



SHOALHAVEN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

TIME TRAVELLER

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OPEN for Research

Sundays 10am – 2pm

1st and 2nd Thursday

each month

10am – 2pm



General Meetings

Commencing 1.30pm

1st Saturday of each
month

February to
December

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SHOALHAVEN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

Founded in 1985

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S.F.H.S. 2022 Membership Fees

Single Membership \$40	Family Membership \$50
Aged Pensioner (single) \$30	Aged Pensioner (family) \$40

Memberships are due 1st January and may be renewed at any time, but if not renewed as of 1st March it will be considered lapsed and member benefits will no longer apply

Duty Volunteers – thank you

Bill, Carolyn, Chris, Elsie, Gwen, Ken, Lorelle, Lynne, Margaret, Marianne, Neville and Sue

Helping others in the library is very rewarding, so if you'd like to help, come along for a couple of hours and see how it works before you commit.

Time Traveller

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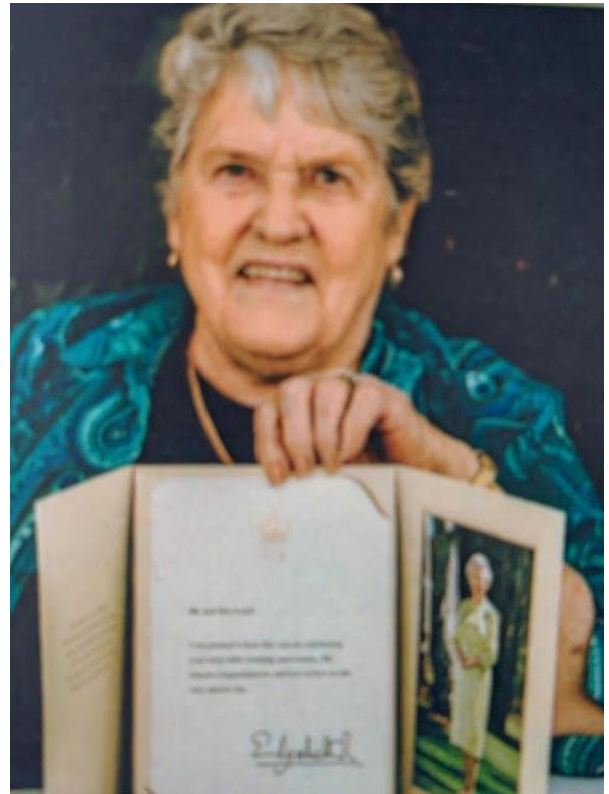
Farewell To a Dear Friend

On 4th April 2024, our society was saddened to hear of the passing of Life Member Shirley Laird.

Shirley's one focus in life, after her husband Dave, was her family. Saturdays were precious, with the ever-expanding family all spending this chaotic day together, with Nan & Pop.

After Family came Family History.

Shirley joined the society in 1987 and very soon became a committee member, serving as Vice President from 1992 to 2003, & 2005 to 2007, and Treasurer from 1991 to 1993.



At seminars and fairs, she always could be found on the bookstall, having organised the stock, float, manpower and displays. She was part of the team which produced the Shoalhaven Pioneer Registers and was instrumental in obtaining the funds to print the publication from Mr Warren Halloran, who donated the substantial shortfall in honour of Shirley's grandparents who had taken him under their wing when he came to the Shoalhaven.

Shirley's dedication was rewarded in March 2003 when she was made a Life Member of our society. She was a valuable, reliable, outgoing and proactive committee member; she volunteered for duty in our research library, working every Sunday - except Mother's Day, up to 2014, when ill health forced her to step back, but she continued to contribute from home for as long as she was able.

Shirley has been and will continue to be missed by all the friends she made during her long association with the society, her knowledge of local families and the assistance she gave was beyond compare, and her presence in our library will always be felt in the improvements, documents and knowledge she contributed over the years.

Free now from pain, I can only hope she has reunited with her Reverend Thomas Steele and Hanorah Watson(Nanno) Stewart and she now has the information she could never find in life.

Goodbye dear friend.

From the Editor

Hi everyone

We have had a busy few months since our last edition. We have finally launched our new website and the few comments we have received have been positive! Do yourself a favour and have a look.

www.shoalhavenfamilyhistory.org.au

You will notice that there is a new email address for the secretary and editor, so don't forget to update your email address book!

In this edition, you will find flyers for the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc annual conference as well as the Illawarra Family History and Heritage Fair. If you able to attend either, let us know.

Jenni Carfoot 22/01

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we slide into the depths of winter, and it is too cold, wet and windy to garden why not visit the Pyree Research Centre where the welcome is as warm as the rooms. It is the ideal time to fill the gaps in your research or seek help with a particularly stubborn ancestor who doesn't want to be found. If you haven't visited since a major reshuffle has made the Library more accessible and comfortable, you are in for a treat as the room is now light, bright and inviting.

We have finally received a copy of the Shoalhaven City Council's Management Committee Guidelines. This long-awaited document has presented SFHS with details to assist in our interactions with Council. Despite the document stating that 'It is important that all members (of the Pyree School Site Management Committee) read the full guidelines in order to understand the committee's delegations and responsibilities', SFHS has struggled to secure a copy of the document and, despite the fact that current delegates have been attending meetings for many years, this is the first time the delegates have had access to it.

SFHS Volunteers enjoyed a very pleasant lunch at Greenwell Point Bowling Club some weeks ago, with the opportunity to socialise, accompanied by much laughter.

Marianne Faull & I attended the annual Boer War remembrance ceremony in Rauch Park, Nowra , at the beginning of June and Marianne laid a wreath on your behalf.

We are conducting a series of free workshops, 'Brain Strain' for our members on the third Thursday from 10 to 12. The format will be a casual 'round table' discussion and sharing of our knowledge, so bring your brick walls with you & while we can't promise to have all the answers, we can advise you where to look next.

Lynne Allen

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS

THE S.F.H.S Committee and members extend a warm welcome to our newest members.

Lenore Hankinson

IN SEARCH OF THESE ANCESTORS

Interest Names	Details	Member #
Apperley	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Turner	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Hyam	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Herne	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
O'Brien	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Miller	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Crawford	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Upton	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Rutherford	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Brown	Shoalhaven 19 th century to early 20 th century	93/33
Morschel, Johan Heinrich	Shoalhaven, Bolong c 1855	24/03
Sheehan, Peter	Bolong, Shoalhaven c 1851	24/03

RESEARCH REPORT

Several enquiries did not progress to completion after our fee was requested.

