

# Eagle Eye



June 2023



Cowra Family History Group Inc  
Journal

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### **Cover Photograph**

Photograph of Moira Ann Atkins (nee Crittenden),  
from Cowra Family History Group's Pardey Photographic  
Collection, negative number 2230, sheet 035 in Album Cowra  
Life 13, taken in July 1955. See her story later in this journal.

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## From the Editor

Welcome back readers!

Get ready for another fantastic edition of the Eagle Eye Journal, full of fascinating stories and some unusual details that cover a few really empowering female related reads.

I hope that you enjoy the material contained within and that it may even inspire you to reach out and share a story about someone that you either knew , have researched or am yet to find. A story untold is one step closer to it being forgotten and it could be the missing piece to a puzzle someone else has been searching for.

Remember that in the Cowra Family History Room we have an amazing Library of resources covering aspects of history not only across Cowra but including its surrounding villages, not to mention as well as many other places in and beyond NSW, across Australia and in several formats. Our volunteers are only too happy to assist new researchers so please come and say hello.

It's now time to grab a cuppa, sit back and be prepared to be amazed, inspired and fascinated about the journeys walked by various shoes (or feet), that helped to shape things as we know them.

Until next time... Stay safe!

Linda Woods

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## **Emily Joyce Muir 1915 – 1995**

**By member Margaret Stent**

Emily Joyce Muir was born in Cowra on 2 April 1915, the fourth daughter of Robert Adam Muir and his second wife Emma Elizabeth Poignand. She had two half-brothers, Dud and Leslie, known as “Bill”, Muir as well as two half-sisters, Annie and Lena. Bob Muir conducted a livery in Vaux Street where he provided horses to travellers and cared for the horse team changes required by the Cobb and Co. coaches travelling in the district. When Emily was only 12 months old her five-year-old sister, Myee, died of diphtheria. Then twelve months later a fifth daughter, Netta, was born to Emma and Bob Muir who survived for only eight days. Probably Emily understood little of the sadness that these tragedies caused the Muir family at the time and as she grew she had many happy times with her sister Jean, only a year older than her, Bessie, her oldest sister and Lilian the last daughter born to Bob and Emma in 1919. The two girls from Bob Muir’s first marriage had never been part of this family’s life. A bitter dispute between Bob Muir and his sister Mary Jane kept these girls from Bob, Emma and their girls. When he had been widowed with four children, the youngest a baby only days old, Mary Jane had retired as a schoolteacher in Holmwood to take over the upbringing of the girls. After Bob remarried Mary Jane refused to relinquish the girls and took them to live in Sydney for a period of time. On the other hand, the boys were almost independent by the time of their mother’s death and always lived with their father. Dud became a carpenter and Bill joined the railways. These boys remained close to Emily and her sisters all their lives.

Emily Muir attended Cowra Public School where her aunts, Mary Jane and Fannie Lillias, had been trainee teachers. Her school results attest to a conscientious, capable student. At the end of her Primary school, she is reported to have been first in the girls’ class. Her Intermediate Certificate showed that she was a good all-round student, scoring B grades in eight subjects. Emily also participated in school plays and entered exhibits of needlework and cooking in the local show.

With a solid Intermediate Certificate, Emily returned to school for Fourth Form but decided to apply for a position with Squire Pepper General Store when it was advertised in March 1932. She duly received a letter from Mr Donaldson, Managing Director, that she would be taken on trial for a month to “see if (she) would be suitable.” She was to commence at 8.40 am the following morning. Emily did prove satisfactory and remained with Squire Pepper for over ten years. During that time, she was promoted to become second in charge of the Showroom. Her reference on leaving to get married indicated that she was

“most capable”. “extremely courteous”. “always punctual.. “ever willing to do all that is asked of her”... “strictly honest and one of the most respected girls on our staff”.

It was inevitable that Emily would be a keen horsewoman. Her father had qualified as a Veterinary Surgeon in July 1924 and horses were his passion. Em rode in local and district shows and was part of the horse parade held for the Cowra’s Jubilee celebrations held in May 1938 .

In October 1938 a young man from Singleton purchased a menswear business in Cowra. William Wells “Bill” Robinson’s family had published the Singleton Argus for three generations. However, Bill had two older brothers in business and his real interests lay elsewhere. He decided to make the move into clothing and sporting goods retailing. In Cowra he found Fred Ellis had a business on the market which Bill purchased and opened on the corner of Kendal and Macquarie Streets. Despite being the sole owner, he named the business Robinson Bros. Almost a year later, in April 1939, Bill and Emily were introduced and they quickly became close. Unfortunately, a few months later, Australia was at war again, and this time Cowra was to become the centre of much wartime activity with news that a military camp would be established here.

Emily joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment group in Cowra and studied for her First Aid training certificates. In all, three of those Certificates survive today as well as photographs of Emily and the group. The first task of the VADs would be to serve refreshments to the thousands of troops set to arrive in the new Military Training camp to be built on the outskirts of the town. Over three days Emily and Lilian Muir would be part of this small band of Cowra women who served almost 3000 men at dawn as they arrived in Cowra.

In August 1940 Emily Joyce Muir became engaged to William Wells Robinson. The marriage took place a year later in St. Peters Presbyterian Church Cowra. After a short period sharing a house with Mel and Lorna Blume, Bill and Em moved into 6 Macquarie Street, a small cream rendered house on the eastern side of the street below the sharp crest of the hill. Emily assisted Bill with his business as the town became increasingly busy with the influx of military personnel and their families. However, the war was rapidly moving closer to Australia and when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour and landed on the Malayan peninsular, Bill decided after Christmas in 1941 that he must enlist. In a flurry of activity, again assisted by Emily, the couple sold the stock to a New England menswear business, stored some of the fittings and closed the business.

