plunkett, Esq., of Port Phillip was appointed as Police Magistrate for Kilmore, Kyneton and Seymour districts on 29 January 1851.<sup>15</sup> He was the first magistrate appointed to serve at Kilmore.

Soon after at Kilmore, he presided over the Court of Petty Sessions on Tuesday, 18 March 1851, hearing a claim that Thomas Reid and his son (absconded) had not complied with a written agreement with Mr O. W. Morgan, agent for William Hamilton, Esq., of Glenaroua; verdict, guilty, three months imprisonment, son to be apprehended.<sup>16</sup>

At the Kilmore Court of Petty Sessions on Tuesday, 17 June 1851, before the bench, including C. G. Plunkett Esq., PM, Underwood, a carrier was fined £2 and seven shillings costs, for working his team, without permission, a bullock owned by Colonel Anderson.<sup>17</sup>

Probably not long after arriving in Kilmore, Christopher donated £50 sterling to the Catholic Parish of Kilmore towards funding the construction of a parish church.<sup>18</sup> This was a significant donation indicating that he was reasonably wealthy.

Victoria was proclaimed as a separate colony on 1 July 1851.

Objections appeared in the press to Mr Plunkett standing for election as a representative for the borough of Kilmore in the 1851 election of the first Legislative Council of Victoria, on the basis that he held a Government position.<sup>19</sup> It was confirmed that Mr Plunkett could not stand for election.

An important meeting was held at Morris's Hotel on Monday 17 June 1853, called as a result of the rumoured removal of the present respected police magistrate Mr Plunkett. A memorial signed by all classes of inhabitants was presented to the Governor a few days later. Also £200 was donated by Kilmore residents for the purpose of presenting Mr Plunkett with a suitable testimonial of respect.<sup>20</sup>

On 24 January 1853 a deputation waited on C. G. Plunkett, Esq., PM, at the Court House, to present him with a complimentary address on the eve of his reported removal to Swan Hill. After a short and very appropriate address, delivered by William Rawlins, Esq., solicitor, the following address was read and delivered by him to Mr Plunkett.

*Sir, we, the undersigned inhabitants of Kilmore, have heard with the most unfeigned regret that it is the intention of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to remove you from the discharge of your duties*

*of police magistrate of the district. During your sojourn amongst us, the uniform integrity displayed by you in your decision of the numerous and conflicting cases heard before you, and the conscientious discharge of your other duties, as chief magistrate, have commanded the respect and admiration of the district. Prior to your departure from us we beg your acceptance of the accompanying testimonial of the high regard and esteem in which you are held by us, and with the most heartfelt wishes for the prosperity of you and your family, We remain, Sir, Yours Faithfully,*  
*J SHEEHAN, JAMES McKENZIE, J K TRAINOR, and 150 others.*

Christopher responded by saying:

*I am glad to find that I continue to give satisfaction to all classes in my official capacity...*

and indicated his disappointment

*... at having been appointed to a remote station.*

On the following Wednesday a deputation waited on his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, consisting of the following: - P. Snodgrass, Esq., MLC; Messrs. J. K. Trainor, Henry Maurice, Dr. Pierce, Thomas Quinn, Thomas Woods, to present a petition numerous signed, praying his Excellency that Christopher George Plunkett, Esq., might be continued as Police Magistrate of Kilmore. His Excellency received the deputation

in the kindest manner, but stated in reply, he could not comply with the prayer of the Petitioners.<sup>21</sup>

The following is an extract from the *Illustrated Sydney News* later in the year.

**GOLD CUP PRESENTED TO C. G. PLUNKETT, ESQ**

*This beautiful specimen of colonial workmanship is the manufacture of Mr. Alfred Lorking, of the Goldsmiths' Hall, George Street. The cup weighs thirty ounces, and stands about eleven inches high; it is surmounted by a statuette, emblematical of Justice holding the sword and scales. On one side is engraved the arms of Mr. Plunkett and on the other the following inscription: "Presented to Christopher George Plunkett Esq., PM, by the people of Kilmore, in appreciation of the upright and impartial manner in which he has discharged his public duties, and esteem for him as a private gentleman whilst a resident amongst us. February, A.D. 1853. An elegant case of Moreton Bay tortoise-shell has been manufactured at the same establishment for the preservation of the cup."<sup>22</sup>*

Christopher George Plunkett was appointed as Police Magistrate at Swan Hill on 7 February 1853.<sup>23</sup>

An advertisement appeared in *The Argus* that Lot 14, Section 6, 3 roods 18 perches in Sydney Street, Kilmore, was for sale on 1 April 1853; this brick cottage, occupied by C. G. Plunkett

Esq., had four rooms, a four-stalled stable and a beautiful garden. It was available for immediate possession and produces £200 per annum.<sup>23</sup>

It appeared Christopher did not take up his appointment, for in March 1855 Mr John O'Shanassy, member of the Legislative Council, advised the Council that

*Mr Plunkett ... had not received the office of police magistrate at Swan Hill.*<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps he remained in Kilmore for his daughter Maria Eliza, aged 25, married Andrew O'Loughlin in Kilmore on 28 February 1854.<sup>25</sup> They had at least two children in Victoria.

Christopher was then appointed as Clerk of Petty Sessions at Horsham, on 19 June 1855.<sup>26</sup> This role appears to be a demotion and was probably not taken up by Christopher as soon after he was appointed Clerk of the Peace, and Registrar of the County Court, Sandhurst, Bendigo, on 3 August 1855.<sup>27</sup>

There were several newspaper reports in 1855 and 1856 appearing in *The Bendigo Advertiser* criticising the court appearances of Christopher. For example, in December 1855:

*The progress of business was constantly impeded by either his incapacity or indolence of the Registrar, Mr Plunkett, who literally did scarcely anything right."*

and in April 1856:

*We regret to learn that Mr Plunkett, the Clerk of the Peace, does not seem to improve in his method of discharging the duties of his office.*<sup>28</sup>

It is difficult to comment on what this means but his performance must have caused concern.

His death notice states he died on 7 February 1857 at his residence in Sandhurst near Bendigo, Victoria. The notice advised that Christopher George Plunkett, Esq., JP, of Mount Plunkett, Ireland, and brother of John Hubert Plunkett Esq., late Attorney-General of Sydney, died in his 54th year. As his death certificate<sup>29</sup> stated he died of cholera after only four days his death was unexpected.

From the time Christopher arrived in Kilmore, nothing was found referring to Christopher's wife Anne. Her name does not appear on his headstone in the White Hills Cemetery, Bendigo, which was erected by his brother John.<sup>30</sup>

John had a very successful career in Sydney, while Christopher's career seemed to decline after some successful early appointments in Victoria.

**References available upon request.**

# John Boxall - Seeking a Simple Answer

Robyn Coghlan

In 2008, I published a book on my father's family history, *From London to the Antipodes*, a copy of which is in the Family History ACT library. It lists the known facts and analyses the problems in assessing and identifying the various factors regarding family structure prior to 1841 when ten-year censuses were instituted.

My family research started in 1986. Ordinary BDM and census records provided enough information for me to build my family tree to a certain extent.

**My father**, Alfred Boxall, was born in Hammersmith, London in 1906. He came to Australia in 1911 along with his parents, Frederick Boxall and Louisa Tilbury, and his brother, Fred.

**My grandfather**, Frederick Boxall, was born in Shepherds Bush, London in 1881, but grew up in neighbouring Hammersmith. He moved to Sydney in early 1911 to prepare for the arrival of other family members on the SS *Pakeha* later that year.

**My great grandfather**, Alfred Boxall was born in 1845 in Agar Town, London. Along with his wife, Sophia Elizabeth Banham, he also moved to Australia, arriving in Sydney on 7 December 1911 per SS *Matatua*. Alfred's older brother, Thomas (born in 1834), had migrated to New Zealand in 1875, along with his wife, Rose Harriet Smith, and eleven children (two more were born in New Zealand). Was this the inspiration for his youngest brother to migrate to Australia in 1911? The economy of both New Zealand in 1875 and Australia in 1911 had been flourishing, but were starting to decline at the time.

**My great-great grandfather**, John Boxall, born about 1806-7, is a mystery. He was a carver and gilder by trade and lived with his wife, Sarah Hugkulstone, mainly in the Marylebone-Regents Park area of London, moving home every few years. In the censuses from 1841 to 1881, John cited his residence as being "St Pancras". He died in 1891 in a retirement facility in Islington, Sarah having

pre-deceased him in 1889. His name, in the 1891 census, was recorded as Jno Vauxhall, aged 84 and born in St Giles.

To date, I have been unable to identify the origin of this John Boxall. He was first recorded in his marriage to Sarah Hugkulston at St George Bloomsbury on 23 September 1824, shown below.

In the censuses from 1841 to 1891, John's age was always stated such as to suggest a birth year of 1806-7, which would have made him only 18 when he married in 1824. His wife's age was always stated as the same as his, except for the 1861 census when John was away in Brighton, Sussex. On this occasion, Sarah stated her

age as two years older. In fact, she was probably the child born to John and Margaret Huggleston on 15 July 1804 and baptised on 2 September 1804 at St Mary's, Marylebone.

John's visit to Brighton, Sussex, in 1861 suggests that this could have been where his family originated. He was, however, visiting a friend from London, John Atwell, who had married Eliza Woodman, a woman born in Upper Bosham in Sussex. Both subsequently moved from London to Brighton.

### Their children

John and Sarah's children were named Mary Ann, John Edward, William Gulland, Thomas, Henry,

No. 1054

John Boxall of this Parish  
and Sarah Hugkulston of this Parish  
were married in this Church by Burns  
this Twenty-third Day of  
September in the Year One thousand eight hundred and twenty-four.  
By me John Boxall  
This Marriage was solemnized between us Sarah Hugkulston her + mark  
In the Presence of John Burnside Langley  
Sarah Ann Langley  
No. 1055



*St George Church, Bloomsbury*

Frederick, Robert and Alfred.

These names reflect Sarah's Hugkelstone siblings: John, Robert, Edward, Mary and Jane.

Interestingly, John and Sarah Boxall travelled over 14 kilometres (as the crow flies) from Marylebone to Woolwich for the baptism of their second son, William Gulland Boxall in 1831. Also baptised at that service was John Bruce Gulland, son of Elizabeth and John Gulland. John Wilson Gulland, an artilleryman, had married Elizabeth Havlin in Plumstead, Kent in 1826. Plumstead adjoins Woolwich and is the site of the Royal Arsenal. No family link between this couple and my Boxall line is obvious at this stage.

Of the Boxall children in the next generation, the common names of John and Sarah's grandchildren are: John (3), Sarah (3), Mary Anne (3), Charles (3), Edward (2), Alice (2), Louisa (2), Helena (2), William (2), Arthur (2), George (2), Thomas (2), Emma (2), Frank (2), Frederick (2) and Ada (2). These do not shed light on the family's origins.

### **A French Connection?**

Many French people migrated to London following the Norman conquest of 1066 and the French Revolution (1789-1799). A study of the French in London recorded that "a privy council census of London, made between 1638 and 1639, shows 641 French residents of Westminster, as opposed to a French-speaking population of 558 in or near the City, which included 330 Walloons. Most of these City-dwellers were occupied in the weaving industry, but the French in Westminster had more varied kinds of work, being described as painters, picture drawers, limners, engravers, musicians and silverworkers." This could possibly include John Boxall, carver and gilder.

These refugees settled in London suburbs consistent with the London locations in which John

Boxall is known to have lived – St Pancras, St Marylebone, St Giles, Bloomsbury, Soho etc.

An alternative possibility is that John is descended from the Sussex area where the name 'Boxall' is reasonably common. The Norman Conquest of 1066 ended in East Sussex with the Battle of Hastings which was won by William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy. The possibility that my Boxall family origins are French is yet to be proven and might prove even more difficult given the possibility of name changes by those who needed to protect their identity.

## Conclusion

Given the common practice of people moving from their birth home to London, my John's birth place could well be anywhere in Britain or, indeed, anywhere in Europe. No available records that definitely apply to John's birth have yet been identified. Of the many John Boxalls born in the London area and considered as a possibility, all have proved to be, most likely, a different person. It is, therefore, time to devote more effort to DNA results.

# Thomas Ramage - Where are you?

Pauline Ramage

Are you the settler Thomas, who arrived in the early days of Melbourne, Victoria and married Margaret McCormack at the Scots Presbyterian Church in Melbourne in 1840; who shared a residence with William Dove and his wife Jane in Wood's Flat, and is the great grandfather of my husband, John?

In the *Port Phillip Directory of 1840*, you were employed as a sawyer with the Red Gum Forest, County of Bourke, and your signature on the official document does indicate you were a well-educated young man. The ages of the occupants listed are from 21-45 years. There is another record in the *Western Victoria Stations* that William Dove and you received a licence from the County of Bourke to cut timber at the Red Gum Forest from 1844 to 1846.

A notebook found at Barbara Ramage's home in Violet Town, Victoria, was written by your granddaughter, and she does mention you were born in Scotland and your wife Margaret

McCormack's maiden name was Hague. The first three children's middle name is 'Hague', and I understand it is a Scottish tradition to use names from the grandmother's side of the family, particularly if they were wealthy.

Family stories claim the family owned a wealthy ship building company in Glasgow, Scotland and also in Belfast, Ireland. They claim the 1830s saw you visiting Ireland yearly to check on the business. One year you went, and you met Margaret; you returned to Scotland and asked if you could marry her, but she was a Catholic, and the answer was 'no'. You were not allowed to go back for a couple of years, until the family thought it safe. You went back, but never returned to Scotland; instead you came to Australia with Margaret, and married her in Melbourne in 1840. I wish I could find the shipping record.

There were seven children to the marriage who were all born in Victoria:

**James Hague** b.1841 at Stringy Bark Forest, m. Ann Aldridge, in 1874 Benalla, and d.1914;

**Mary Ann Hague** b.1842 at Stringy Bark Forest, m. John Brew in 1861 Castlemaine, d.1915;

**Thomas Hague** b.1844 at Stringy Bark Forest, m. Elizabeth Aldridge in 1869 Violet Town, d.1931;

**Daniel** b.1846 at Red Gum Flat, m. Amey Maria Croxford in 1870 Violet Town, d.1923;

**Catherine Ann** b.1848 at Dandenong, d.1853;

**Jane Maria** b.1850 at Brighton, m. James Croxford in 1867 Violet Town, d.1931, and

**Elizabeth Allan** b.1852 at Templestowe, m. William Hill in 1870 Violet Town, d.1934.

Your wife Margaret and several of the children are buried in the Violet Town cemetery in Victoria.

My research has found there were two children whose parents were Margaret Ramage and Benjamin Butcher.

**Emily Butcher Ramage**, b.1856 at Bulleen, d.1856 at three weeks of age and is buried at the Heidelberg

cemetery, and

**Edward Butcher Ramage**, b.1857 at Eltham, m. Julia Ann Burns in 1879, Violet Town, d. 1936.

Researching records of the time, a convict named Thomas Ramage was found (I thought he may have been you). He was born in Edinburgh Scotland, married to Isabella Colling/Colton, and aged 20 years when convicted in 1831 at Edinburgh and transported to Van Diemen's Land. There was a child of the marriage, Alexander, who was baptised as a Roman Catholic at St Andrews, Dundee, Scotland. No records of the convict leaving Van Diemen's Land, or a life there under the name Ramage, have been found. Of course, he may have changed his name. Your marriage certificates indicates that you were a bachelor when you married Margaret McCormick in 1840. The Thomas Ramage who was convicted in 1831 may well have served his sentence by this time, and may have lied. But I do not think he is you.

A family conversation at your eldest son James's home in Violet Town, and reported to me by an elderly relative, suggested you may have gone to the goldfields; however, the family never heard from you again!

Directories, other states' BDM records, probate and inquest records were all searched, but your name did not appear. Did you go to other goldfields in New Zealand or California, or did you return to Scotland?

The names of your parents, your age, or where or when you were born in Scotland is not recorded in any documents viewed to date, and remains unknown.

There is a direct Ramage male line to you from my husband John, through my father-in-law Walter, through his father James, to you Thomas. I decided to sponsor a Y-DNA test through Family Tree DNA which requires such a male direct line. Your great great grandson's (my son's) DNA was collected. To date there are three exact matches.

I contacted John Young, one of the matches. He informed me that his ancestors left Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Scotland in the 1840s and migrated to Vermont in north eastern America. His great-grandfather was James M. Young, who settled in Craftsbury, USA in the 1880s. Now, Ayrshire is not far from Glasgow!

So as a new line of research begins, I will continue looking for

information and documentation about your ancestors before the 1840s to find the elusive connection.

Thomas Ramage, I have been searching for you since 1985.

Will I ever find you?

# Ingredients for a biography

Elaine Gifford

**Take one lad**, working away from home as an agricultural labourer. George Ellis had been loved by his mother and his coachman father. But then both his mother and his third baby brother had died. Later, father Benjamin had remarried.

So being sent away to work hadn't been a bad thing. His eyes had been opened to life beyond his small village of Crowhurst in Surrey. Only 17 miles away here in Horsham in Sussex there were many streets and some grand buildings. Markets serving the surrounding farms buzzed with activity. There was even gas lighting. It was hard to imagine any more in life.

**Add** in a poster. There WAS a possibility of more. Unbelievably more. The offer of a new life in some place called South Australia. People like him – and shepherds, servants and tradesmen – could expect plenty of work, and even harder to conceive, could actually aspire to land of their own.

And how to get there? Free passage! Not having seen the

sea, he wasn't quite sure what that meant, but he liked the word FREE. He was nineteen, with no ties (his father had died the previous year), so why not? He applied right there in Horsham.

**Add** about 100 days at sea. The voyage on the *Rajasthan* was a good one. The paying passengers had a merry time, and even those in steerage had no cause to complain.

**Add** arrival in a new colony whose European settlement only began four years earlier, in 1836, with land schemes in place – and plans to bring in workers to avoid any thought of convict labour.

**Add** a difficult trek up hills on bush tracks to work in a developing area, soon to become the town of Macclesfield about 25 miles or two days' journey by horse and cart from Adelaide.

**Add** seven years' work in this new environment with its wilderness of grasses and dense eucalypt trees, observing the success of crops and grazing and household gardens

on fertile land. And saving some earnings, looking to a future his parents could not have imagined.

**Now add** a girl who had arrived from Wiltshire only months after George with her parents and seven siblings. By 1847 Sophia Ransom Maidment was eighteen. A gum slab chapel was newly built for Congregational worship. It was time for marriage and even bigger dreams for George.

**Add** a new settlement a little to the south, still in hill country, and also with productive land. No town yet, but scattered farms among larger holdings. "Fine meadow flats", said one observer. Time for George and Sophia to settle in what would become the town of Meadows.

Let one of George's obituaries outline the other ingredients:

*OBITUARIES OF THE WEEK*  
(1905, July 22).

*Mr. George Ellis*

*The death is announced, in his eighty-sixth year, of Mr. George Ellis, who for 65 years was a well-known and highly respected colonist. He arrived in the ship Rajasthan in 1840, and with the exception of a short visit to the Victorian goldfields resided in South Australia. For about 30 years he was engaged in farming and store-keeping at the Meadows, and subsequently at*

*Port Adelaide and Semaphore. During the past five years he lived in retirement at Hyde Park. Mr. Ellis was for many years an active member of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church, and subsequently attended Manthorpe Memorial Church. He has left a widow, six sons – Messrs. William and George (of the Meadows), Charles (Victoria), Benjamin (Adelaide), Edwin (Covent Garden, King William street), Frederick (Birt & Co., Sydney, but now on a visit to England); five daughters – Mesdames Jury (Magill), Hamlyn (Hyde Park), and Murray (Western Australia), and the Misses F. and L. Ellis (Hyde Park); 50 grandchildren, and 25 great-grandchildren.<sup>1</sup>*

**Add** a golden wedding anniversary photo of George and Sophia in 1897 with nine of their eleven children – testament to the cohesion of the family.

