



# THE ANCESTRAL SEARCHER



Family History ACT

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# FAMILY HISTORY ACT

***Family History ACT is a business name of  
The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra Inc. founded in 1964***

*Member of the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations;*

*NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies;*

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**Front Cover:** Sue O'Leary, Chris Oyston, Jo Callaghan and Margaret Clough at E.M. Fletcher Awards

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# *From the President*

*Michele Rainger*

Hello to all our readers, and welcome to this our final edition of The Ancestral Searcher for 2025.

Now in its seventh year our annual E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition provides a perfect platform for family history writers from across Australia to show off their skills and to share stories from a wide cross-section of topics within the family history genre. This year's prize-winning and shortlisted stories have been shared in this edition of The Ancestral Searcher for all to enjoy. Once again, these stories demonstrate admirably the variety of stories that we might all have within our families and the diversity of ways in which these can be shared and enjoyed. Congratulations to all these entrants.

At our Society Annual General Meeting on 4 November 2025 we elected Barb Toohey as a new Honorary Life Member. Barb has made significant contributions to our society across a number of areas over more than 25 years. We also recognised June Penny and Pennie Pemberton who are stepping down as our society archivists after 21 years. June has also stepped down as the Society's Public Officer – a role that she took on when the Society Incorporated in 1980. We welcome Annette Fitzgerald as our new Public Officer. Barb, June and Pennie are well known to many of our readers for their many years of dedicated support to the Australasian family history community and we thank them for their assistance.

At this meeting we also elected our new Council for the coming year. I welcome back all the Councillors who renominated for another year, and I especially welcome our new Councillor Helen Bull. The incoming Council is:

|                 |                |                |            |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Michele Rainger | President      | Helen Bull     | Councillor |
| Sue Pillans     | Vice-President | Mel McNamara   | Councillor |
| Marie Wensing   | Secretary      | Grahame Thom   | Councillor |
| Cheryl Bollard  | Treasurer      | Howard Viccars | Councillor |
| Floss Aitchison | Councillor     | David Wintrip  | Councillor |

The new Council is looking forward to a busy year as we begin to implement the intentions outlined in our new Strategic Plan for the period 2025-2030 that was also launched at the AGM. Details are available via our website but to summarise: Our vision is to position ourselves as a contemporary and agile society, adaptive to evolving technologies, methodologies and practice, ready to respond rapidly to opportunities that enhance the research, recording and preservation of family histories, heraldry and allied subjects for the benefit of future generations.

As we come to the end of the year, I wish all members a happy and safe festive season, and I look forward to seeing you at the Society during 2026.

# *From the Editor's Desk*

*Clare McGuinness*

It is always a pleasure to publish the winning entries of the E.M. Fletcher Competition, congratulations to all. A near full set of entries will be found in our publication coming next year.

Although certainly creative and evocative, the competition entries rarely address core and instructive ways of doing family history research. Our journal is a place for members to share what research they are doing or have done, and how they are doing it. Sometimes that will include novel sources or methods; sometimes it will reveal totally unexpected results.

Just as the usually tight 'episodes' of family history are highlighted in a short story, TAS articles also need a focus – if only for the reality of a word limit. I was deluged with articles on 'biography' last year, as it allowed people to select just one person's story and the methods used to find it. This was clearly a lot easier than producing the full family history saga. The opportunity to 'write up' at least one ancestor is available again.

This year there was considerable variety in whose story was told, and some variety in how it was told. I encourage everyone to be creative in the way in which a life story is portrayed, not only for your own writing enjoyment but also for the enjoyment and reflection of readers.

As our membership ages, and perhaps comes close to finishing their research, an article in TAS is an excellent opportunity to reflect on significant or quirky experiences, sure to entertain and instruct 'newer' colleagues. But please don't wait for your research to be finished before sharing it with us all.

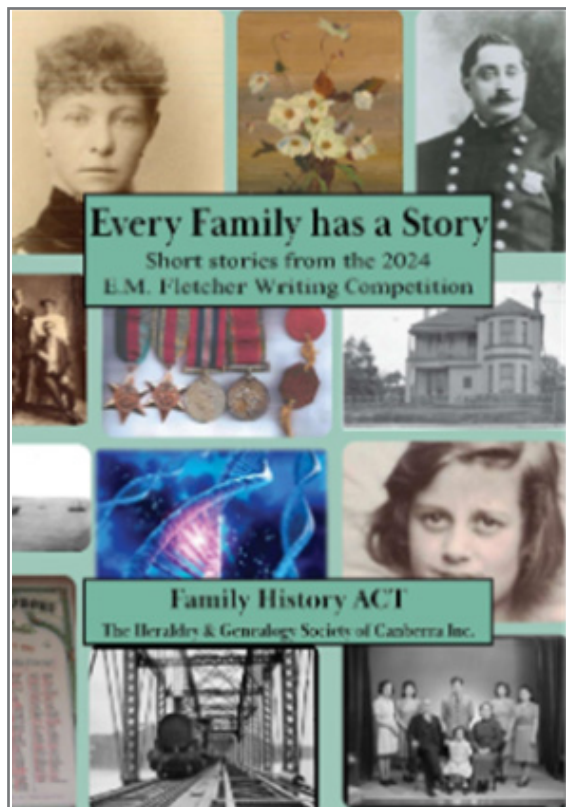
A reminder that our themes for 2026 will be:

|           |                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
| March     | Biography                          |
| June      | DNA                                |
| September | Smorgasbord                        |
| December  | Short-listed stories E.M. Fletcher |

But the theme is just a trigger; articles are welcome on any topic, at any time.

As Editor I am aware of the limitations of our current A5 booklet style, an economy required by the cost of the printed page. Other societies have ceased producing print versions of their journal, for reasons that include allowing for greater page numbers, colours, creativity of layout and better production of images. Currently members receiving the print version pay an additional fee. I welcome your comments as well as your articles for TAS.

# *NEW BOOK - Every Family has a Story 2024 Edition*



Buy your copy of the latest edition of *Every Family has a Story* now!

Published by Family History ACT, this collection brings together 80 captivating family history stories from writers around Australia. With themes ranging from heartfelt memoirs to astonishing discoveries, the book captures the full spectrum of emotion and intrigue found in every family tree.

"The story of your ancestors is your story too." This quote appears on the back cover and reflects the book's central message: that family history is not just about facts and dates, but about people, lives and the threads that connect generations.

This book will appeal to anyone with an interest in family history, whether you're a seasoned family historian or simply love a compelling read. It also serves as a practical example of how to turn research into engaging stories.

*Every Family has a Story* 2024 Edition - \$50.00 [plus postage]. Available from the Family History ACT online bookstore [www.familyhistoryact.org.au/online-store](http://www.familyhistoryact.org.au/online-store)

# Celebrating Excellence in Writing - 2025 E.M. Fletcher Award

*Ann Peut*

The winners of the 2025 E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition were announced at an Awards Ceremony on Saturday 11 October 2025. Thirty-eight guests gathered in person and a further 61 attended on Zoom for what has become an important annual event in the Family History ACT (FHACT) calendar. This year's announcements included the 2025 short-list, the winner and runner up of the E.M. Fletcher Award, and the FHACT member recipient of the Rosemary McKenzie Award.

Now in its seventh year, the E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition continues to be popular with the family history community and writers' forums more broadly as a means of fostering and preserving family history research through storytelling. The 114 stories from across the country entered in the 2025 competition exhibited the same breadth of subject and genre that has become a familiar feature of the competition.

Michele Rainger, President of FHACT and MC for the ceremony, issued special welcomes to John, Robyn and Anne Fletcher, children of Eunice Fletcher after whom the competition is named, and to this year's three judges, two of whom (Sue O'Leary and Chris Oyston) attended in person while the third (Dr Rachael Weaver) provided comments to be read on her behalf.

In a popular segment of the Awards Ceremony, each of the three judges provided reflections from their own distinct perspective on the judging process. Chris Oyston considers himself an unlikely judge but an enthusiastic storyteller who finds joy in turning research into captivating stories for others to read. Chris reflected that his reading of this year's stories prompted strong emotions, many demonstrating "significant depth and meticulous research", and "the pieces that truly distinguished themselves transported [him] instantly to another time and place" through the skilful construction of vivid scenes.

Sue O'Leary, a committed history snoop and blog writer, believes telling our ancestors' stories honours them and enriches the historical record. Sue was captured from the moment she started reading, visiting "jungles, the far reaches of Tibet, war trenches, bride ships, Soviet farms." Sue looked for richly portrayed and convincing characters, a compelling narrative that flowed effortlessly, credible, fitting and natural dialogue, and compelling and balanced use of well-researched historical detail. Equally important considerations for

Sue included vivid descriptions of time, place and events that engaged her senses and emotions, and a well-crafted plot that hooked her from the start and maintained momentum through challenge and tension, building up to a befitting finale with a satisfying and memorable resolution.

Dr Rachael Weaver’s participation as a judge for the 2025 competition was facilitated by the University of Tasmania (UTAS). UTAS also assisted with promotion of the competition among its Family History Diploma students and alumni. Rachael’s perspective is that of a published writer and editor of several books as well as an accomplished researcher and ARC Future Fellow in the School of Humanities at UTAS. She was unable to attend the event, but sent her reflections to be shared with all present.

For Rachael each submission offered a unique window into the lives, challenges, and triumphs of the people and families represented, across many different timeframes and places, where the themes explored in the stories were as varied as the storytellers. There were tales of resilience and courage, reflections on identity and belonging, and some candid reminders that not all family stories are happy ones. The depth of research, the quality of writing, and the emotional resonance of the entries made the judging process rewarding and challenging, with every story bringing a wonderful reminder that behind names and dates there are whole worlds of experience waiting to be discovered and told.

All three judges referred to the pleasure that reading this year’s stories had given them, the challenge posed by the breadth of subject and form they encountered, and the privilege of working together as judges. All were generous in their praise of the entrants for writing and sharing their stories.

**Shortlist and Winners**

Six stories were short-listed:

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| One Pot Family History   | Isabella Crean         |
| The Rain at Marabe Ridge | Rebecca Hodges         |
| Our Spy                  | June Hopkins           |
| Euge will fix it         | Louise Millar-Hoffmann |
| Born into the Bones      | Babi Rani Poudel       |
| London George            | Lynn Sunderland        |

## AND THE WINNER IS...

Congratulations to Isabella Crean, the winner of the 2025 E.M. Fletcher Writing Award. Isabella takes home the winner's prize of \$1,000 for her story **One Pot Family History**, about which the judges commented:

*'We loved the way this story interweaves a family history of migration with a step-by-step recipe, inviting the reader in with subtle humour and sensory details – we could almost smell the curry cooking! The narrative skilfully weaves together tradition and change, showing how cultural heritage can evolve at the same time it remains essential to identity. It's a compelling tribute to the continuity of past and present, reminding us that family history is both a legacy and a living story.'*

## Second Prize

Congratulations to Rebecca Hodges for taking home the 2nd prize of \$500. The judges commented that Rebecca's story **The Rain at Marabe Ridge**:

*'... is a journey to the highlands of PNG that grabs the reader from the very start. It takes one to a place of mystery, the past and the supernatural – first, as a child and later revisited as an adult. The strength of The Rain at Marabe Ridge lies in the highly emotional feelings of love, fear, and death encountered while revisiting the village and the characters and traditions behind the memories. This is cleverly played out so that the reader feels they are actually there.'*

## Highly Commended Awards

Congratulations to the four Highly Commended Award winners, June Hopkins, Louise Millar-Hoffmann, Babi Rani Poudel, and Lynn Sunderland.

The judges particularly appreciated the tender portrayal of the blossoming friendship between two women from different cultural backgrounds in June's story, **Our Spy**. Louise's story, **Euge will fix it**, captures the reader with its flowing and engaging narrative and a dialogue that was both natural and expressive. The writer takes us on a triumphant mission to the finishing post of a major steeplechase in the Australian racing calendar.

Babi's story, **Born into the Bones**, is a powerful story of poverty, daily hardship and survival, identity and a mother's enduring and abiding love for her child who wasn't the son expected. Lynn's story, **London George**, vividly captures 19th century London's character of poverty, fear and hardship, drawing on historical sources and novels to tell George's story.

## Rosemary McKenzie Award

The Rosemary McKenzie Award, awarded by the judges to the winning story from a Society member, recognises Rosemary's significant contribution to the life of the Society over many years, including two terms as FHACT President, editor of the Society's journal, and as an enthusiastic instigator and advocate for the E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition.

Jo Callaghan, who won the inaugural Rosemary McKenzie Prize in 2024 for her story Gorn, was proud to announce the winner of the 2025 Rosemary McKenzie prize – Margaret Clough, for her story, **If This Gets Out**. Margaret's story, written with compassion and sensitivity, is about a young woman trapped in a world of high expectations imposed by herself and the perceptions of others. It is a timely reminder of the personal and social shame associated with a mental health diagnosis in the 1960s and 1970s.