The war years must have been difficult for Em. Bill was absent for the next four years. Their daughter, Margaret, was born in September 1942. It was

Lorna Blume who took Emily to Moira Hospital for the birth. At 17 months of age, Margaret was diagnosed with Pinks Disease, a condition that results in “difficult” children and Margaret was no exception. Emily talked of carting her to a specialist in Macquarie Street, Sydney who announced that because of the challenges their behaviour posed there was a “special place in heaven” for mothers of such babies! To supplement the much-depleted family income, Emily provided board for the wives and sometimes children, of men who were in Cowra for training. It would be four years before Bill and Emily were able to celebrate a wedding anniversary together.

In late 1945 the couple again set up Robinson Bros. Stock was hard to find, and rationing was in place. For the last month Bill was stationed in the Cowra camp and Emily held the fort for those early weeks until Bill’s discharge in November 1945. A son, David, was born in 1946 and another baby, born in 1949, only survived two days. That year the couple purchased a large block of land in Macquarie Street from Mrs Chivers the owner of the great grey granite home known as *Paradise*. Immediately they had a tennis court built there and later a home.

Robinson Bros. moved to the Logan Court Building after it was modernised and the shop thrived there until eventually in 1958 it was split into two separate business, Robinson Bros. Menswear and Robinson’s Sports and Toys. The latter shop was in the lower block of Kendal Street opposite the Imperial Hotel. Emily took over the management of that business. By 1962 Bill’s health deteriorated and it was decided to sell both these business and purchase Anne McKay Frock Salon in the Logan Court Building. Robinson Bros. was sold to the McGlynn family and became Esquire Mercers and John Rablah bought the Toy Shop.

Emily was the front of house person in Anne McKay whilst Bill took over the accounts and advertising and the organisation of lay-bys etc. which were an important part of the business in those days. In the years ahead Anne McKay opened branches in Young, Bathurst and Harden. Emily and Bill’s son David and David’s wife Libby joined them running the Young and Harden businesses. Despite her close involvement in the family business Emily was always active in town activities, both as a support for Bill and in her own right. Bill was at times Rotary President, Far West President, Chamber of Commerce President, a Country Party office holder and involved in the establishment of the Cowra Tourist and Development Board. He was actively involved in the establishment of what became known as The Olympic Way and ran the Lachlan Valley Tennis Championships for many years. He was a leader of the Building Fund to pay for the rebuild of St. John’s Anglican Church. Emily helped him in all these roles.



However, she also had her own interests. She was involved in her children's school activities as well as the P. and C. With a small group of ladies, she established a preschool in the Salvation Army Hall when her son, David, was small.

Emily was a member of the VIEW club and a Charter Member of the Cowra Toastmistress Club. She was a Charter Member of the Inner Wheel Club of Cowra and on its original committee. In 1965 she served as its President and later was involved in the state organisation of that group.

On a personal note, Em's family and her garden were the most important aspects of her life. She was no more than an adequate cook and in later years Bill and a housekeeper did much of the cooking while Em worked hard at Anne McKay. Bessie Wright, Jean Cooley and Emily shared the care of their mother, Emma, in her final years. Emma lived month about with each of her daughters and wherever she was the family gathered on Sundays. The daughters, their husbands and the cousins were all very close, and hours were spent together on the Westville and Morongla farms as well as the Robinson home in Macquarie Street. Saturdays were spent playing tennis either at the Cowra Tennis Club or on the home court in Macquarie Street.

Widowed at just 58 years of age, Emily sold the home in Macquarie Street and built a home in Binnie Creek Road behind her daughter Margaret and son-in-law Jim. Diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease at sixty her life became difficult as the disease progressed. Her final year was spent at Bilyara Hostel. On 19 June 1995, Emily Robinson passed away and was buried in the Cowra Lawn Cemetery beside her husband William Wells Robinson. A lifelong resident of Cowra, Emily had led a varied and active life and she contributed a great deal to the life of the town in business, social and personal ways to enrich her own and others' lives. Despite this, like many other women of her era, she did so largely unacknowledged except by those closest to her.

Do you have relatives who served in World War 2 who lived in or near Orange?

A list of all those who served (army, navy, airforce, medical staff) from Orange and/or nearby is being compiled by the Orange Family History Group.

Send your relatives information to Orange FHG's email :  
[familyhistory@orange.nsw.gov.au](mailto:familyhistory@orange.nsw.gov.au)



squire Pepper Staff - Emily Muir is fifth from left .