These researchers missed a great opportunity to get their family history noticed by our readers both in Australia and overseas as their queries are not published in Time Traveller.



- 1 Client needed a NSW 1936 Nowra birth confirmation for a legal process which we were unable to complete.
- 2 Client wanted a photograph of the Caretakers Lodge in Hazelberry Park, Berry, which was demolished to make way for the swimming pool in 1963. Completed.
- 3 A request for information on the Willett family was passed on to one of our members who belongs to the family.
- 4 An overseas reader requested information to link his Nowra Howitt family to the explorer Wills (Bourke & Wills). We suggested several avenues of research he could follow but we did not accept the query.
- 5 Client requesting school photographs did not proceed after a fee was requested.
- 6 Family Tree package in progress: Abbot / Gassner / Selinger / King / Robinson / Wiley.
- 7 The team has been working on Kerwick and Cleary. The query for Kerwick has been closed and Cleary is almost complete. The Kerwick brothers were both convicts assigned to the Berry Estate.

If you would like to contact any of these researchers, please email the secretary.

secretary@shoalhavenfamilyhistory.org.au

Research Officer Services

Our Research Officer will undertake research on behalf of paying clients.

The initial \$25 fee covers two hours research and entry level photocopies.

Additional fees may be requested depending on the scope and level of the request.

All enquiries should be addressed to:

The Research Officer
PO Box 591
NOWRA NSW 2541



secretary@shoalhavenfamilyhistory.org.au



S.F.H.S. Inc. Membership includes:

- Time Traveller e-journal (April, August and December)
- Assistance from experienced research volunteers at S.F.H.S. Research Centre
- Guest Speakers at Monthly Meetings
- Access to information sessions, seminars, webinars, interest groups, family history projects, volunteering, social gatherings and a whole lot more.

So, I was wondering if there's a reader of Time Traveller who remembers 'Netherburn' being mentioned in one of their own family histories? I know it is or was in Pyree, but not where.

My links to Netherburn are that my Great Grandmother (Mary McIlwraith nee Fleming, 1858-1935) and her children (including the young boy in the photo with the dog, William Daniel McIlwraith, my grandfather) visited Netherburn. As my grandfather was born in 1880, this photo looks like it was taken in the mid 1890s, when he was 12-14?

More importantly, my Great Grandmother's sister, Janet Hodgkinson (nee Fleming, 1859-1910) married Henry Hodgkinson and lived with him in that house until her passing in 1910.

Jamie McIlwraith

OBITUARY

MR. H. R. HODGKINSON.

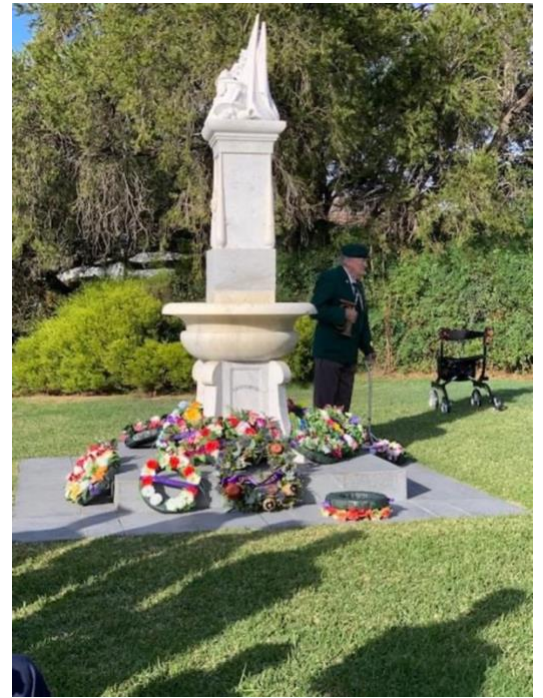
The death of Mr. Henry Richard Hodgkinson occurred at his home, "Netherburn," Crookhaven, Pyree, early on Sunday morning last, at the patriarchal age of 85 years. He was native of this district, born at what was then known as Cook's Wharf, Numba, and later went with his parents to Forest Lodge, Meroo. Growing



Serendipity

At the end of May each year we celebrate the anniversary of the end of the Boer War, and this article was in the research of one of our out of area members who was searching for information on his Shoalhaven families. The Frank Sinclair in the article below was the first part Aboriginal man to enlist from Nowra in the Boer War.

The day our member visited us was the day of the Boer War Ceremony held in Nowra every year, which my colleague and myself were attending to lay wreaths for SFHS and SHS. Our guest joined us and as descendants of Boer War Soldiers he and I both laid wreaths for our ancestors at the service. He was unaware that he could lay a wreath for his ancestor and is entitled to purchase a descendants medal to wear proudly at any future ceremonies he attends.



Kiama Independent, and Shoalhaven Advertiser (NSW: 1863-1947), Thursday 26 April 1900, page 2
TROOPER FRANK SINCLAIR,

MR. FRANK SINCLAIR Writes as follows to his brother at Kangaroo Valley from the Modder River:
"-Just a few lines to let you know that we have had a glorious time so far. We are right in the middle of the fight, but so far have not fired a shot. We were only two days at Capetown when we were sent up here. We had three nights and four days in the train. I gained nearly a stone on the trip over, but expect soon to lose it again. We are limited to six biscuits and half a pound of tinned meat per day. I have plenty of money, but it is no use as I cannot buy anything here because everything is wanted for the troops. It is painful to see the people - mostly natives - starving and half naked. A number of British soldiers are suffering for want of clothing. We have 500 Boer prisoners in charge, so we have to keep our eyes open as there is likely to be an attack at any hour to rescue them. Anyway, we are ready for the attack. There are about 40 000 troops here, and it is terrible to see the train loads of wounded soldiers passing day and night for Cape Town. We left two of our men at De Aar suffering from fever, and one has since died. We had great fun with the horses, most of them being unbroken. When I first came up here I was sick for a few days, the bad water being the cause, there being hundreds of dead Boers in the river. The most of us have not had our boots off for over a week, and we have to sleep with our clothes on. We have to carry three day's provisions and 300 rounds of ammunition and sleep with our rifles on our backs. Skeletons may be seen all about only half buried. We have a fine lot of horses and ours is looked upon as one of the finest regiments on the field. The only clothes we have are what we stand up in, we have no blankets and have to sleep in the dust or mud as the case may be. It is a terrible mountainous country that we are in."