## Thank You

Our thanks to all the entrants for sharing their stories and ensuring another successful year for the E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition. To our judges Sue O'Leary, Chris Oyston and Dr Rachael Weaver - our heartfelt thanks – we couldn't have run the competition without you. The collaboration that the competition fosters between FHACT and UTAS, the creative storytelling by entrants, and the dedication of our judges all combine to support an environment that encourages family history enthusiasts to write stories from their research, and provides them with a forum for publishing those stories.

This will be the last year that Gina Tooke will be part of the E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition committee. Gina has been a creative and driving force behind the growth and development of the competition since its inaugural year in 2019. She will be greatly missed! We offer our very sincere gratitude to Gina for all her work in supporting this initiative and all those involved.



# One Pot Family History

*Isabella Crean*

It was a stifling day. The brutish Western Australian summer blazed down from its rule in the sky. The classroom's faulty air con chuffed irregularly; sputtering bursts of cool air that temporarily subdued the heat. As her presentation slot moved closer, her allegro heartbeat increased. She flicked her eyes to the top right of the whiteboard – Family History. Spittle landed on her cheek from Jack's enthusiastic concluding remark on mining and continuing the Smith family tradition; just like most of the other boys here.

"Time," announces Mrs Buller from her post at her desk. Her eyes remained on the paper as she continued to write down her assessment. Like tagging off in a relay, Scout pushed her chair back and shuffled to the front, tripping on her black school shoes as she neared the lectern. Her arms splayed out for balance, and she felt the draft of momentum rise the hem of her dress above her knees. The room filled with muffled laughter and squeaky giggles as Scout straightened her uniform and picked up her poster. In a clockwise motion, Scout placed a lime green smiley face magnets on each corner, frowning at the garish contrast.

Mrs Buller cleared her throat harshly, signalling Scout to begin. Her hands shook discreetly behind her back, flapping frantically with adrenaline as she stared across the desert of blank faces. Turning away she focuses on her navy A2 poster. The creased textboxes and peeling corners of the hastily glued pictures magnifying in importance at that moment. She traces the faces of her family and the little hand drawn map of the world tracing the routes from afar to Australia. Her eyes settled on the central tableau of her family and exhaled.

Her voice is crisp and clear as she reads, "A Historical Inquiry into the Origins of Familial Culinary Traditions."

~

A wild symphony of slicing, dicing, bashing pots, hissing woks, and the aunties' humble bragging, herald Chinese New Year in my family. As the day progresses, candy flavoured smells hit the air, spicy zings tickle my nostrils, children are dressed in their best, and the familial dishes culminate in a long-anticipated banquet. I've never been clear on what parts of our celebration originate from China and what parts come from our family, but at twelve,

I know all the parts and will never let them go. The crab omelette, the chilli garlic Chinese cabbage, the finely sliced lap cheong, the pork spareribs, honey ginger chicken, fried rice – “the proper way” – are all signs that my family has lived another year and plans to live forever.

Nothing says this more than everyone’s favourite: Curried Potatoes. This dish is a singular link to our heritage. It cannot be ordered in a Chinese restaurant, and it will never grace the pages of a cook book. Its ingredients are devoid of the usual Chinese companions, and it abandons the drama of a fast wok, and yet in my family, it is the one dish that we all crave.

**Step 1:** Wash and scrub potatoes – but leave the skin on. Chop the diced cubed potatoes and place aside in a bowl. Finely slice lamb with seasoning – set aside. Once the potatoes and lamb are prepped and ready, the cooking begins and so does the story.

The origins of Curried Potatoes go back to the 19th century, during the Great Potato Famine of Ireland. When the famine hit, the backbone of provisions supplied through the spine of the country shattered, setting off a chain reaction of disease, death, and starvation. Born in Cashel, County Tipperary three sisters were accepted under the Earl Grey’s immigration scheme for Irish female orphans and boarded the *Lady Peel*. They were amongst thousands, who sailed across the mighty sea to an island colonised by the conquerors of their homeland. Despite resentment against the Irish and employment challenges they thrived. They found love, built families, and passed on the gem that was potatoes. One sister in particular, Mary Dee had a daughter, called Ellen Jones. And it was this daughter, a product of the potato plight, unafraid of the disdain and scorn of others, who fell in love with Wong Chong Sing, a Chinese gold miner from aromatic Canton. From their union they spawned 12 children, one being my ancestor, and most importantly, they merged their cultures in Curried Potatoes; from opposite hemispheres, a connection to their homelands.

**Step 2:** Swiftly sauté lamb in large saucepan. When lamb is cooked through and caramelized, add cubed potatoes – briefly stir to colour the raw potatoes. Sprinkle with more soya sauce if more colour is required. But like every family recipe, time and preferences see the recipe evolve and the strengthening of familial bonds.

Mum would say that Curried Potatoes are all about family, but I think it’s all about competition. My Mum’s grandmother, Billie, was one of nine daughters, who all had boys names because their patriarch wanted a son that didn’t arrive

until number ten. Even though they were Australian born Chinese (ABC), rampant racism drove Billie and her sisters to adopt an exotic French surname to disguise their Chinese origins. Orphaned, the nine Sisters raised their brother and made their living by being talented cooks, and diligent domestics who also taught dancing and music.

They worked hard and the kitchen was a friendly battleground where cooking rivalries took hold. Each made Curried Potatoes differently and proclaimed it “the best”. The differences are etched in family folklore, but not written recipes. I grew up around the kitchen talk that Peta’s was always sweeter than Mickey’s, and Guy’s was hotter than Bobbie’s, but my Great-Grandmother, Billie made it best. Each of the nine sisters had a daughter, and these cousins were raised collectively as sisters while their mothers worked. The Cousins (including my Grandmother Onie) made their own Curried Potatoes, each, a little bit different and of course a little better than the other.

**Step 3:** Add a little hot water and place lid on saucepan until it comes to the boil and allow to simmer. Then gently move the lid aside to allow the ingredients to cook. Unlike cookbooks, there are no definitive quantities and measurements to the ingredients. The vague amounts are passed down in the stories told, and with it the need to adapt, adjust and relax fluctuates as the dish progresses.

My Mum never fails to remind me that the Sisters and the Cousins didn’t have access to the plethora of Chinese ingredients in supermarkets today. I’ve never known a time when the pantry wasn’t stained and smelling of dried fungus, hoi sin, lap cheong, salted black bean, sesame oil or fried shallots. The lack of genuine and freely available Chinese ingredients was the genesis for Curried Potatoes. It was a dish that recreated the tastes and smells of food from a forgotten homeland, from ingredients readily found in Gold Rush Victoria. Rather than abandon the flavours of Chinese cuisine they adapted. Meat was expensive and was sparingly used. Keens Curry Powder is the flavour bomb that gives the spicey kick, and honey and vinegar was used to provide the sour sweetness we now replace with hoi sin. Even the cooking process is more like a European one pot stew than a wok stir-fry. The scarcity of ingredients and utensils fostered a dish that takes pride of place in my family and would have never come to be, had the genuine articles been available.

**Step 4:** Transfer to a serving bowl. Sprinkle with finely chopped spring onion.

When I sit down to eat Curried Potatoes every Chinese New Year, I savour each bite. I let the flavours carry the warm love, loss and joy my family has experienced. I honour its legacy as I “don’t touch, don’t stir” the simmering pot.

As I quietly, bravely, change the ratios, I join the Sisters and the Cousins and make my own version of “best” hoping that one day I too will pass on my own version, the history of the dish and all the successes and struggles of my family with it. The table is our altar, and the dishes are our communion, that narrate the struggles and success of my Chinese family.

~

Scout exhales as she looks across the room. The echo of her tale fading gradually like the whispers of a forgotten spectre of the past. Her feet shuffle as she stares at the blank faces. The harsh grooves of her teacher are set deeper as her pen scrawls against the page. She looks up and with a small smile, nods. Scout plucks the magnets off the stained whiteboard, catching the poster as it curls inwards. As the elastic band thwacks against the cardboard, the bell rings and her peers rush out. Bony frames struggling through the door as they rush to the canteen. Their running steps whispering first come, first serve. Scout strolls to her bag, her lips up-turning into a crescent moon as she pulls out a thermos and inhales the rich scent of curry potatoes.

### ***Inspiration Statement***

As third generation Australian Born Chinese, only food survived enforced/ assumed assimilation. A late discovery of Irish ancestry was reconciled in our family's one pot.



# The Rain at Marabe Ridge

Rebecca Hodges

The first time I saw the hills of Marabe Ridge again, they were soaking wet, slipping quietly under a grey afternoon sky, mist rising from the clay like breath from a sleeping beast. It had been seventeen years. I counted them silently as the bus curved around the final stretch of highway. My hand gripped the seat in front of me harder than I meant to.

Papua New Guinea had a way of gripping back.

I hadn't meant to come back. In truth, I hadn't thought I'd ever return to Tari or anywhere near the Highlands. But the letter that found me in Brisbane had been short and stubborn:

*Bubu's not well. Come now if you can. We don't think she'll make the dry season.* Josephine.

My cousin. My tether to a family I'd folded away like a childhood drawing, smudged and half-forgotten in a drawer I no longer opened. When she wrote, she didn't include updates. Just a call. An echo.

And I answered.

The bus jerked to a stop at a weathered sign painted over in flaking white:

*Hela Province Health Outpost / No Bettel Nut / No shouting at nurses.*

I stepped off into a puddle.

Josephine's face broke through the rain like the sun behind clouds. Older now, lines under her eyes, hair wrapped tight, but unmistakably hers.

"You're early," she said, lifting my bag as though I still couldn't be trusted to carry it properly.

"You're taller," I replied. We smiled with what was left of us.

The walk up the hill was slower than I remembered. The path had grown thinner, hemmed in by vines and stubborn tree roots. The mud sucked at my boots with each step. Rain soaked the shoulders of my jacket. Around us, the jungle pressed in with damp breath.

We reached the house as the clouds cracked open.

The roof had rusted in new directions, but the shape was the same, leaning slightly to the left, as if it too was tired. Inside, the light was dim. A single bulb hung from a cord knotted in two places. The air smelled of cloves and damp wood. And on the cot by the wall, wrapped in blankets that looked too thick for the warmth, lay Bubu.

She was smaller than I remembered. Her skin folded in quiet furrows across her forehead, and her hands rested motionless over her stomach. A string of seeds hung above her head. I stared too long before speaking.

"Bubu," I said softly.

Her eyes opened immediately. Clouded, yes. But seeing.

"You brought the rain," she whispered.

I knelt beside her.

"You remember me?"

She nodded.

That night, the rain didn't stop. It pounded the tin roof like a marching band without rhythm. I lay in the spare room, staring at the beams above me, listening for footsteps or voices that wouldn't come. Outside, frogs called to each other in pulses. And somewhere behind the curtain of night, dogs barked once, then stopped.

I dreamed of the ridge. Of the cave.

Of the place I wasn't supposed to go.

I was eleven the last time I saw it. My cousins dared me. Said I was too soft to make the climb. Back then, I scrambled up the rocks, slipping, knees scraped raw. I reached the cave's edge just as the wind changed. And I heard it. A sound like breathing, but longer. As if the hill was exhaling. I didn't tell anyone what I saw inside. I only remember running.

Later, I told my aunt I'd fallen near the mango tree. The bruise stayed three weeks. But I never went back.

Until now.

The next morning, Bubu was awake early. She refused breakfast but drank water slowly, as if negotiating with it.

She looked at me for a long time. "You remember the mouth in the stone?"

"The cave?"

She nodded. "Something sleeps inside it. And something echoes."

I waited.

"It doesn't want songs. Or fire. Or footsteps," she said. "It only wants memory. But we forget too quickly."

Josephine entered then, interrupting the quiet. She carried peeled papaya on a plate and hummed a hymn I almost remembered. We said nothing more about the cave.

By midday, the clouds had loosened. Sun pressed through the canopy in stubborn shafts. The mud had dried just enough. I told Josephine I needed to see the ridge. She frowned, then nodded.

"I'll come too."

We climbed slowly. The jungle parted reluctantly. Insects buzzed with the impatience of the season. Every so often, I glanced back toward the village, watching the rooftops shrink.

When we reached the base of the limestone, it was almost silent.

The cave hadn't changed. Moss curled around its mouth like lips unsure of the word. The air inside was cooler. No wind. No smell. Just stillness.

I stepped in.

It was shallower than I remembered. The walls glistened with condensation. Lichen clung to cracks. But something deeper pulled me forward.

I touched the back wall.

And heard it.

A low sound. Not music. But rhythm. Echo.

Josephine gasped behind me.

"I hear it too," she whispered.

Then Bubu's voice rose inside me. *It only wants memory.*

And I saw it.

A glimpse, not vision – more suggestion.

Children laughing near a fire. A woman carving bark. A storm split across the sky with singing underneath.

I fell back. Breath stolen.

The echo faded.

We left the cave without speaking.