**Now savour** being one of the multitude of descendants of this pioneering couple.

How could nineteen-year-old George possibly have imagined the legacy he would leave as a result of his bold move?

## Reference

1. *Observer* (Adelaide, SA:1905 -1931), p. 34. Retrieved 24 Jan 2026, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article 162436264>.



*Author's image of a large framed photograph held by Murray Dadds, a x2 great-grandson of George and Sophia. Back row: Edwin, Emily, Benjamin, Fanny, George; Front row: Louie, William, George senior, Mary, Sophia, Ellen; Absent: Charles and Frederick.*

# Meabella Catherine Smith

Tony Fitzpatrick

Meabella was one of six known children of Richard West Smith and Mary Anne Furlong. She was born in 1824 according to her death certificate in 1906 at the age of 82, although other documents show her birth date as: arrival in Australia – 22 (i.e. born in 1831), marriage in Australia – 24 (i.e. born in 1830), and the 1901 Census – 72 (i.e. born in 1829).

Meabella came to Australia per *Earl of Charlemont*, a ship of 878 tons built in New Brunswick, Canada in 1849. The ship was carrying 366 passengers plus crew, 455 people in total. The captain was William Gardner. The first port of call was to be Port Phillip before continuing to Sydney.

Meabella was accompanied by her sisters Mary Ann and Kate, and brother, Richard. She 'left behind' another sister, Frances Mary, my x2 great-grandmother, and a brother Charles Webber. According to the ship's manifest, the group was expecting to disembark at Sydney. Reports of the voyage were not complimentary. *The Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* on

Tuesday, 21 Jun 1853, Page 2, reported:

*Nearly all the passengers we have seen complain bitterly of the owners of the ship; the provisions were scarce and bad, and the crew a most unruly lot, picked up for the run at a few shillings each.*

*The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.) on Wednesday, 22 June 1853, Page 2, reported:

*One general complaint prevails, however: that is the ship was badly supplied with provisions, and that the crew were a bad lot of men, – the passengers asserting, that they were subjected to a wholesale system of plunder by some of these fellows during the whole voyage; not only their clothes, but even their rations were stolen from them.*

But worse was to come. This is the statement of Captain Gardner:

*Made Cape Otway Lighthouse, between two and three o'clock on Friday afternoon. Steered N.E. by E., wind S. W. Double-reefed topsails, furled foresail, mainsail, and jib: sailing about four knots. Continued this course until about half-past five o'clock, when hove to. At this time I judged the ship to*

be about six or seven miles from the land; weather squally with rain, and hazy; About eleven o'clock wore<sup>1</sup> ship. Steered from S.E. by S., to S.S.E., until three o'clock, a. m., on Saturday. Squally, with rain. Wore ship to W. N. W. No land in sight. Supposed that the ship during the time she was hove to, had drifted from the land; judged that the land was about eight miles distant. Steered the above course until half-past 4 a.m. Wore ship to bear up for the harbor, which I judged to be distant about 15 miles, bearing N.E. About twenty minutes after this, found the ship in a sea way, which proved to be breakers. Immediately put the helm hard to port, and in a few seconds the ship struck heavily. I was on deck from ten minutes to 4 o'clock, a.m., to the time she struck. Set the foresail. In about ten minutes the tiller and wheel were carried away. At daylight ordered the foremast to be cut away, to lighten the ship forward, and get her further on the beach. Cut away the main-topmast rigging and back-stays, reserving the mainyard to get the boats out. Gig launched, and swamped. Jolly boat launched to convey a line on shore – it capsized, but the crew retained the line, and made it fast to the rocks. The line, however, was of no use, having fouled among some rocks in deep water. The long boat was next launched, and it capsized; then the life-boat, and it capsized – both boats losing the line. The latter

boat was saved from damage, and hauled up on shore by the crew. A passenger now volunteered to swim ashore with a line from the jib-boom, and succeeded in landing. To the line we attached a strong rope, which he and the men already there hauled on shore, and made fast to the rocks. The officers and men then launched the life-boat from the shore, and made the ship. This boat we now slung by head and stern, like a cradle, to the strong rope already made fast from the ship to the shore, and landed the passengers, the ladies and children first, then the invalids and married men, and then the remainder, – the captain remaining on board, and attending at the gangway, until all the passengers had been safely landed; the whole being effected without accident, by about half-past 8 o'clock at night. The cargo consists of coal, iron, bale and case goods; no spirits or tobacco on board.

Meabella, who was a very accomplished vocalist performed under the name Miabella Smith. An advertisement in the *Kerry Evening Post* dated 3 September 1851 shows her up-coming performance at the Concert Rooms at the Hibernian Hotel, Killarney where she would sing solo an Irish melody "Tho' the last glimpse of Erin" as well as several quartettes and quintettes.

CONCERT ROOMS,  
DALY'S HOTEL,  
The Inhabitants of Tuam and its Vicinity, are  
respectfully informed that a  
**GRAND CONCERT**  
WILL BE GIVEN BY  
**MADAME D'ANTERNEY,**  
(Prima Donna of the Grand Opera, Paris.)  
On Tuesday Evening next, Octo-  
ber 7, 1851,  
**WHEN** the following Eminent Artists will  
Appear :—  
**MISS MIABELLA SMITH, MISS SMITH,**  
MR. DALY,  
MONS. SEBASTIEN;  
MONS. ROECKEL,  
Professor, will Preside at the Piano Forte.  
**PROGRAMME.**  
FIRST PART.  
PRELUDE...De la Musique de Pastic...*(Andr.)*...  
The Minors Smith, Mons. Roedel, Mr. Daly,  
Mons. Sebastian.  
ARIA...“Oh, would I were a boy again,”...*(F. Roedel)*...Mr. Daly.  
JACK MELLODY...“The last Rose of Summer”...  
*(Mons.)*...Miss M. Smith.  
FANTASIA for the Pianoforte...“On Lucia di  
Lammermoor”...*(Roedel)*...Mons. Roedel.  
Vocal Solo...“O Dieu des Dames de la Cour”...  
*(Andr.)*...Miss M. Smith.

Then, again, an advertisement in the *Kerry Evening Post* dated 13 September 1851 at the Concert Rooms at Blennerhassett Arms' Hotel in Tralee which was very much a repeat of the Killarney function.

*The Tuam Herald* dated 4 October 1851 advertised the Concert Rooms at Daly's Hotel, Tuam, where Miabella would perform two solos as well as several quartettes and quintettes.

In all three advertisements, as well as Miabella, there is mention of a

Miss Smith. This could have been one of her sisters, Mary Ann or Kate.

It didn't take long for Meabella to find her feet in the Colony. Her vocal talents came to the fore and Meabella was invited to perform on 12 September 1853 for Mrs Handcock's Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert at Melbourne's Mechanics' Institution. This was followed by a string of engagements throughout Melbourne and beyond.

Meabella married William Alker, a merchant of this city who had arrived in November 1852 per *Great Britain*, on 13 July 1854 at St Francis's Cathedral, Melbourne. It seems that marriage put an end to her singing career as I cannot find any further reference to performances.

**ALFRED PHILLIPS** has the honor to announce that he will repeat his popular Entertainment, entitled, "Our Native Land," at the Mechanics' Institution, this evening, Thursday, February 16th, and Saturday evening, February 18th. **Mrs. Miabella Smith**, the favorite vocalist, and **Mrs. George Cox**, whose success on Monday and Wednesday evenings was most complete, will appear each evening.  
Admission, 5s. and 2s. 6d. Members of the Institution, on presenting their cards, will be admitted at half-price. 420

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.) Thu 16 Feb 1854 Page 8

However, the following years were not kind to Meabella. While living in Collingwood in 1855, a son named William was born but sadly died just 19 days later. Her father died back in Dublin in September 1856 and her brother Richard West Smith who came to Australia with her and had established himself as a successful hotelier, died in July 1857 with his estate granted to her husband William. I have not found when Meabella and William left Australia to return to Ireland but a son, Joseph, was born 18 October 1860 in Dublin. He too died young, aged just 21 in 1882. Her sister Mary Anne, who had travelled with her to Australia, also returned to Dublin and died unmarried in November 1889. As for Kate (Catherine), I have not found any further information on her whereabouts.

There is no mention of either Meabella or her husband in any newspapers back in Ireland.

On the 1901 Irish Census, Meabella was living with her sister Fannie Fitzpatrick and two of Fannie's grand daughters, daughters of her second daughter, Mary Eliza.

Meabella died on 20 May 1906. She experienced the Great Famine, shipwreck on a voyage to Australia, marriage, and the

deaths of her infant son, brother and father while in Australia. Eventually she returned to Ireland where she gave birth to another son who, along with her husband William, predeceased her. A full and eventful life.

Apart from the entry in the 1901 Irish Census and a death notice she simply 'disappeared'. That is the problem with researching women; treated as a chattel, just a homebody, nothing to see here!

Her biography is lacking so much. Oh, what could have been!

# John Murray 1869-1938

Danny O'Neill

John Murray was the youngest of five children to Michael Snr and Johanna Murray née Heffernan, born on 11 Apr 1869, in the Tulla Workhouse Infirmary, located on the outskirts of Tulla, County Clare, Ireland. His father died only months later in the same Workhouse Infirmary.

His childhood years are a mystery, but at the age of 14 he embarked with his sister Margaret (Maggy) and mother Johanna per RMS *Almora*, arriving on 15 Jun 1883 in Brisbane, Queensland. They soon made their way up the coast to Townsville to join the older children, who had emigrated in three trips between 1876 and 1881, and settled in the Herbert River District. John and his mum were there for three years before Johanna became ill with typhoid fever and died in the Ingham Hospital on 15 Jun 1886.

Now aged 17, John is likely to have started exploring, looking for opportunities that might appeal. By the time he had turned 21, he was the licensee of the Globe Hotel in Rockhampton, as we see him in court proceedings against a Thomas Skiffins on 13 Oct 1891. Skiffins was notorious at writing bad cheques and



*John Murray, excerpt from family portrait, c1912*

this case was similar to many others he was prosecuted for, his targets usually hoteliers, but anyone was fair game.

For some reason, John was in Longreach, possibly droving or farming, when he met a Rockhampton girl named Catherine Kahl, and they married in the Roman Catholic Presbytery, Longreach on 2 Jan 1895, both aged nearly 26. Curiously, he lied on his marriage certificate as being born in Townsville

and not Tulla, Ireland; added the middle names of William Henery, and listed his father's occupation as a selector, no doubt to add weight to his claim of being born in Townsville.

This litany of lies was no doubt his intent to hide the fact that he was born in an Irish Workhouse Infirmary.

### John and Catherine's children

**Bertram Murray** was born on 21 Nov 1895 at Milo Station, Adavale near Charleville, but he sadly passed away a few months later on 2 Mar 1896. That may have prompted a move back to Rockhampton and resuming the hotel licence.

**Percival (Percy) Livingstone Murray** was born on 10 Mar 1897 in Rockhampton. John's sister Margaret had married Johann (Fredolin) Schmid on 28 May 1889, a butcher in Ingham, who had also bought the Royal Hotel at Lucinda Point (140 km north of Townsville) in 1902.

It looks like John kept returning to the Herbert district for periods, as he was appointed by Fredolin as licensee and manager of the hotel in 1902-3. The licence then passed onto John's sister Mary Theresa from 1904 to February 1906.

John returned to Rockhampton with his family, and again resumed the licence at the Globe Hotel when the licence renewal of Florence Hay was transferred to John Murray.

It was while John was in Rockhampton that he hired Margaret (Maggie) May Jones to work for him at the hotel. Margaret was suffering from curvature of the spine, and was known for always taking Bex or Vincent powders to ease the pain. She must have touched John's tender side, as he maintained close life-long contact with her. Margaret married Darcy Vincent O'Neill at the Court House in St George on 18 May 1927. Margaret features later in this story.

On 13 Oct 1907, John was charged with the sale of unlawful liquor at the Globe Hotel on a Sunday, and was fined £2, with 4s. 6d court costs. It was one of several hotels charged with a similar offence, and Sergeant E. Johnson asked for a substantial penalty for all.

As the Globe Hotel publican, John had formed friendships with other businessmen that respected and trusted his business acumen, and over the next few years was made the executor and trustee in a couple of significant Rockhampton identities' wills, and granted probate along with

the solicitor Robert Gamble Brown. These were William Henry Smith, and Hugh Fiddes. In particular, Smith's probate was contested by family, and several newspaper articles covered this.

John was doing well by this stage and on 15 Nov 1911 the family diversified their interests when Catherine bought 120 acres of agricultural land on Liverpool Creek near Innisfail for £70/2/5, recorded in the Brisbane register in Book 180, Folio 318.

He also enlisted in the AIF on 13 Jun 1917 in Brisbane, gaining the number Q21404, but was soon let go once they found out his real age, of 48, was over the accepted range, and he was discharged on 3 Oct 1917.

Around 1913, John Murray stopped being a publican, and moved down to the Sandgate-Redcliffe area, where it looks like he became an Alderman for Ithaca-Kelvin Grove in 1914-5.



*L-R: Unknown, John Murray holding unknown toddler, Catherine Murray née Kahl, Percy Livingstone Murray, c1912. Original held by Lorraine McNab née Herron, Imbil, Qld*

The next we hear of him was when he was nominated as an Alderman for the Sandgate Council on 28 Jun 1921. He had built several houses in Granville Street, Sandgate before and during his time as Alderman, and convinced the Sandgate Council to rename Granville Street, where he lived at one stage, to Murray Street.

On 21 Jun 1922, he made the papers again when he fell out of a tram as it rounded a bend near Bowen Bridge in Brisbane – drunk perhaps?

John's surviving son, Percy, is first seen on the electoral rolls in 1922 and 1925 working as a stockman in North Arm, Nambour. He married Emily Dorothy (Dolly) Davison at St John's in Nambour on 19 Apr

1923. It is likely they lived on the property where Percy was stockman at Yandina Creek, North Arm near Nambour until 1927.

John had also bought a farm at Gunalda in the early 1920s, and moved there sometime after leaving the Sandgate Council in 1925. John subdivided the Gunalda farm and gave a portion (about 212 acres) to Percy as a wedding gift.

So far, this story has been about young Irish immigrant doing well in Queensland, but the remainder of his life takes a darker turn where he hid unacceptable behaviour that would ultimately lead to his death. The following information was gleaned by gaining access to



*John Murray at his Gunalda Farm c1920s*

restricted adoption records through the Right To Information Act 2009 in Queensland in 2011, on behalf of my parents who were then alive, and conversations with them and my Aunt Betty.

### Grace Violet Bell

Around 1925 at the age of 56, John's wife Catherine Kahl had become bedridden to a large degree, so John brought in 14- year-old Grace Violet Bell from the nearby orphanage to help with the housework at Gunalda farm.

So was Grace fortunate to have been taken in, employed and eventually informally-adopted by John and Catherine Murray? In normal circumstances, possibly. However, within a year or so of her going to live and work in the Murray household, 15-year-old Grace was pregnant to her employer. Over the next six years Grace was to give birth to five children almost certainly fathered by him. We don't know how much sexual exploitation Grace endured at the whim of John Murray. We have no recollections of how either Catherine or Grace felt about the situation. At best, John's actions might be seen as a serious abuse of a power imbalance between an employer and a young and vulnerable employee.

### John and Grace's children

**Betty Bell** was born on 25 Apr 1927 at Cardiff, 38 Gowrie Street, Toowoomba, a suburban house set up as a birthing centre for unmarried women. John had sent Grace away to have her child. She returned to work for John and Catherine as she had no other means of support. Betty was adopted by John and Catherine from a very early age, and was known as Betty Murray.

My father **Cedric Bell** was conceived about six months later, and again, Grace was sent to Gowrie Street to give birth. He was born on 23 Aug 1928, but there was no chance of Cedric being adopted by John at this stage, according to a conversation in 2000 between Betty and the author.

Cedric was quickly adopted out to Darcy Vincent 'Vince' O'Neill, a shearer and Margaret May (Maggie) Jones. I had always wondered how Vince and Margaret came to adopt Cedric, and it wasn't until John's Inquest that the pieces in that puzzle fell into place. Since Vince and Maggie were already known to John from the time that he had employed her, the immediate application to adopt could be pre-arranged. It is believed they took him straight from the birthing cottage in Toowoomba back to St George where they lived,

a suitable distance of 550km away from the Murray farm.

Once Grace had filled out the Form of Renunciation [a formal declaration to the authorities to forfeit all rights to the child] Cedric was formally adopted and given the name John Bede O'Neill. Vince and Maggie lived in a red cottage in Alfred Street, St George at the Balonne Street end.

Grace was constantly torn by the fact that her low earnings and reluctant support of her employers, John and Catherine Murray, meant that she was unable to keep any of her children with her for more than a few days at a time. She continually struggled to see her children as much as she could, and many letters exist from her to the State Children's Department (SCD) Director, Mr Ferguson, in the adoption records.

**Francis (Frank) Bell** was born on 10 Aug 1929 at the Salvation Army home on Victoria Rd, Marrickville, NSW. Cyril Pollard (deceased) was named as the father, but that was probably a ruse to avoid naming the real father, whom we believe was John.

On her return from Marrickville to Gungalda, Grace was unable to keep Frank at home, so on 15 Sep 1929 she advised the SCD, who placed him at a registered nursing

home when he was five weeks old. Grace took him home to Gungalda whenever she could for a few days before returning him to his carer Mrs Waites.

However, on 6 Aug 1930, Mrs Waites' nursing home licence was revoked by SCD, and all children were removed.

Here is an abstract from a letter by Grace dated 11 Aug 1930 that illustrates the anguish Grace felt at not being able to adequately care for and nurture her children. In this letter, Grace is fighting for who she wants to raise Frank.

*Mrs. Kelly [from Mrs Waites Nursing Home] has been trying to remove this baby from the first day it got there. She succeeded at last, but oh in such an inhuman way. Surely Mr Ferguson, your department might have notified the baby's mother as your intention of removing it, perhaps you don't know, that even a girl having a baby before marriage [can] but love that baby dearly as any mother. I want you to understand that I hold your department responsible for the welfare of my baby Frank Bell, until he is delivered to me or to Mrs Waites or to Mrs Alice Westwood, Mrs Waite's daughter, as they loved the little fellow and cared for him well. If you will not*

*give either of them the right to run this game and give them Frankie back, will you be so kind to allow either of them to adopt him, as I know he will be well cared for with them. I absolutely decline to pay for anything for his keep, to whoever has him at the present time, as I have already paid in advance for his keep and it is impossible for me to pay twice. Unless something has been done to rectify this great wrong that has been done to me and my child, I will bring my case before the public of Queensland. By what I hear of you Mr Ferguson, I am sure that you will see that myself and baby gets a fair deal.*

*Yours truly*

*Miss Grace Bell*

Sadly, the letter did not change the outcome for Frank.

On 29 May 1931, Grace was staying at John Murray's cottage 'Rockdale' in Margate Parade, Redcliffe, presumably to facilitate a connection between her then two children under state care. From there she had written to the SCD advising she was going to place an advertisement for Frank and her new baby Joyce, as she was going west (believed to be Warwick) with the Murray family.

Mrs E. Lindemann of Waterford Logan Reserve answered the advert and looked after Frank for six years. On 20 Apr 1941 Frank was placed with the Indooroopilly Salvation Army in Brisbane. Only a one line entry survives of his time there. It appears he was there for three years until he was boarded with Mrs Herron on 20 Mar 1944 That is the last we hear of Frank.