Cowra VAD members Lillian (left) and Emily (right) Muir



Emily Robinson presiding over  
an Inner Wheel function



WOMENS SERVICES		
BATTYE, S.	DUNN, M.	KERR, D.
BENNETT, H.	ELLIOTT-HORSFALL, E. J.	KERR, J.
BENNETT, E.	FAULKINER, V.	KERRY, J.
BLAIR, H.	FLETCHER, M.	KEYS, S.
BRIEN, K. B.	FLINT, E.	KINDON, P.
BRYANT, E. N.	FREEBAIRN, V.	KURTZ, V.
BRYANT, J. F.	FREW, B. C.	LAING, J. M.
BRYANT, K. I.	FULCHER, M.	LANGFIELD, P.
BRYANT, M. E.	GRAVES, J.	LEWIS, J.
BRYANT, S.	GOODACRE, R.	MALE, J.
BUCHANAN, M.	GRANT, M. E.	MATHERSON, B.
BUSBY, B. A. S.	HALL, M. E.	MORGAN, S.
BUSHELL, D.	HARDING, I. J.	MOSLEY, E.
BYRNE, H.	HARRISON, P. J.	MUIR, E. J.
BYRNE, M.	HART, H.	MUIR, L.
CAMERON, A.	HART, L.	MULVIHILL, R.
CAMERON, K. S.	HAYLEN, M. J.	NEWHAM, A. R.
CAMERON, M.	HENDERSON, E.	NICHOLSON, V.
CANTWELL, P.	HOCKINGS, M. A.	NORRIE, J. M.
CARPENTER, E. A. M.	HOULISTON, J. M.	NOBLE, W.
CORP, M.	HUMPHRIES, A.	OLIVER, A.
CRAMP, R.	HUTCHISON, D.	OLIVER, D.
DAY, E.	JENNER, A.	OLIVER, N.
DICKSON, D.	JONES, D. M.	OLIVER, U.
DIXON, A.	KELLY, V.	O'NEILL, G. M.
PARKER, M.	RYAN, M. T.	WALKDEN-BROWN, E.
PHILLIPS, E.	SHUMACK, R.	WALSH, K.
PHILLIPS, E. E.	SHEAHAN, P.	WATMORE, J.
PHILLIPS, E. K.	SLIGAR, M.	WENHAM, M.
RICHARDSON, N. M.	SMITH, D. J.	WHITE, O.
RILEY, N.	SMITH, E. W.	WHITEMAN, V.
REEVES, D. A.	SMITH, T.	YARDLEY, A.
REEVES, H. M.	SMITH, M. J.	GITTOES, J.
REID, I.	SQUIRE, E.	GITTOES, N.
ROTTON, S.	THIRKELL, J. B.	
RYAN, J.	TRENGOVE, D. E.	



VAD Wall - The wall  
at the Cowra RSL  
memorial in  
Brisbane Street  
commemorating  
the local Voluntary  
Aid Detachment.

## **Moira Ann Atkins (nee Crittenden) – A Remarkable Woman**

This article is a shortened version of a longer article to be found in Cowra Family History Group's 2015 publication, *They Shaped a Town Called Cowra* Volume 2, pages 19 - 22. As the wife of much-loved Cowra's Dr Tom Atkins, Moira made a significant contribution to the Cowra community through her involvement in a number of organisations and causes which were close to her heart, but she also served Australia with distinction as a nurse during World War 2, prior to her marriage.

Moira was born at Walcha NSW on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1912, one of nine children

to Arthur and Margaret Crittenden. After completing her schooling at Fort Street Girl's High School, Moira completed her general and obstetrics nursing training at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital. By the start of World War 2 she was a highly trained triple certificate nursing sister and enlisted in the AIF on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1940 (NX70302), where she joined the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Australian

General Hospital (AGH) Unit. She was appointed as a Senior Sister on the *Queen Mary*, which had been converted to a hospital ship and left Australia in 1941. She then saw active service in Egypt, Greece, Crete, Syria and Palestine. After returning to Australia briefly, her Unit was prepared for service in the islands to the north of Australia, such as Borneo and New Guinea. Moira Crittenden was promoted to Deputy Matron of the 2/6<sup>th</sup> AGH at Labuan (an island off the coast of Borneo, now part of Malaysia) and held that position until the Japanese surrender. Upon her discharge on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1946, Moira held the rank of Captain and resumed her nursing career at Concord Hospital. In 1946 Moira married Dr Tom Atkins at St James Church in Sydney. They had met prior to the war while both working at Royal North Shore Hospital and had intended to marry before WW2 intervened. The following year the couple moved to Cowra when Dr Atkins purchased a medical practice from his uncle. In Cowra Moira efficiently ran her husband's medical practice and reared their 3 children, Anne Irene, Thomas James and Louise Margaret.

Moira's work with the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital during WW2 earned her the award of The Royal Red Cross (2<sup>nd</sup> Class), with the award being presented to her by the Governor of NSW on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1949. The citation states for 'energy, efficiency & loyalty in New Guinea'. That award was only given to 9 Australian nurses during WW2.



Moira Atkins was heavily involved with organisations in Cowra during her 34 years living here. She initiated a pre-school program, held in a small hall near to the old Cowra High School in Vaux Street, was a passionate supporter of the Red Cross and a long-time member of the Anglican Women's Association. Being a keen golfer and an excellent bridge player were among her leisure pursuits. She regularly attended reunions with her fellow nurses and participated in Anzac marches.

The Australian War Memorial honoured her by inviting her to open a nursing exhibit and also arranged for her war service experiences to be recorded for posterity (held in the Keith Murdoch Sound Archive of Australia). The War Memorial also holds a copy of a photograph taken on Labuan Island on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1945 of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten congratulating Lieutenant Moira Crittenden as the winner of the 'Bathing Beauty Contest' at the 9<sup>th</sup> Division Aquatic Carnival, held during his tour of inspection.

Moira only left Cowra following her husband's death in 1980. While living in retirement in Dubbo, Moira kept up her involvement with ex-service personnel by becoming the Patron of the Vietnam Veteran's Association there.

Moira was 92 years of age when she passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2004. What a remarkable woman, who willingly gave outstanding service to her country and the communities she lived in!