That night, I couldn't sleep.

The cave's echo still pulsed in my chest, like a drumbeat. I lay on the woven mat in the spare room, staring at the ceiling beams, tracing the knots in the wood like constellations. Outside, the rain had softened to a whisper, but the frogs had grown louder, their calls overlapping in a strange rhythm - not chaotic, but patterned. Like a language I'd forgotten.

At some point, I drifted into a dream.

I was standing on the ridge again, but the cave was gone. In its place stood a circle of men and women, their faces painted in ochre and charcoal. They were humming – not a song, but a vibration. The sound rose from the ground, not their mouths. And in the centre of the circle, a child stood barefoot, holding a carved stone.

When I woke, my hands were clenched into fists.

The next morning, Josephine was already outside, sweeping the veranda with a bundle of dried coconut fronds. She looked up as I stepped out.

"You slept?"

"Sort of."

She nodded, then pointed to the hills. "Bubu wants to go up there."

I blinked. "To the ridge?"

"She said it's time."

I didn't ask what that meant. I just packed a bag.

We left after breakfast. Bubu insisted on walking, though her steps were slow and deliberate. Josephine carried a small stool in case she needed to rest. I

carried water and a flashlight, though the sun was already high and the path familiar.

As we climbed, Bubu began to speak – not to us, but to the land.

She named trees. Stones. Birds. She greeted the wind like an old friend. Her voice was low, but steady, and each word felt like it belonged to the soil.

“This place remembers,” she said once, pausing to touch a vine. “Even when we forget.”

At the base of the cave, she stopped.

“You go first,” she said.

I entered.

The air inside was cooler than before. Still. The walls shimmered faintly with moisture. I stepped to the back, where the echo had first found me.

Josephine followed, helping Bubu inside.

We sat in silence.

Then Bubu began to hum.

It was a low sound, almost imperceptible. But it resonated. The cave responded – not with sound, but with feeling. A pressure. A presence.

Bubu reached into her blouse and drew out a small bundle wrapped in cloth. Her fingers uncurled it slowly, reverently. Inside was a carved stone – smoothed from years of handling, patterned faintly with spiral marks that seemed to shimmer in the dim light.

She placed it on the ground between us. The cave went still.

“This belonged to my mother,” she said. “And hers before her. It’s not a relic. It’s a key.”

None of us moved.

Then the hum returned. Louder, clearer. A vibration that crawled along the walls and settled in my ribcage. Not threatening – inviting.

And suddenly the space around us shifted.

I saw flashes - not visions, but impressions.

Children laughing near a fire. A woman weaving pandanus leaves. A storm split across the sky, with a chant echoing beneath the thunder. A man in ceremonial

paint stamping his feet in rhythm with the falling rain. A bird flying in slow circles above them all.

The cave was not a secret. It was the centre.

Used. Honoured. Heard.

The hum lifted. The walls breathed. And then – quiet.

We left the cave silently, the carved stone still warm where Bubu had placed it.

Back at the house, the air felt different. Lighter.

Bubu sat upright in her cot, her eyes sharper than before. Josephine and I exchanged a glance.

“You saw,” Bubu said.

I nodded.

“You heard.”

Another nod.

She smiled with a deep, quiet pride.

“The ridge knows you now,” she said. “It heard you. It echoed you.”

That night, the rain returned. But not with violence. It fell like a rhythm in slow retreat. Soft. Gentle. Like the final song of a long ceremony.

I lay on the mat again, eyes open to the wooden ceiling. And again, I dreamed.

In the distance, someone called my name – not urgently, but curiously.

When I turned, the voice was mine.

I woke with a start.

Outside, the frogs had stopped singing.

The next morning, Bubu did not wake.

She lay still in her cot, hands folded, the carved stone resting beside her chest.

Josephine cried quietly. She didn't rush. She placed a yellow cloth over Bubu's forehead, lit a candle, and closed the window just slightly. The rain had paused.

We dressed her in her best blouse. The blue one with stitched patterns of birds and vines. We wrapped her in a woven mat from the storeroom – bright and

stiff with ceremonial dye. And we carried her to the community hut near the church, where three elders waited.

They didn't ask questions. They nodded. They hummed.

I stayed for the ceremony, seated on the edge of the room while the rain began again, slow and deliberate. People arrived. Some I remembered from childhood – older, greyer. Some I didn't know. They sat close. They placed hands on shoulders.

During the final prayer, the echo came.

Not from the cave – but from us.

A group breath. A low murmur. A rhythm of grief and honour.

The elders said it was good. That it meant the land approved.

When it was over, we walked slowly up the ridge again. The mat was lowered into a shallow grave just beyond the cave's reach. I pressed my palm to the earth.

It was still warm.

That evening, Josephine and I sat on the veranda while the light peeled slowly away from the hills.

"She always said she'd rest up there," she said. "She used to tell me that's where the world speaks clearest."

"She knew something," I said.

"She did."

A long silence fell between us.

Then Josephine turned to me. "Will you stay? Just for a while?"

I nodded.

The days that followed moved gently.

We swept the veranda. We cooked quiet meals. We walked to the market, where people greeted me with names I didn't remember, but felt familiar.

Each afternoon, I walked partway up the ridge. Not to the cave. Just far enough to hear the land.

And it spoke.

Not in words. Not in vision.

But in echo.

Old songs. Forgotten chants. The rhythm of footsteps and firelight.

And somewhere in it all, I felt Bubu again.

Not as a memory.

But as a presence.

### ***Inspirational Statement***

The opportunity to work in PNG has sparked a personal journey – connecting family history, culture, and shared ancestry between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

# Our Spy

*June Hopkins*

We either sneak or run past the house where the spy lives. My siblings and friends are certain that in this year of 1953, the New Australian in our street is not who he pretends to be. We know this because we can see that adults act strangely and seem suspicious of him. He has a funny name. It's Hans and we think it's hilarious, because we mispronounce it and giggle about a person being called 'hands'. My cohort of kids are sure he is a spy.

Hans has a wife, a thick set woman named Marta, and they have three young children with equally weird names, Ilse, Nadya, and Mikhail. Ilse is in my class at school. Her English is perfectly Australian, even though when she started in Grade One, she couldn't speak English at all. We are in Grade Three now and she seems normal. Her mother speaks quite broken English and always looks like she doesn't understand people who talk to her.

There are other New Australians who call our small outback town home. Two families are Italian and we, adults and children alike, disparagingly call them the I-ties. Their children have greater difficulty with English than Ilse and her siblings. However, we warm to the Italian kids because they make us laugh, telling us jokes in their funny way of speaking. 'What's a matter you?'

Hans and Marta are so much quieter and mysterious in comparison. We believe their silent observation is because they, or maybe just Hans, could be a spy. We don't tell our parents our suspicions, although there is much discussion between me and my playmates.

Every night I look anxiously under my bed before sleep claims me. There is a lot of adult talk and articles in the newspaper about 'reds under the bed'. I am very wary, and afraid – scared that maybe Hans is 'red' and one night might lie under my bed to listen to the conversations between my sister and me. Of course, he would only hear about our dolls, or our games of Cowboys and Indians.

Oblivious to our concern, my mother reaches out to Marta, offering friendship. She invites her to come for morning tea. We are relatively poor so it's a big deal when Mum uses our precious eggs and flour to make cakes and scones for a guest. She sets the table using Grandma's fine china cups and saucers – the

ones we are forbidden to handle, and which sit high on a shelf in our kitchen.

It's a Saturday and Marta brings her children with her. Mum tells me to go play outside with them, but I want to hang around to hear the conversation. I need some proof that Hans is maybe a spy. Mum has recently bought a new product called margarine, which is going to be a cheaper substitute for butter. I watch as she spreads the hot scones with margarine, which tastes awful, plus it smells. As Marta takes the first bite from a scone, I announce to her:

'It's not butter. It's margarine.' If looks could deliver me a good spanking, I'd have one from Mum right then.

I am soundly reprimanded and ordered to be obedient, so I summon the children to come outside and inspect my cubby house. The cubby is made from a large, old packing case and my sister and I enjoy playing in it. I know I've been bad, pointing out Mum not using butter, but I think spies deserve margarine.

I wonder if I dare ask Ilse about her father. I decide to be brave and do it.

'What does your father do? Does he have a job?' I ask.

'He shears sheep,' Ilse says.

I'm thinking hard about what else to ask.

'What does he do in the evening?'

Ilse looks a bit bewildered by my question.

'I don't know. He's not at home all the time anyway. He goes to the sheep properties and stays there, and only comes home now and then.'

Now I'm feeling brave, saying 'My father was in the war. Was your father?'

Ilse's eyes narrow. I think she's suspicious of my motives.

'He was a teenager when the war ended.' That's all she says and turns her back on me.

I can't find any more words to say but it registers that she didn't answer my question. Mum calls us inside to have a drink of red cordial and a biscuit. In her broken English, Marta thanks Mum all the way to our front gate as they leave to walk home.

Later my sister says to me 'I don't think sheep have any secrets. Maybe Hans isn't a spy.'

'I still think he is. We need more proof,' I reply, unwilling to let go of what I've

imagined.

'What do spies really do?' she asks.

'They find out people's secrets and tell on them,' is the best explanation I can make.

'Like when I told Mum you spat at Brenda the other day?'

'I got a spanking because of you.' I scowl, ignoring the suggestion of comparison to spies.

That night, lying beside my sister in the double bed we share, my mind is centering on the reds under the bed theme when an idea comes to me. If reds can hide under beds to hear secrets, so could we do the same to learn their secrets. I shake my sister because her eyes are closing.

'Don't go to sleep yet. I've got an idea. What if I ask Mum if I can have a sleep-over at Ilse's place? When they are asleep, I could creep into her parents' bedroom and crawl under their bed. I might hear something about being a spy.'

The problem was that I had to convince Ilse I was a good friend, and then get her to invite me to stay over. It wasn't like she had lots of friends at school, but she had a couple, and those kids didn't like me. Before I had any opportunity to put my plan in action, Mum found a note in our letterbox from Marta. I could tell it was written by Ilse. It read:

*Please come on Saturday for morning tea. Bring your children so they can play with mine.*

Mum dressed us in our best clothes as though we were going to Sunday School, on Saturday, and we walked to Hans and Marta's house. Marta sounded excited to see us and kept exclaiming in her broken English. 'You welcome. You welcome.' She led the way into her colourful kitchen. There was a red check tablecloth with a vase of sunflowers in the middle. Lace doyleys adorned a sideboard on which sat a big bowl of apples and oranges.

Framed photographs hung on bright yellow walls. The photos looked like grandparents to me.

Mum sat where Marta indicated she should, at the table in the middle of the kitchen. Then we children were once again ushered outside. I was immediately envious when I saw that Ilse and her siblings had a proper swing set with a silver slide standing separately. We only had a tyre dangling on a rope from a branch of a gum tree in our back yard.

Eventually we were called inside and served a glass of cold milk and a slice of chocolate cake. I felt disappointed because I thought their family would surely

eat strange and exotic foods, not cake. While the other kids settled down to do some colouring in, I crept away and explored the rest of the house. I peered into the bedroom with a double bed, deciding it was probably where Hans and Marta slept. I saw that the bed legs were only a few inches high and there would be no way anybody could get under it. My plan was foiled, so I returned to join the other kids busily wielding crayons to colour pictures of western characters like Hopalong Cassidy.

I listened to Mum patiently speaking to Marta. I realised she was teaching her some English phrases she might find useful.

*How much does this cost?*

Do you have any... (insert name of need here.. butter/sugar/tea/jam/milk etc.)

May I make an appointment?

What time do you open/close?

Mum used lots of gestures and occasionally asked Ilse to help explain. Once again Marta effusively said *thank-you* many times when we left to walk home.

At school the following week my friends and I held a meeting to discuss our dilemma.

The family seemed normal, at least as normal as us, although we hadn't seen Hans much because he was working out of town. Our suspicions of him might still be accurate. Should we continue our mission of discovering if he was a spy? We weren't decisive so the question was left hanging.

Ilse was a little more friendly to me at school, due to our mothers becoming friends. A week or two later she told me she was happy because her father would be there when she got home from school that day. She loved him which made me wonder if someone could be a genuinely nice person and a spy at the same time.

One morning in class my teacher, Mr Connors, who I hero worshipped, told us we were going to have a special visitor

'Ilse's father has agreed to talk to our class about things that happened to him in World War Two. I want you to sit up straight, listen well, and make him feel welcome,' he said making eye contact with a few troublemakers in the class. A tiny voice inside me hinted that Mr Connors might have heard us talking about our spy.

Up close, I saw that Hans was a short, thin man with neatly trimmed brown hair and a young face. He looked years younger than my father. Mr Connors introduced him as Ilse stood beside her father, clutching his hand. She was

going to be his interpreter.