**Joyce Merle Bell** was born on 31 Mar 1931 at the Salvation Army Home, Boothville in Brisbane. Her father is recorded as John Armstrong, deceased, but once again it is more likely John Murray was the father. Grace filled in the Form of Renunciation of Joyce on 23 May 1931. The last record of Joyce from the adoption papers is on 18 Nov 1935, she being at The Superior, a nursing home in Wynnum, Brisbane.

**Ronald John Bell** was the last child born to Grace while she lived with the Murrays. Taking another long train trip into NSW, Ronald was born on 23 Nov 1932 in Merewether, Newcastle. The father is again listed as the deceased Cyril Pollard.

Why Grace needed to go to Newcastle is unknown, but it may be that John wanted distance between his increasing number of illegitimate offspring. Was there talk around the

district? Grace kept Ronald at home for a few days before she decided to place him in a nursing home.

She later wrote to the SCD on 20 Feb 1934 advising that John and Catherine Murray were willing to adopt Ronald, as she could not keep paying the nursing home fee of 10 shillings per week and maintain herself on the wages she had. Grace filled out the Form of Renunciation two days later.

However, on 30 Jun 1936, Catherine Murray wrote to the SCD advising they were sending Ronald down to Mrs Mengel as they were going away for a lengthy period, and felt he would be better cared for there.

Ronald was adopted on 5 Aug 1937 by Digby Fowell, farmer, and Linda Besant Spry. Sadly, he died on 9 Sep 1948 from being kicked in the head by a horse in Louise St, Atherton in

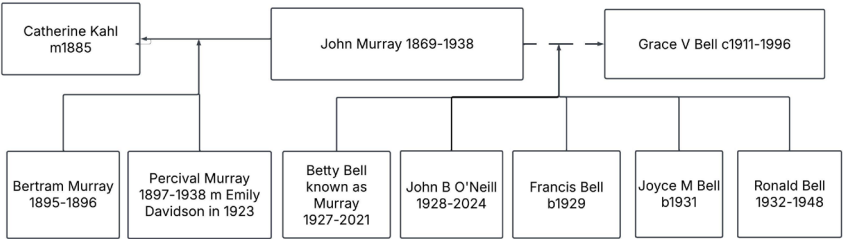
Far North Queensland.

Despite all the details of their early years in state care, the fates of two of Grace’s children, Frank and Joyce, are unknown. Catherine and Grace were both living at the cottage ‘Rockdale’ in Redcliffe when it was destroyed by fire on 24 Apr 1934. John also owned a property at 208 Brisbane Road, Monkland in Gympie and Betty remembers it was a beautiful home, but Catherine was always quiet and sad.

Deaths

At about age 68, Catherine Murray née Kahl passed away on 22 Apr 1937 in the Gympie Hospital from pernicious anaemia, with heart and respiratory failure.

According to Betty, after her death John ordered Vince O’Neill to leave St George and work



for him on his Gunalda farm. So my Dad and Margaret lived with John, Grace, and Betty, usually at 34 Jane Street, Gympie, but also on the farm at Gunalda. It appears John Murray wanted his 'family' with him before he passed.

John Murray's earlier reservations about Dad inheriting had softened, and it was likely he was feeling guilty and depressed about his conduct with Grace, as he made provision for Dad, Betty and Grace in his will.

Interestingly, John made Grace his sole Executrix and Trustee until she married, and then the Queensland Trustees would take over. His son Percy was given an oak chair and pendant from his Alderman days, a gold watch and chain and ring, and a motor car and shares, as he had already given Percy a portion of the Gunalda farm. The rest was for Grace and provision for the farm to be shared equally between Betty and Dad.

Unexpectedly, John Murray took his own life with four shots to the head at his home in Jane Street on 16 Apr 1938. The inquest was held on 29 Apr 1938 in Gympie.

## Inquest

The following is extracted from the 17 page document of the Inquest of

Death conducted on 29 Apr 1938 by the Coroner Stanley Wilson, Esq. The witnesses were:

- Leslie William Gray, Police Constable, Gympie;
- Margaret May O'Neill, domestic, St George, presently of Gympie;
- Grace Violet Bell, domestic, Gympie; and
- Leslie McDonald Outridge, Medical Practitioner, Gympie.

Constable Gray testified he was performing beat duty at about 4am on 16 April in Mary Street when he saw Dr Garth May, who requested the Constable attend John's house as there had been a shooting. He found there were four bullet wounds. He interviewed Mrs Margaret May O'Neill and Grace Violet Bell. They stated they were **adopted daughters of the deceased**.

Margaret O'Neill testified she was a married woman residing with her husband Vincent O'Neill in St George, being at present in Gympie on vacation. She had arrived in Gympie on 9 Apr 1938 and stayed at the house of her **foster-parent, the deceased John Murray**. She had brought her nine-year-old son [my Dad] with her.

She remembered that about 3pm on the 15th John took Margaret, her son and Grace in the car to the Gympie Cemetery, to see the

grave of her **foster-mother**. The deceased did not visit the grave, and they returned home. Later, the deceased looked in pain.

Some time in the night she noticed Grace get up from their shared bedroom and go to John's room. Grace came back out to get some hot water for John to inhale for his painful throat. Margaret noticed Grace came back and got dressed. She said she was going to ring the doctor for her **father**. When Grace left, Margaret went into John's bedroom and fanned him as he was hot. When she came out of the bathroom, she heard a gunshot and screamed. She did not go back into John's room and stayed on the verandah.

Grace Violet Bell was the next to testify, stating she was **the adopted daughter** of the deceased, and had been living at his home since Nov 1937, working as a housekeeper. [She had actually been with John since 1925 - author]. [John] had been seeing Dr. Garth May, who had prescribed pills for his heart condition, and she gave him one. John had said to her 'give me a morphia tablet I want to have a good night's sleep', and then Grace retired.

At about 3am John called out for some inhalant drops in a bottle. He

seemed very heavy at that time and hot. He asked Grace to get dressed and get the doctor. Grace went across the road to the Mulhollands. Before she got there, she heard a noise like a shot. She rang Dr May and asked for him to come quickly.

She heard a second shot and screaming, and went back to the house. She went into John's room and saw a spot on his head and that he appeared to be still breathing, so she fanned him.

Dr Leslie McDonald Outridge was the next to testify. John was dead when he arrived. The body was taken to the Hospital Morgue. The post mortem examination revealed four pellets in his head. Two of the pellets had flattened themselves on the outside of the skull, and caused a small fracture. The third pellet had not penetrated the brain but had caused a small triangular fracture about one inch across. The fourth pellet had entered the same fracture and penetrated the under surface of the brain for a distance of two inches, and was considered the cause of death. The thickness of the skull was definitely greater than the average.

John had also suffered from a chronic degenerative heart condition which caused severe angina attacks. The examiner thought the bullets

from this gun were very soft; were fired very close to the head and would have only stunned him; and considered it took great strength and determination to pull the trigger four times. The medical examiner was satisfied his death was suicidal.

My thoughts about John Murray are that his time in Ireland had made him an opportunist when he arrived in Queensland, and that he used people to better himself. Percy's son John W. Murray and kin always called John Murray 'the King', and were angry decades later when John's will favoured his illegitimate offspring, and not his legitimate son Percy.

The will did favour Grace, Betty and Dad, and I expect this was John's attempt to redeem his earlier behaviour. Grace eventually married and had two girls, but never told them about her life before marriage, always saying it was too sad to relive it. On Grace's death in 1996, one of the girls refused to accept the truth about Grace's life with John when it was revealed to them, and only now is her son interested in exploring the truth of his Grandmother Grace's life.



[Ed. This story is an amended excerpt from Danny's book *Murray and Arndell*, self and privately published in July 2024. The rarely-spoken-about truth in family history is that we sometimes find very difficult characters in our family to both understand, interpret and react to. I thank his honesty in putting it before us].

# Rev. Charles Bayliss Hill - Anglo-Indian Missionary and Educator

Sean Kelly

The discovery that my paternal grandfather's family had extensive links to British India – spanning multiple family lines over 150 years and up to seven generations, totalling well over a hundred individuals born in British India – has led me to a wealth of diverse and unexpected stories. One such story is that of one of my great-grandmother's many first cousins: Charles Bayliss Hill.

My family had never seemed particularly religious – lapsed Anglicans and Sunday Catholics for the most part – so finding a branch of the family replete with passionate Methodist missionaries and pastors – perhaps 15 over three generations – was quite a surprise. Even more unexpected was to find – with the help of the General Commission on Archives and History of the US Methodist Church, located in New Jersey – that one of them, Charles, had become a prominent and influential figure in the Methodist community in India.



## Finding a Calling His Own Way

Charles Bayliss Hill was born on 10 July 1869 in Coimbatore, the youngest child of Margaret and Moses Hill (1815-1890).<sup>1</sup> His father was a Queen's pensioner, having received a medical discharge from the British Army in 1857,<sup>2</sup> and then worked for a number of years as an Inspector of Police,<sup>3</sup> before

retiring to Coonoor in 1864.<sup>4</sup> His mother was the daughter of a fellow British soldier and his Indian wife, known only as Mary.<sup>5</sup> There was nothing in this background that suggested he might take the path of a missionary, although his Anglo-Indian heritage would have limited his career choices, and working for the church was one of a number of options open to a talented Anglo-Indian.

However, his father must have been a strong Methodist (his mother was raised in the Madras Female Military Orphan's Asylum, where she would have been raised Anglican<sup>6</sup>), such that all three of Charles' sisters married committed non-conformist Protestants. His eldest sister, Mary Ann (23 years older than him) had married the Reverend William Stokes (1837-1906) from the Basel Mission, also Anglo-Indian, who served in the area around Coonoor where Charles lived during much of his childhood.<sup>7</sup> His other older sister, Caroline, married Anglo-Indian Fawcett Eber Neville Shaw (1856-1920), who by 1884 had left a promising career as Manager at the Municipal Office of Coonoor,<sup>8</sup> to work with the Anglo-Indian Evangelism Society as a missionary, eventually being ordained as a Methodist pastor in 1889.<sup>9</sup> Both were likely strong role

models for Charles – his father was already a retiree in his mid-sixties when Charles was a teenager, and his only brother, Thomas (21 years his senior), died in 1882 when Charles was still only 13 years old.<sup>10</sup>

Charles completed high school at the Methodist-run Baldwin Boys' High School in Bangalore as a boarder, then attended Doveton College in Madras (but withdrew in 1887 before graduation).<sup>11</sup> While his upbringing might have suggested a career with the church, Charles initially secured a government clerical position with the Marine Postal Service, sailing on P&O mail steamers between India and the Mediterranean for several years. Perhaps he wished to follow in the footsteps of his then deceased brother, who also worked for the Indian Postal Service. In 1890, he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>12</sup>

Charles recounts later how, during his time at sea, he was inspired by the story of the Hon. Ian Keith Falconer, a Scottish nobleman who had died as a missionary in Arabia. With encouragement from other missionaries he met, Charles wrote that he decided, if Falconer.

*... could lay aside special distinction and intellectual advantages to preach the*

*Gospel to the Arabs ... it could be no sacrifice to lay aside a paltry secular ambition and enter upon mission work.*

When he was transferred to duties ashore in Nagpur in 1891, Charles resigned to take up a position as a teacher at the Methodist Mission's Taylor High School for Boys in Poona (a hill station about 150km east of Bombay). In parallel, in 1891, Charles was licensed to preach, and took up a position as a pastor at Lanawie Church in Bombay.<sup>13</sup>

## Becoming a Missionary

In 1893, Charles decided, in preparation for a life's work as a missionary, to go to study in the United States. There he earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Drew Theological College in Madison, New Jersey, in 1896, followed by a Bachelor of Arts degree from Syracuse University in 1897, and further study at Colombia University.<sup>14</sup> (Some accounts say he also earned a Master of Arts from Colombia.)<sup>15</sup>

While studying, Charles continued to build his experience in church work. In 1895, he served as a Methodist pastor at Frankford Plains United Methodist Church in Sussex, New York<sup>16</sup> (90km northwest of New York



*Glenora Green Hill c1905*

City). In 1896, Charles was ordained Deacon at the Newark Conference.<sup>17</sup>

It was around this time that Charles met Harriet Glenora Green (1873-1953), known as Nora. Born on 6 December 1873,<sup>18</sup> Nora grew up on the family farm at Rodman, 9km outside of Adams in Jefferson County, New York State.<sup>19</sup> Nora was President of the Epworth League (a Methodist young adult association) in the church where Charles served his first pastorage.<sup>20</sup> She was the perfect match for his intended vocation as a missionary.

Charles received an appointment as a missionary in November 1897,<sup>21</sup> and on 1 December 1897 he married Nora.<sup>22</sup> Almost immediately, on 10 December 1897, they departed to a mission in Burma, arriving in Rangoon on 7 February 1898.<sup>23</sup> Charles served as Pastor of the Rangoon English Church<sup>24</sup> until 5 October 1901, when he was appointed missionary in charge of vernacular (Tamil, Telugu, Chinese and Burmese) work in Rangoon and the vicinity.<sup>25</sup> From her arrival in Rangoon, Nora also took on missionary work.<sup>26</sup> On 24 January 1899, their first child, Edith 'Margaret' Hill, was born in Rangoon.<sup>27</sup>

## A Return to Teaching

However, Charles's passion was teaching, and in December 1902, Charles was appointed Principal of Taylor High School for Boys in Poona, where he had taught a decade earlier. In late 1904, Charles returned to the United States on his first furlough, where their second child, Gordon Green Hill, was born in Adams on 3 October 1905.<sup>28</sup> With Gordon only two months old, Charles and his family again set sail for a new mission in India, arriving in Bombay in February 1906. This time Charles was appointed as

Pastor of the Taylor Memorial Church in Byculla, Bombay,<sup>29</sup> while Nora was engaged chiefly in evangelical work among women.<sup>30</sup> Charles served there for almost seven years, although Nora and the children returned to the United States at the end of 1910<sup>31</sup> when her mother and then father died only a few months apart.<sup>32</sup> After two years apart, Charles eventually joined them there on his second furlough, arriving in January 1913.<sup>33</sup>

Nearly a year later, Charles, Nora and Gordon returned to India on yet another mission, but Margaret did not return with them, remaining as a student with Nora's sister, Grace, and her family.<sup>34</sup>

Charles took up an appointment as Principal of the Methodist Boys High School at Baroda (now Vadodara, in Gujarat, 410km north of Bombay). Nora also worked with the school.<sup>35</sup> It was a small school that had only just ceased to be co-educational, with classes conducted in side-rooms of the church.<sup>36</sup> Baroda was a quasi-independent 'princely state' under the aegis of the British Raj, and Charles became good friends with its ruler, the Gaekwar of Baroda, His Highness Maharaja Sayaji Rao III. The Gaekwar became a strong

supporter of Western (Methodist) education and by the late 1930s there were 58 Baroda High School graduates in government service.<sup>37</sup>

Charles served as Principal at Baroda for seven years, developing a reputation as an excellent educator and administrator. He is credited with raising the standard of the school's education to high school graduate level and, in 1915, securing the High School's affiliation with Bombay University.<sup>38</sup> He sent more than half of his graduates on to higher studies, many becoming doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, merchants, nurses, government officials, and of course clergymen.<sup>39</sup>

Charles, Nora and Gordon (then 15 years old) again returned on furlough to the United States, arriving on 21 May 1921. Immigration paperwork suggests they planned to stay for two years.<sup>40</sup> Charles stayed longer, and, at the age of 54 years, returned to India alone in September 1923.<sup>41</sup> Nora followed even later – when is not clear.

## Service as a Church Leader

In September 1923, Charles took up the position of one of two Education Secretaries, superintending the Mission Schools

of five Conferences in Southern Asia,<sup>42</sup> a post he held for seven years.<sup>43</sup> The territory he covered was enormous – the Gujarat, Bombay, Central Provinces and South India conferences as well as the Indus River Mission. From his base in Ajmer, he was responsible for the western half of British India, from the borders of Afghanistan in the northwest and Lahore (in the Punjab) in the north, to Tutticorin on the southernmost tip of the sub-continent.

In a letter in May 1923 to Preachers of the Patterson District, Newark Conference (the district where he had first preached and which had now 'adopted' him for support under the Missionary Board's 'Pastors Abroad' program), Charles explained that he would be:

*... inaugurating a forward policy to make it possible for every Methodist boy and girl to learn to read and write; and to make the Christian School of the village a center of character building and community uplift.*<sup>44</sup>

His territory was home to 853 Methodist schools and 60,524 baptised children, of whom only 23,316 were in school – a situation he described as education not keeping up with evangelism.<sup>45</sup>

Towards the end of his tenure

as Education Secretary in 1928, Charles was said to have:

*...narrowly escaped being elected Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia.<sup>46</sup>*

At that time, the Central Conference did not have authority to elect a Bishop, so held ballots to put forward a 'National' minister for appointment. Charles attracted a substantial number of the first-round ballots, but, in an impressive act of humility:

*... withdrew his name with a statement that, although he might technically qualify as 'National' as he was born in India, votes for him were not in harmony with the manifest purpose of the resolution under which the ballots were being taken – that being to elect an Indian Bishop.<sup>47</sup>*

He was, of course, under-stating his qualification, given his Anglo-Indian background. His preferment reflected the high esteem in which he must have been held, while his response demonstrated his commitment to service over personal advancement.

### Once More an Educator

Over the next few years, Charles served for short periods back as Principal of the Boys High School

at Baroda and as Acting Principal of the Leonard Theological College at Jubbulpore.<sup>48</sup> In around mid-1931, Charles took up an appointment as Principal of Benyon Smith High School in Belgaum (now Belagavi – 100km northeast of Goa). His two-year tenure was reportedly:

*... marked by numerous wholesome innovations and by unabated progress in every conceivable phase of school activity.*

He also engaged the school in

*... social uplift by initiating rural reconstruction work in a neighbouring village.*

While there, Charles also served as Secretary of the Southern Maratha Missionary Conference from its inception in 1932.<sup>49</sup>

Charles returned to the United States on what would be his last furlough in June 1933.<sup>50</sup> In October 1934, Charles, then aged 65 years, and Nora, then aged 60, returned yet again to India to continue their missionary work.<sup>51</sup> Where others might have sought retirement, Charles craved a new mission in India.

For his final chapter, in November 1934 Charles returned as Principal of the Boys High School at Baroda, to the delight of the 'Old Boys', who started a Hill Scholarship



*Excerpt of photograph of Rev. Charles B. Hill and Glenora Hill (seated centre) with a gathering of prominent Baroda 'Old Boys', circa 1935*

Fund in appreciation of his work.<sup>52</sup> The Rev. Charles Bayliss Hill died there in Baroda on 8 March 1937, aged 67 years, 41 years after he was ordained.<sup>53</sup> After his passing, the Old Boys established a fund and raised money in the United States to build a new, larger school campus, to be called the Charles B. Hill Memorial High School.<sup>54</sup> The Hill Memorial High School finally opened as a co-educational school at Fatehganj, Vadodara, in 1955,<sup>55</sup> and still carried Charles's name today.

States for the last time. By 1950, 76 year-old Nora was living in a religious colony called the 'Fellowship Front' in Sanford, Seminole County, Florida.<sup>56</sup> Glenora Green Hill died in Poughkeepsie, New York, on 15 August 1953,<sup>57</sup> aged 79 years, probably while visiting her daughter Margaret who was living there.

**References available on request.**

Probably not long after Charles died, Nora returned to the United

# The Men from Snowy River

Annette Fitzgerald

The Snowy River march began with calls for Australian Army recruits during the First World War, after the military tragedy at Gallipoli.

It was a recruitment method that enjoyed popularity during the First World War. It was known as the 'snowball' recruiting march, beginning with a small group of men, the march followed a chosen route, through rural communities, finishing at a town or city with a training camp. At each town or community visited, civic receptions and recruitment meetings would be held to welcome the marching volunteers and encourage local men to enlist, and so the march would snowball in size.

