

Eagle Eye



June 2024



Cowra Family History Group Inc
Journal

Volume 42 Number 1
ISSN 0813-7781



Meetings:	1 st Saturday of each month at 2:00 pm
Venue:	Nguluway Room, Cowra Shire Library
Postal Address:	P.O. Box 495, Cowra NSW 2794
Website:	www.cfhg.com.au
Admin Email:	cowra_fhg@hotmail.com
Research Email:	cfhg_research@hotmail.com
Photo Requests:	cfhg_photos@outlook.com

Cover Photograph – Cowra Lions Club members, John Capps, Roy Gold & Teddy Miller pictured on 3 Ashton's Circus elephants at the corner of Kendal and Brisbane Streets, Cowra in 1963.

(Source: Cowra Family History Group's Pardey Photographic Collection; Album: Cowra Life 5; Sheet 177; Position 1; Date: 1963)

See story elsewhere in this journal.

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From the Editor

Welcome to our mid year Eagle Eye Journal edition for June 2024.

I apologise for the delay in getting this journal to you but assure you that you will not be disappointed as within this volume are some really in depth, amazing stories of families and communities for you to journey into.

We appreciate all of your feedback and have been asked to increase our text size in our journal's stories, so please find I have implemented this change in this edition.

Please remember that we welcome your stories to be contributed as well. Our details to receive these are on Page 2. A story untold is one step closer to being forgotten so this Journal is an ideal way to capture your story amongst our wonderful readership audience, creating a keepsake and place of record for future generations.

The Cowra Family History Group are continuously recommended to people in our local area as well as those outside our area trying to reconnect to a family member or friend to an event or occasion from the past by obtaining old newspaper articles, images and personal records. If you see someone reaching out on social media asking for assistance or know of anyone who needs to utilise our Family History services please pass our details onto them to see how we can assist with their enquiries too!

Grab a cuppa, sit down and get ready to step back in time.

Stay safe, kind regards

Linda Woods

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The Cowra Family History Group Inc thanks the Cowra Eisteddfod Committee for their assistance with the printing of this journal.

CONTENTS

Title	Page
Vale Phillip Fryer	6-8
Herstmonceux Castle & A New Resource: The Index of Pardey Studio Negatives	9 -12
Philadelphia and the Bermagui Mystery	13-16
Death of Ah Fong	17-19
5 Chinese Headstones	19 -22
My Husband's Connection to English Aristocracy	22- 23
The day Cowra residents witnessed the spectacle of an Elephant Race	24
Josie Coe's Book Launch The Corner Store	25- 26
Cowra Family History Group Publications Price List 2024	27

VALE PHILLIP FRYER

On 8th March 2024, Cowra Family History Group lost one of our loyal and hard-working members when Phillip Lindsay Fryer passed away in Cowra Hospital at the age of 72 years. Phillip had joined the group in 2001 and had been an active member until his recent ill health. In recognition of his tremendous contribution to the activities of the group, he had been honoured with the award of Life Membership on 8th December 2012. It was so fitting that his framed certificate of Life Membership was on display at his funeral held in St Raphael's Catholic Church Cowra on 15th March. In 2023, he had received a NSW Volunteer of the Year certificate for his service to Cowra Family History Group.



Phillip was born on 25th October 1951 at Crown Street Sydney, the eldest of eight children born to Lindsay Gordon Fryer and his wife Ursula, nee Carter. He was a brother to Mary, Lynette, Jeanie, Michael, Elly, Leanne and Peter. He grew up in Sydney and after finishing school he gained employment with Hackers, doing gold and silver plating, and proved to be a skilled draftsman. Eventually, he moved on to Cockatoo Island doing the plating on the submarines. Once Cockatoo Island closed, he sold up and purchased a house in Cowra where some of his siblings were living at the time.

It was while living with his maternal grandmother, Eleanor Carter for a time, that her oral histories first sparked Phillip's interest in family history. Later whilst working at Cockatoo Island Dockyards a Russian workmate's idle question relating to the length of time his family had been in Australia, prompted Phillip to find some answers. Thus began Phillip's foray into family history research.