### **Photo Description**

Labuan Island, North- West Borneo 1945-12-08. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten GCVO CB DSO, Supreme Commander South- East Asia Command, visited the 9th Division Aquatic Carnival held during his Tour of Inspection. He is congratulating NFX70302 Lieutenant Moira A. Crittenden RRC, Nursing Sister, 2/6th Australian General Hospital, the winner of the burlesque "Bathing Beauty Contest". (Photographer Sgt F. A. C. Burke) Australian War Memorial, Copyright expired – public domain.

## **CHECK YOUR DOCUMENTS**

By member Shirley Chittick

My grandfather, Brian Arthur McBride, is a most elusive man. His name was not even known to us until after my mother's death in 1986. There were plenty of cousins on my father's side of the family to occupy our attention and any questions about such things as children to my mother were always diverted, so of course we stopped asking.

It was not until I started to do proper family research and obtained his death certificate in 1992 that any details started to emerge – and there it all was!

According to the death certificate, he was born in Castlemaine, Victoria and died in 1933, at the age of 66 in Rockhampton, Queensland.

The death certificate also provided me with his parents' names, as well as the names of my mother's siblings. All potentially powerful information. However, we could not find any record of them at all.

My next step was to send for my grandparents' marriage certificate.

Brian McBride had married Elizabeth Ellen O'Connor in Narrandera, when he was 27 years old. My grandmother was only 16 years old, so had to have her parents' permission. They were married in the Roman Catholic Church in Narrandera – which came as a complete shock to everyone, particularly my Dad – and helped explain a lot about my mother's secrecy and reluctance to talk about her family, for she had hidden these facts from all the family for over 50 years.

My Dad came from a very strict Church of England family. I asked him if my mother would have been accepted by the family, if they had known about her family being Roman Catholic and his answer was a most emphatic NO! He didn't even hesitate. The dividing lines between religions were much stricter then and many families were not accepting of other faiths.

However, all this didn't explain the lack of details for Brian McBride's parents. After many negative and fruitless enquiries, one very alert person asked if I had considered Castlemaine in Ireland, not Victoria! And there they all were – his and his parents' births and deaths etc.

So, the message of this article is really to remind us all not to just accept everything that is on official documents without double checking.

## **New Website & Email for Turtle Consolidated Services**

Laurie & Lorraine Turtle operate one of three BDM transcription services available in NSW. They wish to advise that their previous web server has suddenly let them down, so they have a new website and email, effective immediately.

**Their new website is:** [www.turtleconsolidatedservices.com.au](http://www.turtleconsolidatedservices.com.au)

**Their new email is:** [colpitts1788@gmail.com](mailto:colpitts1788@gmail.com)

They continue to offer all of their usual services as well!

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### **New Codes used by NSW BDM Registry**

Researchers would be familiar with seeing the name of the registration district recorded on early death registrations when searching the NSW online BDM Registry eg. as Cowra, Carcoar, Bathurst etc. However, from 1974 in NSW this field was left blank and then from July 2022 the death registration districts have been displayed as numerical code. There is a list of places to match these codes to be found by doing a Google search for: NSW BDM Numeric District Codes. These begin with 001 for Sydney.

**Note that the code for Cowra is 071.**

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### **50th Anniversary of the end of Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War**

Cowra Family History Group is planning an exhibition in the Cowra Library to mark the 2023 50th anniversary , to feature the local men and women who were involved in the Vietnam War. Our display will be ready for Vietnam Veterans Day on 18th August 2023 and will be up for one month. There are 34 names on the Vietnam War plaque outside the Cowra RSL Rooms and we would like to hear from as many of these people or their family members as possible, particularly about their experience and a photo which can be used in the exhibition (photos will be copied & returned).

Send information no later than the end of July to:

[cowra\\_fhg@hotmail.com](mailto:cowra_fhg@hotmail.com) or drop it into our room at the Library.

Do you know that the Australian Government has produced a 50th anniversary commemorative medallion and certificate of recognition to honour the service of Australians (men and women) who served in the Vietnam War? These are also available to the family of veterans who have since passed away. To apply go to: [www.dva.gov.au/vietnam50](http://www.dva.gov.au/vietnam50) or phone 1800 838 372

## **Visit to John Grant's Grave at Merriganowry**

By Jarrod Johnson-Smith

On Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2022 five members of the Cowra Family History Group Inc., and a guest visited the property owned by Andrew Grant at Merriganowry to view the grave of his ancestor, John Grant. Andrew Grant provided the members with a detailed talk on the history of John Grant. A thank you gift from the Group was presented to Andrew for his time and permission to access the grave site. It is hoped in 2023 that the CFHG will make a return visit to the grave of John Grant. Note that the plaque added for John's second wife Elizabeth Grant (nee West) has an incorrect date of death on it (should be 1886, not 1855).

John Grant was a convict from Moyne, County Tipperary, Ireland who was convicted for attempted murder. He was originally sentenced to death which then was commuted to transportation for life. He arrived in Sydney Cove in 1811 aboard the ship *Providence*. John was assigned to Dr William Redfern at Campbelltown. In 1820 John received a pardon. He obtained 50 acres near Hartley which he called Moyne. Eventually John leased over 30,000 acres along the Lachlan River called Merriganowry. When John died in 1866 he was buried on his property at Merriganowry. For further information on John Grant the Group holds a copy of *Providence – The Life and Times of John Grant (1792-1866)* by Jacqueline Grant.