He spoke in heavily accented English, but we mostly understood him. Ilse explained everything he said. These are her words:

‘My father said he was born in Latvia which is near Russia. He was fourteen when war broke out. When he was sixteen the German Army invaded his country. When he was a teenager, thousands of young Latvian men were forced to join the German Army even though they didn’t want to. My father and his friends hated being in the German Army. If anyone refused to fight, he was shot. Luckily for my father the Russian Army conquered the German Army in Latvia only a few months later, and he was free. My parents married in Latvia at the end of the war and applied to come to Australia to have a good life. He loves Australia and he is not a spy.’

I gasped as she said the last sentence. Turning my head, I saw some of my classmates also looked shocked.

‘Dad asks if anyone has any questions?’ Ilse is staring at me as she speaks. I can’t think of anything.

It’s a strange feeling when excitement dies. I felt my excited interest in Hans being a spy dwindle like a deflating balloon. A smidgeon of disappointment started to rise in me, but it was squashed by a greater feeling of relief. We were safe.

When I told my mother and father about Han’s talk, they were careful not to express any opinions to Sylvia and me.

Throughout the years ahead Hans and his family thrived in our community. Marta and Mum’s friendship flourished, and the children’s lives were as full of extra-curricular activities as mine. Within a few short years we dropped the word ‘New’ and they became simply Australians, like us.

### ***Inspiration statement***

This is a story combining fact and fiction from the time of my childhood. I wanted to capture the fear, and promise, of that era.

# Euge will fix it

*Louise Millar-Hoffmann*

**Stratford, Victoria: 1936**

It wasn't the sharp knocking that stopped him in his tracks. It was the word. Just one word that turned his blood cold.

'Telegram,' called the boy, from the early morning mist, 'Telegram for E. McQuillen, Blacksmith.'

Eugene's heart pounded. His stomach sank heavily like the stones he'd thrown in the River Avon when he was this lad's age. He wondered why the boy wasn't skylarking with his mates, instead of standing at his door delivering fear and dread.

Magpies warbled their usual morning greetings. But today, Eugene did not hear them, nor did he see the wave of the milk cart driver whose horse plodded patiently along the street.

He'd never received a telegram before. He liked his life quiet and uneventful. Besides, nothing before had ever seemed that urgent, not even in the Great War. He did, however, remember the one his mother, Ann, had once received. He'd been a boy of seven, the baby of the family, still in short pants. Nearly fifty years on, the shout of 'telegram,' summoned vivid memories of her ashen face and shaking hands.

That message had brought news of his father, Owen, a bullocky, seriously injured on Briagolong Road. They'd got him home. His every breath sheer agony. Whispered voices had mentioned logs slipping from the load, pinning Owen across the chest. Four days later, he'd died. Eugene had felt his childhood sinking into the ground alongside his father's coffin.

He hadn't thought of his father for a long time. Even his mother had been gone nearly thirty years.

The shock jolted his thoughts along to his siblings. 'Dear God,' he thought, 'Who?'

Entering the kitchen, his trembling hands lost grasp of the envelope and it slipped to the floor, sliding to the feet of his wife, Angelina. She put down the breakfast teapot and bent to retrieve the envelope. Eugene asked her, weakly,

to open it. His level-headed wife would know what to do if the news was as he feared. Angelina read aloud.

'URGENT STOP LOCALS NO GOOD STOP NEED LIGHT-WEIGHT  
RACING PLATES FOR WAKERIFE STOP SEND BY TRAIN TODAY  
STOP D WEEKES'

Eugene's eyebrows shot up and he shook his head slowly. For a moment, he didn't quite believe the words, until the absurdity hit. He let out a laugh that startled even him. Angelina turned quickly to face him.

'I suppose you thought someone had died, you galoot,' she teased. 'What's this about? Plates, that doesn't make sense.'

'That's what trainers call horseshoes,' Eugene explained, and felt his jaw relaxing as he spoke.

Angelina's breath drew in sharply as she retorted, 'Good grief! What kind of fool has money to waste on telegrams about horseshoes. You know half the town can't afford meat in times like these.'

He leaned casually against the doorframe. 'Well, I've never had a customer request by telegram before. But it's Dave Weekes – the trainer. Makes his living racing. I've shod plenty of his horses.'

Pays his accounts, too. Wakerife's the best he's ever had. He's running in the Australian Steeplechase tomorrow, down at Caulfield.'

Angelina raised her eyebrows. 'So the horse is already in the city?'

Eugene nodded as he gently retrieved the telegram from her hands. He pointed to the line and read it aloud again. 'Locals no good.'

'How can you do any better without the horse?' she asked, doubt clear in her voice.

He didn't answer. He didn't need to. There was no time to waste.

He quietly slipped out the back door. He bristled against the cool air as he slid back the door to his smithy. Firing up the forge would warm him soon enough. Without looking, he collected his wellworn leather apron from its hanging place behind the door. He could reach for all his tools instinctively.

Eugene enjoyed the solitude of working there. He and Angelina had an unspoken understanding: her domain was the house and his was the smithy. They both knew he'd always appear just as she set his plate on the table.

While Eugene waited for the forge to heat, he dragged open the large drawer containing his handdrawn templates. He began to flip through the pile organised alphabetically first by customer, be they trades and delivery businesses, farmers or trainers, and then by horse. From heavy draughts to flighty thoroughbreds, Eugene would find a way to get them shod. Wakerife of trainer Weekes was right at the back.

He knew that customers, like Dave, thought of 'Euge', as they called him, as the best local farrier. A real expert at forging and fitting horseshoes. Those who needed it also knew he could fix boilers out at the mills, bend steel wheels or weld pipes, fixings and fences. Some knew of his other shed where he handcrafted timber, metal and upholstery into carts and jinkers, all with quiet aplomb.

Family was different. They'd always known. 'Euge could make that' they'd say, or 'Euge will fix it.'

With template in hand, he moved to the array of pigeon holes housing various grades of metal bars suitable for forging shoes. The bars shone dully in the low light, each one an option. It had to be light enough for Wakerife to race like the wind but survive the impact of landing the hurdles. This choice could be the difference between victory or loss.

Eugene had known Weekes long enough to understand this was his best shot ever at a national prize purse. Perhaps, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Just then his stomach knotted. He reconsidered the words of the telegram. It wasn't simply requesting shoes. As the forge began to warm the smithy, he pumped the bellows and steadied himself, 'If I don't trust my own hands right now, who will?'

Eugene chose four bars and placed them on the forge. When the metal glowed orange, he set his jaw. His work began. As he hammered and shaped each shoe one by one, a familiar rhythm took over: steady, practised, almost meditative. His masterful hands worked as if on their own.

The smell of hot metal and his sweat mixed with the misty air. His thoughts drifted, as the morning's memories played on his mind.

The hammer struck steadily, like a heartbeat. He thought of his mother first, always his mother. Widowed young, with eight children all Stratford-born-and-bred. She never wavered. He smiled faintly, remembering how Tom, just 17 then, had taken up the mantle of provider.

He rotated the shoe around to set the groove in place. The finer work slowed his pace.

Responsibility hadn't crushed Tom. No, it had shaped him. Like metal bent to shape under fire.

He pulled another shoe from the forge, set it on the anvil, and tested its curve over the horn. Not bad. It needed more shaping at the heel.

He lifted the hammer again and tapped away. Bella, too, only 19, became a second mother to the young'uns, himself included. He hadn't seen it as sacrifice then. But as sparks flared and metal bent under fire, he wondered what kind of life Bella might've forged for herself ... marriage and children, perhaps.

On to the fine shaping now. His hammering softened. It was mother who'd earned his highest admiration. She'd sold off father's bullocks and carts but kept the grazing lands. He slowed a little, careful not to overdo the shaping. Those lands had provided steady income from agistment. Her resilience and quiet dignity, later written large in a small inheritance for each child.

Eugene used his long tongs to place the partly constructed shoe back on the forge to reheat. The pause in work afforded him a moment to glance around. It felt good to be reminded again.

His inheritance had become the deposit for this smithy. The seller, his old master, had offered long-term payment terms, and his uncle had gone guarantor. He must always remember that. Never again take it for granted. They'd believed in him. He hadn't let any of them down. Not then.

Not now.

Not ever.

Eugene grabbed his pritchel and punched nail holes through the shoes. One, two, then more, till they were done. He'd bought the smithy during the war. Britain's war as he'd thought of it. It'd nothing to do with him, a Catholic lad of Irish parents. Not when those in the old country were still fighting Britain for independence. As the pritchel punched though the hot metal, the tiny punch-outs fell to ground, scattering like the long-ago conflicts of the past.

He dumped the shoes into the cooling water bucket. The satisfying sizzle and instant burst of steam signalled the job was done.

After a final check against the template and a light polish, he was confident he'd done his best without the horse in the smithy. He just hoped that adjustments wouldn't be necessary when the trackside farriers fitted them. He cringed as he also hoped like mad that Dave hadn't big-noted him to the city blokes.

The water in the bucket bubbled like the memories of his past. Slowly, it settled again and returned to the usual stillness.

Eugene searched the smithy for a box, shavings and brown paper to package the shoes. Once labelled, he finished up by inking his business stamp. He pressed down firmly. His signature horseshoe imprint, with MCQUILLEN around the rim, was all he needed to say.

He stepped into the kitchen just as Angelina put his lunch plate down. Their rhythm was restored.

He exhaled deeply. Suddenly he was famished. He hadn't even noticed he'd skipped breakfast.

After lunch, he waited for the Melbourne-bound train. It slowly hissed and puffed its way along the platform. The iron wheels shrieked to a stop. He entrusted his package to the mail car porter. When the shrill whistle warned impending departure, he thought, 'Well, that's that.' But then another thought soon followed. That day he'd received his first telegram, and now he'd visit the post office to send his first reply:

To D. Weekes, Caulfield Racecourse. PLATES LEFT STRATFORD STN ONE  
TWELVE PM STOP E MCQUILLEN

The next morning, he was secretly relieved when Angelina left early for her weekly flower-arranging duties at church. She didn't like him listening to the races on the wireless, so Eugene rarely did. Still, she didn't seem to notice him quietly scanning the newspaper racing pages each week.

'Just in time,' he declared to his son Brian, voice full of expectation. 'Quick, turn on the wireless.'

Brian, sixteen and their only child, was the great joy of Eugene's recent years. He and Angelina had married late. Both had thought marriage and children had passed them by. It'd been a pleasant surprise to have been mistaken. Brian, a bookish boy, had recently announced ambitions to teach.

Eugene had nodded with quiet pride, though deep down he hoped that maybe one day there'd be a grandson to appreciate the smithy: a fellow maker and fixer.

The radio crackled to life...

'Wakerife clears the final hurdle. It's Wakerife all the way. We're lookin' at the greatest bolover in this race's history. Wakerife is over the line now. Wakerife wins the 1936 Australian Steeplechase by 20 lengths!'

Eugene sprang up, arms aloft, and shouted, 'You bloody beauty!' Brian's jaw dropped wide open at his father's uncharacteristic outburst.

Eugene dropped back to his seat, clamping his hand over his mouth. 'Don't tell your mother I said that,' he grinned, eyes shining with glee.

Later, just as Angelina plated their lunch, the young lad from the post office called, 'Telegram,' from their gate.

Eugene quickly opened the envelope. All hesitation and dread from the day before evaporated like the steam in his smithy. He read aloud:

'PLATES FITTED PERFECTLY STOP WAKERIFE VICTORIOUS STOP YOU ARE A MARVEL STOP D WEEKES'

Brian cheered. Then, with a cheeky grin, he added, 'Dad, you fixed it – again!' Eugene folded the telegram, his thumbs resting on the words: You are a marvel. He smiled, said nothing – and believed it, just this once.

### ***Inspiration Statement***

This is a true story about my great grandfather Eugene, a man who could make anything and fix everything, just like my father, Eugene's grandson.

# Born into the Bones

*Babí Rani Poudel*

**Sunday, 8th June 2025**

My parents settled in a remote corner of western Nepal – in a place the world doesn't ask about, and maps barely mark. They lived in a small pahadi village called Raka Chuli, tucked deep inside Nawalparasi, now known as Madhyabindu Nagarpalika. The land that sustained them was in Dhurdha village, surrounded by the restless arms of Arunkhola and Dhapkhola rivers. That land raised me. That land broke me. That land built everything I am.

It wasn't a town. It wasn't even a village in the way the word is casually used. It was a spine of earth held together by sweat and silence. There were no roads. Just foot trails. No clinics. Just home remedies. No markets. Just barter. But there was life. And there was labour – endless, unforgiving, and unrecognised. In the middle of it all stood my mother. A woman forged in firewood smoke and river dust. Even in her older years, she never slowed down. She tended the goats, the cows, the chickens, the fields – and us. She raised children and cattle with the same care. She cooked our meals on open flames, grinding grain on machines with her bare hands, and swept the dusty floors with a broom made of dry stalks.

She is bent over in her red-patterned gunyo cholo, a blur of motion and muscle. Her spine is curved – not from weakness, but from carrying a family on it for decades. Her hands are calloused maps of survival. Her bare feet, cracked from years of barefoot journeys across uneven ground, speak louder than any anthem.