- ♦ *Image: Phillip at the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Annual Conference Dinner held in Cowra on 17th September 2005. Source: Cowra Family History Group Collection.*

Besides his immediate family of Carter's and Fryer's, some of the other family groups he was interested in included – Peter Higgins & Bridget Connolly, Melbourne 1840's; William Porter & Sarah Ann Devit, Wollongong & Forbes; Jack Coneybeare & Mary Bowyer, Orange 1870's; James Parker & Mary Young, Windsor & Bathurst; James Carter & Catherine Selina Lees, Merri Merri Creek; John Lees & Mary Stevens, Castlereagh, 1800's; James Waddington & Margaret Binnie, Shoalhaven 1850's; Edward Fletcher & Henrietta Shewring, Campbelltown 1800's; Henry Price & Catherine Byrne, Sydney 1860's; Richard Fry & Harriet Meader, Sydney 1860's and George Green & Elizabeth Wilkinson, Shoalhaven 1860's

For many years, Phillip was on duty in our Family History room every Friday and Saturday morning. His help with research was appreciated by many people who called into our room wondering what was known about one of their ancestors – and Phillip often came up with a source they had not thought about. What else did he do? He built shelves, put up screws and hooks, fixed equipment and was the first to arrive with his trolley when a cupboard needed to be moved. He was the only one who knew how to change the time on one of our clocks and was often the first to volunteer to 'hold the fort' when others were unable to do their shift in our Library room. He was often seen with a camera around his neck, recording the group's activities and spent months identifying and labelling digital photos of headstones in Cowra Cemetery so they could be easily located on the computer. He was happy to take our publications over to the Visitors Centre to sell when required and regularly attended our monthly meetings. Olwyn Barnes recalled that when Cowra Family History Group hosted the NSW Family History Conference in 2005 that it was decided to have decorations suitable for the early 1800s, using wattle & gum leaves as table decorations for the Official Dinner. It was decided to put these in large empty fruit tins, and Phil offered to paint them all black as if they had been in a fire. He collected tins from everyone and everywhere, and the effect was terrific. With everyone dressed as one of their ancestors, it was a wonderful night.

Phillip will be dearly missed by his sisters, brothers, in-laws, 23 nieces and nephews, and 34 great nieces and nephews. He will also be greatly missed by his fellow Cowra Family History Group members for his friendship, Mr Fixit skills, knowledge of family history sources and research methods as well as his willingness to always lend a hand. He was laid to rest in the Cowra Lawn Cemetery.

Rest in Peace Phillip.



- ◆ *Image above : Phillip's Life Membership certificate on display at his funeral, taken by Cheryl McAlister, 15th March 2024.*



- ◆ *Image above: Phillip taking photos at an Irish Research Day, 17th March 2006. Others in the photo are Ken Guihot & Jeanette Montgomery at the table and Marina Bennett standing on the right. Source: Cowra Family History Group Collection.*

Herstmonceux Castle

(See story by O. Barnes, pages 22-23).



This is a castle, located near Herstmonceux in East Sussex, England. It is a medieval fortified castle built of brick, dating from the 15th century. The castle is surrounded by a huge moat. It is one of the oldest significant brick buildings still standing in England.

Construction began under Sir Roger Fiennes in 1441 and was continued after his death in 1449 by his son, Lord Dacre. The Herstmonceux Estate was confiscated from the Fiennes family by King Henry VIII in 1541 after the hanging of Sir Thomas Fiennes, 9th Lord Dacre, but was later restored to the Fiennes family. Since 1993 the castle has been the UK Campus of Canada's Queen's University.

- ♦ *Image above: Source https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Herstmonceux_Castle.JPG
(Attribution: 6mat1 at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>;, via Wikimedia Commons)*

A New Resource: The Index of Pardey Studio Negatives

5 August 1939 to 18 November 1941.

by member Margaret Stent

A recent addition to the Cowra Family History resources is a new index of the part of the Pardey ledger which contains details of customers prior to November 1941. Despite there being no surviving negatives from this period this index can still be a useful source of information for family historians. It is a very useful complement to the earlier indexes and could be most helpful to anyone researching an ancestor based in Cowra in the early war years, which were not covered by the original indexes.

There are 2374 entries in total, covering the time frame from **5 August 1939 to 18 November 1941**. Each entry spans two pages of the ledger and contains a date, a negative number, the name of the customer and usually, the **address of the customer**.

There is sometimes a second address or a phone number and a description of the subject of the photograph. Where there is no description of the subject it is assumed to be a photograph of the customer who ordered the image. On the right-hand side of the ledger there is a description of the sizes and number of the images requested, the cost, the tax to be paid and the colour to be used for the eyes and hair when a coloured image is ordered.

This new index gives the date, negative number, customer name, Military number where applicable and military rank. Addresses are recorded, including, in many cases of military personnel, a request to send the finished photographs to a friend or family member elsewhere. This is all recorded in this new index. It also gives the ledger page numbers for each entry to enable anyone interested to view or order the pages for further information.

What the Index tells us about Cowra in that period?