In March 1988 John Grant's damaged grave was viewed by the National Trust of Australia and in May 1988 the grave of John Grant was classified and included on their register of significance. The reason for the significance was John Grant's grave is marked with a finely crafted and substantial monument. The memorial is evidence of Grant's prominence as an early settler and his importance to the local community. The monument was crafted by an early local mason. The selection of the burial site, adjacent to a creek typifies isolated rural burial practices in the nineteenth century; this site is one of only two lone graves in the Cowra district which feature remaining memorials. The grave was restored later that year.

### **Photo Captions**

*Figure 1: Grave of John Grant Pre 1988. Photograph supplied by Graham and Sue Grant.*

*Figure 2: Restored Grave of John Grant taken October 2022*

*Figure 3: Grave of John Grant Restored Inscription.*

*Figure 4: Plaque added to Base of John Grant's Grave*





Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



*Figure 5: Andrew Grant (on right), Cheryl, Greg, Jarrod & Louise at John Grant's Grave*



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## **Our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Cowra Family History Group was established in 1983, 40 years ago and became an Incorporated not-for-profit organisation in 1988.

We are planning a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to take place at Cowra Bowling Club on **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023**, starting at 1.00pm, with the anticipated cost being \$25.00 per head. Further information and details for payment will be notified as soon as details are confirmed – bookings and pre-payment will be required. All present and past members are invited to attend. As this is the Saturday of the Labour Day long weekend in NSW, put the date in your diary now and book accommodation if needed.



Cont... If you know the address or email for someone who may be interested in attending, please let us know as soon as possible. If anyone has relevant photos that we can borrow and copy for a display, please forward these to our postal or email address no later than 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023. It is interesting to note that Orange Family History Group is also celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

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On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2008 our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was held, attended by over 35 people. As a trip down memory lane, a photo taken on that occasion follows.



**Row 1** (Front) – Shirley Chittick, Lorna Spackman, Win Beer, Margaret Stent, Cheryl McAlister, Helen Ousby

**Row 2** – Cheryl Ianson, Phillip Fryer, Marion Mitchell-Read, Glenda Twemlow, Olwyn Barnes, Jeannine Bryant, Pauline Ramage, Ros Ryan, Helen Withers, Jean Brien, Kerry Smith, John Brien, Marina Bennett

**Row 3** – Ian Sutherland, Libby Walsh, Doug Beer, June Brien, Shirley Wills, Vicki Williamson, Val Bourke, Robyn Churchland, Marie Singho, Laurel Williams

**Row 4** (Back) – Norm Palazzi, Jarrod Johnson-Smith, Bruce Morrison, Ted Bennett, Victor Smith, Stan Bourke, Doug Williamson

## **LAST VISIT TO COWRA**

By Coral Shand

Joyce Barrett was born in Cowra in May 1929. By November 2015, Joyce had survived cancer treatment and was insisting on visiting Cowra one more time before she died. She wanted to do three things: to look around places she knew, to stand on the land that her beloved grandfather Samuel once owned, and to find out more about her grandmother's Francis family. As her niece, I volunteered to take her on this journey.

Joyce arrived dressed in slacks, sandals and a checked shirt. Her long hair was pulled back into a bun on her neck as usual, except for the wisps of grey hair that were insisting on curling around her face. She leaped into my car and quickly had both of us organised with water bottles and food. While we caught up on family news the busy highways were travelled quickly. Joyce became quieter as we turned off near Bathurst. Her eyes scanned the countryside, and I could almost hear her mind trying to match reality with memory.

"They must have had a bit of rain, the paddocks are green not brown" she said. "Look, that property's sheep still have their winter fleece on. The shearers haven't got there yet."

Once in Cowra, Joyce set off to walk the main street. She walked down to the Lachlan River to check whether the rickety wooden bridge was still there. She had to wait for a car to cross and make the 'thump' sound she remembered. Many of the buildings and businesses remained from her childhood, though some were in a different location. One thing she did not approve of was the new cobblestone paving on the footpaths, as it was dangerous for old ladies like her.

Next day we set out to find the first of the family properties. After an exciting detour down a gravel road while being chased by an enormous truck, we were forced to retrace our steps to find Sunnyside. Somehow we had missed the old windmill on the side of the road! But the wire gate with the property name on it was still there. My hands shook a little as I took a picture of Joyce leaning on the gate, with a satisfied grin on her face. Her memory was proving to be correct!

The finding of the second property, Wilburton, proved an impossible task as no buildings or signs remained. 3 However, we stood together on the side of the road at the place our modern technology told us was probably correct. All around, the flood plain paddocks were covered with grain. There were groups of trees scattered about to provide shelter for the sheep. How different this was to the tree covered land that Samuel had cleared using hand-saws and Clydesdale horses. Then, the cut trees would be lying around ready to be sawn, with stumps smouldering and small fires adding to the smoke in the air. Samuel would have been devastated the day he heard his young daughter's screams. Her dress had flared into flames after she had walked too close to such a fire. 4 Joyce reminded me that three young children had died while the family lived on this property.

Later that day using instructions from a distant relative, we sought the third property Curraweana. We had to:  
"Head out the Grenfell Road for 35 km. Look for the big pepper tree on the right hand side – it's at the gate. If you get to the blue Church, turn around, you have gone too far."

These brilliantly accurate directions helped us find the property that Samuel had owned in the 1920s. 5 The large brick house was still standing with only essential restoration having been done. The wide stone veranda was sheltered by large bushes growing right up to the edge of the bullnose roof. Inside, we admired the original high ceilings of slatted timber, and savoured the 20 degree drop in temperature. We walked around the house and the out-buildings, and could easily imagine how they would have been 100 years earlier. Joyce walked slowly, occasionally touching the brickwork and the timber posts, while admiring the workmanship.

