

# THE ENDEAVOUR



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# BOTANY BAY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

## *Discovering Your Heritage*

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**Mail Enquiries:** The Secretary  
Botany Bay Family History Society Inc  
184 Gannons Road  
Caringbah South NSW 2229

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	Noele Watkins	

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	<a href="mailto:botanybayfhs@yahoo.com.au">botanybayfhs@yahoo.com.au</a>	

## Meetings

Face to face meetings are held on the first Saturday of March, June, September and December at the Research Centre commencing at 1.30pm. Zoom meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month (except January) starting at 7.30pm.

## Library and Research Centre Messages and Bookings Only: 02 9523 8948

Port Hacking Community Centre 184 Gannons Road Caringbah South NSW 2229  
Open: 10am-2pm: Mon, Wed, Fri, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat. For bus route 978 & timetable, see:  
<https://transportnsw.info/routes/details/sydney-buses-network/978/31978>

## Annual Membership Fees

From 1 Jul 2024: single – \$45; family – \$60; distance single – \$23; distance family – \$30; membership renewals due 1 July each year.

## Research

Volunteers from BBFHS will research family history relevant to the Sutherland Shire for non-members: minimum fee of \$30 (first hour) and \$30 per hour thereafter.

# CONTENTS



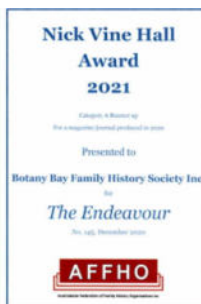
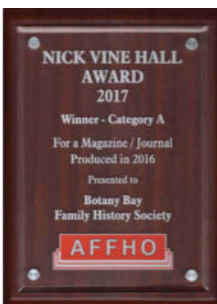
	Page
Thomas Weedon, c1785-1869 .....	7
Simplifying Ancestry Search Results. ....	12
Earl Grey and the Irish Orphan Girls. ....	16
Surprising Family Connection. ....	23
The Very Civil Servant. ....	26
Paper Chase .....	34

## Regular Features

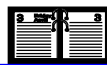
Calendar.....	2
President's Page.....	3
New Members.....	9
BBFHS Research Centre and Library.....	10
Education .....	15
Notes and News .....	20
Library Acquisitions .....	24
Diggings.....	25
BBFHS Interest Groups.....	33

## Advertisements in this Issue [PLEASE MENTION *THE ENDEAVOUR* WHEN CONTACTING]

Annual General Meeting of Botany Bay Family History Society .....	4
Lyndal Holland Writing Competition Reminder .....	5
NSW & ACT State Conference .....	6
2SSR 99.7FM Sound of the Sutherland Shire .....	14
Joy Murrin – BDM Transcription Services .....	33
Martins Green Thumb Gardening Services .....	39
Save Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum.....	40



# CALENDAR



**Members are advised to check latest details on our Events calendar at [www.botanybayfhs.org.au](http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au) or see your fortnightly BBFHS eNEWS**