There were 646 entries for the first year of this ledger which records orders for the twelve months before the arrival of the military in Cowra; that is from August 1939 to August 1940; the first military intake beginning on 3 September 1940. From September 1940 to September 1941 there were 1382 entries - more than double the previous year. These ledgers held by Cowra Family History group only record the formal portrait orders for the Pardey business. Studio images were not the only source of income for Pardey's. Pardey Studios also developed other people's snaps and sold films, picture frames and cameras. However, using these ledger entries we can calculate that the business must have doubled when Cowra became the site of the Military Training Camp and Prisoner of War Camp.

This trend would have been echoed in many other local businesses. The cafes and hotels increased their trade immensely. Allan Vorias, whose family owned the "Rose Marie" Restaurant in town during this period has said that they had to run three sittings of eighty people per night, seven nights a week, to cater for the needs of the new residents.

The police officers were increased from three to over one hundred, and the many businesses catering for the needs of all these extra residents must have thrived. This index records many names giving cafes and hotels as their address. Many entries noted that the photograph was for “a locket”, “medallion” or “wallet” which was to be purchased “from Haines”- the jeweller at the time.

There are employees of The Fruit Mart, the “Linga Longa” Café, the Imperial Hotel, the Railway Hotel and others. There are six general stores recorded -Western Stores, Squire Pepper Pty. Ltd., Reid Smith Pty. Ltd., O’Gilpins, Peterson Bros and L & D. Ltd.

Despite the war, social life in Cowra also thrived. The index records balls, concerts and street parades as well as agricultural shows, sporting teams and horse races.

It is also clear from the index that many local men enlisted and were training at other camps. These were often at Greta or Richmond and these men were often listed as members of the RAAF. The ledger indicates that the photographs were to be sent to a family member in Cowra. There appears to be a flood of images at times where the images are to be sent to family members away from Cowra. It would be interesting to know if these influxes of orders coincided with a pending deployment overseas.

One piece of information I found interesting concerns the Military Parade held to celebrate Australia Day. This was held on 4 October 1940. A Trove search shows that other areas of New South Wales held Australia Day marches on the same date.

What can the index tell you about an individual?

The entries are not necessarily consistent. Mostly an address is given but if the customer is a well-known local it is often omitted. A second address is often given when a soldier is the customer. This is probably family or girlfriend. A military number can be included as well as the squadron, battalion or regiment. The soldier’s rank is included in many entries.

When tinted images are ordered hair and eye colours are noted on the right-hand page, where you can also find the cost of the images, the number of prints ordered and the tax to be paid. This information is not included in the index but can be found on the right-hand side of the ledger (on request by one of our members/researchers).

Occupations are sometimes given. There are many nurses, a solicitor, a mercer, doctor and dentist mentioned. There are also families whose addresses are care of a Police Station or school, sometimes in another town. These details could help you place an ancestor at a particular date.

Image descriptions include gent, Mr and Mrs, mother and baby, baby and sister, two brothers. Children's names and ages are sometimes given. There are sheep, horses, a bird, houses, gardens, funerals, cemetery images, church windows as well as many weddings. There is even an entry for an image which refers to the subject as a "fracas", which further research shows was a fight between two residents which ended with a murder charge.²

Despite the lack of images there is no doubt this index can be very useful to family historians with connections to Cowra during this period. I recommend you consult it if you think you had an ancestor in Cowra between August 1939 and December 1941.

1 Trove: Sun (Sydney), 24 April 1941, page 3

2 Trove: Gundagai Independent, 31 August 1939

Image: Exterior View of Pardey Studio on Kendal Street Cowra.

(Source: Cowra Family History Group's Pardey Photographic Collection, Album: Cowra Life 2, Sheet 74)



Philadelphia and the Bermagui Mystery

by member Jarrod Johnson-Smith

This article is about Philadelphia Tompsett nee Colvin (1834-1893), my 3rd great grandmother.

“If you are not out of this I will take the gun and blow your brains out!”₁ Warned Philadelphia Tompsett from her bed, “I will set the dog on you!”₂ The two strange men stopped tapping on the window and left. Philadelphia went back to sleep, it was past midnight. She thought to herself who would want the ferry at this time of the night?₃ John had not said a word, he knew his wife was capable of dealing with anything at any time, even from her bed.

Philadelphia recalled when John and their family of five surviving children arrived in Bermagui. It was six years ago. John had obtained a job with Thomas Moorhead as a sawyer and then at his sawmill. The little fishing village was filled with the sounds of the busy timber cutting industry. The surrounding spotted gum forests₄ echoed with axes. The regular movement of bullock teams carrying the freshly cut timber to Moorhead’s sawmill and then onto his sailing ships bound for Sydney.₅ The smell of the bullocks and cut timber had become unnoticeable to her family.