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1 NSWBDM Birth Certificate, Cowra, 1929/22392, Joyce Barrett

2 NSWBDM Marriage Certificate, Cowra, 1889/4169, Samuel Barrett and Harriett Elizabeth Francis

3 State Records NSW Crown Lands Administrative Maps, County Forbes, Parish Cudgelong, Edition 2, 1889, lots 96 and 47, Sam'l Barrett

4 Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal, Friday 4 June 1897 p.2

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article62036098> Accessed 18/04/2011

She stood on the steps and surveyed the land around her for a few moments. Then, as proof she had been there, Joyce insisted on being photographed standing at the front door.

On our final day we visited the Cowra Historical Society whose small rooms were filled with books, files, folders and three enthusiastic humans. Grey haired Norm was the archivist. Dressed in a blue polo shirt, jeans and runners this short wiry man looked prepared to find 'anything' for us, provided we didn't touch his precious filing cabinet. Each time he asked whether a family name was one we were interested in, I answered with a yes! Norm's smile changed to a puzzled frown as he looked carefully at us both.

"You might be interested in this then" he said, and crooked his finger for us to come closer.

He showed me a handwritten page about William Francis and Lydia George, listing their many children. 6 Norm pointed to a name near the bottom and said "That's my grandmother Ellen".

I leaned across and moved his finger up the page to the name Harriet. "That's Joyce's grandmother. Your grandmothers were sisters!"

Joyce and Norm grabbed each other in a bear-hug and danced around that little room. Norm shouted, "I have never met anyone related to that part of my family tree, that's still alive!"

"Norm, you are the first Francis family member I have ever met!" countered Joyce.

For the next half an hour the couple were uninterruptable. With their arms around each other, they posed for a photo. It captured two octogenarians, the same height and build, sporting a 'cat has found the cream' grin on their faces.

Once back in the car, Joyce sighed. "That was the best hour of my life. It was so unexpected, and yet so wonderful!"

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5 The Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser, Thursday 16 Feb 1928, p.3 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article115906931> Accessed 18/04/2011

6 Cowra Historical Society, Family Group Sheet for William Henry FRANCIS and Lydia GEORGE, prepared by Norm Egan, Cowra, Accessed November 2015





Above : Joyce at Curaweena  
Below : Joyce at the Gate of Sunnyside



# MARIA DAVIS – A CONVICT’S STORY

## My Female Ancestor

By Member Shirley Chittick

This is the story of my four times great grandmother, whose name was Maria Davis. She arrived in Botany Bay on 12 June 1801 as a convict aboard the ship “Earl Cornwallis”.

They sailed from Portsmouth on 18 November 1800 with 193 male prisoners and 95 females, of whom Maria was one. Maria Davis had been imprisoned in the cells at Lancaster Castle and it was there on 18 March 1800 that the judge came to hear the cases of those accused of various crimes.

Maria, along with her friend Mary Denton, had been accused of trying to cash a “bill of exchange” (similar to our cheques) for 9 pounds 11 shillings (quite a large sum then). For this crime, they were each sentenced to 7 years transportation.

Earl Cornwallis departed Portsmouth on 18 November 1800 – about 8 months after they were sentenced. The voyage took 206 days with 25 deaths occurring during that time – this was considered a good result for those days when, as we now know, transportation conditions were very crowded and unhealthy. Female convicts were generally assigned to someone to work during their sentence. It is not known where Maria spent her first few months after arriving in the colony, but on 5 October 1801 (some four months after arriving) she married Samuel Haslem – who also has an interesting history, being a very successful early member of the emerging colony, mostly farming in the Parramatta area. I suspect they may have known each other in England. The witnesses to this marriage were Maria’s friend Mary Denton and William Howarth. Mary and William had been married on 11 September 1801 and their witnesses were Maria Davis and Samuel Haslem. It is interesting to note that Samuel Haslem was the only one to sign his name – the others just did crosses, indicating they were probably illiterate.

The marriage certificate states “Marriage by Banns” which alludes to the requirement of reading the banns (notice of intention of two persons to marry) three times on consecutive Sundays in the parish prior to the wedding ceremony occurring.