Frank Layton Sinclair was born on 22nd November 1873, registered Nowra/ 18622, to parents James Sinclair & Jane Ryder.

James was a baker, aged 31, born Parramatta, & Jane was 23, born in Shoalhaven to Patrick Ryder and Kyanga. She was raised by Arthur Smith and his wife Ellen.

THE COTTAGE HOME FOR FEEBLE MINDED CHILDREN.

Source TRACKS June 2024. Journal of The Tweed Gold Coast Family History and Heritage Association Inc.

"The Cottage Home for Feeble-Minded Children 1907-1923?". located on Pennant Hills Rd, Parramatta, was established by the State Children's Relief Board in 1907. It was intended to provide special treatment for children who were intellectually disabled or psychologically disturbed but were not so unwell that they needed to be sent to a hospital for the insane, it possibly closed about 1923".

"Nan" always told me she was in "Burnside Home" as a child, mainly because of the estrangement between her mother Lily Elizabeth Elliott née Fox and her father John Elliott. "Burnside Presbyterian Orphan Homes (1911-1955)" was situated on Pennant Hills Rd, North Parramatta. When I came across the Dependent Children Registers a few months ago. I was shocked when I entered my grandmother's name, not only her information came up but most of her siblings as well.

"Dependent Children Registers 1883-1923" were first published in Oct 2021. These records relate to children who were admitted to State care between 1883 and 1923. They record where the dependent children were placed (whether with foster parents or guardians). Some of the children were eventually adopted. The registers give: name of child; age; religion; where received; name and known address of parents and remarks. particulars of foster parents and guardians - names, addresses, dates when received and when transferred, and how placed; and how eventually disposed of and date (this may be by adoption, back to custody of one or both parents, or the child may have attained the age of eighteen). This index records: child's name, date of birth, date admitted to care, names of parents, and foster parents.

The State Children's Relief Board was a government agency established by the State Children's Relief Act 1881 to introduce the boarding out system. By 1915, more than 24,000 children had been boarded out in New South Wales. The State Children's Relief Board was created with the aim of removing children from large institutions, such as orphanages and asylums, and boarding them out, or fostering them. Foster parents were paid a small fee. Older children could be apprenticed, as domestic servants, for a tiny wage. Boarded out children were supposed to be considered a member of the family and attend school, but they also worked, often quite hard, in the foster family's home. As apprentices, they earned their keep, although boarding out was the main goal of the State Children's Relief Board, not all state children were fostered. From 1885 the Board created a series of cottage homes, or small institutions, beginning at Pennant Hills and later moving to Mittagong, to care for children who had special needs, such as illness, mental and physical disabilities, eye conditions or behavioural problems. During the life of the State Children's Relief Board, around 60 per cent of children were boarded out, 20 per cent were apprenticed, 15 per cent lived in cottage homes and the rest were 'adopted'. The State Children's Relief Board did not look after reformatories and industrial schools. My Gt grandfather John, (Kate's father) was born in Binnia Downs a little town in Coonabarabran NSW 1879. His father Samuel Elliott was an Irishman who came to Australia in the 1860's or early 1870's, I suspect with the hope of making his fortune on the goldfields. I assume this, as on his death certificate his occupation was Gold miner. His place of death was Tucklan goldfields, Corrobora Shire, NSW, Australia, he was 74 years old and died on the goldfield of acute bronchitis. In comparison, her mother Lily was a city girl, born Redfern Sydney NSW 1886.

John was a country boy and although he was 7 years older he was no match for the charms of the young Lily, who became pregnant at the age of 15. Not long after, they ended up on the goldfields in Gulgong NSW. My grandmother was born in a tent there on the 27 Nov 1902, Lily had only turned 16 on the 25 Aug 1902. John and Lily had married in a Presbyterian church in Gulgong 5 Sep 1902, 3 months before the birth.

The goldfields of Gulgong must have been a hard life for the young city girl Lily. When her 2nd child (another girl named Lily, for her) was born and died in 1905, she must have decided this was not the life for her. Her next child another girl, Edith May Elliott was born in Sydney in 1906, then a boy Reginald Percival Elliott was born in Katoomba NSW in 1907, the following year 1908 Leslie Herbert Elliott was born in Parramatta, and after his birth .

Lily's roving eye caught the attention of petty criminal John Kennedy, a rugged looking Irishman. An article under the heading "Matrimonial Squall" about John paying maintenance to Lily in The Cumberland Argus and Fruit-growers Advocate, Parramatta, 3 Mar 1909, proves they were separated by this time.

Lily gave birth to her first son with John Kennedy, Thomas James, 6 Jul 1911, their next son William Daniel was born 2 Sep 1912 and their 3rd son James Henry was born on 3 Apr 1914. It is of note that all of Lily's children were registered with the surname Elliott with the NSW BMD. Until my discovery of their records on the Dependent Children Registers I had no real proof of who their father really was. They were all registered with the surname Elliott on The Dependent Children Registers but John Kennedy was named as their father and they were all labelled as illegitimate. Lily went on to have a 4th child with John Kennedy, a girl Alma Hilda, surname Elliott, born 1916. When John Kennedy went to war about 1917 Lily became involved with a James Newell, a son was born in 1919, Arthur Henry, surname registered as Elliott.

Lily knew how to exaggerate the truth, or maybe she was just a born liar! On my grandmother Kate's marriage certificate in 1920, she had Kate's father John Elliott as deceased even though he didn't pass away until 1952. On births, marriages deaths, etc. she lied. I had a relative contact me on Ancestry whom I had the unpleasant task of informing that John Elliott was not her father, John Kennedy was! She was devastated, she was a grandmother and all of her life had believed that John Elliott was her father, needless to say, her tree was all wrong. When Lily's and John Kennedy's 3rd son James Henry was born in early 1914 my grandmother Kate would have been 11 years of age, she would have been the eldest of 7 children. Kate was the first one of Lily's children to be placed in a home. 9 Sep 1914....Particulars of Parents - F. John Elliott, 393 Church St, Parramatta. M. Lily Elliott, deserter, 124 Cornwallis St, Redfern.