It was a wet day on 6 January 1916 when the first march began with 12 men, Captain Wedd, a piper, a drummer and a chaplain started their way as the 'Men from Snowy River' from the front of the Delegate School of Arts. Delegate is a small country town south of Bombala, New South Wales heading towards the Victorian border. The march was approximately 221 miles



*Banner of the Men from Snowy River.*

(355kms). It went from Delegate to Bombala, Bibbenluke, Nimitybelle (Nimmitabel), Cooma, Umeralla, Bredbo, Colinton, Michelago, Williamsdale, to Queanbeyan, Bungendore, Tarago and then finished at Goulburn.

The Snowy River march significantly boosted recruitment during the First World War. By the time the march reached Goulburn the group had grown from 12 to 144 men, demonstrating its effectiveness in inspiring enlistment.

My cousin, Ernest (Ernie) Albert Corey, was among the 'Men from Snowy River'. He was 25 when he left home. Ernie was born on 20 December 1891 at Green Hills,

Numeralla near Cooma, New South Wales and died 25 August 1972 in Queanbeyan Nursing Home, and was buried in the Woden Cemetery, Canberra, age 80.

Ernie was the eighth of 11 children born between 1877 and 1891 to Thomas and Ellen Corey. He was educated at Thubergal Lake Public School and then worked as a labourer in the Cooma district. Ernie had not planned on going to war. He left school early to go to work when the First World War broke out in August 1914, he did not enlist immediately. Ernie was engrossed by the news from the front.

On 13 January 1916 he left his job as a blacksmith's striker to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force. He joined 'The Men From Snowy River' march in Nimmitabel.

Ernie Corey left the Goulburn training camp for overseas on 4 September 1916 on HMAT *Port Sydney* in the 4th Reinforcements to the 55th Battalion, where he was posted to a grenade section. He was to be sent to the Western Front to fight the Germans.

Arriving in England, Ernie spent three months with the 14th Training Battalion and then on 8 February 1917 at Montauban, France, he helped with the capture of the Doignies.

The Western Front was one of

the main areas of fighting during the First World War. Following the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the German Army opened the Western Front by invading Luxembourg and Belgium, then gaining military control of important industrial regions in France.

The Western Front ran through France and Belgium. It was a 750 km line of trenches from Belgium's North Sea coast to the Swiss border that tried to keep our ANZACs safe. There were over 330,000 Australian ANZACs who served overseas during the First World War, the majority served on the Western Front.

In early May 1917 the Germans held the Hindenburg Line, but the Australian troops attacked them for the second time at Bullecourt. The 5th Division, which included the 55th Battalion, were in battle for a few days. In the early hours of 15 May the Germans launched a massive counter attack to try and drive the Australians out. Commanding Officer of the 55th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Percy Woods, called for volunteers with first aid experience to act as stretcher bearers as the casualties mounted up; Ernie volunteered.

During one of Ernie's forays, he saw two Germans treating an Australian casualty. He casually walked up to them, picked up the wounded Australian and returned

to his lines, while the Germans looked on in amazement.

After Bullecourt Ernie became a regular stretcher bearer. On 26 September 1917 at Polygon Wood near Ypres in Belgium, the 5th Division, even after careful planning and apparent ease of advancing over the landscape, still suffered significant casualties.

While the 55th Battalion were a part of the battle to capture the town of Peronne on the Somme River, there were a lot of casualties and the stretcher bearers' work seemed endless. Bert Bishop was helping Ernie treat a wounded man during the fighting at Peronne. Ernie quickly inspected the damage and later wrote:

*One of the wounded man's arms was attached to his body by a single sinew of muscle. He was bleeding badly. I took a razor blade from my pocket and cut the sinew and got busy trying to stop the bleeding by bandaging the stump and soaking it in iodine.*

Uncertain what to do next, Bishop dropped the arm and returned to the battle. Then the wounded soldier asked Ernie a favour, "Go back and get my arm please? On the third finger there is a ring my wife gave to me. Save it for me". Ernie retrieved the arm and got the ring for the soldier.

The war had reached its climax and the 5th Division was again involved in an attack on the Hindenburg Line, near Bellicourt on the St Quentin Canal on 30 September. Ernie, who had been promoted Corporal nine days earlier, was in charge of the battalion's stretcher-bearers and, despite intense machinegun and shellfire by the Germans, the stretcher bearers went out into 'No Mans Land' to rescue wounded soldiers including several Americans. At Bellicourt, Ernie was awarded his third bar to his Military Medal.

Ernie Corey received the following awards for his service during World War I:

- Military Medal – For his courage in rescuing a wounded Australian soldier under enemy observation during the battle at Bullecourt in May 1917.
- First Bar to the Military Medal – For his "untiring energy" in tending to the wounded and carrying them to safety under constant artillery and machine gun fire at Polygon Wood near Ypres in September 1917.
- Second Bar to the Military Medal – For his efforts during the battle to capture the town of Peronne on the Somme River in September 1918, where he treated numerous casualties under intense conditions.
- Third Bar to the Military Medal

– For leading stretcher-bearers in rescuing wounded soldiers, including Americans, under heavy machine-gun and shell-fire during the attack on the Hindenburg Line near Bellicourt on 30 September 1918.

Ernie Corey is believed to be the only soldier in the First World War to have been awarded the Military Medal and three bars. I wish I had got to meet him, I am so proud of him.

Sadly, Ernie's luck ran out one day. About 11am he was getting a wounded officer when he was hit by shrapnel from a shell burst. Bleeding from the femoral artery, Ernie managed to crawl to his first aid kit and apply a tourniquet to his wound. He then crawled about another 300metres before being picked up by another soldier who carried him a mile to the nearest dressing station. Ernie had a successful operation and returned to Australia in April 1919.

After demobilisation Corey worked at Cooma as a contract rabbitier, and in 1922 moved to Canberra as a camp caretaker. On 23 September 1924, at St Gregory's Catholic Church, Queanbeyan, New South Wales, he married Sarah Jane Fisher; there was one daughter of the marriage which was dissolved in 1935. In 1927-40 he worked in Canberra as an office cleaner with the Department of the

Interior, then served with the 2nd Garrison Battalion in World War II.

He was later employed as a caretaker, as cook for a departmental survey party and as leading hand at the Canberra incinerator. By 1951 he was almost crippled with osteoarthritis. Survived by his daughter, he died at Queanbeyan Private Nursing Home on 25 August 1972 and was buried with full military honors in Woden cemetery.

The recruiting march was repeated early in Second World War, actually mostly by car and truck. There were re-enactments of the original march in 1988 and 2006.

The conditions on the Western Front were horrific. The ANZACs not only had to face machine guns that could fire up to 500 bullets per minute, they also had the challenge of gas, heavy artillery and mortars.

Besides the many deaths from the German attacks, there were a many deaths because of the weather. The soldiers had suffered one of Europe's coldest winters in 30 years. So there was a lot of pneumonia and trench foot.

At the end of the First World War more than 61,000 Australians lost their lives. Of those, more than 46,000 died on the Western Front.

[Ed. Annette entered this story into the 2025 E.M. Fletcher Award. While preparing the stories for the annual publication, I was so moved by his story, I asked for permission to publish it here.]



*Queanbeyan, NSW. May 1971. Photograph of the medals awarded to veteran Ernest Corey. Mr Corey was the only soldier in the British Commonwealth to be awarded the Military medal four times. The Military Medal can be distinguished from the other medals by the three bars on the ribbon.*

# Alice Amelia Lazelles - A Short Biography

Sue Goard

## The Facts

According to her 1906 marriage certificate, Alice Amelia Lazelles, was born in New Zealand in 1872. While her mother, Mary Grace Havens was still alive at the time, Alice stated that her father, Samuel John Lazelles, was deceased. Alice reported she was employed as a domestic in the remote mining town of Mt Morgans, Western Australia.

So far there are no records of Alice's travel from New Zealand to Australia and on to Mt Morgans. There she met a miner named James John Gregg. On 27 Dec 1906 Alice and James were married at the Perth Registry Office. Alice was 29 and James was 25. It was the first working day after the Christmas season.

An employment record for James, in my possession, details that by 1908 Alice and James Gregg travelled from Western Australia to another mining town, Linda, on the remote west coast of Tasmania. Linda is now flooded but was

located just outside of Queenstown a larger mining centre still in operation.

The next record for Alice is the birth of her son Charles James Gregg on 3 January 1910 at a private nursing house in Melbourne, Victoria. Three weeks after the birth, on 28 January 1910, James registered the birth of their son at the Brunswick registry office in Melbourne. Alice and the baby Charlie were not present at the registration. James said that he and Alice normally resided in Linda, Tasmania.

Alice, James and baby Charles, must have travelled back to Linda. Although no records have been found of their travels, it is likely they caught a local steamer from Melbourne back to Davenport, or a nearby port and then a train down the west coast to Queenstown.

The 1912 electoral roll for Linda records James and Alice still residing in Linda. The information for this was likely collected in 1911.

This is the six year story of Alice's life. To the best of my research, there is no further record of Alice Gregg, nee Lazelles.

## The Family Story

Alice Amelia Lazelles was my grandmother, hence my interest. As the youngest in a family of four girls, born to parents aged in their mid 40s, I did not have grandparents in my life. There was some family talk about them, but only my maternal grandmother was alive.

I was told that Alice was the name of my Dad Charlie's mum. There are no photos of her and Alice left her family when Dad was only about 18 months old. The family story was Alice came from Andorra – a country I had not heard of, but thought sounded exotic.

At school when friends talked about spending time with their grandparents I would explain that mine were all dead, but I had a grandma who had come from Andorra!

As Dad aged I would ask about his mother Alice, but the story didn't change. Charlie was raised by his father James, with help from his parents and siblings in Perth. Eventually James and Charlie

settled in Broken Hill in 1918. James and Charlie, my Dad, are both buried in Broken Hill. I had hoped to help Dad find his mum but didn't have the time or skills to do so. A simple but sad story.

After Dad's death in 1998, his birth certificate was in his papers and the story changed. My dive into family history commenced.

## The Search

Alice, as the focus of my research, proved to be a huge challenge for a beginner in family history. There were numerous brick walls along the way, so focus often changed to other relatives to learn new skills. Alice was always in the back of my mind. I was alert to clues.

The three documents I have support the existence of Alice Amelia Lazelles. However, they have raised many questions for my research.

## 1906 – The Marriage Certificate

Alice's new family, the Greggs, had moved south from Geraldton and settled in the Perth and Fremantle area. It is understandable that Alice and James may have travelled from Mt Morgans to spend Christmas with his family and then married

at the first opportunity. James's sister and brother witnessed the marriage.

However, the hand written certificate is unusual because instead of Alice's name in the space for 'Bride', the name Kathleen Florence Mary Lazelles is written! At the bottom of the document, the registrar has noted "In column 3 for Kathleen Florence Mary read Alice Amelia Lazelles". Did the registrar have a very merry Christmas?

That Alice reported herself as a 'spinster' at the age of 29 has also been of questioned. It seems she could easily have had another 'life/ husband/ family' prior to her marriage to James.

Why choose to work in Mt Morgans? What brought her there? It is extremely remote and photos I have viewed of the town in the early 1900s are not appealing!

Research for Alice's birth in New Zealand was further complicated by the unclear writing of her mother Mary Grace's surname – was it Hevens, Stevens or similar? No records that match Alice's varying details on the marriage certificate have been found.

## 1910 – The Birth Certificate

This was the first document I had to start my research. Over time I became increasingly curious about their reason for travelling from Linda, Tasmania to Melbourne, Victoria for the birth of their child. There was a hospital in Queenstown at the time. When did they travel? At what stage in Alice's pregnancy did they travel? How did they travel? Research and discussion with locals on the west coast of Tasmania suggested they travelled by train north to Davenport or a nearby port and then by local boat to Melbourne. When did they return?

Charlie's certificate states he was born on 3 January 1910, but was not registered until the end of the month on 29 January 1910 at Brunswick registry in Melbourne, Victoria. Why such a time between the birth date and the registration? Where did Alice and James stay for at least six weeks or more? There are no close relatives in the Melbourne area that I have found.

James states his son Charles James was born at 115 Blyth St, Brunswick, an inner city Melbourne suburb. He was delivered by a nurse, Mrs Garth. There was no doctor present and no witnesses.

James was consistent in reporting his and Alice's age in 1910, their residence as Linda and that Alice was formerly known as Lazelles, born in New Zealand. According to the certificate details, neither Alice nor the baby Charles were present at the registration.

## 1912 – The Electoral record

This record simply indicates that James, Alice and their baby returned to Linda after Charlie's birth.

### What next?

Alice is reported by James as 'walking out on them' about mid 1912 when the baby was a toddler. She made no further contact with James and her young child Charlie, my Dad.

What happened to Alice? Did she leave because she didn't like Linda? This is hard to accept considering she had lived in Mt Morgans and knew the life of a harsh, isolated mining community. Did she have a new man in her life? Where did she go? How can a mother leave a child and make no further contact? Was she murdered? We can conjure up numerous reasons.

Research in libraries and trips to

Tasmania have not found our Alice again. To make the search more challenging there are a number of Alice Greggs in Tasmania around the 1915-1930s.

An Alice, from Melbourne, married into a Gregg family who farmed on the Tasmanian east coast.

In the 1920s there are reports in the *Hobart Mercury* newspaper of a woman being washed up on the shore of the Derwent river. Her name was Alice Gregg. But again not our Alice. Would you believe there were two woman named Alice Gregg who lived in the same street in Hobart, and the paper had to print a retraction because they had given the wrong address for the woman in their first article. Again, research has proved, neither were our Alice.

We have also puzzled over the surname Lazelle and researched it for a long time. There are many possible variations to the spelling and these have also been considered. Was Lazelles even her surname? There was a travelling circus star of that name who was well publicised at the time. Was she associated with him or did she like the name and choose to use it? There is a person buried in the cemetery at Bourke, New South

Wales with the same spelling of the surname. There was a herbalist named Samuel Lazelles in Perth who applied to be the executioner in the 1930s without success. Many stories and rabbit holes.

Neighbours in Broken Hill told my Dad in the 1940s that they knew his mother was alive in Adelaide. Again, more research and again another Alice Gregg, but not our Alice.

My grandfather James had died when I was still a baby. I have seen photos of them both. James was short and stout in stature. In contrast, Dad was a 'string bean', tall and lean all his life. My sisters and I have commented on the difference in their appearance and attributed the difference to Charlie taking after his mother, Alice's physique. Not that we knew what that was!

So many dead ends and no success. No evidence of our Alice after 1912.

After moving to Canberra, I joined HAGSOC and was warmly welcomed. I had already done my DNA in 2014 but had not made much sense of the results. Attending the vibrant DNA SIG gave me new skills and support to analyse my results.

The science of DNA gave me the answers to my father Charlie's heritage, but not to Alice's later life. A benefit of COVID was the time to build and explore trees and make connections to the numerous DNA matches on my paternal line. I received help and willing support from local and interstate relatives of the DNA lines.

The biggest twist in my research was to discover that my Dad Charlie was not the son of James AND he was not the son of Alice!

He was adopted by them, but not formally. Legislation for adoption in Victoria occurred in 1928. Baby Charles was actually born on 8 Nov 1909, at the Women's Hospital Melbourne, to a young, single girl from county Victoria. His birth was registered in his mother's surname, as Norman Kennedy. No father was recorded, though I have since found him through DNA.

Nine days after his birth, on 17 November 1909, baby Norman was admitted to The Haven, a care facility for young children in Melbourne. Norman is a one line entry in their records. It states he left The Haven on 10 January 1910. Just like Alice, there is no record of him after that date! Even his one line entry does not say where he went. It is starkly blank.

## More questions than answers

Given that DNA has identified my father Charlie's birth parents, more questions arise. Why did James and Alice make the return trip to Melbourne in 1909/1910? They must have been there for James to make the registration in 29 January 1910.

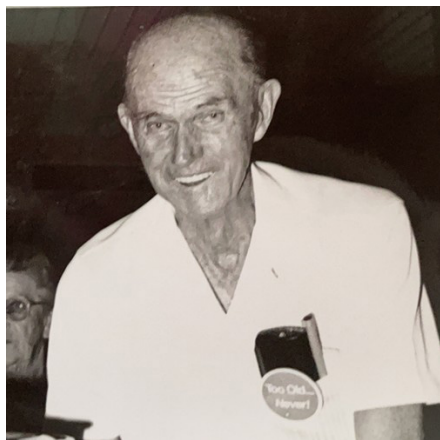
I can not find a connection between the birth parents and James and Alice. If James and Alice wished to adopt a child it could have happened more easily in Tasmania. James and Alice were a simple couple and not wealthy.

After James settled in Broken Hill he rarely travelled, unless to the Darling River at Menindee during the Mine 'shut down' over summer, or in later life to Adelaide. He met a widow with a young son and they set up a stable household together with the two boys. They did not marry.

I may never know what happened to Alice Amelia Lazelles as my sisters and I have no DNA connection to this woman who was long accepted as my grandmother in my family history. Alice exists on paper for just six years. Where she came from and where she went to I have not been able to discover

.... yet. I am very grateful that in the search for Alice I have found some great friends, developed my research skills, enjoyed interesting trips focussed on research, and found new and accepting relatives.

To paraphrase Oscar Wilde – to lose one grandparent may be regarded as a misfortune but to lose both paternal grandparents looks like a lot of work – not carelessness!



*Sue's Dad, Charlie Gregg aged 80*

# LtCol Sir John Dring - End of Empires

Cathy Day

Most of us learn all that we can about our ancestors, and also yearn to hear their voices, but we rarely hear their own words. My relative, John Dring, is a wonderful exception, having granted the BBC a three-hour radio interview about his experiences in India. Whilst I have researched him for years, met people who knew him, visited the places where he lived and worked, and read his files, it was very special to hear a recording of his voice talking about his experiences, and perspectives on an extraordinary life.

John Dring was born in Calcutta in 1902, the second child and only son of Sir William Arthur Dring (1859-1912) and his wife Lady Jane Reid Greenshields Ross (1870-1951). John and his sister Helen (1899-1975) lived a conventional life of upper middle class Britishers in Calcutta, riding ponies in the morning, playing in the extensive gardens whilst waited upon by attentive nannies, and always wearing a topi (solar helmet) when outdoors. Every

afternoon, the nanny would take the two children and their mother out for a ride in a governess cart: a light, two-wheeled cart pulled by a single pony or small horse. It had a tub-shaped body, rear entry door, and inward-facing seats, making it safe and well-suited for transporting children under the supervision of a governess – hence the name, governess cart.

Their father was the head of the East Indian Railways and always went to the office in a dog cart, which was a light, two-wheeled open-air carriage pulled by a single horse, which was a 'rather eye-catching cob'. He recalled a particular custom that:

*On Sundays between 12 and 2 my father and mother used to be at home for calling, and the younger members of the commercial community used to call, dressed in their very best, even top hats. No refreshment whatever was offered and we used to peep through the bannisters and have a look at who was coming and going.*

As was usual at that time in British India, at the age of six years, John and his sister Helen were sent to England for their education. Parents of British children in India feared that their children would develop Indian accents, the so-called *chi-chi* accents imitated by comedians like Peter Sellers, and to prevent this potential calamity, they were shipped back 'home' and often didn't see their parents for years. The 1911 census shows John and Helen, then aged eight and eleven years, living with their Swiss governess and three servants in a cottage in Hursley, Hampshire, whilst their parents remained in India.

In 1912, their parents visited them in England for a six-month holiday, but their father had to return to work and so he embarked for Bombay, on the west coast of India. As the head of the East Indian Railways, he had his own private carriage for the 2,000km journey back to Calcutta. It was fitted with all the necessary luxuries, including a large double bed, private bathroom and toilet, an office and a well equipped lounge and dining room.