The settlement of Bermagui was quite small when they had arrived, there were only eight families with children of school age. The settlement only consisted of a few buildings₆ and its main focus was the timber industry.

On Friday, 17th September 1880₇, a chain of events that would affect Philadelphia and her family for at least the next ten years began. On the beach a discovery of a quantity of gold had been found. Newspapers published articles about the discovery, soon things would never be the same again.

The Illawarra Steamship Company suddenly had hundreds of eager passengers wanting to get to Bermagui⁸ for the Montreal gold rush. The steamers were unable to land their passengers, so they were ferried by small boats to the beach.⁹ It was now common to see hundreds of men being ferried to shore in a day.^{10, 11.} It was an invasion, the like of which Philadelphia and her family had never seen before. Soon a tent city rose along the land between the beach and lagoon. A hotel, stores and even boarding houses were quickly constructed.^{12, 13.}

Within three weeks about two thousand men had arrived to work on the Montreal goldfields.¹⁴

Philadelphia had seen her beautiful scenic village of familiar welcoming faces and secure home for her children, almost overnight turn into an unbelievable nightmare. Bermagui was full of men from the diggings purchasing supplies or alcohol. Montreal now had a settlement larger than Bermagui with three hotels plus sly-grog shops.¹⁵ Philadelphia would look across the river and see camps springing up like canvas mushrooms, they were everywhere.

On Friday, 8th October 1880, Lamont Henry Young with his team from New South Wales Department of Mines had arrived on the Truganini¹⁶ to survey the newly discovered goldfields.^{17, 18.}

On Saturday, 9th October 1880, Philadelphia and one of her daughters heard a gunshot, like an alarm, and loud screaming of several voices followed by a flash of fire, like an explosion,^{19, 20.} near the river's mouth²¹, in the direction of Young's campsite in the evening, at about 8 o'clock.²²

Bermagui was abuzz, people discussing the mysterious disappearance of Lamont Young and his party of four men on Sunday, 10th October 1880.²³ Their boat was found damaged at Mutton Fish Point.²⁴

The water police from Sydney came to investigate the disappearance and Philadelphia was interviewed several times. The police were unable to solve the mystery.

Most of the residents of Bermagui moved to Montreal and as a result Bermagui Public School was forced to close in April 1881.²⁵ Philadelphia's youngest three children were no longer able to attend the local school, until the school re-opened in April 1883.²⁶

The Legislative Assembly of NSW held a select committee into the mystery from 1883 to 1884, once again, Philadelphia was compelled to give evidence.²⁷

Before leaving Bermagui Philadelphia looked over the river to what was the settlement of Montreal, now it was nothing but a ghost town.²⁸ The gold rush had finished in 1883, lasting less than three years. She wished it had never occurred. Philadelphia and her family boarded the royal mail coach to Moruya where they would travel by steamer to Sydney.

The continued pressure of the several investigations into the Bermagui Mystery encouraged John and Philadelphia to move to the new temperance township of Gough Town²⁹, in Merrylands.

The death of Lamont and his party became known as the Bermagui Mystery. Mutton Fish Point³⁰ was renamed Mystery Bay. Despite the many investigations and coronial inquiries the mystery still remains unsolved today.

Note: I have very carefully limited deductions and conclusions to prevent false assumptions. False assumptions can become passed down as family facts resulting in misleading genealogical research.

¹ Barbour, Levin & George Day, Minutes of Evidence taken before The Select Committee of Mr Lamont Young and Party, Sydney, Legislative Assembly New South Wales, 1884, Question & Answer Number 795.

² Barbour, Levin & George Day, Minutes of Evidence taken before The Select Committee of Mr Lamont Young and Party, Sydney, Legislative Assembly New South Wales, 1884, Question & Answer Number 795.

³ Barbour, Levin & George Day, Minutes of Evidence taken before The Select Committee of Mr Lamont Young and Party, Sydney, Legislative Assembly New South Wales, 1884, Question & Answer Number 788.

⁴ 'Bermagui Goldfield', Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 8 Oct 1880, page 7.

⁵ Judi Hearn, Bermagui by the Sea, Bermagui, Penmark Press, 2004, page 11.

⁶ 'Good News from the Goldfields', Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, Saturday 25 Sep 1880, page 4.