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>May 22</b>      | Writers Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom   |
| <b>May 24</b>      | DNA Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom   |
| <b>May 27</b>      | Family Tree Maker Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom   |
| <b>Jun 9</b>       | King's Birthday Public Holiday – Research Centre closed   |
| <b>Jun 14</b>      | <b>Meeting – 1.30 pm Research Centre, Saturday. Gillian Lewis.</b><br><i>The Battle between HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran off Western Australia on 19 Nov 1941 and the Search for the Wreck</i> |
| <b>Jun 18</b>      | <b>Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.</b>   |
| <b>Jun 19</b>      | Tour to New South Wales Parliament  |
| <b>Jun 21</b>      | Australian Focus One Day Seminar: Research Centre   |
| <b>Jun 28</b>      | Volunteers' Day: Research Centre  |
| <b>Jul 2</b>       | <b>Meeting – 1.30 pm on Zoom. Maggie Gaffney.</b> <i>Treasure in the English Tithe Records</i>  |
| <b>Jul 12</b>      | Technology Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom  |
| <b>Jul 16</b>      | <b>Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom</b>  |
| <b>Jul 24</b>      | Writers Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom   |
| <b>Jul 26</b>      | DNA Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom   |
| <b>Aug 6</b>       | <b>Meeting – 1.30 pm on Zoom. Vanessa Cassin.</b> <i>Wills and Probate 101</i>  |
| <b>Aug 9</b>       | Scottish Interest Group: 2-4pm at Research Centre   |
| <b>Aug 16</b>      | Open Day: Research Centre   |
| <b>Aug 20</b>      | <b>Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.</b>   |
| <b>Aug 21</b>      | Bus Trip to NSW State Records at Kingswood ( <i>to be confirmed</i> )   |
| <b>Aug 23</b>      | Irish Interest Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom  |
| <b>Aug 26</b>      | Family Tree Maker Interest Group: 1.30-3.30 pm on Zoom  |
| <b>Sep 6</b>       | <b>Annual General Meeting – 1.30 pm Research Centre, Saturday. Mel Hulbert.</b> <i>DNA Painter (to be confirmed)</i>  |
| <b>Sep 12 – 14</b> | <b>NSW &amp; ACT Conference, Wollongong</b>   |
| <b>Sep 17</b>      | <b>Member's Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.</b>   |
| <b>Jun 19</b>      | Tour: Como Heritage Walk  |
| <b>Sep 25</b>      | Writers Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom   |
| <b>Sep 27</b>      | DNA Interest Group: 1.30-3.30pm on Zoom   |

Botany Bay Family History Society is a member of:



**NSW & ACT  
Association of  
Family History  
Societies Inc.**



**The Australasian Federation of  
Family History Organisations Inc.**



**FAMILY  
HISTORY  
Federation**

Supporting Family Historians since 1974

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# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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So far this year, three new innovations have been introduced for the benefit of our members.

## 1. MONTHLY TASKS

Members who attend our Mid-Month Chat Meetings on Zoom are set a task each month, which is followed up at the next meeting. So far, we've covered the following tasks:

- Backing up your family history research
- Logging your family history research
- Sorting your digital (or physical) family history files
- Making a family history research plan

These sessions are proving very popular and hearing how members are progressing with their tasks has been illuminating.

PowerPoint slides for each task have been uploaded to the Members' Area of our website for all members to review at their leisure. Whether or not you attend the Mid-Month Meetings, these resources remain extremely helpful for organizing your genealogical journey.

## 2. TECHNOLOGY INTEREST GROUP

Our inaugural Technology Interest Group meeting took place in March. Don't be put off by the "techie" name – this group explores a wide range of topics aimed at helping BBFHS members use technology to enhance genealogy research, streamline work, and connect with fellow family historians.

Topics of interest include:

- Genealogical software and tools
- Digital archiving and preservation
- Social media and online collaboration
- Mapping tools for genealogy
- Webinars and online learning
- Using artificial intelligence in genealogy
- Data privacy, security, and ethics
- Emerging technologies in genealogy

We hope this group will become a collaborative effort – not just me! If you have skills or experience in any of these areas and would be willing to give a short

talk or presentation, please get in touch. Even a brief contribution would be appreciated.

### 3. INTEREST DAYS

Following the closure of the regular Australian and English Interest Groups, we've introduced an annual Australian Interest Day and English Interest Day.

Planning is well underway for the **Australian Interest Day**, scheduled for **June 21**, with talks being presented by myself, Jean Campbell, John Levy, Jeff Madsen, Megan Neilson, Sue Hewitt and Pat Fearnley. If you'd also like to give a short presentation on any aspect of Australian research or family history, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

These innovations offer new ways to engage with BBFHS and might just help you break down a brick wall in your research!

Jennie Fairs

## BOTANY BAY FHS NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Botany Bay Family History Society Inc will be held at 1.30 pm on **Saturday 6 September 2025** at the Research Centre, 284 Gannons Road, Caringbah South. Only financial members can vote. Any financial member may be nominated for election to the Committee by any two other financial members. Nomination forms are available from the Secretary at [botanybayfhs@yahoo.com.au](mailto:botanybayfhs@yahoo.com.au).

## RESEARCH CENTRE OPENING TIMES

**Monday, Wednesday and Friday – 10 am to 2 pm**  
**Saturdays by appointment, by the prior Wednesday night.**

**Please phone 9523 8948 if going in after midday.**

When researching, please ask for help if you need it – it is why the Centre assistants are there and they love to help.