Every morning his bearer (a male servant, like a valet) would enter the private carriage to provide tea, then return later to shave and dress his master.

One morning, when he returned to dress him, the bearer found that Sir William was missing. He had last been seen on the observation platform at the end of his personal carriage, sipping tea. Now, only his slippers were there on the observation deck. A signaller on the rail line saw:

*... a hatless European standing between two carriages, his two hands resting against the carriage as he had nothing to hold onto, with one foot on the buffer and one on the coupling.*

A few minutes later, a group of Indian railway labourers found his body, which had been dragged 25m under the train, crushed to death, still wearing his pyjamas. It is assumed that he was sitting on the railing of his observation deck drinking tea, as was his habit, when the train must have lurched, causing him to fall to his untimely death, crushed by his own private carriage. How such an experienced railway man could have been so careless as to cause his own death is a mystery.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, John and his sister Helen remained in England and continued their education. John Dring was educated at Winchester College, then Sandhurst Military College, before embarking for India in 1922 as a subaltern in the King's

Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The following year, at Mardan on the North West Frontier between what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan, he joined the Guides Cavalry, an elite unit of horsemen. He arrived at the train station and was taken by the Adjutant and put on a horse. They did a few jumps and the Adjutant took him to see the remounts, which were horses imported from Australia that had never been trained or had a saddle put on them. The Adjutant told him that his job was to take on one of these and go through with the training. John selected a very nice-looking horse, a chestnut, and went to bed, not understanding what a remount was. The next morning was his first parade with his new, elite regiment and, unaware that remounts were completely untrained, he put a saddle on the horse and merrily mounted it. The horse bucked and shied, 'a sort of rodeo' and threw John to the ground. The horse disappeared and John arrived at his first parade on foot. There was much merriment from his fellow officers, and it took some time for the jesting to fade away.

The Guides Cavalry were a famous unit that had been raised in 1846 by General Harry Lumsden. It was Lumsden who introduced khaki into the British Army, to replace the red, woollen uniforms then in use.

The word 'khaki' is a Persian word meaning 'dust-coloured' and as John said,

*absolutely ideal for use in the hills when you're attacking raiding parties.*

A typical day was to have early parade, then breakfast. After breakfast, he would go up to the stables, and then there were lectures or office work. He played polo three times a week, and hockey or football twice a week with the men.

After four years in the Guides Cavalry, John decided to take the unprecedented step of leaving to join the Political Service. He said,

*I had a very happy time in the Guides but I did feel I should never get to know the people of the country properly as a military officer. I felt I would be confined to a cantonment or occasional duty in Waziristan, whereas opportunities to go on tour with the local assistant commissioner had shown me a bit of the other side of life and I thought I could possibly get to know the people better and take a bigger part if I could join the civil administration... As a military officer one didn't get an opportunity of knowing about the problems of village life or getting to know the people of*

*the province where one was working, and in many cases, such as mine, I would never get to the homes of Sikhs who were well known in the Punjab, so in a sense one was confined to a cantonment.*

The Political Service was a sort of Department of Foreign Affairs for the British Raj, dealing with the frontier tribesmen and representing the interests of the British Government. On average there were about 160 Political Agents in India, of which 30% were in the North West Frontier Province. John went on to become fluent in Urdu, Pashto and Dari, the main local languages of the region.

In 1927 he was appointed as Assistant Political Agent in North Waziristan, with responsibility to organise the picquetting, or protection, of roads. Tribal leaders were paid a sum of money by the British government to protect the roads, but in practice they generally took the money and only placed one or two men on lookout. John's job was to try to make the picquetting 'more regular'. He was next appointed to Charsadda, but had to take a very circuitous route in order to avoid being attacked by the enemies of the Raj. By the time he arrived, tribesmen had shot up his Model T Ford and there were at least two bullet holes in the bonnet.

Charsadda was a rough posting with the constant threat of death, and he was startled to receive a phone call in 1931 ordering him to Shimla, in the mountains of northern India, which was the seat of the British government in India during the summer months. He was to be considered for the position of Assistant Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India. John was bundled off to Simla with nothing but the khaki shorts that he was wearing. When he arrived, he was informed that the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, along with Lady Willingdon, were at their weekend house but would be back the next day to meet the candidates for the position. John sought help to find more appropriate attire than his shorts. As John tells it:

*The man who was Assistant Private Secretary at the time was called Cecil Griffin. The next day, Lord Willingdon and Lady Willingdon returned and there was a lunch party. The four or five candidates were placed on the left wing of the guests and the Viceroy came by and I bowed, as I was shown how to do. Lady Willingdon came by and I bowed again and she said, "Hello I see you've got Cecil's suit on". Well I was decidedly embarrassed on this. After lunch each of us had about five minutes with the Viceroy and then five minutes with Lady*

*Willingdon and later that day I heard I was appointed and I was quite certain that I should never have been appointed had it not been for the suit.'*

John went on to serve for two years in that position, adjacent to the highest levels of government. Some people speculate that the character of the Private Secretary to the Viceroy in the British TV series "Indian Summers" was partly based on John Dring, as his time in the role directly coincides with that of the fictional character Ralph Whelan, and circumstances and family history all matched John's.



*John Dring 1930, National Portrait Gallery*

In April 1932, an announcement was made in several Scottish newspapers that John Dring was to marry Gwladys Lloyd, daughter of the Financial Commissioner of Burma, Sir Idwal Lloyd. However, nothing came of it, and it is one of the mysteries of family history that we shall probably never know the reason for the engagement being called off, despite its very public announcement. In October 1934, John married 37-year-old Marjorie Wadham who had ventured to India the year before as one of the famed 'fishing fleet', to find a suitable husband, as unmarried European women in India were in short supply. John and Marjorie went on to have two daughters who, like their father before them, were sent to England to be educated while still very young. Tragically, Marjorie died in England in 1943 when her girls were still very small. John re-married three years later, to Deborah (nee Cree), the widow of Major-General John Stuart Marshall.

After his stint serving the Viceroy, John returned to the North West Frontier Province in several increasingly senior positions for the remainder of his time in India. At the time of the end of British India, and the partition of the country into India and Pakistan, John was at Lorelai in Balochistan. On the night of 14 August 1947, he ceremonially lowered the

Union Jack and raised the flag of Pakistan. He had mixed emotions, sad that Britain's connection with India was ending, but optimistic about the future of Pakistan and India.

John was well-liked and respected in Pakistan, and was immediately offered senior positions in the new Pakistani government, first as Chief Secretary of the North West Frontier Province and then its Revenue Commissioner. From 1948 to 1952 he was Prime Minister of the princely state of Bahawalpur and was the only Englishman in the whole administration of the independent state. Bahawalpur remained an independent state until it joined Pakistan in 1955. Dring Stadium in Bahawalpur, the site of the first ever India-Pakistan Test Cricket match, was named after him.

After his work in Bahawalpur was over in 1952, John was knighted for his services to the British Empire. Having been involved in one partition and end of empire, and the transition of an independent state to a larger federation, he was invited to advise on others in Africa. In 1955 he was appointed as advisor to the Governor of the Gold Coast regarding the plebiscite of Togoland. This vote resulted in British Togoland being integrated into Ghana. Similarly, in 1959 he was an advisor to the Governor-General of Nigeria regarding

the Cameroons plebiscite. The result was that Muslim-majority Northern Cameroons became part of Nigeria whilst Christian-majority Southern Cameroons became part of the newly-independent country of Cameroon.

John returned to the UK and was appointed a Justice of the Peace and Chair of the Havant Bench. In 1973 he was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire. He died in Purbrook, Hampshire in 1991, aged 88 years. A window was dedicated to him in the Punjab Frontier Force memorial chapel in St Luke's Church, Chelsea in London.



# Albert William Bridges – A Pommie Emigrant

Jenny Smith nee Bridges

My father, Albert (Bert) Bridges, was the fifth child born to Bob and Rose Bridges in Hendon, London, with three sisters, Lilian, May and Agnes, and an older brother, Robert, already in the family. He was born in 1908 and his birth was followed by a brother, Tom, born 1909 and then another brother, Geoffrey, in 1914. Bert was very proud of his father, as he had served his country with the Suffolk Regiment and had seen service in the Sudan, Egypt, India and the Boer War. When Bert was only six, Britain was involved in World War I. Bert's father then joined the Army Reserve Corps – it is understood he was a dispatch rider and served at the Somme. Bert's home bordered the Hendon Aerodrome and one of Bert's life-long memories was during World War I, when a gas-filled blimp was shot down in flames over the airfield.

Some of the stories with which Bert regaled his family, showed that he and his little brother, Tom, were 'partners in crime' despite

the fact they were sent to a Congregational Sunday School and his mother and aunt 'wore the bonnet' for the Salvation Army. Bert had various jobs as a young teenager – silent movies were a source of entertainment and Bert obtained employment in a picture theatre at Marble Arch putting sounds in at 'all the right places.' Much imagination was put into it, and, it was evidently a fun job as Bert used to laugh about it quite a bit. Hendon had some light industry, and Bert obtained employment with a firm of leather goods specialists, 'A Garstin & Co Limited' at The Hyde, Hendon. Bert worked there from March 1922 until June 1925 and received an excellent character reference on his departure from England.

After World War I, world economies improved but Europe had taken a battering from the war and employment opportunities were competitive. Despite the 1920s being tagged the 'Roaring Twenties', by the late 1920s those same economies were unstable

and for the workers in England, the future was bleak. In Britain, migration to the Colonies was actively promoted and campaigns were commenced by Australia to bring healthy young Britons to the Colonies. This was seen as a remedy to increase the population too.

What motivated Bert to emigrate? Was it just a sense of adventure or were things just plain tough economically? Whatever it was, Bert, his brother Tom and their friend Richard (Dick) Willis applied to emigrate. As far as can be ascertained, these young men were brought to Australia under the Dreadnought Scheme.

What was the Dreadnought Scheme? Briefly, when Germany's naval building program threatened Britain's naval supremacy, many Australians felt the need to raise funds to purchase a Dreadnought battleship to support Britain. In New South Wales, an amount of £90,000 was raised but it was then decided Australia would raise its own Navy, and the Dreadnought would not be needed. Some of the money raised was returned to the donors, but the bulk (£80,000) was deposited to the newly established Dreadnought Trust. About half the money was used establishing the Jervis Bay Naval College to train

men for the new navy and the other half was used to fund young men between the ages of 16 and 19, who were of good character and physique, from British cities to be trained as rural workers (particularly 'dairy boys') on New South Wales farms. The first Dreadnought boys arrived in 1911 and the Scheme ended in 1939 having brought 5,000 young men to Australia. Many of these young men were satisfied with their lives, but equally so, they suffered homesickness, loneliness, culture shock and 'Pommy Bashing'. Dick Willis, Tom and Bert left England on the P&O steam ship *Bendigo* on 11 November 1926. Tom was 17 years, and Bert 18 years, upon arriving in Sydney in January 1927.

On arrival, they were given £2 and put on the train to Cowra Agricultural Experiment Farm. Bert spent the first eight weeks cutting burrs (given that it was the middle of summer, this would have been dreadfully hot for a young man from London). After completing his 'orientation', he obtained work at a dairy in south Cowra. After the stint at this dairy, he went back to the Experiment Farm for a spell and then worked for a time with a family on a farm north of Cowra. Bert held very fond memories of his time with this family. It was a sad fact that

Bert's initiation into Australia life at the Cowra Experiment Farm had a huge impact on him and, after his initial work, he had very little to do with it again.

There were periods of unemployment and times were tough. Men were desperate for work. The construction of Wyangala Dam had commenced and there were jobs available on the roadworks to assist in the movement of men and materials. At one time, Bert was camped in the stock reserve on Waugoola Creek near Woodstock. Bert, Tom and several other men were trying to obtain work, and to sustain themselves they lived off rabbits and scraps of food from a bush kitchen which had been set up to feed the men working on the road.

In the meantime, Dick Willis obtained work at Scott's dairy at Warwick via Cowra, while Bert and Tom had become itinerate labourers. The Scotts had employed other young Englishmen, one being a very talented Jack Frith who later became lead cartoonist with the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In 1929, just as the world was plunging into the Great Depression, Dick Willis obtained work in Newcastle. When Dick told the Scotts he was leaving, they asked if he knew anyone

who might like the job. Dick said if they lent him a horse and sulky for a day he would find someone. Dick drove to Waugoola Creek to see Bert. Bert recalled that when he was told about the job, he just got up into the sulky, Dick turned the horse and sulky around and drove away, as he had nothing to hang about for. At least being on a dairy during the Depression, there would have been advantages with fruit and vegetables available. Still, life was tough and they often had swaggies call in looking for work or food. Mr Scott died in 1926, which had only left his wife, Margaret, and two daughters, Maud and Lil running the dairy.

Farm work was hard physical work and Bert had to put his 'shoulder to the plough so to speak, with the help of beloved draught horses. Bert used to enjoy singing and would sing while he was ploughing. One particular hymn kept him and the horse amused; Bert would sing "We plough the fields and scatter" and when he got to the line in the chorus where it went "For all His love", Bert's "foooooor all" sounded like "Whoooooa" and the horse, thinking it was "Whoa" would promptly stop!

In the meantime, Bert's little brother Tom had stayed at the Experimental Farm. Eventually

Tom found work around Young and Grenfell. But, basically, after these stints of employment, Tom disappeared having taken up with travelling shows as a showman, eventually settling in Western Australia. Despite the effects of the Depression, Bert returned to England in 1933 on the steamer *Hobsons Bay*. After nearly five months in England he returned to Australia on the *Esperance Bay* leaving Southampton on 11 October 1933. His life and opportunity was in Australia. So, young Bert settled into the dairy farming life and the Scotts and their extended family became his family. Milking cows was a twice day activity, rising in the dark to get the cows in and then milking by hand, squatting down beside the cows. Eventually, mechanical milking machines were installed.

By 1939 Bert met Grace James (his future wife), who was visiting her sister across the road from Scott's dairy. However, World War II intervened and Bert joined the AIF on 6 December 1941. He packed his bag and headed off to Sydney without telling the Scotts what he was doing. The Enlisting Booth was in George Street, near the Town Hall. When the enlisting officer asked his occupation, he replied "Dairy Farmer". To this the officer said "If you want to get into

the Army you had better change your job, go for a walk and think about it". So Bert walked around the block and when he came back, told the same officer he was a labourer! Bert recalled there was a military band playing the 1812 Overture in George Street, backed up by a cannon in Hyde Park and the bells of St Andrew's Cathedral peeling across the City; it was all very stirring, patriotic stuff.

Private Bridges was posted to the 2/7 Australian Field Ambulance and commenced his training and, for a time, camped on what is now Canberra Airport as the blizzard winds blew. It was no fun. Eventually, the soldiers were moved to Gympie. (We would later learn Tom had also joined the Army and was in Darwin when the Japanese attacked). As many men had 'signed up' for service, there was a labour shortage in industry, and on farms. Somehow, the Army found out that Bert had left the dairy in the care of the Scott women; Mrs Scott died in 1941 and Lil Scott not long after. It was then left to Maud Scott, in her late 50's, to be in charge of the dairy. So Bert found himself man-powered out of the Army. In all he had 850 days on Active Service (although not outside Australia), and was discharged on 7 August 1944. During and after the War,

there were shortages of everything and goods were rationed, but this did not deter Bert and Grace from becoming engaged. Grace had moved from Sydney to Cowra and obtained employment at the Small Arms factory in 1943 set up in the Cowra Show Pavilion. As there was, eventually, a reduction in the Munitions' Programme, Grace's employment was terminated in February 1945.

Bert and Grace married in April 1945 at the Methodist Church in Thornleigh (Sydney). Grace had lived at Thornleigh after having moved there with her mother from Shellharbour. As everything was in short supply, Grace borrowed her wedding dress from her sister. After the War and until 1948, Grace, Bert and Miss Scott would send food parcels to Bert's relatives in England, as rationing was still in force in England with people queuing up for hours to obtain basic needs. Bert and Grace started a family and their first-born son arrived in November 1946 followed by another son in 1948. Two daughters followed in 1951 and 1953. Maud Scott still resided with the family and soon became 'Auntie Maud' to the Bridges children.

Back in the dairy, there were only

ever about 45 cows milked, and to supplement the dairying, Bert bought a large Massey Harris baler in partnership with another local dairyman and together they baled lucerne hay for many farmers who farmed along the Lachlan River.

In April 1955, Bert, Grace and family plus Maud Scott sailed for England from Sydney on the *Arcadia*. When the ship berthed in Perth, Tom came to meet them, but this was the last they saw or heard of him for many years. The family stayed in England for about six months, travelling back on the P&O ship, *Oronsay*. In England, they stayed with friends and relatives, travelling in the southern areas of England. Bert was very thrilled to have taken his family to his homeland, although saddened he was not able to introduce his children to his parents, both having died. Eventually, Bert bought the dairy farm from Miss Scott and continued to supply milk to both Cowra and Canowindra milk factories. The dairy also supplied raw milk to the seasonally-manned kitchens for the cutters working on Fagan's and Edgell's asparagus farms.

Bert had kept in contact over the years with Dick Willis and in about 1968, Bert heard Dick

was ill in Manly Hospital, having had a massive operation for lung cancer. It was not long before his compatriot passed away.

It was late-1960s when Bert's brother Tom re-entered his life. Unexpectedly a letter arrived addressed to "Albert Bridges c/o Miss Scott, Warwick, NSW". Tom had taken a punt on Bert still being there. It was such a shock for Bert, but more of a shock was to come, when Tom arrived unannounced from Western Australia. It was a 'prodigal brother' story for Bert as he thought he would never see his brother again.

In 1968, Bert's second son was drafted into the Army followed by a tour of duty in Vietnam. It was also about this time that he retired from dairying and began producing beef cattle on another property he had purchased at Canowindra. During the early 1970s three of the children all married, and as Bert had retired, he loved the company of his little grandchildren.

By mid-1974 Bert was ill and he passed away on 10 June 1975 and is buried in the Cowra Lawn Cemetery. Maud Scott lived until 92 years of age, dying in 1976. Over the years, Tom became a regular visitor, and until Grace Bridges died in 1994, he stayed at the

Warwick home. Tom made his last trip to New South Wales in 1995 and he passed away in 1996 in Perth. His ashes are interred in the columbarium at Cowra Cemetery. This year is the 100th anniversary of Bert leaving England, and he would be very proud his Australian family is still in touch with those remaining relatives in England.



*L-R Bert, Tom Bridges and Dick Willis*

# The mysterious disappearance of Victor Varty

Wendy Paterson

For years, a rumour circulated among our family that my cousin Victor Varty disappeared after becoming involved with the Communist Party. Some speculated he had travelled to Russia, others thought he had changed his name. As often happens, serendipity played its part. I happened to come across Victor's name when I visited the National Archives of Australia in 2010. An exhibit titled 'Memory of a Nation' caught my eye. Intended to provide an overview of the records in the archives collection, it provided details of how four generations of the Aarons family were active communists under constant surveillance by intelligence authorities. Their family tree included Victor Varty as the de-facto husband of Amelia Aarons, who was the daughter of Louis Levy and Jane Aarons (nee Hyams).

Louis and Jane were foundation members of the Melbourne Branch of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) established in 1920. Drawing on Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*, members believed the working class would eventually revolt

against capitalism and replace it with a classless society based on the common ownership of assets, resources, and property, distributed according to need.

Returning to the Archives Reading Room, I discovered that security and intelligence agencies had collected 11 volumes about Victor's activities. Volume 1 revealed Victor was a committed communist who used at least six aliases.<sup>1</sup> After tutoring 'European Socialism and the Russian Revolution' at the University of Newcastle in the late 1990s, I was appalled by the suffering Stalin inflicted on his own people through ethnic cleansing, famine and forced labour camps. I decided this was one family member I would place on a dusty shelf. However, after reading Roy Peter Clark's *Tell It like It Is*, I put aside my reservations. Clark persuasively argues that anyone who writes for the public has a responsibility to address the barrage of 'lies, propaganda and misinformation' that media bombards us with daily. This applies equally to us as family

historians. We hopefully aim to set the record straight, and write with 'clarity, honesty and conviction'.<sup>2</sup> So, I decided it was important to learn more about Victor's life, and the choices he made.