She never went to war. But she fought every day. Her battleground was the hearth, the yard, the field, the riverbank. Her weapon was love. Her victory? We lived.

This is where my story begins – not with dreams, but with dirt. Not with speeches, but with sweat.

I remember the day clearly – quiet, heavy, and grey. The Dhapkhola River wasn't just water that day; it was emotion, chaos, and memory crashing through rocks. I sat on a slab of stone, feet dangling, body still, mind loud. The river didn't whisper. It roared. But I had nothing to give it back. Everything was

inside me – frozen. Leaves floated by, twigs broken by storms, petals from some distant ritual. Each one carried grief. And I felt like one of them. Carried by something I couldn't control. Forgotten by those who should've noticed.

My mother approached like wind. Soft. Steady. Present. Her voice broke through, not like thunder, but like light slipping under a closed door. "Kanchi chhori, ke gareki?" Her voice always landed like a blanket on a cold night. I didn't look at her. I couldn't. My reply was hollow, factual: "You told me I was born premature. That I should've died." She didn't react. No gasp. No correction. Just a half-smile. "Yes," she said. "But you drank the milk of an entire village to survive." Her words always had truth layered in story. My mother didn't speak of miracles. She spoke of grit. She saw survival not as fortune, but as duty.

I was born from two bloodlines that didn't expect me. My mother's roots came from the cold stillness of the Tibetan plateau, a place where silence ruled and strength wasn't shown – it was endured. My father's blood came from the Shivalik Hills, steeped in prayer, rituals, caste, and caste again. Brahmin pride in every corner. My mother lived close to the clouds. My father lived inside religion. I – was born outside the lines they drew. They followed tradition. I asked too many questions. And that was the beginning of everything.

My mother was a bride before her voice had changed. Eight or nine, married off like a harvest ready for trade. My father – just a boy himself. No one called it wrong. They called it custom. After the ceremony, she stayed at her uncle's home. Played hopscotch with other girls. Bounced around with braids and scraped knees. But the day she stepped into her husband's house, the game ended. "Now you are a daughter-in-law," she was told. One sentence. One life change. No warning. No mercy. And she obeyed. Because in our world, obedience is stitched into a girl's breath.

She became everyone's servant before she became anyone's mother. Firewood on her back, water pots on her hips, meals in her hands, and silence in her mouth. Her body moved from before sunrise to long after moonrise. She served elders with bent knees and a bowed head. She ate last, if at all. Her hands were blistered by age twelve. Her childhood buried itself quietly in ash and mud. There was no ceremony to mark its death. Just daily labour and a silent acceptance.

I wasn't the son my family expected. I was the girl I knew myself to be – but the world wasn't ready. My father, the ever-wandering priest, barely stayed in one place. Rituals took him from one village to another, dressed in white dhotis, mantras echoing through him like he was just a vessel. But he never

carried prayers home. He brought rice, maybe salt. Never love. Never warmth. My mother was the fire. Quiet, glowing, never out. She didn't have the words for what I was, but she had the love. She never stopped me from braiding my hair or wearing my sister's frocks. She just watched. Sometimes with tears, sometimes with a strength I still don't understand.

School was hell in multiple uniforms. Boys used words like blades – “chhakka,” “Hijra,” “boka.” They slashed at my spirit with laughter. My brothers joined them. Teachers looked away. Classrooms became cages. My name wasn't said – it was spat. I moved from one school to the next, from cities that promised refuge to rooms that turned into battlegrounds. I didn't run away to chase dreams. I ran to survive. When I landed in Australia, it wasn't ambition that brought me – it was the desperate need to breathe.

I was born weeks too soon. Some say months. The sudani women whispered that I wouldn't last the night. Blue body. Limp limbs. A cry that didn't echo – just a squeak like a torn flute. No joy. No celebration. Some neighbours didn't even come. They assumed the story ended there. But my mother began her own. She borrowed breast milk from every nursing woman nearby. She wrapped me in old saris, layered one after another, as if fabric could act as armor. There was no hospital. No doctor. No light. Only her refusal to lose me.

My father? Absent in most pages of my childhood. He might've been performing sacred rites in a nearby village. Or chanting Vedas at someone's Bartabandha. But home? That wasn't his temple. My mother raised eight of us alone. Three more pregnancies ended in silence – miscarriages she grieved in private. She buried her dead babies in her heart and went back to cooking dinner the next day. One child on her hip, another clinging to her leg. Pain was not a conversation. It was a reality.

We didn't grow up in a house. We existed inside a shelter. Mud walls. Grass roof. No toilet. No floor tiles. No paint. Rain leaked like it had a grudge. We caught water in pans and tried to sleep around puddles. Food was cooked over firewood. Dung was scraped and dried for fuel. We shat behind trees. We bathed in rivers. We ate in silence. We slept in layers of hope and shame. That wasn't home. That was survival with no choice.

My father's family was a theatre of hierarchy. The men sat first. The women waited. Grandfathers were gods. Daughters were servants. My mother, always last to eat. Always first to rise. And into that world, I arrived like a problem. I wasn't boy enough. I wasn't allowed to be girl either. My body was a battleground. My voice, too high. My steps, too soft. My presence embarrassed them. So they

punished me for it. My brothers didn't protect me. They became my first bullies. They tied me up once. Gagged me. Left me. I was called names that scorched. Treated like an infection. I've bled from places that weren't supposed to bleed. Bruises that lasted weeks. My body remembers more pain than my words can hold. Some memories are locked away, not because I want to forget – but because I need to live. The abuse wasn't just physical. It was erasure. And in all that horror, the only hand that reached for me – was my mother's.

She didn't raise her voice. She raised me. While others called me "napunsak," she called me "chhori." While others spat, she fed. While others hid me, she held me. She couldn't protect me from all the harm. But she never left. And in our world, sometimes just staying – just staying – is the strongest resistance.

In 2001, I changed the story. I bought land. Not from marriage. Not from inheritance. From work. Cleaning. Lifting. Serving. I laid brick on brick until I had a house. Not a palace – but a place. It had walls that didn't bleed. A roof that didn't leak. Gas to cook on. A light switch. A locked door. When I brought my mother there, she wept. She kissed the floor. "Yahi marnu chha," she said. "I will die here." And she did.

My father passed in 2014. We buried him with the rituals he once led. My mother left in 2016. Not with noise, but with peace. She died in the house I built. That house still stands. My sister lives there now. Sometimes I call her just to hear the sound of wind in the trees. The same wind that used to rattle our old shelter's roof. Everything changes. Except love.

Now I live in Australia – not because I wanted to. Because Nepal shut every door. Every closet. Every window. I left to live fully, not just legally. I left to exhale. And now, I speak my name without trembling. I wear my truth without apology. But I never forget who carved the path with her bare hands – my mother.

She never wrote her name. But she wrote me. In the way I walk. The way I fight. The way I love. She's gone – but she's everywhere in me. Every speech. Every story. Every breath that defies silence.

### ***Inspiration Statement***

I was not born by accident. I was born in fire, carried by a mother who refused death, and I now speak so others can live.

# London George

*Lynn Sunderland*

He is a map I cannot read. A veined tracery of crooked lanes and narrow alleys and gloomy, cobbled courtyards. He carries within him a secret. He won't know that until it is too late. But I am following close behind, so close. I know his secret.

At first he was somebody else entirely. For the swiftest time he was a butcher's apprentice in Hammersmith High Street, son of a tallow chandler, and I glimpsed him through the open door of a low ceilinged shop in his wet, bloodstained apron and scuffed boots, his shirtsleeves rolled as he scrubbed salt into the butcher's block. But Hammersmith George was entirely fictitious, a sorry result of misreading the spider's web of ink calligraphy on a nineteenth century birth certificate.

Then I saw him in a scrum of schoolboys on West Street in Great Marlow erupting from the sternly named Sir William Borlase Academy for Sons of the Deserving Poor. Almost immediately he gave me the slip, sprinting away down West Street and hurrying past Albion House, where Mary Shelley once laboured to bring Frankenstein's grim Creature to life. Great Marlow George soon dissolved into the unknown back streets of someone else's history. My George, I will learn, had monsters of his own to face.

The next time I thought I had tracked him down, I found that he had wrapped himself in a sturdy, reassuring corporeal reality. He was George Gibbons, youngest son of a prosperous provincial grocer. Walthamstow George had seven brothers across two marriages, a mother who died in childbirth and a father who owned two large grocery and corn chandler enterprises with a side graft as a coke merchant. There were even photographs: foggy, sepia images of drays and corn sacks and women with baskets over one arm. Solid backstory in other words.

Yet go deeper into the records and no child by the name of George was ever recorded in the household of John Gibbons, grocer, of Walthamstow. He was not at home on census night in 1841, which is precisely where an eleven year old child ought to be, nor was he at home ten years later, when a twenty one year old of this era might still possibly be found living with his family. Even more troublingly, go back to his infancy, and no census records exist to show this

one year old baby in Walthamstow or anywhere else.

Anyone can slip through the net of a single census. But my great-great grandfather contrived to slip right out of his life. He was not yet twelve and he was already adept at inventing himself.

And then I found him, pinned down undeniably by street and number and name on one of the most infamous maps in the chronicles of London. Here was London George, hale and hearty, living with a large household of Gibbons, tanners and leatherworkers, in the crowded slums of Bermondsey, hard by Southwark Cathedral. The inky black stain of Booth's Poverty Map of London shadows every mean tenement and cramped rookery and overcrowded hovel from Bermondsey to Rotherhithe and beyond: street upon street of barefoot, ragged children hollow eyed with hunger; washerwomen and night cart drivers and cat's meat vendors. And tanners: all entered scientifically on the litmus paper of social want and deprivation. Thanks to the ethnographic zeal of Charles Booth I can reach out and place my hand on the life of George Gibbons and even name that place – a name surely chosen with all the unintentional irony of some cartographer in a Fleet Street office who never saw what he labelled – Paradise Row.

Booth had a label for Paradise Row and its residents. *Lowest class. Vicious, Criminal ...*

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Eighteen year old Mary Ann, on a mild summer's morning in June 1852, walking tentatively on the arm of her fiancé George through the tawdry parade of soup kitchens, gin shops, tenements and factories along Snow's Fields, Bermondsey, towards Kipling Street and St Paul's Church. It was her wedding day and she wore her mother's best shawl and carried a small posy of spring flowers.

Vicious. Criminal. In the eyes of Greater London, the world of the working poor in places like Bermondsey was as alien as the surface of the moon. Writers peopled this fictional Bermondsey with monsters every bit as horrifying as Mary Shelley's Creature – Jekyll and Hyde, Spring Heeled Jack, Dracula, Bill Sikes – until it became home not to a vast crowd of impoverished Londoners but instead to every form of imagined villainy that a Victorian imagination could summon up.

Somehow the real, flesh and blood George Gibbons grew up and survived in this hellish place. Maybe he swam in the foul, gaseous reaches of nearby Folly Ditch, haunt of Fagin and Sikes and Oliver Twist, with other boys who may or

may not have survived to adulthood. No records remain, if they ever existed, to tell us what became of the rest of his family. Against ridiculous odds, he got himself to the steps of St Paul's on the morning of his wedding and seized his future with everything he had.

George and Mary Ann laboured to erase themselves from Booth's map with its cruel label. After George's childhood in Paradise Row, their first lodgings in Crucifix Lane must have filled them with hope, especially as George soon found work at the biggest tannery in Bermondsey: Hepburn and Gale. For the next two years George returned daily soaked in blood and tanning chemicals to a tenement where families lived five to a room in miserable cold and candle dimness with one well and one row of privies per street. Mary Ann must have spent her days trying to wash George's tannery clothes in water filthier than sewage, or labouring to assemble something edible out of the few pence worth of stale bread, dubious vegetables and indigestible 'cat's meat' sold locally. Their first child, Harry, was born in 1854 as yet another cholera epidemic swept the district, closely followed by smallpox. George knew in his heart that they had to get out.

With a second baby on the way he moved his family across the river to rooms in Deal Street, Shoreditch, finding ready work in the Shoreditch tannery. The new infant George Frederick Gibbons was a true Cockney, born well within the sound of 'the great bell at Bow' and close by Whitechapel and Cheapside. Had he returned to his birthplace just a few years later, he would have found himself rubbing shoulders with some very dubious neighbours. Deal Street runs directly into Hanbury Street, the scene of the second Jack the Ripper murder in 1889.

Eighteen months after George's birth, the family were on the move again. This time it was for the birth of a daughter, Rosa, in Kent, where George found employment in the sprawling tannery on the banks of the River Darent, amongst the paper mills and factories of Dartford's industrial heart. A period of relative stability followed, and the birth of a fourth child in 1860 – another son, William. And then they moved again. This time, with four children under the age of six, George and Mary appeared in Reading in the tannery district on Katesgrove Lane. Their family grew and grew: Walter in 1862, Sydney Arthur in 1864, Minnie Agnes, my great grandmother, in 1866 and finally Emily Ada in 1870. By this stage Mary Ann was thirty eight years old and utterly exhausted by the eight children now in her charge. But it was George who was in deep trouble, deeper than Mary Ann and their brood of boisterous children could possibly fathom. He was fading away, dissolving from their lives, disappearing from the

map of his existence forever.