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## 2025 LYNDAL HOLLAND WRITING COMPETITION REMINDER

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The **BBFHS Lyndal Holland Writing Competition** was established in 2023 in memory of Lyndal Holland, a Foundation Member and inaugural secretary of our Society. The details for the Competition were announced in early April and are reprinted below.



- The competition will run from 1 April and close 30 June.
- The competition is open to every BBFHS member.
- Winners will be announced at the 2025 AGM in September.
- Rather than a first and second prize, there will be two prizes of \$400 each.
- Only one entry per member and the topic can be either: **The Life of an Ancestor Back Home** OR **The Life of an Ancestor in Australia**.
- Limit 1000 words.
- Entry form available at <https://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/>
- Entries to be sent to [secretary@botanybayfhs.org.au](mailto:secretary@botanybayfhs.org.au) who will remove any identifying material before sending to the judges.

### COPY DEADLINE

Please submit copy for the September 2025 journal as soon as you have it available but the deadline is **Friday 1 August** – preferably by email to the Editor at [bbfhs\\_ed@yahoocom.au](mailto:bbfhs_ed@yahoocom.au). Copy may also be left in the Editor's folder at the Centre, handed to the Editor or a committee member at a quarterly meeting or posted to 184 Gannons Road Caringbah South NSW 2227. Please include your name and state if you want any materials returned.



Follow Botany Bay FHS on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/39uzkb2b>





The Illawarra Family History Group Inc. is pleased to host the 40th Annual Conference of the New South Wales and ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.

Dates: 12, 13 and 14 September, 2025

Theme: **“They Came From Where?”**

First Nations people and in recent history every other cultural group came to Australia from somewhere else. Tracking down their origins can be difficult but finding out where they came from, why they came and how they travelled adds to their stories.

Venue: The Fraternity Club, 11 Bourke St., Fairy Meadow.  
2519.

Format: The conference will be available in person and also by Zoom.

All details are available on the conference website at:

<https://familyhistoryconference2025.org.au/>



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# THOMAS WEEDON, c1785-1869

by Helen **Bain** (Member)

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**T**homas **Weedon** was indicted in the Old Bailey for feloniously stealing, on the 4th of January 1806, 72 pounds weight of veal value £3 the property of Sarah Greenfield. Aged 21, he was found guilty and was sentenced to be transported for seven years.

Thomas was my 3 x great grandfather and the first of my ancestors to come to this country. He arrived on the ship *Anne 2* which docked at Hospital Wharf, Circular Quay on 28 February 1810. The ship carried quite an assortment of passengers. Besides the 187 convicts below decks, these included Rev. Samuel **Marsden**, his wife Elizabeth, a Maori prince Rutara, whom Marsden befriended in England and a detachment of soldiers of Governor Lachlan **Macquarie**'s 73rd (Black Watch) Regiment and their families, arriving to replace the soldiers of the New South Wales Corps. The voyage was notable for the fact that only one of the convicts died on the journey.

The prisoners remained on the ship until 3 March when the settlers who had requested allocation of men to work for them arrived to collect them. Thomas was assigned to Gregory **Blaxland**. Because he had already served four years of his seven year sentence in the hulk *Retribution* moored in Portsmouth harbour, Thomas became a free man in 1813 – the year the explorers Gregory Blaxland, William Charles **Wentworth** and William **Lawson** crossed the Blue Mountains.

There is scant biographical information about Thomas at this stage. In the 1814 Muster he is listed as working as a labourer and later, in 1820 the Register of St Phillips Church, Sydney records his marriage to Mary Ann **Field**, aged 18.

By the time of the 1828 Census he was aged 40, occupation Shop Keeper, wife Mary 26 and children Thomas, Jane and Joseph. He had a horse and one manservant, one maid and a “little girl”. So he had managed to start working his way up the ladder in Colonial society.

Other than a fine of 5/- for breaching the Publicans Licensing Act for failing to keep the lamps burning from sunset to sunrise in the tavern he now operated, I have not found further mentions in the press of the day for breaches of the law.