Last year, I requested the National Archives make the remaining ten folders available for me to view in their Reading Room. I was intrigued to find they held assessments of Len's character, detailed information about where he lived, his relationships, employment, meetings, and travel arrangements. However, a public servant had deemed that a considerable amount of material should be withheld as their contents "could reasonably be expected to result in damage to the security, defence or international relations of the Commonwealth". For instance, I could view only 43 of 161 pages in Volume 2, and even then, some text had been firmly inked out.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, I now had sufficient details to conduct further research.

Victor Linden Varty was born on 19 August 1908 to John Edward Varty, a wheelwright and Rose Varty (nee Johnson), home duties. He had three older brothers, John, William, and Harold. The family lived in the small country town of Numurkah, about two and a half hours north of Melbourne.<sup>4</sup> From the local newspaper, I learnt Victor was formally known by his

middle name, Linden (shortened to Len). He was smart. Aged 11, his name was recorded on Numurkah Public School's honour list, and he was one of sixteen pupils who passed the qualifying certificate for seventh grade. Len's political education also likely started early as his father John was an active member of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows (a charitable organisation), Vice President of Numurkah Political Labor Council, and a staunch supporter of the Australian Labor Party.<sup>5</sup>

According to ASIO, Len was 20 years old and working in the building trade when he began to take an interest in politics. In September 1928, waterside workers across Australia were protesting a harsh reduction in their working conditions following the introduction of a new Award delivered by Judge Beeby on behalf of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. Sympathising with their cause, Len joined Sydney protestors who were handing out leaflets and picketing against the use of non-union 'scab labour'. Shortly afterwards, Len read the *Workers' Weekly* and joined the Communist Party.<sup>6</sup>

Len's activism made an impression. In 1929, the CPA invited Len to return to Melbourne and work

with its Organising Bureau, a subcommittee of the Central Executive Committee, responsible for internal administration. Len also joined the newly established Victorian Militant Minority Movement. Its aim was to co-ordinate the activities of militant union members disillusioned by the Labor Party's response to recent attacks on wages and working conditions. The Australian economy was under significant stress and the Great Depression soon bit hard, with rapidly increasing numbers of trade unionists unable to find work.

From 1930, the CPA Executive demanded its members demonstrate unswerving commitment to Stalin's activities in the Soviet Union and provide revolutionary leadership to workers, the unemployed, the poor, and the homeless. As McIntyre states in *The Reds*, "It imposed an iron discipline on its own adherents, who were expected to make any sacrifice, endure any hardship, accept any risk, in the service of the party".<sup>7</sup>

Len set out to impress fellow comrades when he participated in the 1930 May Day march held annually to commemorate the achievement of an eight-hour workday by Melbourne's stone masons in 1856, a world-first victory. Fired up, Len addressed the crowd, recklessly using offensive language to criticise the Labor government which

resulted in 'half-a-dozen stalwart men of the law' arresting him. He was subsequently sentenced to a month's imprisonment.<sup>8</sup>

Identified as a future leader, Len was one of six communist delegates who secretly travelled from Australia to Russia in June 1930 to attend a conference of the Red International of Labour Unions. After the conference, Len commenced an intensive one-year course of study at the International Lenin School in Moscow where he learnt Russian, and worked at several of the new socialist factories, including the famous Stalingrad tractor works.<sup>9</sup> After spending two and a half years in Russia, Len returned to Melbourne on 27 January 1933 and was appointed CPA's District Secretary for Victoria. Attorney-General's Investigation Branch reported in May that 'Lender [sic] Varty', now known as O. V. McDonald, is one of "two of the most prominent men in the Communist Party here at the moment".<sup>10</sup>

Len once again attracted the authorities' attention when he climbed on to the Eight Hours Monument in Russell Street, near the Melbourne Trades Hall, and addressed several thousand people participating in the 1934 Labour Day march. When Len refused to get down, the police charged him

with offensive behaviour, recording his name as 'Leonard Donald'. The next day Len provided a written statement to the magistrate rejecting the prosecution's claim he had asked workers to resist police, instead asserting he was asking workers to uphold the right of free speech. This time, Len was fortunate to receive a six-month good behaviour bond rather than imprisonment, as on 13 September he married Grace Alma de la Lande, despatch clerk, at the Mentone Registry Office, using the name Leonard Victor Varty.<sup>11</sup>

However, Francis Worth's divorce petition reveals that Len was soon committing adultery. Francis stated he and Amelia (known as Millie, nee Aarons) had a happy marriage until early 1934 when Millie began going out frequently at night, though she refused to tell Francis where she went, or who she was with. In December, Francis saw his wife 'in the company of another man quite by chance'. Eventually Millie told Francis she could not live without 'Len' as she was deeply in love. Francis begged her to reconsider leaving him, as her actions could only bring 'unhappiness' for them and their daughter June, who was about five years old. However, he was unsuccessful. Their divorce was finalised on 9 January 1940.<sup>12</sup>

By February 1935, Len and Millie were living together as Mr and Mrs

Linton at 8 Stanley Street, West Melbourne. Then in 1938, the Central Executive permanently transferred Len to work full-time with party headquarters in Sydney.<sup>13</sup> They were both relieved when Millie's divorce was finalised on 9 January 1940. However, on 15 June, the recently elected Menzies government banned the CPA under the *National Security (Subversive Associations) Regulations*. Subsequently, the police raided Len and Millie's home at 6 Vernon Street, Petersham, and seized communist literature.

Using the surname 'Barty', Len 'went underground' and worked as a bartender at a hotel in George Street, owned by the aptly named Albert Slush. Though, according to an ex-Communist, Len spent most of his time 'interviewing Communists and exchanging envelopes with them', rather than serving drinks at the bar.<sup>14</sup>

Following Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the USSR became a key ally. The Curtin Labor government declared the CPA legal again in December 1942 so it could support the war effort. The party reached its zenith in 1945 with around 22,000 members. Len made a significant contribution during this period – his roles included editor and author for the party's official newspaper *Forward* (Sydney) from 1944-1949; paid organiser, member of the Central Committee and NSW

State Committee, chief director for the 1944-45 Victory Campaign, and campaign director for the Federal elections in 1949.

Intelligence and security services continued to closely monitor Len and Millie's activities. Responding to a request for information about who was living at 75 Miller Street, North Sydney, the Divisional Returning Officer advised that its residents were 'Leonard and Millie Vartez' in April 1946, and 'Leonard and June Mills', in September 1949.<sup>15</sup>

The Cold War officially commenced in 1947, when US President Harry Truman announced American support for allied countries threatened by communist expansion after the end of the Second World War. In February 1954, a message marked 'secret' noted Len was flying from Sydney to Perth. As the officer was unable to identify the name Len used when booking his ticket, an unflattering description followed: 'age 45 years; height 5 feet 7 inches; medium build; straight brown hair; hazel eyes; florid complexion; long hook nose and turned up pointed chin; pidgeon-toed [sic], knocked-kneed and flat-footed; usually neatly dressed.' Requesting surveillance, it stated, 'Donald is most active and takes leading part in illegal work and counter security for Party'.<sup>16</sup>

Surprisingly, the Department of Immigration's Sydney office approved Len's passport application for up to six months' travel 'as a tourist' to the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in April 1958, as legislation allowed it to be refused due to Cold War security concerns. Perhaps it was because Len completed the form using his birth name 'Victor Linden Varty', occupation 'clerk'. Len also provided a statutory declaration in 'lieu of form of consent to departure by wife' that stated he married Grace de la Lande in 1933, they separated in 1935, and since then, he had not any contact or communication with her.<sup>17</sup> This was the first time I noted a reference to Grace in archival material released to the public, which is curious as she was also a committed member of the CPA and named as a potential spy in the Victorian Royal Commission into Communism held 1949-1950. Another line of enquiry to pursue!

Published in the *Tribune*, Len Donald's obituary stated he died on 1 January 1965 after a prolonged illness. He had served the CPA as a Central Committee member for 30 years, was 'well-loved and supremely modest', 'known for unusual courage and boundless enthusiasm'. It went on to state Len met his 'wife and comrade June Donald' [Millie] in Melbourne and they had a 'devoted life partnership'.<sup>18</sup>

Once again, I searched the NSW Registry of Birth, Deaths and Marriages, and located a certificate for 'Leonard Donald'. There were several discrepancies. It stated he died in Sydney Hospital on 2 January 1965, aged 57, from multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer. The informant was Nellie Donald, details of his parents 'unknown'. Under 'first wife', appeared the name 'Grace Welaland' [sic], married in Melbourne. Then next to Grace was listed a second wife, 'Nellie Wirth' [sic] married in Melbourne when Leonard was 26.<sup>19</sup> That would be 1934 – when Len was married to Grace De la Lande, and Millie to Frances Worth. No wonder it was difficult to track down Victor Varty!

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*Image of Victor Varty*<sup>18</sup>

# James Henderson McAdam - A Ten-Pound Pom

Mae Mulheran

Life was tough in Glasgow in 1922. My father, James Henderson McAdam, was born in August 1922. The men had not returned very long from WWI and my grandfather, Francis (Frank) McAdam, had had a difficult time fighting on the Somme, along with many other Glasgow men. He returned to his previous work in an iron foundry, but with the end of WWI, the shipbuilding industry collapsed and there was not the demand for iron and steel. It was the beginning of the 1920s depression in Glasgow. Grandad married my grandmother, Mary Henderson, in 1920. He was made redundant in 1922, just after my father was born, and there was no income coming into the family at that time.

Dad left school at 14, a usual age for working class boys to start earning an income. He tried a range of different jobs without establishing any sort of a career. He was even a 'tea taster' for a time. His parents had opened a general store (like today's IGA)

in a new housing development on the outskirts of Glasgow. He worked for a time in the shop, not being paid a wage but being given 'pocket money'.

Like many young men, when war was declared in 1939, he wanted to do his bit, but his mother and his girlfriend were horrified when he told them he intended to be a tail gunner. Sensible debate resulted in him joining the RAF as ground crew, and he became an airframe fitter. He enjoyed the opportunity to see other countries (Italy and Egypt in particular) and he would have associated with and worked alongside men from Canada, Australia and other European countries. This influenced his desire to move out of Britain and find a better life elsewhere.

Dad's RAF service was unremarkable, and he sought early demobilisation on "compassionate grounds", i.e. to help his parents run the general shop. Dad was forced to work for some years in the shop – still receiving 'pocket money'

rather than receiving a proper wage. With no money, my parents ended up living in a caravan in the shop's back garden. My mother issued an ultimatum, and a proper wage was negotiated.

The early hard years and the urgency and criticality of the work he was undertaking in the RAF fed his desire to improve his family's lot, and also encouraged a do-it-yourself outlook. Furniture was built, homes were renovated or refurbished, and we spent the years up until migration in 1962, moving house every 18 months to two years, each time to a slightly larger, slightly better home. In 1954, he started the process to migrate to Canada. He had uncles and cousins who had migrated there in the 1920s, and he corresponded with them regarding opportunities for employment. In the end the emigration plan fell through. My grandmother insisted she was ill and that he couldn't abandon her. The desire to emigrate was stifled, but the dream was as strong as ever.

Dad found work in insurance, walking around the streets and tenements of Glasgow, rain, hail, smog or snow, selling life insurance and collecting a few pennies from each of the policy holders each week. He was a good salesman

and record keeper. In 1960, he was offered a promotion to manage the Falkirk area branch, which he accepted. The family talked about the changes and how it would all work, and then my grandmother died. Gran was the business head of the family business. She knew how to look after the customers and she had a knack for making money. During the 1930s and 40s, she also ran a boarding house in Largs, a seaside town about an hour from Glasgow (in today's parlance, we would call it a B&B). It was open during the warmer weather, and she and my mother would work there whilst the menfolk would ensure the shop business was maintained. Eventually she sold the boarding house and invested in a caravan for summer rental instead.

After Gran died, my grandfather was distraught. He had no idea about running the business and did not want to change anything. Dad felt obligated to resign from the insurance job and help Grandad run the business. It did not take long for him to realise the business was failing. Dad tried to persuade Grandad to allow him to modernise the shop but Grandad would not consider it. In the end, this was the last straw for Dad. In early 1962, he commenced the process to emigrate to Australia. Grandad,

of course, would come with us as there was no other place for him to go.

In July 1962, we found ourselves in Edinburgh being interviewed. Notes of that interview, obtained from the National Archives of Australia, showed that we were considered a well-presented family, with Dad noted as being hard working and sober, just what Australia wanted at that time. Dad had contacted his previous insurance employer and had managed to get a full-time position in Adelaide and this sped up our processing. We were seen by a doctor, although my brother and I were just asked to touch our toes and were passed as medically suitable. My parents had a far more comprehensive medical examination which identified a medical issue for my

mother, requiring treatment before we could depart.

In September, we were offered a sailing date of November 14 from Tilbury, London on the SS *Orion*. Now it all became real. We had to sell our house, sort out what we would be able to take and what we would give away, and arrange for school reports. The amount of space allocated in the ship's hold was quite small and we were able to take two large trunks and a couple of small pieces of furniture. We had also to say goodbye to everyone. Dad was excited and looking forward to the move. He had an aunt and uncle living locally that he saw occasionally but as far as he knew, he had no other relatives in Glasgow. Mum and I started a round of visits to my maternal grandmother's large

group of siblings and cousins. Mum must have found this difficult. It was only when she was in her late eighties, that she admitted to me one day that she didn't want to go, didn't think we would be accepted and didn't think she would spend the rest of her life in Australia.

The ship was not very big and on this voyage carried about 500



*The whole family two days before leaving Glasgow*

passengers. It was a two class ship – first class and steerage. All the British passengers were given first class cabins. First class meant that there were only two bunks in the cabin; in steerage, there were four to a cabin. Greek migrants embarking in Piraeus were placed in steerage cabins. Showers were down the hall and were communal. The British class system was alive and well.

The ship had few facilities, but the food was good, the staff were friendly, and Mum and Dad treated it like a holiday. Every night, there was ballroom dancing in the main entertainment area in the upper part of the ship. The small group of teenagers on board visited the steerage hall, where the Greeks had their own dances every night. Most had no or little English, but smiles and laughter as they tried to teach us how to do their folk dances went a long way.

Dad was keen to give my brother and I some interesting experiences on the journey. In Piraeus, he arranged for us to go on a tour of the archaeological sites of Athens. As we travelled through the Suez Canal, he pointed out the Pyramids and explained what the locals were trying to sell us. In Aden, we went shopping! Dad was keen to show off to us the bartering skills he had

learned while here during the war.

Our final stop before Australia was Colombo in Sri Lanka (called Ceylon at that time). I had been socialising with a group of boys from the Big Brother Scheme and their chaperone invited my family to join a bus tour he had arranged. We visited the zoo and then we went to a “British-style” hotel. This was markedly different. There was high tea, served on beautiful porcelain, scones and small cakes, silks, embroidered shoes and shawls and jewellery to buy. Young boys clambered up coconut palms to show us how they were harvested. It was a beautiful place, but the difference with the rest of the city was stark.

We arrived in Adelaide late on the evening of 14 December 1962. The temperature was in the high 20s at 10pm, and in December! We had left in mid-winter and arrived in summer. We did not disembark until the following morning. The logistics to process hundreds of families and their belongings took a long time.

Dad had investigated housing in Adelaide as part of his preparations. He found a real estate developer who was willing to sponsor us if we signed a contract to purchase a house within a couple

of months of arriving. Because Dad had arranged a job already, they were keen to progress. The development was some way out of Adelaide but the distances were not great and contracts were duly signed. It meant that on arrival we did not have to go to one of the migrant hostels and would go to a rental unit, owned by the company, until our house was ready.

A representative of the developer met us at the port and explained they would be booking us into the People's Palace for a couple of days. This was a nice break with decent sized rooms, the opportunity to look around Adelaide City and for my father and brother to have simple meals, e.g. baked beans on toast! Mum especially was keen to get into what was to be our new home for the next few months. The unit was basic with no heating or cooling but was more than adequate for a few months.

Dad's job didn't start until three months after we arrived. He was worried about income until then and approached the developer to see if there was any work he could do. He ended up labouring, digging holes for light poles. They were sceptical that Dad would last (he was 40 and had never done any physical work) but

Dad assured them that he could. His level of determination was considerable. Mum applied for and was successful in acquiring a job at Weapons Research Establishment in Salisbury.

Was it a good decision to emigrate? For Dad, yes I think it was. For Mum, not so much. Her father died a few months after we arrived here and she would not fly back on her own. For my brother, yes; he assimilated quite quickly at the local primary school although we were all bemused as to why God Save the Queen was played every morning. For me – not so much. My previous high school experience was ignored and I was placed in a class according to my age group. I had been three months shy of sitting my "O" levels (end of 4th year high schooling) and the South Australian Education Department decided to place me at the beginning of third year.

For my Grandad, definitely not. He was lost for some years, not able to adjust to a different country and finding it difficult to make friends. He became very depressed. After a few years, though, he was persuaded to join the local Seniors Centre, where he met a lovely lady called Marion, and married her.

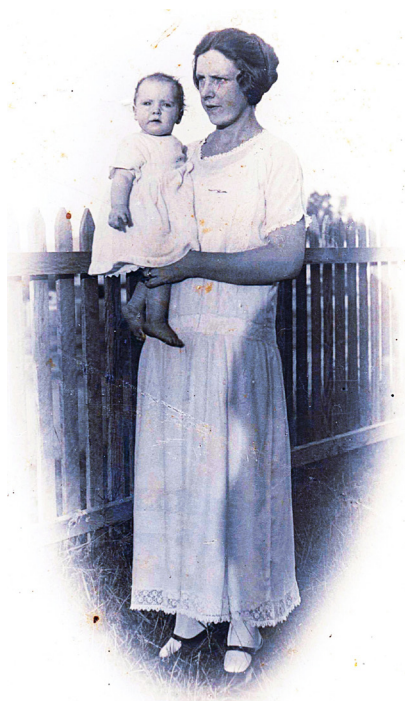
# Betty Trott, My Centenarian Cousin

Sandra Barnbaum

My first cousin was baptised 'Beatrice' but was always known as Betty. Born on 21 February 1924, she will soon celebrate her 102nd birthday in her own home on the Gold Coast. Until a few weeks before her 100th birthday, Betty was regularly driving friends and neighbours to church each Sunday. Her doctor advised her to give up driving, but Betty claimed she had not heard THAT, so her daughters had to 'get it in writing'!

Following the disruption caused by World War 1, Australia was still recovering in 1924, so Betty grew up learning to 'make do'. Her mother, Phyllis (nee Miller) was born on a dairy farm and was an excellent role model. Their hardy generations survived the great depression during the late 1920s and 1930s, World War 2, and many regional conflicts. Betty remained perfectly calm when a recent cyclone threatened her area; her main concern was the survival of her goldfish in their pond.

Her parents met in Rockhampton after Betty's father Stanford returned home from fighting on the Western Front. Stanford Trott



*Phyllis Trott with baby Betty*

enlisted in the AIF when he was 16 years of age. His father, my very stern grandfather, attempted to thwart him, but Stanford travelled by train to Brisbane and was accepted there. After training in Egypt, he was posted to the Western Front in 1916, where, due

to his small stature and obvious youth he was put in charge of the carrier pigeons. The latter provided the essential communications between the front line of fighting and Army headquarters. Stanford suffered both gun shot and shrapnel wounds during his time on the front and was transferred to a military hospital in England. When the war ended, Stanford took the opportunity to visit Scarborough in Yorkshire, where his father, William Boyes Trott, was born, before the family emigrated to Queensland in 1881. Returning to Australia, Stanford found it difficult to find work owing to his permanent injuries. He was fortunate to marry a strong and caring woman in 1923.