First time Kate was lucky enough to be placed with her Paternal Grandmother (also named Kate Elliott) AB (adopted boarder) address - Tucklan via Dunedoo; she was there just short of 2 years but for some unknown reason Kate was returned to care by her grandmother. Lily must have been having a very hard time at this stage as on 20 Feb 1915 she put 2 more of her children into care. Edith May Elliott b. 1907 and Leslie Herbert Elliott b. 1908 were put into care just 5 short months after Kate, and then 10 Jun 1915 her 3 boys fathered by John Kennedy were also placed in care. It must have been heartbreaking for Lily as her sons were only about 6, 5, and 1 at the time, they were all admitted to the "Cottage Home for Feeble Minded Children". Lily managed to get all her children back by 1917 except Kate who was discharged to her 16 Jan 1918.

Lily's father was gaoled for bigamy after deserting the family. Lily's mother was left destitute and had no choice but to put Lily and her siblings into care. When children were put into care they went to the Depot first where their details were taken, from there they were transferred to a home, and from that home they were assigned to be boarded out or fostered if they were lucky enough. If for some reason they didn't work out they had to go back to the Central Depot before they were sent back to a home to be reassigned.

The Depot "Ormond House" (1884-1923) in Oxford St, Paddington, also known as the Central Depot, was a children's home, a government- run, receiving home for children of all ages, It was used by the State Children's Relief Board from 1884 until 1923. It took girls from Shaftesbury Reformatory in 1904 and Hillside Home for Mothers and Babies moved there in 1915, becoming Hillside Training Home in 1920. The Children's Court and Metropolitan Children's Shelter was at

Ormond House from 1905 until 1911, during which time 2,400 children passed through the house every year. It was designated the Metropolitan Girls Shelter from 1911 until 1923.

In 1923 the State Children's Relief Board changed its name to the Child Welfare Department and moved its operations to other properties. Kate was returned to the Central Depot and from there she was finally discharged on 16 Jan 1918 to her mother. Kate would have only turned 15 years on the 27 Nov 1917, she had been in and out of state care for a harrowing 5 year period, possibly longer.

When I first discovered the "Dependant Children Registers" I downloaded the information that they had on my grandmother for free. I decided that they may have further information so I emailed the CareLeaverRecordsAccessUnit@dcj.nsw.gov.au for further information, below is their reply.

The Care Leaver Records Access Unit provides information to people concerning their own time in statutory out of home care. Because you're seeking the records of another person unfortunately our unit will be unable to assist you. However, you should be able to get access to any records held by the Department on your grandmother by submitting a request to the Open Government, Information and Privacy Unit. Instructions on how to do so may be found here: <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/about-us/gipa/right-to-information-policy.html#Formal4> . If you need further help with submitting an application their contact number is (02) 9716 2662.

That was not easy, I had to pay a fee plus attach all kind of ID, including Driver's licence, my birth certificate, my mothers birth cert. My grandmothers death certificate, below is an excerpt of the return email.

NOTICE OF DECISION

Dear Mrs Merrell,

I refer to your formal access application under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) that you lodged with the Department of Communities and Justice (the Department), where you requested access to information regarding your grandmother, Kate Elliott. Decision

I am authorised by the principal officer of the Department to decide your access application under section 9(3) of the GIPA Act. Under section 53 of the GIPA Act, the Department must undertake reasonable searches as may be necessary to find any of the government information applied for that was held by the Department when the application was received, using the most efficient means reasonably available to the Department. I can confirm that a thorough search has been conducted of the Department's records holding at the State Archives, where one register card was located in relation to your grandmother.

I have considered your request in view of the objectives of the GIPA Act where you have a legally enforceable right to obtain information, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the subject information. Further, I have also considered the requirements of section 74 of the GIPA Act, which provides that an agency may delete information from a record if the deleted information does not fall within the scope of the information applied for.

In deciding your application, I was required to conduct a "public interest test" where the public interest considerations favouring disclosure of government information were weighed against those factors that do not favour disclosure. On this occasion, I have not identified any public interest factors against the disclosure of the information that you have requested.

Therefore, in accordance with section 58(1)(a) of the GIPA Act, I have decided to provide you with a complete copy of the information that falls within the scope of your request.

Review rights

If you disagree with any of the decisions in this notice that are reviewable, you may seek a

review under Part 5 of the GIPA Act. You have three review options:

- An internal review lodged with the Department's Open Government, Information and Privacy Unit, within 20 working days of the date of this Notice;
- An external review by the NSW Information Commissioner, within 40 working days of the date of this Notice; or
- An external review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, within 40 working days of the date of this Notice.

Attached to the above reply was the very file that I had downloaded for free from the website. I sent a return email stating that I had paid the fee hoping for some additional information about my grandmother but all I received was information I could have accessed for free, below is that reply.

Unfortunately, that is the only information that was located in relation to your grandmother and it is not unusual for the Department to hold very little information from that time.

There is no other information that was located that makes reference to the existence of other records. Due to the age of the records, it's highly possible that anything additional has since been lost or destroyed in accordance with the department's record keeping practices of the time. I apologise that I could not provide you with anything more substantial.

Going from this return email, I have come to the conclusion that my grandmother Kate had been in the "Burnside Presbyterian Orphan Homes (1911-1955) at some time, possibly before she was admitted to "The Cottage Home for Feeble Minded Children" in 1914. The argument being that every story my grandmother ever told me to date has proven true. I do believe that her records there have been lost or destroyed.

I hope this article will help other people with their searches. "The Dependent Children Registers 1907-1923?" is a wealth of information I have found many other relatives on there just by entering their name in the index.

All the websites I have mentioned in this article are a part of the NSW State Archives. They can also be accessed through "Find & Connect", (History and information about Australian Orphanages, Children's Homes and other Institutions).

Credit: Jenny Byrne Merrell - Member No 558 of The Tweed Gold Coast Family History and Heritage Association Inc. Published in full in "Tracks" journal June 2024.

Bibliography: Ancestry.com.au. Burnside Presbyterian Orphan Homes (1911-1955) Dependent Children Registers 1883 -1923. findandconnect.gov.au. Ormond House (1884-1923) The Cottage Home for Feeble-Minded Children 1907-1923. The State Children's Relief Board. trove.nla.gov.au



The Jefferis Cottage Home for Feeble Minded Children, Pennant Hills Rd, Parramatta

NOWRA MINISTER BECAME A MUCH-REVERED METHODIST

By Alan Clark.

During the first months after Federation, the Wesleyan/Methodist minister appointed to take up duties at Nowra was **Rev. Harold Wheen** (1867-1926) who would have an impact both here and on the wider church scene and following his death at the age of 58 years, he was described by the Conference President of the day (Rev. Frank Hynes) as “the best-loved man in Methodism”.