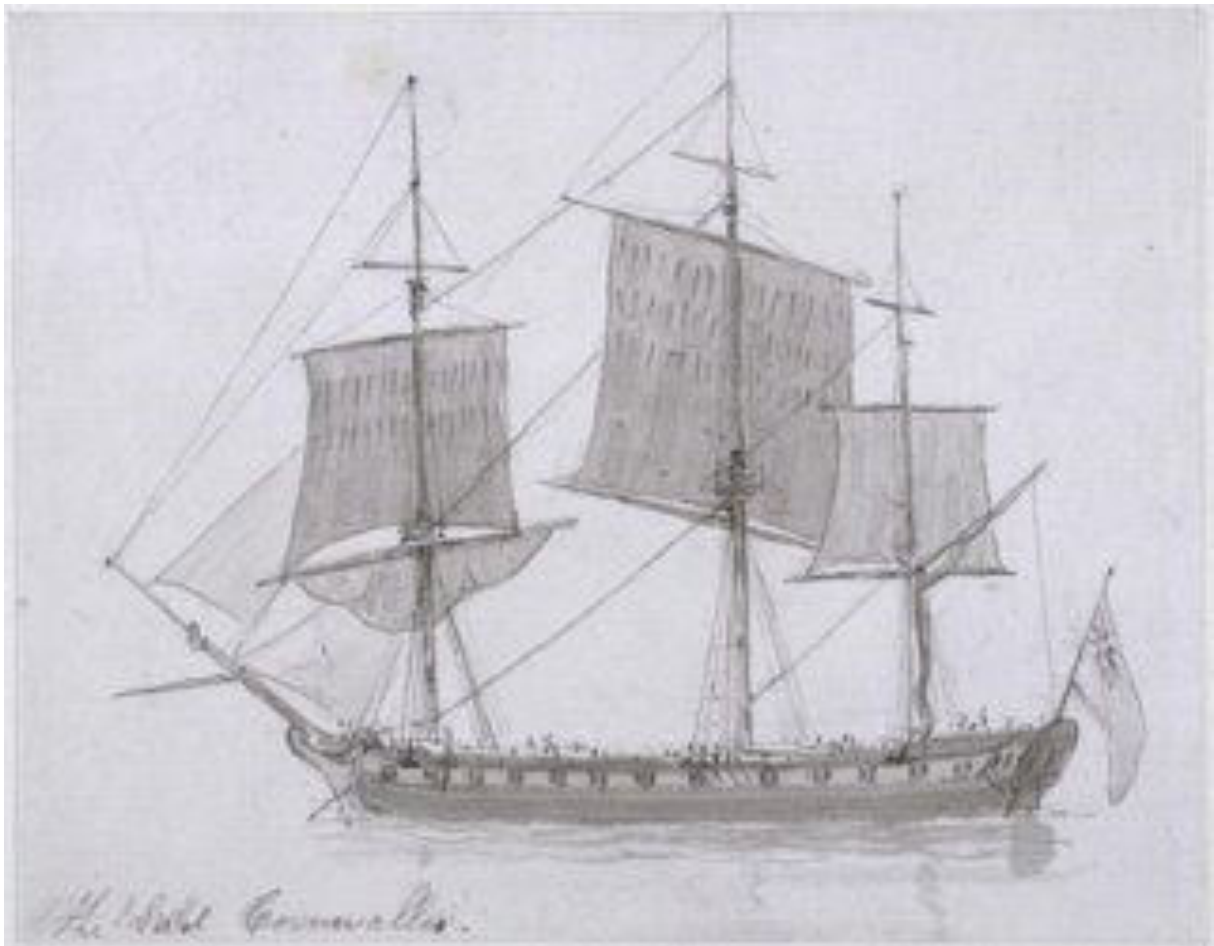
Samuel and Maria produced a son – William Makin Haslem, whose daughter Maria Haslem (born 1833) came to the South Coast area with her father, when he travelled there to take on the job of overseer for Terry Hughes estate, where Albion Park now is.



Maria Haslem met my great grandfather, John Thomas, there and they soon married and produced a large family which was well known in that local area. Maria Davis may have been an illiterate convict when she arrived in Sydney, but she and her family became a successful part of the development of the colony.

### **The Earl Cornwallis**

The Earl Cornwallis was a 3- decker East Indiaman launched in 1793 on the Thames River in England. She made 7 voyages for the British East India Company, then from 1800 she transported convicts from England to NSW.



Drawing of the Earl Cornwallis c. 1786 – 94, Thomas Daniell, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

## **Affiliated Library of the LDS FamilySearch**

**By Jarrod Johnson-Smith**

The Cowra Family History Group Inc., became an affiliated library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – FamilySearch on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021. The Cowra Library and all other branch libraries in the Central West Libraries Network are also affiliated libraries of the FamilySearch.

FamilySearch began in 1998 to digitize all their genealogical records hoping to be completed within 15 years. In September 2021 they had managed to digitize 2.4 million microfilms of their records.

You can access the digitized records online with a free FamilySearch account. Your FamilySearch account allows you access to all digitized records, there however is restrictions on level of access based on the internet access point. The digitized microfilm records do have different levels of restrictions. The computer's IP address controls the restriction levels. The restrictions are due to the contractual and data privacy agreements that FamilySearch entered into with different Countries, Churches, Archives and other organisations to obtain the genealogical records. A key symbol will indicate restriction on levels 2 & 3.

Level 1: These digitized records can be accessed with your account and any internet computer. FamilySearch has attempted to have most of their records in this category.

Level 2: These digitized records can be only accessed with your account at an Affiliated Library of FamilySearch or at an LDS FamilySearch Centre.

Level 3: These digitized records can be only accessed with your account at an LDS FamilySearch Centre.

Key Symbol means restricted access.



Magnifying Glass Symbol means a searchable index.



Camera Symbol means the microfilm has been digitized and available to view.



Microfilms that previously were restricted from circulation will remain restricted from access in digital format until legal conditions change.



## **Elaine Constance Clements OAM (nee Moseley)**

Elsewhere in this journal is the story of Moira Ann Atkins, who had a distinguished career as a nurse during World War 2, before she married, then was an active member of the Cowra community for many years after her marriage. Elaine Clements has a similar story of serving her country and her Cowra Community,

Elaine Constance Moseley was born at Wellington NSW on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1915, the only child of Edgar Moseley & Eva Male. Elaine spent some of her early years living in Jhelum, India where her father was serving as the Captain of the 21<sup>st</sup> Punjabi Regiment, after being injured in France during World War 1. In those days the Indian troops had Commonwealth Officers. The family returned to Australia when Elaine was old enough to start school (children had to leave India by the time they were six or seven to go to school in England or Australia). Elaine and her parents came to live in Cowra in 1930 when her father got a job at Cowra's Garden & Montgomerie Solicitors.