My Aunt Phyll, also my Godmother, turned her suburban garden into a source of food for the family. As well as growing fruit and vegetables, she kept fowls for their eggs, and was well known for her prizewinning jams and chutneys.

Betty grew up in a time before pasteurised milk, motor vehicles and flushing toilets were commonly available. She recalls that although money was scarce in her early years, she and her sister Margaret had everything they needed.

Most girls and boys had only primary school education. Thanks to the generosity of great uncle Frank Sealy, my mother, as well as

Betty and Margaret, all benefitted from a private school education. Betty was enrolled at the local Girls' Grammar School at the age of five.

Stanford did not own a car, so Betty travelled to school each day with fellow pupils in their family's horse drawn sulky. Over the following ten years, Betty made many lifelong friendships.

At the age of 15, Betty left the school already trained to be an efficient secretary, but she was first employed at a Photographic Studio. There she was required to delicately touch the black and white photos with colour on the eyes, cheeks and lips of the subjects. Then she was offered work in St Paul's Cathedral Registry Office. Next came an opportunity to work in the accounts section of Lakes Creek Meat Works, one of the area's largest employers. While there, Betty mentioned that her father was also trained in account keeping, and that his opportunity to work had been limited by his war injuries.

By this time World War 2 had commenced, men were leaving to enlist, and Stanford's employment was gratefully accepted. From 1942, Rockhampton became the base for two Divisions of the United States Army which had joined Australia in its battle in the Pacific.

Betty was just eighteen when, at a function at the Old Grammarians Club, she met Frank Middlebrook. Frank had come from Lincolnshire through the Big Brother Scheme and had joined the Air Force in 1940. Romances developed speedily in times of war, when men, uncertain of their futures, needed the certainty that someone would be waiting upon their return from battle. Betty and Frank married in 1942, and after a twenty-four-hour honeymoon at Yeppoon, they left on transfer to Maryborough, Queensland, where Frank continued his Air Force training. Betty's sister Margaret also married a member of the RAAF, Bruce Stein.

Betty returned to her parents' home in 1944 for the birth of her first child, Rodney. When the war ended in September 1945, Frank, with the help of a neighbour, put his cabinet making skills to good use by building his home with Betty. Conveniently, their new home was a short walk from her parents' home. As an immigrant from England, Frank did not have the local connections so valuable in a town the size of Rockhampton. Frank relied on family and friends to help advertise his skills. Apart from seeking orders from local furniture stores, Frank provided my family's home with desks, bookshelves and a glass-fronted music cabinet, which I still use today.

Betty's resourcefulness saved the day! At a time when women were expected to stay at home, caring for both home and children, Betty found ways to grow the family income. Although there were now three children, Rodney, Judith and Pamela, Betty found she could visit clients in the evening and use her talent for 'saleswomanship'. The first product I recall was 'bunting' to welcome Queen Elizabeth on her visit to Australia in 1954. This was very successful and Rockhampton was bedecked with banners, streamers and flags during the Royal Visit.

Second son David was born in 1957 suffering a slight impairment. Betty has always made his well-being a priority. In November 1959 I completed my Senior Public Examinations and was satisfied that my hard work had earned me a few awards at my school's Speech Night. All too soon, I discovered that such prizes bring only momentary joy, when followed by news of an innocent life tragically cut short!

Our telephone (affixed to the wall in 1959), was ringing when we arrived home that evening. The caller was a very distressed Betty. Rodney had been electrocuted during a fierce storm earlier in the evening. Betty sobbed as she told how a policeman had called with the terrible news, and that Rodney's father Frank had gone to

identify his deceased son.

Rodney, just fifteen, was a quiet lad, well liked, who loved horses. On the last day of the school year, he was looking forward to a student excursion to Brisbane the next day. He had left his signed Rail Travel Student Concession form at the school and just hopped on to his bicycle to retrieve it – he either did not see the fallen line in his path, or he did not realise that it was 'live'. I was called upon to look after Betty's three younger children on the day of the funeral, as in the 1950s, children rarely attended funeral services. These were very solemn events and not celebrations of life as often described today. Many years later, when a history of the school was published during its Centenary year, fellow students of Rodney's recorded that they would like to have attended as a 'mark of respect'.

Betty's family doctor advised her to continue her volunteer work, so as not to be consumed by the terrible loss of her elder son. Betty's mother, recently widowed, urged her daughter to join her at lawn bowls. This shared interest gave Betty an outlet for her grief.

The sudden death of a child is a tragedy, but Betty had to marshal all her strength when her husband Frank suffered a fatal heart attack in 1975. Now middle aged with

younger son David still dependent on her, Betty embarked on a new career, selling soft furnishings in the new Target store in Rockhampton. (Yes, of course we bought our new living room curtains from her.)

Betty had always encouraged her children to believe that by hard work and perseverance they could attain their 'goal' in life. Judy, her elder daughter, has had a remarkable career. Leaving school at fifteen, as her mother did, Judy studied at night, spent a year or so teaching at a church school in PNG, and after being awarded a Lady Gowrie Scholarship, moved to Canberra to study at ANU. She completed an Honours degree in History. Her first position was a research assistant for Professor Manning Clark. She then commenced twenty years of service to Australian Parliament and became Serjeant-at-Arms in the House of Representatives. Judy was also secretary to many overseas delegations.

Betty was equally proud of all her children. Pam, working for a local politician, enjoyed fishing, gardening and lawn bowls, and David, living independently, spent time volunteering. When asked recollections of their childhood, they quoted Betty's practical advice which was "mangoes should only be eaten in the bath!"

Betty had a love of travel. While on a cruise after she retired, she

met Jack Rodger, who was also a veteran of World War 2. They were soon married, but before she left for her new home on the Gold Coast, Betty rescued a red rose bush from the garden of her first home. It is still thriving and the memories of her previous life with it. Always keen to travel, Betty and younger daughter Pam enjoyed a lengthy road trip from San Francisco to Los Angeles just weeks after Betty had a heart pacemaker implanted. Betty's ability to stay calm in a crisis, brings to mind her account of a trip back to Rockhampton to visit her younger children. Jack was driving when she warned him to "Slow down Jack, the police might see you speeding while wearing your oxygen mask!" Betty's beloved mother Phyllis eventually joined Betty and Jack at their home on the Gold Coast and passed away there aged in her late nineties. Betty continued to care for Jack for another decade until he died at a similarly great age.

Betty continues to live a very full life at Elanora on the Gold Coast. Now her younger daughter and son are also living close by. Even a diagnosis of breast cancer did not prevent Betty from caring for others. Since losing her sister Margaret, the latter's children and grandchildren treat Betty with the same love and respect they had for their own mother. Betty was always available when a family

member was in need of support. I was grateful for her presence during the illnesses of my parents and brother.

One of the greatest joys in Betty's life has been the birth of two great-granddaughters, Annabelle and Victoria, aged four and two years now. Betty celebrated her 100th birthday with 40 of her family, friends and neighbours at an afternoon tea. She looked very attractive in a blue silk frock and cheerfully chatted to her guests. It was a truly memorable occasion with four generations, all proud to honour a wonderful mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt and cousin – Betty!



*Betty Rodger at her 100th birthday party*

Betty's story continues as I write this in January 2026. Her once busy life is more restricted due to a nasty fall she had on Christmas Eve, 2024. Even in intense pain, her first reaction was disappointment at not being able to cook the Christmas dinner for family as she had planned. Instead, she spent six weeks in hospital, determinedly learning to walk again once the fractures had healed. Fortunately, Betty is able to remain in her home with excellent care, and still rarely misses church – even though Judy remarked that her mother slept through the sermon last Christmas Day.

Betty has spent her whole life caring for others and spreading joy wherever she goes. In her final chapter she will be blessed by the love returned by so many in her extended family.

# Derk Koning

Ben Hickey

*Introduction: A few years before his death, Derk Koning told his life story to his daughter Kate and me, Ben Hickey, his son-in-law.*

*Those recollections were the basis of a eulogy I gave at his funeral in August 2023 at Rainbow, north-west Victoria. This is an edited extract.*

Today we celebrate the life of Derk Koning, the Dutch lad who became a New Australian migrant. I'm his son-in-law Ben Hickey who knew him for 45 years, and recently conducted interviews with him about his life. I want to tell you about the Derk Koning I knew.

He was a man who was humble and unpretentious. He was sometimes grumpy but usually with a great sense of humour, especially about his own mishaps. He adopted innovation to be a better farmer, and always wanted to see the world outside his small community. He was loyal and firmly focussed on advancing his family.

But it was a mystery to me about how and why he left his homeland in Holland after the Second World

War to migrate to Australia. You see, when he arrived in Australia in 1951, he came quite unprepared. He was a teenager, and travelled alone. He travelled against the wishes of his parents. He knew nobody in Australia. He knew no community groups or sports groups that he could contact on arrival. He had no English skills and virtually no money.

All he had going for him was a spirit of adventure, was young and fit and could work hard, and the values instilled in him by his family in Holland.

When his ship arrived in Australia, he asked to disembark in Melbourne. It was the only city he knew, having seen its name in a newspaper article about an air race from London to Australia.

Today in the church we have a painting of the young Derk that captures some of these contrasts. Painted by his daughter Kathy, it's an artist's impression of Derk arriving for his first day of work in Rainbow.

The painting shows his travel tickets



*A painting of Derk Koning on his arrival from Holland in the country Australian town of Rainbow. Art by Kate Hickey. Published with permission.*

from Amsterdam to Melbourne and Rainbow. It shows he's arrived in a raincoat and is ready for wet weather yet he finds himself in the middle of a hot, dry country. No wonder he has a quizzical look. I think in the painting he's asking himself: What have I done? and What happens from here?

So let's solve that puzzle and go back to his childhood in Holland.

He was born in 1931, during the Great Depression, and lived on a small family farm near Groningen with parents Jan and Annie. His was a regular Dutch childhood of ice-skating on frozen rivers, cycling to nearby towns, and helping out on the family farm.

But everything changed in 1940 when Germany invaded Holland, and occupied the country until 1945. For young Derk, these six years were to change his life. The war brought a raft of restrictions, especially on everyday movement, and it meant he was mostly confined to the family farmhouse.

His meals were largely the same every day and consisted of what was grown on the farm – essentially, it was potatoes, milk, and some vegetables. Soldiers arrived regularly to confiscate the farm's food. Shops were largely empty. Every night was a blackout. High school occurred, but at best it was half a day a week.

It was hard to know who to trust. Some locals supported the Germans, some worked for the Resistance. His only entertainment was to visit grandparents in nearby Groningen, who encouraged the reading skills which stayed with him forever.

The young Derk began to see the horrors of war. He told stories of planes crashing near his home, of seeing pilots falling from the skies to their death, of hearing people being tortured, of seeing waves of war planes crossing overhead, and truckloads of dead bodies being transported from a battleground.

He saw the gruesome outcomes of the four-day Battle of Groningen, in northern Holland, when hundreds were killed near the end of the war. Some of this battle was fought near his grandparents' house. These were key years of his youth, from the age of 8 to 14, that were lost to war.

It was little wonder that the teenager was interested to see if a different world existed from what he knew. He applied to three countries to emigrate. It was the Australian Government which responded first, and accepted him. He had no backup plan if things didn't work out. He set sail, while still a teenager, on the former troop ship *Groote Beer* (Great Bear), and arrived at Port Melbourne, just 20.

He was processed at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. Aware of his farming background, the immigration officials directed him to the town of Rainbow for work:

they hoped the local farmers could teach him a thing or two – which they did.

Over a number of years he worked in both Rainbow and Melbourne as a farm labourer, and driver. He began to learn the English language, initially by reading Tom and Jerry comics as well as Reader's Digest. He bought a block of land at Box Hill which he hoped to build a house on, and establish a future in Melbourne. But that plan came to a halt when his life took a new direction. When you live in Rainbow, north-west Victoria, you get to know of Pella, that small farming community of German settlers just over the creek whose ancestors settled there at least a century ago.

One resident was the young Una Heinrich, an occasional teacher and daughter of a pioneering family of Pella. Una had had suitors, none had lasted, but one day she became aware of this tall Dutch fellow in town. It was Derk.

She then asked for a few trusted townspeople to bring him out to a church service at Pella where she could meet him. Una quizzed him thoroughly, and was convinced that not only was he good looking but he also had good morals. It was love at first sight, she said. The rest

is history, and they married at the same church, St John's, in 1955.

However, the news of Derk's wedding was unexpected to his parents. In those days, when there were no international phone calls from isolated areas of Australia, Derk wrote to his parents about the engagement and marriage. He used the thin blue aerogramme letters which represented mass international communication at the time, and would take up to a month to arrive.

Derk's mother Annie, who had spent an unhappy six years in Holland when it was occupied by German soldiers, was taken aback by the news. She quizzed her son about why he would be marrying someone with a German-sounding surname. Derk wrote back to explain that his new wife was born in Australia, and was a fourth-generation Australian, and her surname came from German migrants who arrived in Australia from the 1830s onward.

And his life wasn't easy with his new father-in-law when he began to work on the farm. Derk's knowledge of farming drew from a tiny but productive 30-acre property in Holland. Now he found himself working on a dry, sandy 1200-acre property next to desert.

Just because he knew how to farm in Holland didn't mean he knew how to farm in Australia was the message that Derk heard from his Australian-born father-in-law, Bill Heinrich. Derk said of their relationship: whatever idea I had, Bill disagreed with it. For a young man lacking in confidence, the clashes they had were difficult.

However, there would be an important milestone where Derk's farming skills would be proved. It was his mother-in-law Hilda who said she'd never seen the crops so good as when Derk was preparing the land. This was a confidence boost for Derk: it proved he could succeed on his own, with his own ideas. He had been taken by the idea of a BBC TV program about soil care, and the need to keep the micro-organisms alive by avoiding overcultivation. It made sense. So he started reducing the tillage when he was growing the crops. It was rare then but the principle of minimal-tillage is commonly used by farmers today.

Away from the farm was a growing family of five for Derk and Una to feed and educate. There was rarely any money available so they were always frugal. Their clothes were from the cheapest shops or hand-me-downs. They avoided restaurants or anything that

might be unnecessary expense. Holidays were out of the question. When their first child arrived home in 1956, there was no mains electricity. Water was often carted to the house. Food came from their farm, not from grocers.

And there were regular droughts, which meant farm income was at best intermittent. A good year with a wheat crop yielded good income, but a bad year yielded zero. Unfortunately, there seemed to be a lot of drought.

Even at their final farm near Horsham, Victoria, they faced two years of drought. They battled to find enough feed for their sheep, and needed to keep them alive by droving them on local roads. In the end they did not have to shoot the sheep but the battle became too much as Derk and Una aged, and they sold up and moved nearer to their children in Adelaide.

They sought to minimise similar financial hardships for their children by helping out with child care. For almost a decade, they provided free day care for a growing number of grandchildren while their parents worked. During school holidays, Derk and Una often looked after three or four nieces of family members who could not take time off.

One niece was Angie Furlong who said they were always warmly welcomed by Derk and Una, including with trips to the pool if the temperature reached 100 degrees (38C). Said Angie: "What I learnt from Auntie Una and Uncle Derk was that: All children are very precious, teach them Christianity and kindness, and most of all, eat all your dinner!"

As Derk aged, he became more assured about his place in the world. Provided he had your confidence, he was a great raconteur. There were regrets. He never went back to Holland. And, like any parent, he reflected that some things could have been handled differently.

But he was proud of every one of his children. He would say – *They all seem to have done well for themselves*. I asked him last year what his best memories were. He said:

- Marriage to Una
- His five children and their success
- Being a migrant himself, he was proud that his expanding family was now in its fourth generation, and was becoming a multicultural Australian family.
- And he always remembered with great fondness his travels around Australia.

At the age of 70, he and Una made two lengthy trips with their old Ford Falcon and caravan. They travelled around east and west Australia, and loved every minute. On those trips, Derk at last discovered the big wide land of Australia that he had wanted to see since he arrived from Holland 50 years previously.

Finally, I have no doubt that the Government officials who approved his application to come to Australia got the decision right, because he contributed well to his beloved country.

His life was without fanfare. There were no medals but in my opinion he was truly a Quiet Achiever.

And we farewell him today with a floral tribute that contains orange tulips from his native Holland, combined with the yellow wattle flowers from his adopted Australia.

**Goodbye old friend**

# A little bit Australian: A Journey from Kharkov to Canberra

Helen Cohen

After reading a tale about Stefan and Alex Jurkievicz in Mark Butz's *Tales from Two Cities*, mentioned in my last book review, I was intrigued to find a new book in the library with the story of Alex Jurkievicz. 'In the aftermath of the Second World War many European refugees made their way to Australia. Alex's story is a graphic personal picture of how one woman managed the drastic impact of war and met the challenges of settling in a foreign country.'

The book's introduction by Carol MacKay explains how she recorded and transcribed many hours of oral history with Alex Jurkievicz. Additionally, over time, Alex began writing stories of her childhood and some of her war time experiences. From this material Carol MacKay has created a story with the voice of Alex Jurkievicz.

From the age of 17, Alex was forced to leave her home in Kharkov after the German invasion of Ukraine and travel to Germany to become a forced labourer in a factory to help the German war effort. The many privations of hard work and lack of food made life miserable. After the war Alex became a displaced person and was moved through a series of camps within Germany.

Alex met Stefan Jurkievicz, from Poland, in one of the camps and eventually they were able to be married. Their first child was born in 1948 while they were still in a German camp. In 1949 representatives of other countries came to the camp to talk about immigration. After listening to an Australian representative, they decided to apply to go to Australia.

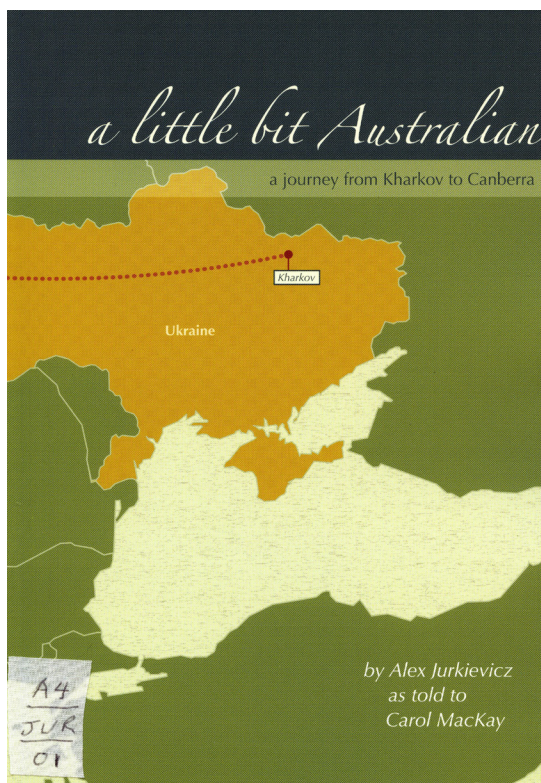
Stefan's first job was at the Cotter Dam and Alex and their first child, Wally, had to live in a migrant hostel in Cowra. 'How does a person develop the resilience and the optimism to assimilate into a foreign culture with joy and enthusiasm?'

Carol MacKay has selected stories that are particularly about Alex and her journey to becoming an Australian. Alex made every effort to join in with community activities as she tried to learn English. She volunteered at the Turner school tuck shop when her first child started school, she was determined her children would become Australians. In preparing Wally for school, she spoke to him only in English to ensure he would be able to understand his schoolteachers.