- 7 'Bermagui Goldfield', Sydney Morning Herald, Monday 4 Oct 1880, page 5.
- 8 Judi Hearn, The Montreal Gold Rush Bermagui 1880-1883, Pambula, Excell Printing, 2005, page 7.
- 9 'From Our Own Reporter', Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Saturday 9 Oct 1880, page 713.
- 10 Judi Hearn, The Montreal Gold Rush Bermagui 1880-1883, Pambula, Excell Printing, 2005, page 8.
- 11 'The Bermagui Gold-field', Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 7 Oct 1880, page 5.
- 12 'The Bermagui Rush', Sydney Daily Telegraph, Wednesday 29 Sep 1880, page 3.
- 13 'The Bermagui Goldfield', Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser, Thursday 7 Oct 1880, page 2
- 14 'News of the Day', Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 8 Oct 1880, page 5.
- 15 Ron Gaha & Judi Hearn, Bermagui – A Century of Features & Families, Bermagui, Literati Press, 2005, page 50.
- 16 Judi Hearn, Bermagui by the Sea, Bermagui, Penmark Press, 2004, page 21.
- 17 'Telegraphic Despatches', Argus, Thursday 7 Oct 1880, page 5.
- 18 'The Bermagui Goldfield', Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 7 Oct 1880, page 5.
- 19 Barbour, Levin & George Day, Minutes of Evidence taken before The Select Committee of Mr Lamont Young and Party, Sydney, Legislative Assembly New South Wales, 1884, Question & Answer Number 758.
- 20 Pearl, Cyril, Five Men Vanished – The Bermagui Mystery, Richmond, Hutchinson Group (Australia) Pty Ltd, 1978, page 25.
- 21 Barbour, Levin & George Day, Minutes of Evidence taken before The Select Committee of Mr Lamont Young and Party, Sydney, Legislative Assembly New South Wales, 1884, Question & Answer Number 760.
- 22 'The Bermagui Mystery', Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday 16 Feb 1939, page 7.
- 23 Pinkney, John, Great Australian Mysteries, Rowville, The Five Mile Press Pty Ltd, 2006, page 269.
- 24 State Records of New South Wales, Sydney, Bermagui Mystery, Item 2/3512.
- 25 New South Wales Department of School Education, Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1993, Marrickville, Southwood Press, 1993, page 31.
- 26 School Files, State Records of New South Wales, Sydney, Bermagui Public School - Bundle A, 5/14897.2.
- 27 Barbour, Levin & George Day, Minutes of Evidence taken before The Select Committee of Mr Lamont Young and Party, Sydney, Legislative Assembly New South Wales, 1884.
- 28 Judi Hearn, The Montreal Gold Rush Bermagui 1880-1883, Pambula, Excell Printing, 2005, page 21.
- 29 'The New Temperance Township', Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday 12 April 1881, page 9.
- 30 John Pinkney, Great Australian Mysteries, Rowville, The Five Mile Press Pty Ltd, 2006, page 269.



Caption for Photo

Photo - Unknown photographer, John James Tompsett and Philadelphia Colvin, unknown date, digital image, personal collection M270.

Death of Ah Fong

Introduction

Earlier this year, our Research Officer had an inquiry about one of the Chinese headstones in the Cowra Monumental Cemetery. This particular headstone bears no name (in English), just the year 1925 at the top and 3 vertical rows of Chinese characters below. Following is the report of the inquest into the death of the unfortunate Chinese man that appeared in the Cowra Free Press newspaper.

Cowra Free Press

Friday 26 June 1925, page 3

The End of Ah Wong (note: the article uses Ah Wong instead of correct Ah Fong a few times).

Drowned in Seven Feet of Water.

A Market Gardener who could not swim.

On Wednesday morning the Coroner (Mr P. G. Westphalen) held an inquiry concerning the death of Ah Wong, a young Chinese who was drowned on Monday.

Ling Sing deposed: I am a market gardener and reside at Cowra. I knew the deceased, Ah Fong; he was working at my garden; he was 25 years of age; he was born at Hong Kong, in China; he had no property of any kind; his life was not insured in N.S.W; he did not leave a Will; his nearest relation in Australia is Yan Chew, his uncle, who lives in Sydney. I saw deceased on Monday, 22nd inst.; he was then at my house in my garden at Cowra; that would be about 12.30 p.m.; he left my house and was walking through the water to the hut; I sang out and waved my arms, "Don't you go down. Come back." He said "Oh, not too deep - me can cross it." The water was rising between my house and the hut; the water would be about 7 ft. The current carried him out of his depth; I saw him out of his depth; I saw him go down and told Mrs Hood to ring up the police. The police came and later brought a boat and dragging operations was started with grappling irons, hoes and rakes. Constable Caldwell dived for the body; the body was found about a quarter past 5.

The body was then quite dead; it was taken to the morgue at the Hospital. Deceased was working for me about ten months and had been 16 or 17 years in the country; deceased could not swim at all.