Born in the English county of Gloucestershire, Harold was living at a village called Ecclesall Bierlow in the vicinity of Sheffield (Yorkshire) by the early 1880s, and accordingly, would later be described as a Yorkshireman. By the time he migrated to Australia later in that decade, both his parents had died in their mid-40s.

While starting life in Australia as a pharmacist in suburban Sydney, Harold became active in the Wesleyan Church, and with a view to following in the footsteps of an older brother, John Gladwell Wheen who was then a minister in Tasmania, was noted conducting a service at Randwick in April 1890. Later in that year he took the examination and was recommended as a candidate for full-time church work. His time as a probationary minister was at Bourke from 1891, and Wilcannia 1893.

As was common with Wesleyan ministers, their ordination coincided with marriage, and that was the case with Harold. His bride was the Wentworth-born Clara Isabel Morze Black, and the ceremony on 26 March 1895 in the Mudgee Wesleyan Church was conducted by Rev. Joseph Woodhouse (the brother-in-law of Harold, who had married Margaret Wheen). The newlyweds settled at Sunny Corner in the Central West, where two sons would be born, and Harold was required to exchange pulpits monthly, with Oberon.

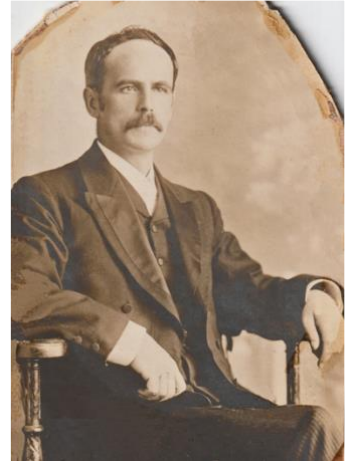
His next circuit from 1898 was Kiama where he was stationed at Jamberoo, and two further sons were born (one named John Woodhouse whose second name was after his uncle who was apparently an influential figure in their lives). During March 1900, Harold conducted a service at Nowra and after initially being listed for a posting to Kogarah, it was confirmed in March 1901 that he would be coming to Shoalhaven where the parsonage was at Nowra. His efforts over the previous three years were shown to be appreciated when farewells were held at Kiama, Jamberoo and Gerringong.

Sunday, 21 April saw Rev. Harold Wheen conduct his first services in Nowra, at 11am and 7pm, with one at Falls Creek (2.30pm) in between. Within a month he would also preach to the congregations at Kangaroo Valley, Pyree, Cambewarra and Tomerong. The formal welcome to the circuit involved Presbyterian and Church of England clergymen, and in his response, Harold expressed support for the Wesleyan policy of regularly moving its ministers. Displaying a pleasant tenor voice, he sang *Queen of the Earth*, and then joined with Sunday School superintendent William Westbrook in a duet. He would often entertain with a song, and also played the organ when required.

With so many preaching places, the minister was supported by a group of “local preachers” headed by James ‘Father’ Shepherd and Thomas Binks. The circuit had a debt on the parsonage, and with the dual purpose of fundraising and evangelism, Rev. Samuel MacDade was invited to host a series of meetings around the district in July. The Irish-born minister illustrated his talks with images from a limelight lantern (a forerunner of the slide show). Well received, he would return a year later to raise funds for the Solomon Islands Methodist Mission.

Another fundraiser in October was an “old-fashioned Methodist tea meeting” which almost wiped out the debt and met expenses for fencing around the church and repairs that were completed at working bees. The tea meeting held in the School of Arts had the support of folk from Cambewarra, Pyree and Berrellan (Brundee) who joined the locals in listening to Rev. Joseph Woodhouse on his subject, “Men of Mark Whom I Have Known”.

With local churches initiating a campaign against gambling, Harold prepared a sermon to be delivered just prior to the 1901 Melbourne Cup. Well advertised beforehand, two local newspapers each devoted a column to its content, and there was a letter to the editor with opposing views published the following week. Encouraged by the impact of that sermon, a year later he decided to



pursue the same subject and promised to answer the questions, “Is horse-racing a sport?” and “Is the gambler a sportsman?”. However, on the Saturday while riding home from Nowra Hill, he was thrown from his own horse and was unable to deliver his much anticipated sermon.

When the week-long Sydney Simultaneous Mission was held in November 1901, Harold Wheen was allocated the area around Petersham and Stanmore, after which he was presented with a handsomely bound Bible as a memento of his effective work. That led to him being the instigator and organising secretary of a series of tent missions in early 1902, starting at Nowra before heading north to Berry, Kiama and after six weeks ended in the Wollongong area.

A Sydney businessman met the cost of the mission, and the fact that after 10 days in the tents at Nowra there were further meetings in the School of Arts was a triumph for Harold. [A century after that tent mission, it was acclaimed as “a most significant event in the history of Methodism in NSW” by historian Rev. Dr Stuart Pigginn when he preached in a service that celebrated the 125th anniversary of the Nowra Church.]

During his time at Nowra, Harold would participate in various other evangelistic missions including those at Jamberoo and Dapto. While he had good relations with the other protestant churches in the district – Anglican, Presbyterian and Salvation Army, that goodwill did not include the Catholics. He was supportive of the anti-Catholic “Australian Protestant Defence Association”, and chaired a meeting addressed by its founder, the Irish-born Presbyterian, Rev. Dr Dill Macky which led to the formation of a branch at Nowra – a move that drew a response from parish priest, Father Patrick Holland.

After starting their family with four boys, the Wheens welcomed the addition of two daughters during their time at Nowra, and Clara received assistance when Ada Tate (previously active in the church at Wollongong) accepted a position in the parsonage. Supporting her husband, Clara was active in the Nowra Benevolent Society and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. On one occasion her quick thinking averted disaster when one of the children took a lighted candle into a bedroom and when the curtains caught fire, she instantly pulled them down and threw a blanket over them to extinguish the flames.

During July of 1903, Harold collapsed and was ordered to take a complete rest. It was suggested the breakdown had occurred after a strenuous week of parochial work as Nowra marked the bicentenary of the birth of founder of Methodism, John Wesley. The supply minister was Rev. Kirton Corner who had been at Nowra 25 years earlier, and some of Harold’s three months of recuperation was spent at Goulburn. He was welcomed back in October and during the same month was invited to stay a fourth year at Nowra. Recognising his fragile health, the Quarterly Meeting gave him leave of absence the following April, and £20 to help defray the expense of a holiday in the Blue Mountains.