'The YWCA was my salvation', Alex said. From English lessons to home-making courses to tennis lessons, the YWCA provided Alex with the opportunity to make friends with Australians as well as with other migrants. Alex worked hard to integrate into the Australian way of life. She also worked whenever that was possible, including helping Stefan as he established a business.

This little book is an uplifting immigration success story. Following the terrible privations during and following the Second World War, with hard work and determination, Alex and Stefan succeeded in becoming successful and valued members of the Canberra community.

*Alex Jurkiewicz as told to Carol MacKay, A little bit Australian, A Journey from Kharkov to Canberra, Canberra Stories Group, Canberra, 2008. 76pp, Call number: A4/JUR/01.*



# From our Contemporaries

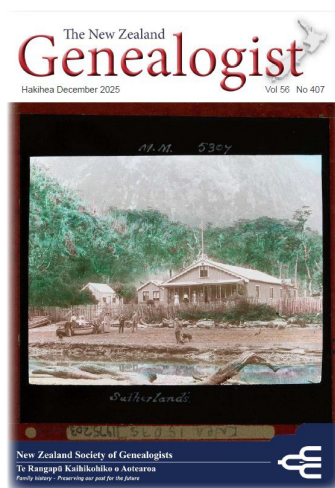
Pauline Bygraves

The items selected for this column are taken from some of the many overseas journals received by the Society - they usually mention Australia in some form or may be of general interest to Australian researchers. If you have an interest in a particular country or location, there will often be other relevant material - recently received journals are on display at the front of the Library.

E-journals are accessible on the computers in the main room. Open the FCER icon on the desktop and click on the link to "Electronic Journals" under "Electronic Resources". If you have any comments or suggestions, please email [editor@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:editor@familyhistoryact.org.au).

## AUSTRALASIA

\* Charlotte BETHELL, daughter of Thomas BETHELL and Beata FRENCH, moved to Australia where she married Edward George LANE in 1857. At Melbourne in 1871 Charlotte was charged with manslaughter but the family relocated to New Zealand before the trial. She died at Oamaru, North Otago in 1912. *New Zealand Family Tree* Dec 2025 p3 (electronic journal).



\* Ralph Franklin CARRODUS (1923-1945) was born at Waverley NSW and joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force in 1942. He served with 50 Squadron and was based at Skillingthorpe Lincolnshire. *The New Zealand Genealogist* Dec 2025 v56 n407 p174 (electronic journal).

\* Celia GEARY: "From there to here". Benjamin REEVES worked in Australia before moving to New Zealand with his wife Harriet WORT and family. William GEARY, born in Hucknall Torkard, Nottinghamshire in 1800 was sentenced to seven years transportation in 1831 and arrived in Hobart on the *Jupiter*. He later became a whaler on an American boat, before settling in New Zealand.

*The New Zealand Genealogist* Dec 2025 v56 n407 p153 (electronic journal).

\* Hannah BROUGHTON, aged 16 from Liverpool, arrived at Hobart Town on the convict ship *Platina* in 1837. Her misconduct over many years saw her punished several times and her sentence increased. In 1846 she married Joseph HANNAM who had been convicted of larceny at London and sentenced to 10 years transportation. Joseph and Hannah had one son, Joseph Henry, born in 1849, who married Rebecca CORKIN in 1874, before moving to New Zealand where he died in 1916. Joseph senior died aged 35 in 1856. Hannah's death has not been traced. *The Midland Ancestor* (Birmingham and Midland SGH) Dec 2025 v20 n12 p718 (electronic journal).

\* Paul HICKFORD: "On the Wright trail...part 2". Ellen Grube, daughter of James Relton WRIGHT and Jane Ann GRUBE (nee RAE/REA) was born in New Zealand before her parents married at Sydney in 1868. In 1893 Ellen married Christopher de Lacy CLARKE, a chemist, at Adelaide. They had a son Sydney WRIGHT/CLARKE. Following Christopher's death from suicide at Sydney in 1902, Ellen left for South Africa, where she was murdered in 1906. The name "Relton" has been given to numerous Wright descendants including Claude Relton BARKER (1902-1988) who served with the Australian Army during World War II and became a prisoner of war in Burma. *The New Zealand Genealogist* Dec 2025 v56 n407 p166 (see also issue for Sep 2025 v56 n406 p106) (electronic journal).

## ENGLAND

\* Harry Albert GRIFFITHS was born in 1866 at Manchester. He married Annie Hester BODENHAM and they, with their son Douglas Harry, migrated to Western Australia. Douglas, aged three, died at Coolgardie in 1897. Other children named are Ernest Norman (b1895), Roy Neil Craven (b1903) and James Croser. Both Annie and James Croser died in 1911. Harry married Mabel WHITE (nee SAWKINS) in 1918 and they had three daughters. Harry became a prominent Member of the WA Legislative Assembly. He died aged 68 and is buried at Karrakatta, as are both his wives. *The Manchester Genealogist* 2025 v61 n4 p310 (electronic journal).

\* Mary Lilian HARDEN, daughter of James HARDEN and Emily Jane BARKLA of Kapunda, South Australia, was christened in 1863. James had earlier married Mary Catherine SMITH at Saffron Walden, Essex in 1854. Mary and daughter

Amelia had died in 1858. James died in 1894 and, according to the Adelaide Advertiser, his funeral left from the residence of his son-in-law, James GRAVES, Portlandward. *The Essex Family Historian* Dec 2025 n186 p56 (electronic journal).

\* Edward Albert STONE, son of George Frederick STONE and Charlotte WHITFIELD, was born at Perth, WA in 1844. His sister Alice, born in 1848, married James Brown ROE, son of John Septimus ROE, a British Royal Navy officer who served on HMS Horatio during the Napoleonic wars and who later became Surveyor-General for Western Australia. The article contains comprehensive biographical details of both the STONE and ROE families. *The British Columbia Genealogist* Sep 2025 v55 n3 p18 (see also issue for Jun 2025 v55 n2 p23) (electronic journal).

\* James BLACK married Elizabeth BOYLES of Bramfield in 1891 and in 1916 they migrated to Western Australia after answering an advertisement for would-be farmers. James was repeating history. His ancestors from Scotland, who moved to Suffolk in 1886, were attracted by the terms offered by large landowners (such as Lord STRADBROKE) in advertisements in Scottish newspapers and magazines. *Suffolk Roots* Dec 2025 v51 n3 p210 (electronic journal).

\* George HEAD, his wife Mary Ann and children Elsa, Mary Ann, Eliza and Ellen migrated to Australia 1839. They are included in an online display on emigration from Suffolk available on the Suffolk Archives website. *Suffolk Roots* Dec 2025 v51 n3 p219 (electronic journal).

\* Emerson JORDAN, son of Emerson JORDAN and Ann WOOLNOUGH, was born in 1788. He married Letitia SMITH in 1809. After several convictions, in 1827 he was sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing two hogs. He left England on the *Phoenix* in 1828. Nearly 10 years later he successfully applied to have Letitia and their three surviving children join him in NSW. *Suffolk Roots* Dec 2025 v51 n3 p228 (electronic journal).

## SUFFOLK ROOTS

Vol. 51 : No. 3 : December 2025

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

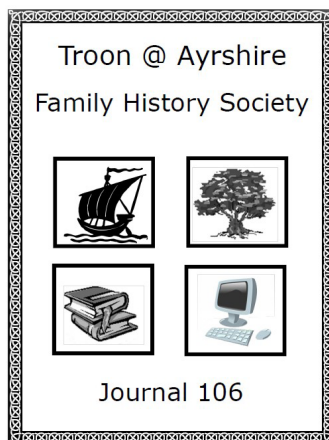


THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

\* Mary Ann MARJORAM, daughter of Thomas MARJORAM and Elizabeth WATLING, was born in 1795. In 1812 she was convicted of arson and sentenced to be executed which was reprieved. Instead she was transported for life, arriving at Sydney on the *Wanstead* in 1813. She had an illegitimate son, Richard, with Richard BATTY, before marrying William COATES at Parramatta in 1820. Mary died in 1838 at Bathurst, having given birth to a further 10 children. She is buried at Castlereagh. *Suffolk Roots* Dec 2025 v51 n3 p235 (electronic journal).

\* William DOWNING married Hannah WOODING in 1839. In 1841 William, with two cousins, was accused of shooting the gamekeeper of the Marquis of Northampton. They were convicted and transported to VDL on the *Tortoise*. Hannah and their baby were left behind. William married Sarah BROOKS in 1850 and died in Tasmania in 1886, aged 71 years. *Troon@Ayrshire* Autumn 2025 n106 p17 (electronic journal).

\* Jane HARDMAN, daughter of William HARDMAN and Elizabeth WILLIS, married James LEICESTER, an engineer from London, in 1845. Jane and her family migrated to Australia, where she died at Adelaide in 1871. *Troon@Ayrshire* Autumn 2025 n106 p15 (electronic journal).



AUTUMN 2025

\* Terry GATWARD: "Gatward - Jewellers of Hitchin". James GATWARD, a watchmaker and clockmaker, is reputed to have started the business in 1760 and, after seven generations, it is still trading today. The author, born at Luton, migrated to Australia in 1988 and is involved in a One-Name Study of the GATWARD family. *Hertfordshire People* Dec 2025 n175 p8 (electronic journal).

\* Louise Stavordale HOUNSELL and her three daughters travelled to Australia in 1915 on board the *Osterley*. Louise was joining her husband and two of their sons who had migrated before the outbreak of war. The ship called into the French port of Toulon where Louise amazingly managed to meet her son Archibald who was serving as a Private in the 1st Surrey Rifles. (This was all reported in the NSW edition of *The Sun* newspaper dated 5 Jan 1916). *Tree*

*Tappers* (Malvern FHS) Winter 2025 v30 p80 (see also issue for Autumn 2025 v30 p60 (electronic journal)).

\* William HOWITT was born in 1792 at Heanor. He married Mary BOTHAM from Staffordshire in 1821. They were both Quakers. By 1851 they were living at Bendigo. William's brothers Richard and Godfrey also migrated to Australia. Godfrey was a doctor and entomologist and became well-known. William and Mary's son Alfred William, born in 1830, became a prominent Australian explorer, botanist and anthropologist. *Nottingham FHS* Oct 2025 v18 n4 p19 (electronic journal).

\* Matt WILSON (Sydney, NSW) is looking for information about his ancestor William WILSON who occupied the Manor House at Stensall in 1841. William's son William moved to the Marong Shire in Victoria and had 14 children. William junior named his Australian property "Stensall". *Ryedale Roots* Jul 2025 n80 p9 (electronic journal).

\* Walter Bentley WOODBURY, born 1835, sailed for Australia in 1851 intending to prospect for gold. Instead he developed an interest in photography and, with James PAGE, travelled throughout the Far East taking photos of indigenous people. Walter married Marie Sophia OLMEIJER who was born in Borneo in 1847. Letters Walter sent to his mother during his travels are available through the State Library of Victoria. Walter's brother Henry James WOODBURY married Sarah Jane ALDERSLEY and their daughter Ellen was born in Java. Henry later moved to Australia and ran his brother's portrait business. Walter and his family moved to the UK where he died in 1885. *The Manchester Genealogist* 2025 v61 n4 p295 (electronic journal).

## GENERAL

\* Martin GREENWOOD: "The Promised Land: The Story of Emigration – 1850-1914 Part 2" mentions migrant ports, shipping, passages, disasters and diseases, as well as a case study about four BUTLER brothers from Fringford who settled in Queensland. Joseph was the first to arrive in 1870, followed by Henry and his family later that year and then Charles and Thomas in 1874. Family History Federation *Really Useful Bulletin* Oct 2025 n62 p2 (electronic journal).

# Society Education and Activities

**Meetings** are held via Zoom, face-to-face in the Education Room, or “hybrid” via both methods. Refer to the website [www.familyhistoryact.org.au](http://www.familyhistoryact.org.au) for additional information or to register for the meetings. Contact the convenor if you have any questions.

**Education Sessions** – Registration is required for all paid courses or events. Information is on the website [www.familyhistoryact.org.au](http://www.familyhistoryact.org.au) or in the newsletters. Contact [events@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:events@familyhistoryact.org.au) for any questions about education events.

## **AI for Genealogy SIG**

7.30pm third Monday of even-numbered months

## **Australia SIG**

2pm fourth Sunday of odd-numbered months

## **Coffee and Chat**

10am third Friday of each month

## **Convict SIG**

7.30pm second Wednesday of even-numbered months

## **DNA SIG**

1pm first Saturday of February, second Saturday of March, May, July, September, November

## **English and Welsh SIG**

7.30pm third Thursday of odd-numbered months

## **Family Tree Maker SUG**

10am second Thursday of each month except January

## **Heraldry SIG**

8pm third Thursday of even-numbered months except December

## **India SIG**

10am first Saturday of even-numbered months

## **Irish SIG**

9.30am second Saturday of February, March, May, July, September and November

## **Legacy SUG**

10am third Thursday of each month except December

## **Morning Coffee and Chat**

10am third Friday of each month

## **Pauline's Parlour**

11am third Sunday of each month except December; and 11am last Tuesday of each month except December

## **Library Practice**

10am fourth Monday of each month except December

## **Reunion & Mac Support SUG**

9.30am first Friday of each month, except January and December

## **Scottish SIG**

7.30pm first Thursday of each even-numbered month

## **TMG Down Under SUG**

2pm second Saturday of even-numbered months except December

## **Writers SIG**

10am third Saturday of each month February to November (dates around Easter may change)

## April

- 2 7:30 pm **Scottish SIG:** *Accessing British Newspaper Archives*; convenor Clare McGuiness, [scottish@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:scottish@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 3 9:30 am **Reunion & Mac SUG:** convenor Danny O'Neill, [ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 4 10:00 am **India SIG:** *TBA*
- 7 7:00 pm **Monthly Meeting:** *TBA*
- 8 7:30 pm **Convict SIG:** *Possible Excursion to Goulburn and the Towrang Stockade*; convenor Michele Rainger, [convict@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:convict@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 9 10:00 am **Family Tree Maker SUG:** *General Questions & Answers*; [ftm.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:ftm.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 11 2:00 pm **TMG Down Under SUG:** *Dr Cathy Day - Using TMG in an academic research project*; FHACT convenor Lindsay Graham, [tmg@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:tmg@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 16 10:00 am **Legacy SUG:** convenor Julie Hesse, [legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 16 8:00 pm **Heraldry SIG:** *TBA*; convenor Chris Lindesay, [heraldry@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:heraldry@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 17 10:00 am **Coffee and Chat:** [coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 18 10:00 am **Writers SIG:** *Telling Family War Stories - an interactive morning of show and tell*; convenor Jo Callaghan, [writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 19 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour:** *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, [parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 20 7:30 pm **AI for Genealogy:** *Exploring AI-assisted photo enhancement using FAL.ai*; convenor Cheryl Bollard, [ai@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:ai@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 27 10am **Library Practice:** *Learn to use our Library and other resources*; Jeanette Hahn
- 28 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour:** *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, [parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au)

## May

- 1 9:30 am **Reunion & Mac Support:** convenor Danny O'Neill, [ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 5 7:00 pm **Monthly Meeting:** *TBA*

- 9 10:00 am **Family Tree Maker SUG:** *General Questions & Answers*; ftm.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 14 9:30 am **Irish SIG:** *TBA*; convenors Nick Reddan and Peter Mayberry, irish.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 14 1:00 pm **DNA SIG:** *TBA*; convenors Cathy Day and Clare McGuiness, dna.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 15 11:00 am **Coffee and Chat:** coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 16 10:00 am **Writers SIG:** *Writers Circle: a morning of constructive feedback*; convenor Jo Callaghan, writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 17 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour:** *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 21 10:00 am **Legacy SUG:** convenor Julie Hesse, legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 21 7:30 pm **English and Welsh SIG:** *Looking at the influence of geography on our family histories*; convenors Floss Aitchison and Nina Johnson, english.welsh.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 24 2:00 pm **Australia SIG:** *Show and tell - Sharing Family Stories from the Past*; convenor Pauline Ramage, australia@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 25 10:00 am **Library Practice:** *Learn to use our Library and other resources*; Jeanette Hahn
- 26 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour:** *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au

## June

- 2 7:00 pm **Monthly Meeting:** *TBA*
- 4 7:30 pm **Scottish SIG:** *Jeanette Hahn - Using the British Newspaper Archives from Cook*; convenor Clare McGuiness, scottish@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 5 9:30 am **Reunion & Mac SUG:** convenor Danny O'Neill, ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 6 10:00 am **India SIG:** *TBA*
- 10 7:30 pm **Convict SIG:** *Irish Convict Marriages*; convenor Michele Rainger, convict@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 11 10:00 am **Family Tree Maker SUG:** *General Questions & Answers*; ftm.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au

- 13 2:00 pm **TMG Down Under SUG**: *TBA*; FHACT convenor Lindsay Graham, [tmg@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:tmg@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 15 7:30 pm **AI for Genealogy**: *Dating Old Photos: How to read clues hidden in every image*; convenor Cheryl Bollard, [ai@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:ai@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 18 10:00 am **Legacy SUG**: convenor Julie Hesse, [legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 18 8:00 pm **Heraldry SIG**: *TBA*; convenor Chris Lindesay, [heraldry@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:heraldry@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 19 10:00 am **Coffee and Chat**: [coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 20 10:00 am **Writers SIG**: *TBA*; convenor Jo Callaghan, [writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 21 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour**: *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, [parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 22 10am **Library Practice**: *Learn to use our Library and other resources*; Jeanette Hahn
- 30 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour**: *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, [parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au)

# Services for Members

## **Photocopies**

A4 25c

## **Microform Prints**

A4 45c

## **GRO Certificate and PDF Service**

Members \$28 Certificate, \$18 PDF,  
\$7.20 Digital

Non-members \$35 Certificate, \$22.50  
PDF, \$9 Digital

## **Translation Service**

Translations available for the following languages:

English handwriting c. 1600, Estonian, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Latin, Norwegian, Polish, Welsh, Yiddish.

Prices: A \$10 fee for assessment of the material is non-refundable. Prices vary according to language and are charged per 100 words or part thereof.

Further details in Library or from the secretary@familyhistoryact.org.au

## **LDS Film Viewing**

The FHACT library is registered as a Library Affiliate with the LDS FamilySearch Organisation. This enables members using the FHACT library access to the approximately 25% of digital records held by LDS that have restricted access imposed by copyright holders.

## **Discounts**

Financial members receive a 10% discount when purchasing FHACT publications. Further details in Library.

## **Research Advice**

The service providing free research to members, for those facing a “brick wall” in their research, is currently suspended.

## **Readers' queries**

Members may submit queries for inclusion in *The Ancestral Searcher* free of charge. Please no more than 200 words per query. Non-members \$27.50. Contact: editor@familyhistoryact.org.au (all prices include GST)

## Notice to Contributors

The copy deadline for contributions to *The Ancestral Searcher* is first day of the month prior to publication. The journal is published quarterly in March, June, September and December.

The Editor welcomes articles, letters, news and items of interest on any subject pertaining to family and local history.

Please send text files in either **MS Word or plain text, not pdf**. Articles should be no more than 2000 words, with one or two quality images. Please limit footnotes to 3-4 per 500 words.

Digital images should be high resolution tiff or jpeg images.

The Editor reserves the right to edit all articles and include or omit images as appropriate.

Authors can assist by: format dates ‘1 July 1899’, spell out months, omit ordinals on numbers (no st/nd/rth), italicise ship names, all quotes “double quotes”. We no longer capitalise surnames in articles.

Please send submissions and questions to editor@familyhistoryact.org.au.

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*The objectives of the Society are:  
To promote and encourage the study and preservation  
of family history, genealogy, heraldry and allied  
subjects, and to assist members and others  
in research in these areas.*