As time went on, Thomas proved to be an astute businessman and in 1831 had obtained a number of land grants. His continued purchase of property and renewal of Publicans Licences seem to be the extent of his mention in the Trove newspapers.

One of his properties in Harrington Street, Sydney was a tavern he named the *Spread Eagle* - a rather cheeky reference to the name of the public house in

London outside which his theft was carried out and where his journey to Australia began.



*Spread Eagle Hotel (photo: Views of Sydney, 1870-1902, NSW State Library)*

Thomas was best known for owning the *Cherry Tree Gardens* inn, located at the bottom of Taveners Hill on Parramatta Road. A chronicler of the day, James Tobias **Ryan** in his book *Reminiscences of Australia* describes the establishment as a favourite of the sporting and prize fighting community. Thomas was described as the “inimitable little Londoner” who was “a short man, about five feet high”. This is the closest we come to knowing what he looked like.

Thomas and Mary had five children who survived childhood: Thomas Elijah, a solicitor, Joseph, David, Elizabeth and Jane. Both Jane and Elizabeth married men with convict family backgrounds. Elizabeth married Augustus **Morris**, grazier and politician, who was well known at the time and Jane married Frederick **Oatley**, son of clockmaker James Oatley.

Thomas Weedon died in 1869 at his home *Maryfield Cottage*, Petersham at the age of 85 and was buried in Balmain Cemetery – now Pioneer Park, Leichhardt.

At the time of his death, the only one of his children to survive him was

Jane Oatley who despite having a husband and children to Frederick Oatley, conducted a long standing relationship with Edward **Flood**, a man active in politics and public life of the time. Flood left his legal wife and children in poverty to live with Jane and three of her children.

There is a note in my late mothers research indicating our family were well aware of Jane's infidelity and that Thomas Weedon, despite working hard to make the best of his second chance in a new country, died a sad old man as all his sons all died before him and his daughter had dishonoured him and the family name by her behaviour.

#### REFERENCES

<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18060115-19?text=%22thomas%20weedon%22>  
Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com.au>

New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au>  
*Bound for Australia*. David T Hawkins

*Note in England & Wales Criminal Registers 1791-1892 – “Removed to the hulks at Portsmouth, 8 March 1806”*

Newspapers on Trove, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

RW Rathbone - Australian Dictionary of Biography. Vol 4. Edward Flood & Jane Oatley  
*Reminiscences of Australia*. James Tobias Ryan

1828 New South Wales Census

Margaret Booth – my mother and a one time member of BBFHS

#### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Many of the convicts sent to Australia were put on trial at the Old Bailey in London. The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913 are available on the website: <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/> which had a major update in 2023. It is fully searchable and has information on getting started and a guide to searching. If you have a convict ancestor from that era, it is worthwhile having a look.



### NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members. Please use your membership to attend meetings, interest groups, classes and the Research Centre (and please ask for help if you need it).

1976	Barry Moscrop	Cronulla
1977	Lynne Lewis	Caringbah

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# BBFHS RESEARCH CENTRE AND LIBRARY

by Jean **Campbell** (Research Centre Coordinator)

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The next in-person member's meeting is in the Port Hacking Community Centre Hall on **Saturday 14 June** at 1:30 pm. The Research Centre will be open on that day from 10 am.

In May, Sue Hewitt presented a wonderful class on **Treasures in the BBFHS Collection – in the Research Centre**.

There are many, many resources in our research centre and library, which are available to members. Here is an overview of some of them.

## THE BOOK LIBRARY

We have many library books on the shelves, on many different subjects, with many available for borrowing. Our library catalogue is available on the BBFHS website: <https://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/library--research-centre.html> . If a book has 'LC' after the book's details, it means it's a **Loan Copy**, so you can borrow it and take it home for two weeks.

## COMPUTER SUBSCRIPTION SITES

These paid sites members can use for free when in the Research Centre:

- Ancestry
- Find My Past
- British Newspaper Archives
- The Genealogist
- Biographical Database of Australia
- Sydney Morning Herald 1955 to 1995 (expires September)
- The Newspaper Archive
- John Grenham's Irish Resources

## FAMILY SEARCH

Family Search is available on your home computer ... BUT... some original documents, which cannot be seen at home, can be seen at the Research Centre, as we are a **Family Search Affiliate Library**, which has online access to FamilySearch digital records. Make a note and come in to find the details.