Elaine completed her secondary school education at Marsden, an Anglican Boarding School for girls at Kelso, near Bathurst, before gaining her Leaving Certificate in 1932. She did her Karitane nursing training in Woollahra, Sydney before doing a course in typing and bookkeeping and returning to Cowra in 1938 to work at Garden & Montgomerie.

Early in 1940 a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) was formed in Cowra with Elaine as the Commandant. When the first troops arrived at the Military Training Camp established in Cowra later that year, the VAD nurses helped in the camp hospital as well as at Cowra District Hospital. Early in 1941, there was talk of VAD's being sent to overseas hospitals attached to the Australian Infantry Forces. Elaine duly applied and was accepted. Private SN: NX76473, Elaine Moseley enlisted at Cowra at the age of 26 years & 4 months in the Voluntary Aid Detachment as a nurse. At the end of October, the NSW contingent set sail aboard the Queen Mary, bound for the Middle East. After arriving in Palestine Elaine started working in the wards of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital, later at the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital. While there Elaine was able to visit places such as Tel Aviv, the Dead Sea, Jerusalem, Beirut and Damascus while on leave. After leaving Palestine in 1943 and returning to Australia, Elaine was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian General Hospital, based on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland.

Elaine married Joseph (known as John or Jack) Clements in Sydney at the Methodist Chapel on Pitt Street on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1943. Then both Elaine and John returned to their army units before they were discharged. John was discharged first but Elaine had to wait for her discharge until the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1944. Elaine and John first lived at "Gerringoma", 26 miles from Cowra on Hovells Creek for 12 months before moving to "Yeronga" on the Reid's Flat Road where they lived for many years and raised their two children, Allan and Anne. Elaine attended VAD reunions whenever possible, such as one in Adelaide in 1966 and the 30<sup>th</sup> reunion in Sydney in 1971. The midnight blue Voluntary Aid Detachment jacket and skirt worn by Private Elaine Constance Moseley of Cowra were donated to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Elaine's name is included on a plaque commemorating the local Voluntary Aid Detachment Women's Services on the wall outside the RSL Rooms in Brisbane Street Cowra.



Sydney embarkation, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1941 – helping to fasten a kit bag- on right Miss Jean Miller of Neutral Bay, on left Miss Elaine Moseley of Cowra. Australian War Memorial Photo

Elaine was a very active volunteer in the Cowra community working with organisations such as the Smith Family, View Club, Cancer Action Group, Arts Council, Legacy, Church of England & Cowra Hospital Auxiliaries and Red Cross. Elaine regularly visited people in hospital, Bilyara and Weeroona retirement homes, knitted caps for premature babies and transported people to church, appointments and the shops. She was recognised by the Red Cross in 2013 for her over 70 years of service. Elaine was named Senior Citizen of the Year in 2005 and awarded an OAM in 2006. She moved into Kalyan Court in Cowra after her husband's death in 1993 and eventually into Bilyara Hostel. Elaine died on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019, aged a remarkable 104 years.

Researched and written by CFHG member Cheryl McAlister

Midnight blue Voluntary  
Aid Detachment  
jacket worn by Private  
Elaine Constance  
Moseley of Cowra.  
Australian War Memorial  
Photo →



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

REL30201.001



←  
Mrs Elaine Clements

## **Bridget Shanley—An Irish Orphan**

By Linda Woods

Bridget Shanley was born in Lagan, Longford county, Ireland around 1833. During the great Irish famine both of her parents, Thomas and Mary sadly passed away. At the ripe age of 17, Bridget was placed onto the Tippoo Siab Ship from Ireland, destined for a new life in Australia from the Earl Grey Scheme.

Arriving in Sydney on 29th June 1850, Bridget was one of the 185 Irish orphans reportedly sent to Bathurst, NSW to be sold into households predominantly as house servants. Unlike other orphans who experienced a similar journey, Bridget's records as to her whereabouts and duties once arriving in Bathurst are unknown.

On Jan 20th 1853— three years into her new life in Australia, Bridget married William Hill of Tuena, NSW at St Saviours Anglican Church in Goulburn, NSW. William Hill's father; Bartholomew Hill is reported to have served alongside Sir Walter Davidson's father in the 71st Scottish regiment pre his Australian Arrival.

Bridget and William travelled with William's work around the Central West of NSW including Young, Jugiong Creek, Bumbaldry, Carcoar and finally settling in Cowra. Together they had up to 16 children between 1855– 1875. Associated surnames linked to Bridget and William's children include: Hill, Joselin, Woods, Hayes, Bozeat, Cardwell and Ivers.

Bridget passed away in 1918. In her Obituary that she had 40 Grand children, 15 Great Grand children, and was much loved and known across Cowra as "Granny Hill". 11 of Bridget's Children and Grand children served in the Australian Military; 4 of these at Gallipoli and 1 at Gallipoli not surviving. Another Great Grandchild because Australia's 18th Governor General; being Mr John Robert Kerr, his mother born in Grenfell, NSW in 1889. Other achievements of Bridget's family included representing municipal councils in Cowra, Forbes and Condobolin, president of the western bookmakers association, restaurant managers, fine athletes, bushranger hunters, boxers, and a butcher to name a few.

Bridget surpassed her husband's death by 31 years and lived many years with her son James Hill (Chummy Hill) at the 'Hillcrest' residence in west Cowra.

[Trove.nla.gov.au](http://Trove.nla.gov.au) : Death of a pioneer — Obituary 10th April 1918, Cowra Free Press

Fair Delinquents Irish famine orphans of colonial Bathurst and Beyond —Leonie Glynn Blair & Perry McIntyre page 367-368

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