Of the various weddings he conducted here, the majority were on a Wednesday (never on Saturday), and only occasionally in the church. In the months before his departure, an extension of the church hall towards Junction Street saw its accommodation trebled. Work by local builders Daniel Clark and William Bryce involved pulling down the existing building before re-erecting and extending it; and the formal opening took place on 15 March 1905 following a tea meeting organised by the Ladies’ Church Aid Society.

A farewell for the Wheen family took place in early April when after accepting a purse of sovereigns subscribed by people of the circuit, and a pair of silver-lined buggy lamps from the Christian Endeavour Society, Harold said that the four years spent in Shoalhaven had been the happiest of his ministerial life. Many from the congregation were at the Bomaderry railway station when he left to become the second minister in the Bathurst circuit. [Not forgotten at Nowra, he would be invited back on several occasions to conduct services.]

After Bathurst he was appointed to Paddington in 1910, but suffered further ill-health the following year and was advised to rest for six months. With the task of organising Methodist Sunday Schools around the State, he was subsequently appointed general secretary of the Young People’s Department (YPD), and he would fill that role for more than a decade. During that period Clara Wheen gave birth to her 11th child in 20 years – their fourth daughter, Marie Olive Cavell (who would live past her 100th birthday).

The three eldest sons all saw service in World War I – Arthur Wesley Wheen, awarded the Military Medal for action during the Battle of Fleurbaix, who as a Rhodes Scholar in 1920 went to

England where he settled; Ronald Gladwell Wheen of the 2nd Machine Gun Squadron who was seriously wounded in Palestine, but recovered; and Harold Frank Wheen who saw lengthy service with the 35th Infantry Battalion.

Harold was chosen in 1924 to represent NSW at the World Sunday School Convention in Glasgow (Scotland), and he left during March aboard the White Star liner *Ceramic* for the journey via South Africa for Great Britain where he was greeted at Southampton by son Arthur. There was time to visit his former home town in Yorkshire, and to pay his respects at the statue of Robert Raikes who had instigated the first Sunday School in 1780. Throughout his time away, he wrote extensively of his experiences in columns headed "Around The World For Childhood's Sake" which were progressively published by *The Methodist*, and continued well after his return. There had been more than 4000 delegates from 50 countries at the convention, where one of the speakers was scouting founder, Sir Robert Baden-Powell.

His itinerary included the Holy Land and visits to important Christian destinations including Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Nazareth; before leaving on the *Franconia* for America where as NSW president, he went to the world headquarters of the Christian Endeavour Union. The return journey on the *Makura* stopped briefly in Fiji, and he arrived back in Sydney on 15 November after almost eight months away. He would subsequently speak on many occasions, of his travel experiences.

Harold's stature in the church became evident on 25 February 1925 when he was chosen as President of the NSW Methodist Conference. His death some 16 months later was not unexpected, and colleagues were quick to mention the impact he had had on the state's children during 14 years with the YPD. More than 50 Methodist ministers attended his funeral when he was remembered for his remarkable initiative and wonderful organising ability.

In his latter years Harold had sought to have a church building at Kurnell where he had conducted the first Christian service, and he made provision in his will for the purchase of land. Within a month of his death the Harold Wheen Memorial Committee was established, and as donations came from around NSW, architect Lanyon Clark gave his services to the project that progressed quickly.

The foundation stone was laid on Australia Day 1927 by his brother John (then the President-General), and the opening was set down for 30 April to coincide with the NSW commemoration a short distance away, of Captain Cook's 1770 landing. However a cyclone delayed completion of the Harold Wheen Memorial Church and the opening was conducted a month later by Harold Wheen junior.

That would not be the only building to bear his name, for the Harold Wheen Free Kindergarten was opened in May 1931 adjacent to the South Sydney Methodist Mission at Redfern. When banks refused to loan money for the kindergarten – the first of its kind in Sydney – funds were raised, and it was soon caring daily for up to 40 children. It had been the brainchild of Miss Bessie Osborne (State director of Methodist kindergarten work) who performed the official opening. The kindergarten was still functioning more than 20 years later, and on Miss Osborne's death, an additional wing was added in 1953 as a memorial to her.

Harold was the great-uncle of Judith Lawrence, nee Wheen (1930-2007), a granddaughter of John, who was active in this congregation for a lengthy period from the 1970s when she and husband Doug bought a Shoalhaven property that was developed as Camp Koloona.

Sources: Sydney Morning Herald – Saturdays 5 April 1890, 16 November 1901, 11 October 1902, 31 October 1903, Wednesday 12 November 1919, Saturday 30 April 1927, and Monday 4 May 1931; Evening News, Sydney – Monday 10 November 1890; Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal – Fridays 20 March 1891, 29 March 1895; The Methodist, Sydney – Saturdays 18 March 1893, 9 and 16 March 1895, 26 February 1898, 13 July 1901, 29 April 1905, 28 February, 7 March 1925, 26 June, 24 July, 7 and 28 August 1926, 29 January and 26 March 1927, 2, 16 and 23 May 1931, 29 August 1953; Shoalhaven Telegraph – Wednesdays 28 February 1900, 1, 8 and 15 May, 9 October, 6 and 13 November, and 4 December 1901, 12 and 19 November 1902, 6 May, 22 July, 7 October 1903, 30 November 1904, 18 January, 5 and 12 April 1905, 16 March 1910, 23 August 1911, 5 June 1912, 15 October 1913, 9 October and 11 December 1918, 10 October 1923, and 29 July 1925, 25 May 1927; Daily Telegraph, Sydney – Wednesday 27 February and Friday 15 March 1901; The Kiama Reporter and Illawarra Journal – Saturday 6 April 1901; Kiama Independent and

Shoalhaven Advertiser – Friday 12 April 1901; Shoalhaven News and Shoalhaven Districts Advertiser – Saturdays 20 and 27 April, 4 May, 13 July, 5 October, 30 November and 7 December 1901, 3 May, 21 June, 5 July 1902, 29 August and 3 October 1903, 18 March and 15 April 1905; Nowra Colonist – Wednesdays 31 July, 16 and 23 October, 6 November 1901, 5 and 12 November 1902, 27 May 1903, and 27 April 1904; Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney – Saturday 18 January 1902; South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus – Saturday 18 July 1903; Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong – Wednesday 29 July 1903; Ulladulla and Milton Times – Saturday 16 April 1904; National Advocate, Bathurst – Thursday 23 February 1905; Check It Out – Shoalhaven Parish of the Uniting Church – May 1998; Australian Dictionary of Biography; Ancestry.com.