## BDM MICROFILMS – the Early Church Records: 1788 to 1855

From 1788 to 1856 the only birth, death or marriage records kept in the colony of New South Wales were registers maintained by the churches when they performed a baptism, marriage or burial. This required people to attend a church in person which means that not all life events in this period are recorded.

We hold microfilm copies of the Registers of Births Deaths and Marriages to 1856 (volumes 1–123) which are available in the Research Centre and can be read on our Scan Pro machine. (Ask a Centre Volunteer for help.) Note that many of these records cover the eastern mainland of Australia, as Victoria was declared a separate colony in 1850 and Queensland in 1859.

For example, when searching the birth, death and marriage indexes in the pre-1855 period at <https://familyhistory.bdm.nsw.gov.au/>, a typical result may be:

## Births Search Results

Name	Registration Number	Father's Given Name(s)	Mother's Given Name(s)	District	PDF availability
<input type="checkbox"/> ? FIELD EDWARD	283/1829 V1829283 13	EDWARD	MARIA	CD	Unavailable

« PAGE 1 | »

The registration number is read as entry 283 of 1829 in volume 13 of the records. The ‘V’ indicates that it is an early church record. The district code ‘CD’ indicates Anglican records at Castlereagh (near Penrith). The following is a transcription of the church record entry recorded on the microfilm:

Baptisms in the Parish of Castlereagh in the County of Cumberland in the Year 1829  
When baptised: 25 January 1829  
When born: 17 September 1828  
Christian name: Edward  
Parent's names: Edward and Maria Field  
Abode: Evan  
Rank or Profession: Farmer  
Ceremony performed by: Henry Fulton

## EXCHANGE JOURNALS

We exchange our journal, *The Endeavour*, with about 90 other societies, mostly Australian but some overseas. Some are print versions but most are digital versions. We recommend that you read any journal which originates from an area in which your ancestors had connections.

Members may borrow from the collection of printed journals held at the Research Centre and Library for the years 2020 to 2024. Please ask a volunteer for the loan procedure. The digital exchange journals are also available at the Research Centre and may be viewed on the computers (click on the *Resources on the Server* icon on the desktop).



# SIMPLIFYING ANCESTRY SEARCH RESULTS

by John Levy (Editor)

When searching on Ancestry, the results are often quite cluttered, making it difficult to find the information you are looking for. Consider the following;

## All Australian Voters Lists results for richard lacey

1-20 of 248



Browse by collection

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Percy Lacey**

Residence 1914 Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Lacey**

Residence 1924 Dromana, County of Flinders, Victoria, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Percy Lacey**

Residence 1924 Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Henry Lacey**

Residence 1924 Elsternwick South, Balaclava, Victoria, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Percy Lacey**

Residence 1931 Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Percy Lacey**

Residence 1936 Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard John Lacey**

Residence 1977 Coff's Harbour, Cowper County, New South Wales,

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Lacey**

Residence 1910 Menzies, Coolgardie, Western Australia, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View

Name **Richard Lacey**

Residence 1910 Kanowna, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, Australia

Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980

1930s

View


Name **Richard Lacey**


Residence 1910 Perth, Perth County, Western Australia, Australia





In the results above, a number of different Richard Laceys appear in a number of different electoral roll years, making it difficult for you to sort through to find the results you are looking for. However, by moving the ‘Browse by collection’ button to the right, you get:

## All Australian Voters Lists results for richard lacey

248 results  Browse by collection





















 [Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980](#) 248

20 per page  1 of 1 

Then, by clicking on ‘Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980’, the following list makes it far easier to find the entries for the person you are searching for.