Tom War deposed: I am a schoolboy residing with my uncle, Ling Sing, at Cowra. On Monday deceased had his dinner at my Uncle's house about 12.30. Deceased usually lived in the hut; there was water between the house and the hut; the water was about 7ft deep; there was a strong current there. Deceased left the dining room and when we next saw him, he was 3 or 4 feet away from the bank; we called to him, but he would not come back. The water was up to his chest, and he waved his arms and said, "I can get across all right."

He went through the gate to the garden, which was under water and went on towards the house. The current caught him and took him under the water; he came up two or three times and waved his arms about as if he was trying to swim, then he disappeared. My uncle cannot swim, and neither can I. No one went in after him. My uncle asked Nurse Hood to ring the police. The body was found about a quarter past 5. I don't know what he went over for; he might have had a reason, but he did not tell us.

Constable Auld deposed: About 2 p.m. on the 22nd inst. I went to Ling Sing's residence, on the east side of Macquarie Street. Practically the whole of the street then was under water and on the inside of the fence in Ling Sing's Garden there was a strong current of water about 7ft deep; there were a number of people there and Constable Caldwell and several others were out in a boat. Ling Sing informed me a man named Ah Fong had gone into the water about 12.30 p.m. and had gone under, disappeared, and after several hours dragging the river I recovered the body in about 6ft of water. He was dressed in a pair of woollen underpants and a singlet. I conveyed the body to the morgue at the District Hospital. Dr Foley examined the body about 10 to 6 and pronounced life extinct. There were no marks of violence on the body. Ling Sing identified it as the body of Ah Wong.

The Coroner found that the deceased was accidentally drowned while proceeding from Ling Sing's residence to a hut at Ling Sing's garden.

Top Image:

Ah Fong's headstone in the Old Church of England portion of the Cowra Monumental Cemetery, Section C, Row 9, number C295. (Source: Cowra Family History Group, Cowra Cemetery Photographs Collection)



Five Chinese Headstones

by member Cheryl McAlister

Ah Fong's headstone, the subject of the other article in this journal about a Chinese headstone in Cowra Cemetery, is just one of five, quite close together and all in the same section and row of the old Cowra Monumental Cemetery (being Church of England/ Anglican Section C, Row 9). The deaths they memorialise date from 1903 to 1943.

One is an impressive large white marble headstone, with a pattern of flowers and leaves around the edges and another flower and leaves motif at the top, with both English and Chinese writing.

This is surrounded by a wrought iron fence. The inscription reads: “In Loving Memory of THOMAS GONG LEE who departed this life July 15th 1903, aged 44 years, leaving a wife and five children to mourn their loss. In the sweet bye and bye we shall meet on the beautiful shore”. Underneath this and filling the remainder of the headstone are 3 vertical rows of Chinese characters. This grave is number C297. NSW Births, Deaths & Marriages (BDM’s) has this death registered as GONG LEE Thomas, number 9780/1903, registration District of Cowra.

Next to this is another smaller white marble headstone with both English and Chinese writing. The inscription reads: “In Memory of JOHN CHONG who departed this life May 18th 1903, aged 38 years”. Again, beneath this and filling the rest of the headstone space are 3 vertical rows of Chinese characters. This grave is number C296. This headstone has been broken but repaired. NSW BDM’s has this death registered as CHONG John, number 5748/1903, registration District of Cowra – father’s name is given as Suey Gai and mother as Ah Woi.

Next to John Chong in grave number C295, with a small sandstone headstone (it is the smallest in size of all 5 headstones) is the one known to be AH FONG, although this does not bear his name (at least in English).



As mentioned in the previous article concerning Ah Fong, his headstone bears the year 1925 at the top, then 3 vertical rows of Chinese characters. From his inquest we know that he died on the 22nd June 1925. NSW BDM's has this death registered as both AH FONG Chinese and AH FONG Chung Kong, number 7099/1925, registration District of Cowra – for the Ah Fong Chinese registration it says Chung Kong in the Father's Name column and 55yrs Cowra in the Mother's Name column. From the inquest report both appear to be incorrect, as he was only 25 and had no known relatives other than an uncle in Sydney.

There is then a space in the row for one grave before another sandstone headstone which just bears the name SHU TAN at the top, then 4 vertical rows of Chinese characters. From research, it is known that Shu Tan died on 17th August 1935. Shu Tan is in grave number C293. NSW BDM's has this death registered as SHU TAN as well as SHU TAN Chinese, number 17861/1935, registration District of Cowra. This states that he died in Cowra Hospital at the age of 84, having been in NSW for 60 years.

The last of the five and next to Shu Tan's is another sandstone headstone bearing the inscription: "P. L. SEE HING, 3rd March 1943", followed by 3 vertical rows of Chinese characters. From other information we know that his name was Peter. This grave is number C292. NSW BDM's has this death registered as HING Peter See, registration District of Cowra, number 1949/1943. This states that he died in Cowra District Hospital, was a Herbalist, aged 70 years and had been in NSW for 50 years.