Why did they move, again and again, every time they seemed settled? It is hardly credible that George was searching for work. These were boom times for the leather industry and you couldn't put a pin in a map of industrial London without hitting at least one tannery. Nor do the facts bear out any suggestion that the family were moving from strength to strength, gaining in prosperity. Quite the opposite picture emerges, as the family began to flee their lodgings in the dead of night, rent unpaid and bailiff at the door, or pawn what little they had of value to raise a few pence. Something was wrong. As Mary Ann and her children held on to survival year upon year, George seemed ever more enigmatic, insubstantial.

In fact he almost slipped away from me entirely in those last months and years, until it occurred to me to look where I never expected to find him again. Paradise Row.

Here there were no more questions, because there were no more possibilities. Mary Ann understood at last, baby on hip, hands raw with scrubbing, that George had come to the end of the road. He could no longer fight what ailed him and had dogged his steps halfway across London and back. Its insidious signature was a terrible lethargy that made full time labouring agonisingly difficult and caused George to be dismissed as lazy simply because he hadn't the stamina for the hard physical demands of the tanneries. By 1860, with the birth of his fourth child, it had been evident enough to Mary Ann that George was struggling, for them to risk swallowing their pride and throwing themselves on Mary's family in the hope of help. By 1870, with the birth of their final child, it would have been depressingly apparent that they were on their own. Within weeks George, scarcely forty, died of Addison's Disease.

The symptoms of Addison's are notoriously vague and were even more so in Victorian England. Addison himself first described them in 1855: lethargy, fatigue, frailty, sometimes a craving for salt, sometimes joint pains. Vicious, Booth would have said. Criminal. Malingerer. Work shy.

George's was a secret history carried in his blood, written into the very bones of him. In the end it would tell the story not just of his occupation but his class, his childhood, and even the irony of surviving such a childhood only to carry that deadly legacy inside him, sabotaging every attempt he made to build a better life for his family. Like Magwitch, like Sikes, like Mary Shelley's poor, tortured Creature, he could never finally escape.

This is where I feared I had finally lost him, consigned as he surely was at last

to the vast, unmapped anonymity of a pauper's grave. Yet every life leaves a trace.

And here it was. The solitary symptom so peculiar to Addison's Disease that it was soon considered a conclusive diagnosis, was ... tanning. Darkening of the skin in areas not normally exposed to sunlight ... the creases and folds of skin ... the waistline where belts might chafe. The lines in the palms of the hands.

A tanner living in the Bermondsey slums would have had no end of trouble scrubbing the stain out of his skin. It must have lingered in every pore, and crease, and fold, mimicking the very disease it concealed. It breaks my heart to know what a qualified attending physician might have read in the worn out palms of my great great grandfather's hands, in the tracery of lifeline and heartline, headline and fate line. But it was always an impossibility that George, poor as a church mouse and consigned to a charity hospital with God knows how many other souls, would have had the funds to pay for his own doctor. In all likelihood he had no idea that he was dying. It is as if a darkness, the darkness of Paradise Row, reached out at last to claim its own.

London George went to his grave with the story of his life and the map of his long, long dying written on his skin, unread.

### ***Inspiration Statement***

History is an act of retrieving the lost and restoring them to the light: George seemed to especially need my help in this regard.

# If This Gets Out

*Margaret Clough*

At daybreak Jane slips off her shoes and folds her jacket on top. The beach is deserted. Her long shadow points down to the water's edge. The tide is out, but the waves are strong, tumbling over each other in a hurry to get to shore. A delicate crust of dry sand crumbles as she walks to the water's edge. She flinches as a wave swooshes up and over her feet, then shimmering, frothing, sweeps back, dragging her heels into the sand. She's sinking, drawn backwards.

Barefoot, a young man jogs down to the water's edge. He slows as he approaches.

'Sorry,' he says. 'I didn't mean to startle you. What a glorious morning.'

'Mmm', agrees Jane. She hadn't noticed.

'Local, are you?'

'No. From Melbourne. Holidays.'

'Bit cold for paddling, isn't it? He notices her arms are red and scratched. Something odd is flapping at the back of her neck. Is her top inside out? 'I run right round to the point before work. Keeps me sane,' he says, stretching his arms wide, breathing in the beauty. 'Better get going, I guess.'

His footprints, deep in the wet sand, fill with water and disappear.

He's well away now, on the curve of the beach. Jane checks the other way. Still deserted.

'Now! Now! Before he comes back.'

The sand drops away quickly as she takes another step. Gasps as the icy water reaches the back of her knees.

.....

Jane tops her class each year, plays the piano beautifully, excels at everything. 'You're the brainy one of the family,' her sister Lannie says, ruefully. But she's been an unsettled child, often worrying her mother. Myrtle woke one night, knew instantly something was wrong. The front door was open, Jane running down the middle of the road like a tiny ghost in the moonlight. Myrtle took the steps at one leap, raced after her, the bitumen biting into her soles. Scooped

her up in her flimsy nightie and carried her back, still asleep.

'She's a strange one. She'll be the death of me,' her mother Myrtle complains more than once as she's growing up.

Then it's final exams. A huge hall at the Exhibition Centre, Swanston Street. Hundreds of uniforms, all bent over their papers, writing, writing. Jane presses her hands to the desk. She can't think, let alone hold a pen. The minute hand on a massive clock on the wall lurches forward, relentlessly. 'What's wrong with me?'

She pulls herself together, finally, but has to rush through the paper, still writing wildly as the call comes. 'Pens down. Stop writing!'

Somehow Jane makes it home on the tram, races past her mother, slams the door and flings herself on the bed.

'Leave me alone. Go away!' She cries for hours. Won't talk, won't eat. After tea Myrtle takes her a cup of Milo. But her room is empty. She's not in the garden, either.

'Calm down, Myrtle,' says Jim. 'She can't have gone far. I've always found her before. She'll be okay, I'm sure.'

'Look on the beach, near the rocks,' suggests Lannie. And Jim finds her pacing beside the water's edge, face pale in the darkness, eyes red and swollen. They sit on the rocks, her father's arm around her. 'I've ruined it,' she sobs. 'English. My best subject. Now I'll fail all the others. They said I'd come top.' Jim stays silent, lets her talk. The stars, one by one, peer out of the darkness to listen.

'Sometimes life's really hard,' he says. 'Gets on top of us. I remember, in the war, they sent us to Egypt first. Marched us across the desert, in full uniform. Sun beating down all day, bitterly cold all night. Three days they had us going, but the supplies weren't there. No food or water for three days and nights. I thought I would die. Men were dropping as we marched. You know what I did to stop myself dropping too?

'Push on,' I said, as I marched. 'Push on, soldier. Push on.' Tried not to think, to just push on.'

Pale, listless, hardly eating, Jane almost makes it through the exams. Then it's the dreaded geography exam. She refuses to get up. Stays all day in bed, the covers over her head. Lies there for days, all scrunched up, not talking. She won't talk to Doctor Wilson, either. Only shakes her head. 'I just want to die,' she whispers, finally. 'I'm useless. Let everyone down. Mum, Dad, teachers.'

Jane can hear her mother in the kitchen, later. 'A nervous breakdown,' he calls it. 'I can't take it, Jim,' she says. 'She's killing me, with the worry. What should

we do? Send her away, for weeks?’

Jim and Jane travel by train, a sleeper to Sydney. She should be excited, in a sleeper to Sydney. But Jane stares unseeing at the cover of the *Womens' Weekly* her mum handed her. Silent, head down, she's admitted to the private hospital.

‘We'll take good care of her. You can ring for a progress report, but no contact. Our patients do better that way.’ She's rigid as a tree-trunk as her father gives her a final hug. Looks away as he waves goodbye from the gate.

‘I'll tell everyone she's staying with friends in Sydney,’ Myrtle says. ‘If this gets out. You know how people talk.’ But she cries herself to sleep at night, sick with worry.

In time Jane recovers. She's still shaky, subdued. It's agreed, no more exams. ‘Matriculation? That's not for girls,’ her mother says. ‘When you get married your young man won't care about your marks at school.’ She enrolls at Zercho's Business College, and is soon topping the class in typing and shorthand. Gets a job straight away with the Adelaide Steamship Company in the city.

Five years on, Jane is bored. Determined, she studies for her Matriculation at night school, Taylors Coaching College, passing all four subjects with honours. Sails into an Arts degree at Melbourne University, one of only fifteen girls. Myrtle is really proud, only too happy to talk this time.

‘Don't know where she gets the brains from. Not me, that's for sure!’ But to be honest Myrtle gets more joy from her younger daughter. Lannie trained at Zercho's too, went into business and before long she's met her man and is now happily married, Myrtle blissfully embroidering rosettes on tiny nighties.

Jane is thrilled to win a job in the public service. Over the years she moves steadily up the ladder, rewarded for diligent work, a high standard of ethics. At thirty-five she's lost her girlish freshness, but she's still a handsome woman, in her neat suits and pastel blouses, her hair a rich glossy brown. Jane's had her share of boyfriends, but she's the one to break it off when it gets serious. ‘I'm not wasting my life washing dirty socks and scrubbing floors,’ she declares. ‘I want a career, travel, my own flat.’

In time she's noticed by the Director, no less. Impressed by her thoughtful contributions in meetings, he invites her to work with him on a select committee. Calls her into his office, more than once, claims he wants to mentor her. Everyone's impressed. But the sessions grow longer, more frequent. Then he wants her to sit beside him at his desk. When it happens, she's horrified!

Pushes his warm, fleshy hand out, revolted. Jumps to her feet, heart racing. 'Need to go,' she mumbles, and races for the Ladies'. She returns to her desk, pretends to work. Maybe no one noticed. Sits with her secret for a few days, sick with dread. Finally plucks up courage to approach Mr Walker, her senior officer. He frowns as she stammers out her story.

Shakes his head with disbelief. 'I'm quite sure you are mistaken,' he declares. 'No, no! He wouldn't do such a thing. You should be honoured he's taking an interest in you. It's these short skirts. Asking for trouble!' And raising his voice as he opens the door – 'A transfer is quite out of the question. I'm really disappointed in you, Miss Martin!'

No-one looks up, but they all watch as she gathers her things and walks out.

Miss Martin, the perfect Miss Martin? Really? The rumours fly faster than she can escape the building.

She travels by ambulance this time, a risk to herself. A longer stay in the very private hospital. It's months before Jane is herself again. Thinner, wiser, a little cynical. An agonising appointment with the Government Medical Officer and she's declared 'fit for work.'

Jane is appointed to a position at the Public Service Board. Slowly, she rebuilds her confidence. Is widely respected, promoted again. Soon she is in charge of personnel records, holding the key to the huge filing cabinet where all records are stored on tiny cards. Jane loves that metal cabinet, concealing, along with past histories of every government employee, her own record, with its tell-tale secret squeezed in tight. Loves the solid feel of the bunch of keys locked in the Safe each night.

There's been talk of computers for years. Jane hasn't taken much interest. Massive beasts, they're in Defence, in the universities. Then a mainframe for the Public Service Board. But suddenly, they've shrunk. Now, it's micro-computers. In time, they'll each have one on their desks, they were told. And now they're really coming! Intel 8080s. 'They'll transform your work,' her boss enthuses. Of course, there's panic. Two older men, fearful of change, get up and walk out.

They'll chance early retirement rather than these monsters. There's wild talk, out of ignorance. 'We'll all be able to see everything.' 'There'll be cameras in the corner, watching everything.' 'Anyone can just look stuff up!'

Miss Martin, he says, will have a team to help her enter all records on to the computers. Suddenly she can't breathe. Knows what that means for privacy. Someone else's eyes growing wide at her medical history. Those tell-tale

words. 'Nervous prostration, mental instability.' Her secret exposed to all. She couldn't bear the shame. They'll say she's dingbats. Cuckoo. The sniggers, behind hands.

There's only one thing to do, quickly. But she wouldn't. No. She wouldn't. But yes, she will!

Jane catches an early tram. Opens the safe, unlocks the filing cabinet, fumbles terribly as she pulls out her card and carries it to her desk. Chooses different pens and with trembling hands rewrites her history. Now she's clean. Normal. Hurries to the Ladies', to pat flushed cheeks with cold water, settle shaking hands.

That night, in bed, she realises. Of course! There'll be records in the hospital. They'll be getting computers too. 'Anyone can look stuff up.' She takes a week's sick leave. Flies to Sydney and arrives unannounced at the private hospital.

'I'm looking for a complete change from my job,' and Jane hands over her references.