### All Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980 results for richard lacey

1-20 of 248

View Record	Name	Electoral Date	Electoral Place	View Images
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1914	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1919	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Lacey	1924	Dromana, County of Flinders, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1924	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Henry Lacey	1924	Elsternwick South, Balaclava, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1931	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1936	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1936	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard John Lacey	1977	Coff's Harbour, Cowper County, New South Wales	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Lacey	1910	Menzies, Coolgardie, Western Australia	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Lacey	1910	Kanowna, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Lacey	1910	Perth, Perth County, Western Australia	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Lacey	1931	Dundas, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Lacey	1972	Mayfield, County of Newcastle, New South Wales	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Henry Lacey	1912	Prahran, Fawkner, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1915	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1922	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1927	Richmond Central, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Percy Lacey	1949	Richmond, Yarra, Victoria	
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Richard Lacey	1912	Toodyay, Swan, Western Australia	






This technique also works well for England and Wales census searches. It is easiest to search the collection as a whole, entering your search terms just once because if you search each census individually, then you have to enter your search terms for each one. However by searching the whole collection, you get a mixture of results with different persons and different census years, making it difficult to find the results you are looking for. Again, by moving the ‘Browse by collection’ button to the right, you get:

## All U.K. Census Collection results for ralph brinsley

134 results

 Browse by collection

 1939 England and Wales Register	48
 1901 England Census	21
 1891 England Census	18
 1921 England Census	13
 1881 England Census	9
 1861 England Census	7
 1911 England Census	5
 1851 England Census	4
 1871 England Census	4
 1911 England Census Summary Books	3
 1841 England Census	2

20

per page

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1

of 1

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And it is then easy to click on each census to find your information.



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# BBFHS EDUCATION PROGRAM

by Carol **Cronan** (Educator)

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Our classes so far this year have been very well attended. Our March class, ‘Investigate Where I Live’ presented by Jeff **Madsen** was full. It was a very hands on class and the excitement of finding the history of our own home had to be experienced to be fully appreciated. For myself, I was able to trace my family home in Kogarah back to an original land grant to a First Fleet convict! Jeff showed amazing patience with all our questions and lack of technical skills and we thank him for his willingness to share his expertise.

I urge you to think about what you would like to see offered in the way of classes and let one of the committee or me know. Of course if you would be prepared to run a session that would be fantastic.

Remember to keep an eye on the BBFHS website for upcoming workshop.



*Members attending the **Investigating Where I Live** workshop (photo: Carol Cronan)*

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# EARL GREY AND THE IRISH ORPHAN GIRLS

by Colleen **Passfield** (Member)

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In 1991, The Genealogical Society of Victoria published *Barefoot And Pregnant?* by Trevor **McClaughlin**, then a senior lecturer at Macquarie University in New South Wales. This publication would be a catalyst in triggering interest in a previously little investigated aspect of Australia's immigrant history. In writing his previously published (1985) *Shamrock To Wattle*, McClaughlin had become aware of the large number of Irish women who came to Australia in the nineteenth century but would go on to focus exclusively on Earl **Grey's** Famine orphans, an involvement that still continues.

In his book, McClaughlin describes the Earl Grey orphan immigration scheme which led to the transfer of 4114 female orphans from many workhouses in Ireland to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide between October 1848 and August 1850 after which the scheme was discontinued. Earl Grey, then British Secretary of State for the Colonies, faced the problems of a shortage of labour and an imbalance of the sexes in Australia and overcrowding in the Irish workhouses after the Famine. Of the 130 workhouses, 117 sent one or two groups of orphan girls to Australia. Girls, nominated by the workhouse and offered a free passage to Australia were of good character, healthy and aged between fourteen and eighteen.

From Board of Immigration Shipping Lists, McClaughlin has compiled a *Register of Irish Female Orphans who Arrived Between 1848 and 1850*. Ships are arranged in chronological order and divided into Sydney Arrivals, Melbourne Arrivals and Adelaide Arrivals. There are details for each girl under headings of Age, Native Place, Parents and Religion.

*Barefoot and Pregnant Volume 2* is an updated version of the original and, in the Preface, McClaughlin acknowledges and encourages the efforts of family historians to 'view the wider historical horizon and learn about the specific historical context' of their particular family.

Dr Trevor McClaughlin has retired from university life but has established an ongoing online seminar which is available to anyone interested in the Irish orphan girls. The website <https://earlgreysfamineorphans.wordpress.com> is a must visit.