To our knowledge, there have been no attempts to decipher the wording of the Chinese characters on any of these headstones, and now with the passage of time, they are difficult to see clearly.

We would love to hear from anyone who has further information on any of these Chinese people.

- ♦ *Image on page 20: John Chong's headstone in the Old Church of England portion of the Cowra Monumental Cemetery, Section C, Row 9, number C296.
(Photo taken by Cheryl McAlister July 2024)*



- ◆ *Image above: All 5 Chinese headstones in the Old Church of England portion of the Cowra Monumental Cemetery, Section C, Row 9, numbers C292 to C297. (Photo taken by Cheryl McAlister July 2024)*

My Husband's Connection to English Aristocracy

by life member Olwyn Barnes

One of my late husband's ancestors was Thomas Fiennes, 9th Baron Dacre 1515-1541, an English aristocrat notable for his conviction and execution for murder. Dacre was the son of Sir Thomas Fiennes and Jane Sutton, daughter of Edward Sutton, 2nd-Baron Dudley. He inherited the title in 1528 and the family seat at Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex. He married Mary Neville, daughter of George Neville, 5th Baron Bergavenny. Dacre was a member of the jury at the trial of Anne Boleyn in 1536.

On 30th April 1541 Dacre led a party of gentlemen to poach on the lands of Sir Nicholas Pelham of Laughton. During the escapade they encountered three of Pelham's servants. The encounter turned into an affray during which John Busbrig (one of Pelham's men) was fatally wounded.

Dacre and several others were charged with murder and arraigned before the Lord High Steward Lord Audley of Waldon on 27th June. Dacre originally entered a plea of not guilty but was later persuaded to change it and throw himself on the King's mercy in the hope of a reprieve. At that time the usual punishment was beheading. Unlike his contemporaries, he was not executed by beheading but was hanged at Tyburn on 29 June 1541. An account of the execution in Halls Chronicle says: "He was led on foot between the two sheriffs of London from the Tower through the city to Tyburn where he was strangled as common murderers are and his body buried in the church of St.Sepulchre."

Dacre's family were stripped of their lands and title, but the title was restored to his second son Gregory in 1558, the elder son Thomas having died at the age of 15 before the restitution.

After discovering Lady Mary Neville's marriage to Dacre, I found all of the above in Wikipedia. Through his wife's line I was able to continue back to find a direct line to King Edward 2nd and Isabella of France. Unfortunately, I discovered all this after my husband Bob had passed away in 2016, he would have been tickled pink!



- ◆ *Hans Eworth portrait of Mary Neville, Baroness Dacre of Gilsland (age 32) with an inset portrait of her husband Thomas Fiennes, 9th Baron Dacre Gilsland in the background. Date: around 1556.*
- ◆ *Source: Hans Eworth, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_Eworth_-_Portrait_of_Lady_Dacre_-_WGA07581.jpg*



- ◆ *Above image: Thomas Fiennes, 9th Baron Dacre (1517 – 1541).*
- ◆ *Source: Unidentified painter, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fiennes,Thomas_Baron_Dacre.jpg*

THE DAY COWRA RESIDENTS WITNESSED THE SPECTACLE OF AN ELEPHANT RACE

by member Cheryl McAlister

This is the story of the photo on the front cover of this journal.

Back in 1963, Ashton's Circus came to Cowra by train. A problem arose as the elephants needed to be transported from the railway station, located at the eastern end of the main street, to the grounds where the circus was to be located for its performances. Now, this was some distance away, on the other side of Cowra – requiring the crossing of the bridge over the Lachlan River to the circus grounds in West Cowra, near where the Golf Course is today.

Some members of Cowra Lions Club came up with the ingenious idea of staging an elephant race down Kendal Street, Cowra's main street. Three elephants were chosen and were resplendent in their harness headdresses, while three Lions Club members, John (Jack) Capps (the then Mayor of Cowra), Roy Gold and Teddy Miller, donned special costumes for the event. Of course, the elephant's handlers walked alongside in case of problems, but there weren't any. The people of Cowra were amazed to see such a spectacle in their main street. It certainly stopped the traffic!

These days the circus arrives in trucks, there are no elephants and trains no longer run on the Cowra line.

Ted Miller recently added that the actual 'race' was from Cowra Public School to the Post Office, and he won by a short trunk! Ted said he was sore for a week afterwards as the elephants had really hard bristles and he was only wearing jockey silks! Ted ended by saying it was the 'Good Times'.

Here is another photo taken on the day. This shows Roy Gold with his harem of 3 veiled ladies!