'I'd really love to work here, in the office. You helped me so much in the past.' Matron, a new one, is puzzled, but pleasant. 'That's nice,' she says. 'But unfortunately, there are no positions. I'm sorry.'

Jane is desperate. Returns the next day, this time begging, pleading.

'I'll do anything. Cleaning, cooking. In the kitchen.' But Matron is a busy woman. Tells her firmly not to return.

In the guest house Jane paces all night. Tries to sleep, but her eyes won't shut. She tears at her hair. Scratches her arms till they bleed. Stabs her thighs with a nail file.

By morning, she's decided. Creeps out of her room while it's still dark.

On the beach, Jane steps deeper into the water. A wave thwacks her chest, smacks her face as it races past, carelessly. 'Push on, soldier,' she says, as she takes another step. 'Don't think. Just push on.'

The barefoot jogger returns. Sees the pile of clothes on the sand. Then, a figure in the shallows, floating, face down.

### ***Inspiration Statement***

I wanted to honour a brave relative, hopelessly trapped by her own personal makeup and societal expectations in the 1960s and 70s.

# Book Reviews From Our Readers

Helen Cohen



## **Tales from Two Cities: Canberra-Queanbeyan across two centuries**

Spanning 200 years from 1820 to 2020, *Tales from Two Cities: Canberra-Queanbeyan Across Two Centuries*, sets out to examine the complex relationship between Canberra and Queanbeyan over time.

A comprehensive explanation of how the book came about can be accessed at: <http://www.markbutz.com> Accessing the website is useful in understanding the intentions of the book and that, 'It adopts a "magazine" format ... for dipping in and out of work rather than a front-to-back reading.' It is based on newspaper archives, oral history interviews and other unpublished material.

Following the book's introduction, there is a series of chapters starting with

‘1800s Groundwork’. This is followed by a chapter for each decade of the 20th and 21st centuries. A variety of topics, or tales, are covered in snapshots ranging from half a page to three pages in length, illustrated with photographs and scanned images.

An 1840 real estate advertisement referring to Queanbeyan is quoted as extolling one of the advantages of the growing settlement being ‘the grand halting place on the line of road to Port Phillip...’ This resonated with my family history as my great-great-grandfather is recorded as having ‘made an overland trip from Sydney to Melbourne’ prior to 1839, ‘where he was thoroughly pleased with the new settlement’ of Port Phillip. Perhaps he changed horses or rested overnight in the early Queanbeyan village.

An example of the connection between the two cities is the anecdote about the Queanbeyan War Memorial Swimming Pool, which opened in 1961. ‘The design was very modern, the work of architect Robert G. Warren...’ This chapter continues to talk about the Warren family, who lived in Canberra and the participation of Bob and Joy Warren in community activities. It is typical of how one topic leads into another and can be relevant to both cities.

A page has been written about the work of Lindsay Pryor (1915-1998) who continued the work of Charles Weston (1866-1935) in the ‘greening’ of Canberra.

Another tale, ‘Newcomers: Ukrainian-Polish connections’ has been written about Stefan and Alex Jurkiewicz, who both survived WWII in Europe and migrated to Australia in 1948. They established the Jurkiewicz Adventure Store in Fyshwick in the 1950s, which many of us will remember as the best place for camping and outdoor equipment over the years.

Anyone who has lived in Canberra or Queanbeyan for some time will recognise people referred to in the various tales throughout the book. An index of surnames is a useful inclusion for a family historian seeking a family member. Five appendices contain further useful information, naming people such as Honour Walk recipients in both Queanbeyan and Canberra Mayors, Chief Ministers, Local Members and Senators. There are 413 image credits and a list of interviewees as well as a comprehensive list of references.

Published in 2024, this ‘Hardback – Special Edition’ in A4 format is a recent addition to the library. It has been signed by the author.

Mark Butz 2024, *Tales from two cities. Canberra-Queanbeyan across two centuries*, Learnscapes, Canberra. ISBN: 978 0 9945748 31, 432pp. Call number AA7/01/15.

# From Our Contemporaries

Pauline Bygraves

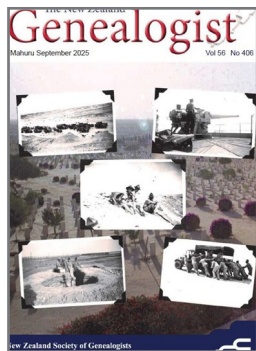
The items selected for this column are taken from some of the many overseas journals received by the Society – they usually mention Australia in some form or may be of general interest to Australian researchers. If you have an interest in a particular country or location, there will often be other relevant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

William CRAIG was convicted of sheep stealing in 1829 in the Inveraray Court of Justiciary and sentenced to 14 years' transportation. He arrived at Launceston in 1830 on the *Prince Regent*. William and Sarah Ann WHITE had four children together, including Hannah CRAIG who married Giles PERAM/PERHAM at

Longford in 1860. William died at Cressy in 1867, aged 68. New Zealand Family Tree August 2025 p1 (electronic journal).



Paul HICKFORD: "They became Prisoners of War" identifies several of his relatives, some Australian, who were involved in World War II. Archibald Elwyn GUYMER (1911-1983) was a Squadron Leader in the RAAF. Relton Claude BARKER (1902-1988) enlisted at Marrickville in 1940, was captured by the Japanese at Batavia in 1942 and put to work on the Burma-Thai railway. The New Zealand Genealogist Sep 2025 v56 n406 p106 (electronic journal).

Ruby Oldham Kathleen Stavordale HOUNSELL married Oliver Henry ALLEN on 8 Mar 1924 at Mosman, NSW. Their wedding photo includes Ruby's parents Bernard and Louise, Oliver's parents William and Harriet as well as Ruby's older sisters Beatrice and Margorie. Ruby and Oliver met after emigrating from London to Australia in the early 1900s. They lived at Cabramatta with their children Douglas, Dorothy, Joyce and Gordon. Tree Tappers (Malvern FHS) Autumn 2025 v30 p60 (electronic journal).

Amelia JONES: "Random Memories of WWII in Australia" recalls childhood memories, mentioning her father Lauren McDONALD, a mechanical engineer who worked for Evans Deakin (EDCO) and became involved in naval shipbuilding and repair work. The New Zealand Genealogist Sep 2025 v56 n406 p102 (electronic journal).

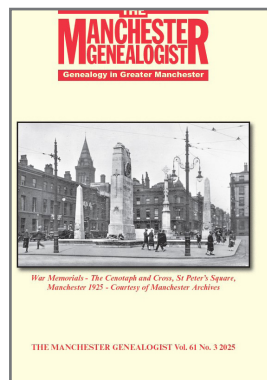
Lynda REID: "Missing Bucks Emigrants" refers to enquiries in the Australian press about the whereabouts of John FINCHER, late of the Parish of Hardwicke, who emigrated in Mar 1844 on the *Dale Park*. Another is about George THORN, a farm labourer from Weston Turville who emigrated in about 1844 and is thought to have gone from Sydney to Lord Howe Island. Origins (Buckinghamshire FHS) Summer 2025 v49 n2 p90 (electronic journal).

Rev William THOM, a Presbyterian Minister, arrived in Sydney from London on the *Nineveh* in 1867, accompanied by his orphaned niece Catherine Isabella MARSHALL. William married Clarinda Sarah (Menie) PARKES, daughter of Sir Henry PARKES and Clarinda VARNEY in 1869. Catherine married Edward BUCKNALL in 1885 and their daughter Elsie (Elizabeth) Grace was born in 1887. When Catherine arrived in Australia she brought with her a sampler stitched by her great-aunt Jean THOM which has been handed down through the generations. Aberdeen & North-East Scotland FHS May 2025 n174 p34 (electronic journal).

Allan John WALLACE was born in 1912 to James WALLACE and Irene Frances (nee FLETCHER). He moved to Australia in 1935 and enlisted in 1939, joining the Second 7th Battalion. He was captured in Greece, sent to a Polish prison camp and then forced to march to Regensburg in appalling conditions. Allan survived and returned to Australia in 1945. He married Ethel TOCKER in New Zealand in 1946 and had three children, Robert, Joan and Patricia. Allan died in 1997. The New Zealand Genealogist Sep 2025 v56 n406 p122 (electronic journal).

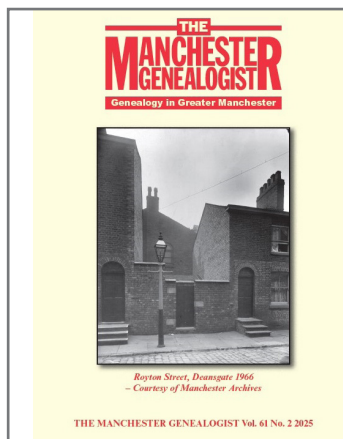
## ENGLAND

Abraham BARROW, with his brothers James and John, son Abraham Jnr and Roger ECKERSLEY, robbed the Westleigh cotton mill in 1819. They were convicted and sentenced to seven years' transportation. Only two were sent to Australia; the other three were pardoned eventually. James departed England on the *Recovery*, arriving at Sydney in 1819. Abraham Jnr was transported on the *Dromedary* to VDL in 1819. He died at Hobart in 1863, aged 75. The Manchester



Genealogist 2025 v61 n3 p243 (electronic journal).

John BEST stole grain from John GROVE's barn in the parish of Harmondsworth in 1838. He left a trail of wheat leading to his house so it was not difficult to find the culprit. He was sentenced to seven years' transportation. A report of the trial can be found on the Old Bailey website. Hillingdon FHS Sep 2025 n151 p17 (electronic journal).

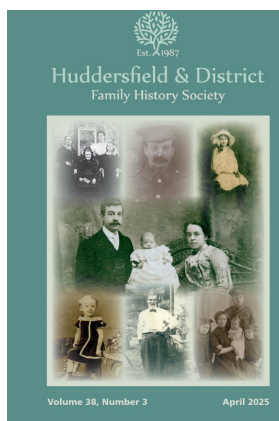


Thomas CADD, son of Joseph and Mary CADD, was baptised at Preston Bissett in 1815. He married Ann NEAL there in 1835. Ann was the daughter of John and Mary NEAL and was also baptised at Preston Bissett in 1815. The couple, with their five children (Elizabeth, Edmund, Mary A, Sarah and Reuben) left Plymouth on the *British Empire* in 1850 and settled at Angaston, South Australia, where more children were born. Origins (Buckinghamshire FHS) Summer 2025 v49 n2 p75 (electronic journal).

Ann ENTWISTLE and Mary HINDLE were among 41 people charged and convicted of rioting and destroying about 1,000 looms in 1826. For their part, they were transported to Australia. The handloom weavers faced hardship and widespread hunger, with their livelihoods being undercut by power looms which were faster and cheaper per yard to manufacture. The Manchester Genealogist 2025 v61 n3 p272 (electronic journal). See also Lancashire FHSJ Feb 2015 v37 n1 p12 (NLa9/60/01).

Henry FITTON was born in 1832 at Cliffe Hill, Shelley. In 1856 he married Amelia MOSLEY, and became a successful stay manufacturer, expanding his business and the number of employees over a number of years. In 1900 he became bankrupt as handwoven and seamless corsets were no longer in as much demand. Henry, Amelia, their daughter Ellen Ann, along with his nephew Harry HANDLEY, left London for Sydney on the *Oruba* shortly after. Huddersfield & District FHS Apr 2025 v38 n3 p28 (electronic journal).

George Lambert GRISDALE (1914-2001): "Recollections from Past Years - Part 2" mentions



his sister Beryl who married Ronald WALKER in Essex in about 1946. They had one son, Kevin, and moved to Australia in 1958. Essex Family Historian Mar 2025 n184 p15 (electronic journal).

James Buchanan YOUNG married Clara Florence WOODROW in 1923 in Derbyshire, and three children quickly followed. Clara died in 1929 at which time her illegitimate daughter Joan, born in 1921, went to live with the Woodrow family in Bristol. At the time of his marriage to Clara, James was already married to Bessie HUTCHISON whom he had wed at Lochgelly, Fife in 1918. Two daughters, Elizabeth and Isabella were born in 1919 and 1921 respectively. It is thought Joan D WOODROW and one of the Scottish-born daughters migrated to Australia. The Essex Family Historian Aug 2025 n185 p48 (electronic journal).

## IRELAND

Brian MITCHELL: "Derry – Londonderry: Gateway to a New World". From the late 1600s to 1939, Derry – Londonderry was one of the principal emigration ports of Ireland. Between 1837 and 1845, ships were fitted out to take selected immigrants from Belfast, Cork, Derry and Limerick to NSW. The Septs (Irish Genealogical Society International) Apr 2025 v46 n2 p69 (electronic journal).

Jennifer HARRISON: "Australian Irish Connections – Biographical Dictionaries: Irish-Australian Explorers" Irish Roots 2025 2nd Qtr n134 p26 (R9/60/04).