The publication of *Barefoot and Pregnant?* aroused considerable interest among academics and family historians particularly as sources became more accessible. Foremost among these were Perry **McIntyre** and Richard **Reid** who have also collaborated with others like Cheryl **Mongan**. Trevor McClaughlin was also involved with Perry McIntyre in setting up the Australian Memorial to the Great Irish Famine at Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney.

Tom **Power**, born Clonmel, Tipperary but a long-time resident of Australia, was motivated by the appeal to the community of Sydney in 1995 by visiting President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, to mark the memory of the Great Famine in some special way. He formed a committee to raise funds to establish an appropriate memorial and, after four years, it was unveiled on 28 August 1999 by Sir William **Deane**, Governor-General of Australia. After much deliberation, it was located on the southern wall of the Hyde Park Barracks where the Irish orphans were housed when they first arrived in Sydney. The evocative memorial was designed by Hossein and Angela **Valamamesh** to represent disruption and dislocation and allude to the subject of famine. Each year, on the last Sunday in August, an event is held at Hyde Park Barracks, the site of the memorial, to keep the memory of the orphan immigrants alive and recognize their contribution to the building of this country.

In 2007, the Sydney Irish Famine Memorial website was set up where family historians could input a summary of the life of their relative. Since 2022, on this site is also access to *How To Research And Write The Life Stories of Irish Famine Orphans* by Amanda **Midlam**.

There has also been growing interest in Ireland about the girls sent from local workhouses such as Mayo, Skibbereen, Kerry and Newry. There have even been works of fiction relating to the Irish orphan experience such as *The Hungry Wind* by Sionbhe Lally based on the orphans from Ballyshannon workhouse.

Tintean magazine has some biographies of orphan girls written by descendants which may be useful, such as Rose **Fleming** by Jeff **Kildea**. Check under categories at <https://tintean.org.au>.

In March 1848, a letter from the Irish Poor Law Commissioners to local Poor Law Inspectors described the proposed orphan emigration scheme. Boards of Guardians had to provide lists of girls of good moral character, healthy, aged between fourteen and eighteen and willing to take advantage of the free passage to Australia. If available, references from previous employers or others who knew them well, were presented and the girls were then examined by an authorized representative of the Emigration Commissioners from Dublin

When chosen, girls were provided with clothing and a sturdy sea chest containing extra clothing and useful utensils and which was strongly secured for the long sea voyage. Leaving the workhouse, the group had to travel to Plymouth where they would board the vessel which would transport them to Australia.

On arrival in Sydney, the girls were housed, as previously stated, in Hyde Park Barracks, overseen by Matron Eliza **Capps**, and which was also the Immigration Depot where prospective employers came to hire workers. There was



# Female Emigration TO NEW SOUTH WALES.

## COMMITTEE:

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**The Committee for promoting the Emigration  
OF**

# Single Women

From IRELAND to AUSTRALIA.

acting under the Authority of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies.

HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, THAT

**A Superior First Class SHIP of 500 Tons,**

Carrying an experienced Surgeon and Matrons of their respective Religious Opinions, to ensure the Comfort and Protection of the Young Women during the Voyage, will sail from

# CORK,

**On Thursday, the 26th of May next,**

(Beyond which day she will on no account be detained) direct for

# SYDNEY.

HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT, in order to encourage the Emigration of **Single Women and Widows** of Good Character to the Australian Colonies, where the number of Females, as compared with the male Population, is greatly deficient, and where consequently all who may embark themselves with distinction and industry, may calculate in time importantly to benefit their condition, has authorized THE EMIGRATION COMMITTEE to grant

# A FREE PASSAGE

To such **SINGLE FEMALE**s, between 15 and 30 years of Age, as the Committee may ascertain to be likely to conduct themselves creditably and suitably in the Colonies.

As the accounts received by the Committee from NEW SOUTH WALES, respecting the Females who had arrived there in the Ships sent out by them, are highly satisfactory and encouraging;—a suitable Bazaar, with every necessary comfort, is provided ready for their reception on arrival; they are received and protected by the Governor until placed in suitable abode, and a Committee of the most respectable Ladies in the Colony benevolently organized and selected from the number of their friends, and one to their being placed in proper families, and every well considered Female has obtained a situation immediately on arrival. In the choice of which they are perfectly at liberty to judge each female for themselves.—A large proportion have received respectable situations, and altogether the interesting treatment of the number of Emigrants to young Women of domestic conduct, clearly demonstrates that all such have importantly benefited their condition by procuring in this healthy and progressive Colony.