Illawarra Family History and Heritage Fair

RANGE OF EXHIBITORS

- Appin Historical Society & Douglas Park History
- Australian Motorlife Museum
- Berkeley Pioneer Cemetery Restoration Group
- Berrima District Historical & Family History Soc Inc
- Black Diamond Heritage Centre
- Bulli Corner Quilters
- Cathy Dunn- Australian History Research
- Fellowship of First Fleeters - South Coast Chapter
- Hars Aviation Museum
- Helensburgh Historical Society
- Illawarra Family History Group Inc
- Louise Steding - Ground

RAFFLES

BOOK SALES

EFTPOS & CASH

EXPERTS

THE FAIR OFFERS THE CHANCE TO SPEAK TO THE MANY EXPERTS WHO WILL BE THERE ON THE DAY

FREE TALKS

Brenda Inglis-Powell
Author & Family Historian
10.30am

Wendy & Terry Nunan
Histories of the Families in Dapto Cemetery
12.30pm

John Boyd
First Fleet Ancestor

17 August 2024

10:00am - 4:00pm

City Diggers Club

82 Church St Wollongong

Contact Judy Bull, President, Illawarra Family History Group

0407 672 417

Judy.bull@bigpond.com

"Heritage includes places, values, traditions, events and experiences that capture where we've come from, where we are now and gives context to where we are headed as a community." – National Trust

To celebrate National Family History month in August, the Illawarra Family History Group Inc. are hosting a Family History and Heritage Fair on Saturday 17th August, 2024 at the City Diggers Club in Wollongong from 10am to 4pm. Admission is free and the Fair is open to the public.

IFHG President Judy Bull says that, "The Fair will showcase the diversity of heritage in the Illawarra area. There will be participants representing family history, local history, heritage crafts, heritage transport, local museums, Wollongong City Library, State Archives, U3A and the University of Wollongong."

A raffle will be run on the day with great prizes. There will also be books and other items for sale.

Three interesting speakers will present talks on the day

- > 10.30 am Brenda Inglis-Powell. Author of "Soldiers in Different Armies"
- > 12.30pm Wendy and Terry Nunan. Histories of the Families in Dapto Cemetery
- > 2.30pm John Boyd. His First Fleet Ancestor

BENJAMIN DUNKERLEY [1839 -1918] and the SLOUCH HAT



Benjamin Dunkerley was born in 1839 to William Dunkerley and Mary Ann Hart in Stockport, Cheshire, England. He married Harriet Smith [1840– 1918] in 1858 and they had 9 children.



In 1874, Benjamin migrated to Australia, Hobart, and decided to start a hat business in there. His wife and the first 6 children born followed the next year.

His skills as a hatter were backed by his ability to invent machinery. In 1876, Benjamin and David Glenhill established the Kensington Hat Mill in Glenorchy, a suburb of Hobart. The family was living at this time at a property called St Helena which is now part of the Wrest Point Casino complex. The mill employed 30 workers producing 750 hats per week. However, in 1879, the business was declared bankrupt. In 1885, the restrictions on his bankruptcy were lifted and Benjamin re-established the Kensington Hat Mills in partnership with H. J. Hill.



To improve production, Benjamin invented a mechanical method of removing the hair tip from rabbit fur so that the under-fur could be used in felt hat making. Previously this had to be done by hand. The rabbit plague across Australia gave plenty of scope for Benjamin to access the fur. The machine was registered in 1892. The following year, he travelled to Manchester, England and patented it. It was also patented in New York and Melbourne, Victoria. Later in 1893, in partnership with James Dugdale, he took out a patent for an invention that improved the cones used in making hat bodies. In 1895, Benjamin relocated to Melbourne after ending the partnership with Hill. A business slump hit Melbourne and so Benjamin moved with his family Sydney [Crown St, Surrey Hills] in 1900.

In 1901, Stephen Keir from Manchester England with hat making experience, migrated to Sydney and entered the employ of Benjamin in 1904. In 1905, Keir married Benjamin's daughter Ada.

In 1911, Dunkerley Hat Mills Pty Ltd was registered with 7 shareholders, 19 employees with Stephen Keir as managing director and Arthur P. Stewart as chairman. Stewart sold all hats produced at the factory in his store in York Street Sydney as well as distributing to other retailers in Sydney.

August 7, 1912, Stewart registered the name AKUBRA as trademark 13462 and since then it has been using Akubra as a brand name.

With the onset of WW1, Akubra started manufacturing the **slouch hat** for the Australian army. Slouch hats were made of rabbit fur which is even more hard wearing than the hats made previously from woolen felt. Since this time, the company has continued supplying slouch hats to the Australian armed forces with an estimated over 2 million produced by 2016.

1918 saw the death of both Benjamin and his wife within a month of each other. They are buried in the Methodist section of Randwick Cemetery. Ownership of the business was transferred to Stephen Keir, their son-in-law.

In 1919 the company moved to bigger premises in Bourke Street Sydney. In the 1920s, there were hundreds of employees and during the Depression, Keir proposed a 10% wage cut for all employees which avoided any reduction in numbers.

During WW2, most of the production of the company was for slouch hats for the military. The employees who enlisted had their normal civilian wages preserved by the company to augment their military pay.

During the 1950s Akubra expanded its range when it was licensed to produce Stetson hats in Australia. Stephen Keir retired in 1952 and his second son, Stephen II served as general manager. Stephen III became managing director in 1980 and retired in 2007 to be replaced by Stephen IV as managing director. In 1972, Mainline Corporation acquired Dunkerley Hat Mills and in 1974, it was relocated to Kempsey.

Akubra was acquired by private investment company Tattarang in November 2023 [Twiggy Forrest].

But why my interest?

I can remember driving along Bourke Street Sydney and my father talking about Dunkerley hats and where the factory was located, but to a young child, it had no relevance.

However, an article in the SMH a few weeks ago stirred my interest to seek more information on Dunkerley Hat Mills. My second eldest sister, Wendy, lost her husband Neil, in 1989 aged 49. After the funeral I asked her if she would be okay financially without a husband and 2 teenage sons and she replied that there was still a lot of Dunkerley money. She had married [John] Neil Dunkerley, the great grandson of Benjamin and Harriet Dunkerley.

Carolyn Howard



Do hobbies run in your family?