Dr Mary HATFIELD: "Using the DIPPAM (Documenting Ireland: Parliament, People and Migration) Archive" which brings together three collections under one digital platform – Enhanced Parliamentary Papers on Ireland (EPPI), the Irish Emigration Database (IEMC) and the Voices of Migration and Return oral history archive. Irish Roots 2025 2nd Qtr n134 p6 (R9/60/04).

Susan McKEE: "The Guinness Archive". The Brewery began keeping detailed personnel records from the early 1880s and holds about 26,000 personnel files, mostly relating to employees who received a company pension. Irish Roots 2025 2nd Qtr n134 p28 (R9/60/04).

Linda L REID: "DNA Confirms a Lloyd Family in Ireland for Two and a Half Centuries". Australian male descendants of George Thrift LLOYD and Bartholomew Frederick LLOYD (aka Frederick DALTON) were key in confirming ancestry back to the Rev Humphrey LLOYD who moved from Wales to Ireland

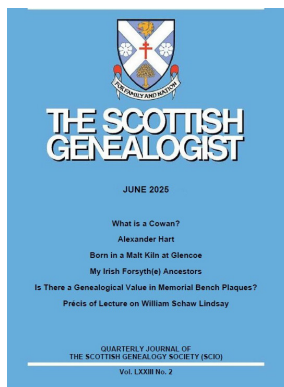


in the 1680s. Anglo-Celtic Roots (BIFHSGO) Fall 2025 v31 n3 p3 (electronic journal).

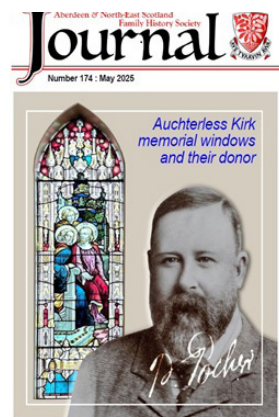
James RYAN: "Local Resources for Family History Research: County of Westmeath". Irish Roots 2025 2nd Qtr n134 p10 (R9/60/04).

## SCOTLAND

Alexander HART, who was the son of Alexander and Rebecca (nee KERR) and born in 1794, was caught up in the Radical Rising of 1820. He was sentenced to 14 years 'transportation. He arrived in NSW on the *Speke* in 1821 and went to work for Surgeon Henry Grattan DOUGLASS at Parramatta. He married Bridget O'HARA in 1822. Alexander, a carpenter, became a successful businessman in Sydney. His niece Margaret migrated on the *Thomas Arbuthnot* in 1841, later marrying George BROWN. Alexander died in 1876. The Scottish Genealogist Jun 2025 vLXXIII n2 p45 (electronic journal).



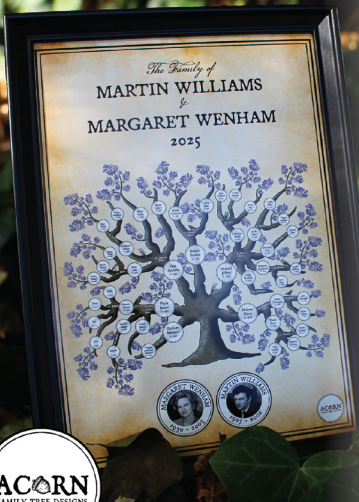
Captain George LAMBIE, born in 1849, was the captain of an ageing East India clipper *Windsor Park* when its cargo of coal reached dangerous temperatures and some had to be jettisoned during a voyage from Newcastle, NSW to San Francisco. After toiling for more than a week, the temperature in the hold returned to normal levels and the voyage was completed. Troon@AyrshireFHS Summer 2025 n105 p27 (electronic journal). Robin PRICE: "Australia and New Zealand Group Report", the topic of which is sharing Scottish research resources. Aberdeen & North-East Scotland FHS May 2025 n174 p16 (electronic journal).



Joan STEELE: "Searching for the Family of Barbara WATT around 1795". Barbara gave birth to an illegitimate daughter, Sophia around 1820. Sophia's granddaughter Isabella THOMSON moved to Australia in 1908. Aberdeen & North-East Scotland FHS May 2025 n174 p33 (electronic journal).

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# *Obscure Library Sources*

*Pauline Ramage*

## **The Australasian Genealogical Computer Index (AGCI)**

AGCI is a major surname and record index designed to help researchers locate names of individuals recorded in Australian historical sources. It's especially useful for family historians and genealogists.

There are times in our research when we just cannot find that elusive ancestor, even though we feel that we have reached the end of our research, until there is another place that becomes known for us to search.

The Australasian Genealogical Computer Index (AGCI) is a CD project that allows 39 genealogical and historical societies to cooperate and share millions of Australian and New Zealand genealogical records.

It acts as a finding aid – showing where information about a person can be found in Australia's many archives, libraries, and local history collections.

AGCI is only an index, but the entries show names, places of event, date of event, type of record and a reference for who holds the complete record, and where and from whom the information may be obtained.

The index includes millions of names from:

- Cemetery transcriptions
- Church and civil registers
- Electoral rolls, council rate books
- Convict and immigration records, shipping arrivals
- School rolls and musters
- News, published family histories,
- Local historical society indexes, war memorials
- Newspaper entries, many local papers are still waiting to be added to TROVE.

## **AGCI Publications**

Volume 1: has 3.9 Million records.

Volume 2: is a name index to the NSW Government Gazette (1832-1863).

Volume 3: a name index with 1.2 million NSW shipping arrivals, NSW Government Gazette (1864-1868), and names from newspapers and burial transcripts.

Volume 4: names from newspaper cuttings in SAG collections (from papers not yet indexed on TROVE) and other material from other societies.

### **In our Library**

Searching our catalogue, six records were found accessible in our library.

CD Section : A2/ 12 CD 0218 Introduction to AGCI - Y2/A2, 1-247

Book Shelves : A5/ 07/02

Fiche Drawers : Y2/A2a/1-247

I personally have had success in finding an ancestor among the shipping lists that had been supplied by Tasmania.

Happy Researching.



Wishing  
you all  
a very  
happy  
Xmas  
and  
Holiday  
Season

# 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.

## Calendar for regular groups

### 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

### Practical Procedures

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)

## January 2026

- 15 10:00 am **Legacy SUG**: convenor Julie Hesse, [legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 16 10:00 am **Coffee and Chat**: [coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 17 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour**: *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, [parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 22 7:30 pm **English and Welsh SIG**: *Life Downstairs: Exploring domestic service*; convenors Floss Aitchison and Nina Johnson, [english.welsh.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:english.welsh.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 25 2:00 pm **Australia SIG**: *TBA*; convenor Pauline Ramage, [australia.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:australia.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 26 10:00 am **Practical Procedures**: *Learn to use our Library and other resources*; Jeanette Hahn
- 27 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour**: *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, [parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au)

## February 2026

- 3 7:00 pm **Monthly Meeting**: *TBA*
- 5 7:30 pm **Scottish SIG**: *Tales from the Hebrides*; convenor Clare McGuinness, [scottish@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:scottish@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 6 9:30 am **Reunion & Mac SUG**: convenor Danny O'Neill, [ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 7 10:00 am **India SIG**: *European and Anglo-Indian widows*; convenor Marie Wensing, [india@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:india@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 7 1:00 pm **DNA SIG**: *Clusters-revision*; convenors Cathy Day and Clare McGuinness, [dna.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:dna.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 12 7:30 pm **Convict SIG**: *Back to Basics - Beginning Convict Research*; convenor Michele Rainger, [convict@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:convict@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 12 10:00 am **Family Tree Maker SUG**: *TBA*; [ftm.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:ftm.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 14 9:30 am **Irish SIG**: *TBA*; convenors Nick Reddan and Peter Mayberry, [irish.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:irish.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 14 2:00 pm **TMG SUG**: *TBA*; FHACT convenor Lindsey Graham, [tmg@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:tmg@familyhistoryact.org.au)
- 15 10:00 am **Writers SIG**: *Show, don't tell. A Workshop*; convenor Jo Callaghan, [writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au](mailto:writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au)

- 19 10:00 am **Legacy SUG**: convenor Julie Hesse, legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 20 11:00 am **Coffee and Chat**: coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 20 8:00 pm **Heraldry SIG**: *TBA*; convenor Chris Lindesay, heraldry@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 21 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour**: *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 20 7:30 pm **AI for Genealogy**: *TBA*; convenor Cheryl Bollard, ai@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 23 2:00 pm **Australia SIG**: *TBA*; convenor Pauline Ramage, australia.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 23 10am **Practical Procedures**: *Learn to use our Library and other resources*; Jeanette Hahn
- 24 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour**: *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au

## March 2026

- 3 7:00 pm **Monthly Meeting**: *TBA*
- 6 9:30 am **Reunion & Mac Support**: convenor Danny O'Neill, ram.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 12 10:00 am **Family Tree Maker SUG**: *TBA*; 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**: *Using clusters strategically*, convenors Cathy Day and Clare McGuinness, dna.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 15 11:00 am **Pauline's Parlour**: *Round table support*; convenor Pauline Ramage, parlour@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 16 7:30 pm **AI for Genealogy**: *TBA*; convenor Cheryl Bollard, ai@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 19 10:00 am **Legacy SUG**: convenor Julie Hesse, legacy.sug@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 19 7:30 pm **English and Welsh SIG**: *Brickwalls*; convenors Floss Aitchison and Nina Johnson, english.welsh.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 20 11:00 am **Coffee and Chat**: coffee.chat@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 21 10:00 am **Writers SIG**: *Writers Circle: a morning of constructive feedback*; convenor Jo Callaghan, writers.sig@familyhistoryact.org.au
- 23 10am **Practical Procedures**: *Learn to use our Library and other resources*; Jeanette Hahn
- 28 10:00am **India SIG**: Note this is the April meeting.

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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

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## Research Advice

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

Contact Jenny Higgins 0429 704 339.

## 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 the 1st Monday 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. 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". Please send submissions and questions to: editor@familyhistoryact.org.au.

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|                | Saturday  | 2.00  | pm | – | 5.00 | pm |
|                | Sunday    | 2.00  | pm | – | 5.00 | pm |

**The Library is CLOSED on all Public Holidays**

## SOCIETY MEETINGS

**Reader's Access Ticket** for non-members: \$10 for one day, \$20 one week, \$30 one month.

Monthly general meetings are held beginning at 7.00pm in the FHACT Education Room, Templeton Street, Cook, ACT on the first Tuesday of each month, except January. The Annual General Meeting is held on the first Tuesday of November. Notices of special meetings and social gatherings are advertised in this journal as appropriate.

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership begins from the date the member joins and will expire either one or two years later at the end of the month in which the member joined. New members, or members who have lapsed for more than 12 months, are required to pay a joining fee. Joint membership is available for additional members at the same address. A concession membership is available to Australian residents: please check with our Membership Coordinator. Amounts are shown for one year.

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*Membership forms are available on the website, at the FHACT Library or can be posted on request.*

**The Ancestral Searcher** is the official journal of the Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra Inc. The journal is published quarterly and available without charge to financial members of the Society and affiliated bodies. Kindred Societies can receive the journal on an exchange basis. Back copies are available for current year and previous two years at \$5.00 each. Earlier issues are \$3.00 each or \$5.00 for a yearly bundle of 4 issues (excluding postage).

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Copy for advertising and contributions is required by the first day of the month preceding the month of publication. Advertising in the journal:

Full page for four consecutive issues \$330; half page for four consecutive issues \$175;

Full page for one issue \$110; half page for one issue \$60.

Advertising in non-consecutive issues is charged at the single issue rate. 10% discount is available to advertisers who are members of the Society.

Advertising flyers can be included with the journal posting. These are to be supplied by the advertiser folded to A5 or smaller in size, cost for A5 20c, A4 30c and A3 or larger 50c per insert.

Readers' Queries up to 60 words: members, no charge; non-members \$35.00.

*Payment is required at the time of submission.*

*All prices include GST*

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## Surnames in this issue:

This index includes only names in *From Our Contemporaries*

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| Bucknall  | 253 | Hounsell  | 252 | Thom         | 253      |
| Cadd      | 254 | Hutchison | 255 | Thomson      | 256      |
| Craig     | 252 | Jones     | 252 | Thorn        | 253      |
| Dalton    | 255 | Kerr      | 256 | Tocker       | 253      |
| Douglass  | 256 | Lambie    | 256 | Varney       | 253      |
| Eckersley | 253 | Lloyd     | 255 | Walker       | 255      |
| Entwistle | 254 | Marshall  | 253 | Wallace      | 253      |
| Fincher   | 253 | McDonald  | 253 | Watt         | 256      |
| Fitton    | 254 | McKee     | 255 | White        | 252      |
| Fletcher  | 253 | Mitchell  | 255 | Woodrow      | 255      |
| Grisdale  | 254 | Mosley    | 254 | Young        | 255      |
| Grove     | 254 | Neal      | 254 |              |          |
| Guymer    | 252 | O'Hara    | 256 |              |          |
| Handley   | 254 | Parkes    | 253 |              |          |



*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.*