Margaret Bryant, Roy Gold, Joyce Cummins and Joan Capps. (Source: Cowra Family History Group's Pardey Photographic Collection; Album: Cowra Life 5; Sheet 177; Position 2; Date: 1963)



Josie Coe Book Launch “My Family History”

by member Judie Eddington

With a large Mob, on Saturday 20th of April, Linda Willding and myself attended the book launch of Josie Coe’s “My Family History”.

Lynette Carroll started the proceedings with “Acknowledgement of Country”, passing on to Auntie Josie who thanked us all for our attendance and passed then to Rebecca Shepherd, researcher, editor, and publisher of said book.

Rebecca spoke about Josie’s family serving in World War One and World War Two. Six of Josie’s family served in the First World War, where her uncle gave his life in France. Josie’s brother, John (Jack) was an internee in Changi POW Camp from 1942-1945.

“Auntie Josie’s father descends from the Indigenous Grant, Coe, and Dargin families, who have Cultural connections to Hartley, Cowra and the Bogan in NSW. Her mother, Fanny Challenger, can trace her heritage back through a long line of coal miners from County Somerset in England. Fanny married Josie’s uncle Walter Coe towards the end of World War One, and then accompanied him to Australia.



Image above: Lynette Carroll & Auntie Josie Coe at the book launch.
(Photo taken by Judie Eddington 20th April 2024)

After the breakdown of her marriage, Fanny partnered Thomas Moseley, an Indigenous man from Kempsey and lastly Josie's father Elijah Coe, an elder brother to Walter who had also served in the First World War".¹

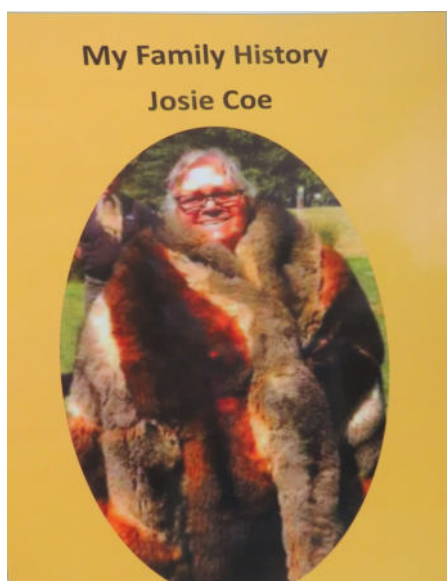
"Elijah was the son of Tom Sr Coe and Sissy Dargin the first wife of Tom. A Wiradjuri woman from the Bogan River, Sissy died from TB when Elijah was very young, and his father Tom then married Mary 'Jessie' Crowe.

Tom Coe, a stockman, had 15 children, with both his wives and is buried at Cowra where many of his descendants still Live."²

To finalise the book launch, Rebecca asked for a minute's silence to commemorate fallen soldiers.

"Lest We Forget"

- ◆ 1 Quote from Editors Introduction to "My Family History" by Josie Coe.
- ◆ 2 Information given by Rebecca Shepherd, Editor of "My Family History" by Josie Coe.



- ◆ Left above: Front cover of 'My Family' book. (Photo taken by Cheryl McAlister July 2024)



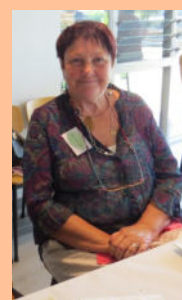
- ◆ Above image: Lynette Carroll, Rebecca Shepherd & Auntie Josie Coe at the book launch. (Photo taken at Book Launch by Judie Eddington 20th April 2024)

"THE CORNER STORE"

Do you have memories of your local store? Is it still there, or in another guise?

My name is Judie Eddington: judieeddington@gmail.com

I am compiling anecdotes of memories of corner stores and butchers in Cowra. Please reach out to me if you can help!



Cowra Family History Group Publications Price List 2024

Books	Price
Cowra Lawn Cemetery, Columbarium, Memorial Trees	\$30.00
Cowra Military Training Camp	\$25.00
Cowra Unmarked Burials to 1940	\$35.00
Index to the Lachlan Leader Newspaper 1937 – 1943	\$15.00
Lives and Times of Morongla	\$35.00
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They Shaped a Town Called Cowra Volume 1	\$35.00
They Shaped a Town Called Cowra Volume 2	\$35.00
Through the Lens	\$20.00
Tragedies in the Cowra Shire	\$30.00
Woodstock Cemetery	\$25.00

Note – Postage is extra for books (\$15 for most). Email CFHG before payment for postage price of an order for 2 or more books, as often 2 books fit in the one post pack.

CD's (Postage is included in CD price)

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