By Margaret Sharpe

Recently, in an attempt to reduce some of the clutter in my home I packed up eight bags of material scraps to be disposed of. Robin, my daughter who was visiting, relieved me of two bags to use to make bunting which she assured me was a no-sew project.

I was sorry to see the scraps go, however some years ago I made a scrap quilt, so I have something to remind me of all the clothes I have made over the years.

I can see a pattern of sewing in my family. My mother Eileen was an excellent dressmaker, although not professionally taught. She made beautiful clothing for me as well as for herself. I don't think that as a child I had any shop-bought dresses. Mum also made dresses for her mother Bridget. I only remember Bridget as an old frail lady and can't remember her doing any sewing, but on Mum's paternal line there were quite a few sewers. Mum's cousin Muriel was a trained dressmaker and tailor. Fittingly her married name was Taylor. Muriel once made me a beautiful green velveteen dress with a full skirt. I loved to wear this dress and was very sad when I grew out of it. Mum's wedding dress was made by her Aunt Theresa and in turn Theresa's daughter Patty made the dainty ballerina length tulle and lace frock for my wedding in 1960. Mum's paternal grandmother Jane, a Pacific Islander, made clothes for her family. One family story tells of her using a knife to cut out a dress because she had no scissors. Another story tells us that when Jane died her daughter Theresa stayed up all night making black dresses for family members to wear to the funeral. Apparently, Jane's sewing skills were not limited to making clothes as family members recall her sewing up the hens when they fought and injured each other. She not only sewed up the chickens, but also members of the family when they were hurt.

During the 1950s and 1960s there was only one shop in Nowra which offered a good selection of material. This shop was in Junction Street and was owned and operated by Mr Albert Morrison and his wife. It was a fairly small shop packed with shelves, full of big rolls of all sorts of material. I can remember as a child seeing Mr Morrison riding his bike to work while we waited for the school bus on Illaroo Road. I would go with my mother on the bus to Nowra to choose materials from Morrisons and later on I also shopped there myself for many years as did most people in Nowra.



My mother Eileen's Bebarfalds Bluebird treadle sewing machine on which I learned to sew.

My sewing career did not begin until I was married and had my own family, when with some help from Mum I used her trusty old Bebarfalds Bluebird treadle machine to make little nightdresses for my babies.

This old machine has been rescued by my daughter Kathy and now resides in her home. It will be safe from overuse there as Kathy boasts that she does not know what to do with

needle and thread and bundles up her mending periodically and sends it to her sister Joy who, as she says, "takes in mending to make ends meet".

My sewing career started sixty odd years ago for myself and four daughters and includes one wedding dress, bridesmaids and flower girls' dresses as well as many dress-up costumes for school and parties, usually made in a hurry to avert a last-minute crisis. I have made many ball gowns to indulge my love of traditional dancing with accessories and often a matching waistcoat for my husband.



My ballerina length tulle and lace wedding dress was made by my aunt Patty.

Only one of my four daughters has inherited the sewing gene. Joy learnt to sew from an old nun at school and was soon making her own clothes (usually) to wear the same night. Some time ago, my daughter Joy had the brilliant idea of all the family sewing squares to contribute to making an appliqued patchwork quilt for a coming grandchild. From this time the family and some friends have helped construct eleven quilts with still some more anticipated.

Joy has also made some clothes for me and is a fast and neat dressmaker. Joy's daughters Elizabeth and Susannah have been known to do a little mending or re-styling of op-shop buys. My eldest son Stephen once in his teen days decided to make a shirt, which he did and made a very good job of it, except that after cutting out all the pieces of the shirt, he threw away all the leftover scraps of material. He then needed an extra piece to make some facing for the sleeve at the wrist, but because there was no pattern for this tiny bit there was no fabric left. He had to use mismatched material and was very cross. As far as I know he did not ever repeat the process.



Eleven babies in our family have so far received gifts of a handmade quilt, with squares made by family and friends. Little Angus Langdon received his in March.



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Annual Conference

Join us at the Annual Association Conference in 2024 to be run by Society's Management Committee.

When

14 September 2024

Place

Zoom

Website

The Conference website – [Dig deeper in 24](#)

Conference Notices

Arthur Frederick Cyril Jeston

Researching the burials in the Bamarang burial ground, despite its size, is proving to be difficult due to the time frame, remote area & lack of records for this private cemetery.

I found in death registration records that Arthur Frederick Cyril Jeston had died at Bamarang and this raised the question: Was he buried there?

Our research of the old Worrigee cemetery had produced a headstone, engraved thus:

"In Loving Memory of Arthur F Cyril Jeston

Who died March 24th 1875

at Bamorang near Shoalhaven NSWales aged 22 years.

*He was the second son of the late Revd Robert Green Jeston, Rector of Avon Dassett,
Warwickshire England .*

"It is the Lord, Let him do what seemeth good" 1Sam.111.18

This memorial was erected by his sorrowing mother"

Why was Arthur in Bamarang - he had been in the colony for only 9 months?

Was Arthur buried in Worrigee as stated on his death registration, which was several miles from his place of death? or was he buried at Bamarang, with a memorial placed at Worrigee by his mother who remained in Warwickshire?.

The first question was answered by the death notice in The News, Shoalhaven, Terrara Saturday March 27 1875

DIED, At Bamarang on the 24th instant, of consumption, Arthur Frederick Cyril Jeston, brother of G Gambier C Jeston, teacher, and youngest son of the late Rev Robert Green Jeston, Rector of Avon Dassett, Warwickshire England. Aged 22 years.

Arthur was staying with his brother George who was the teacher at the Bamarang public school, having recently moved out of the Terrara/Numbaa district. Perhaps Arthur's move from England was to improve his health in a better climate.

Seeking further information, it was time to check the NSW State library British Newspapers website for death notices or obituaries.

The several death notices I found in the English newspapers began on June 12th 1875, with the sad news taking three months to reach his family in Avon Dassett. Warwickshire, all had basically the same information:

"DIED. On the 24th March at Bamorang (Bamarang) near Shoalhaven, NSW, of rapid decline, deeply regretted, Arthur Cyril Jeston, in his 22nd year, youngest son of the late Rev R G Jeston of Avon Dassett, Warwickshire."

The detailed research on the Worrigee Cemetery carried out by SFHS members is at present being withheld from the society so the case for now rests as there are no surviving records for the Bamarang Burial Ground, and the death registration must be trusted as being accurate, but any information from our readers will be very welcome.

Marianne Faull 02/18