Married Apprentices, Labourers, Shopgirls, Housemaids, Milks, and Farm-servants; are also solicited and Artisans—particularly Blacksmiths, Coopers, Joiners, Millwrights, Wheelwrights, Agricultural Implement Makers, Bookbinders, Bakers, Plumbers, Bone Masons, Shoe Cutters, Painters, Smiths, and Harness Makers, Runners, &c. &c. may, by the last advice, be sent to the Colonies, and all such, provided they are of industrious and steady character, are certain of immediate and useful employment.—With a view to enable such persons to emigrate to the Australian Colonies, a married couple when the Committee are satisfied as to their character will be conveyed not in the Ship, but under their direction, at a charge of £38 only, beyond the sum which the Government will allow. Children under five years old will be charged £4k each, and those above that age £3 per year in addition, but Daughters above 10 years old, not accompanying their Parents, will be allowed a Free Passage. Infants under one year old, will not be charged for.—In order to promote perfect cleanliness and comfort on the voyage and landing, will be provided for the use of the Passengers, and two distinct sleeping Apartments will be fitted up, in one of which the Male Passengers will be accommodated, and the Females in the other.

Persons in the Country who may desire to avail themselves of the important advantages thus offered them, should apply by Letter to **LIEUT. CHARLES FRIEND, R.N. His Majesty's Emigration Agent, Cork**, (Post Paid) at some Office, addressed as—**"THE EMIGRATION SECRETARY, 30, BURLINGTON GATE."** It will be necessary that the Application be accompanied by a satisfactory Certificate of Character from some of the respective Clergymen residing in the Parish, or some other responsible Person to whom the Applicant is well known.

Particular directions of communicating with the EMIGRATION DEPARTMENT in London, are requested to accompany their Letters to

**J. DENHAM PINNOCK, Esq. His Majesty's Agent-General for Emigration.**

Under Clere to the SECRETARY of STATE, Colonial Department.

By Authority:

PRINTED BY JOSEPH HARTNOLL, Fleet Street, FOR HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE



*Poster advertising free female emigration to Australia prior to the 'Earl Grey scheme', c.1835. Source: State Library of New South Wales, [a6087008 / D 356/17/8], (Mitchell Library), accessed at <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/media/4319>*

great demand for house servants and, unfortunately, most of the girls were inexperienced in such employment which led to much disappointment and criticism of the orphans. There was much political and sectarian backlash against the scheme raising fears of a growing Irish-Catholic majority. The scheme was completely funded by the colonies, and newspapers were quick to spread misinformation and unrest. Many of the orphans were married within three years of arrival to men who were much older than they were, had many children and were often widowed in the late 1800s. Many married Englishmen and outside their religion and many became the much loved and respected matriarch of a thriving family.

Unfortunately, not all orphans had a safe and happy life. Some experienced physical abuse and exploitation by an employer or spouse and others could not cope with the harassment and opposition based on sectarian concerns which would be a factor in the abandonment of the Earl Grey Scheme after 1850.

Since the publication of *Barefoot And Pregnant?* in 1991, academics and family historians have been active in researching and recording some amazing stories of resilience and resolve and there is a constantly growing list of publications about the emigration from various workhouses. I have only listed a few of the resources that are available.

There are descendants, like me, of those brave girls in all levels of our community who take pride in declaring their ancestry. There is a prominent and well known Member of Federal Parliament who is one of them. In the March 2024 edition of *The Endeavour*, Aileen **Trinder** wrote about her extensively researched ancestor Bridget Dagworthy nee Quigley. I suggest you read it. There are other members of BBFHS who also have Irish orphans in their tree. Who knows what you might find?

#### SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- *Barefoot And Pregnant?* Trevor McLaughlin, 1991
- *Irish Workhouse Orphan Emigration - to Australia 1848-1850*. Perry McIntyre & Richard Reid, 2021. Many further resources are contained in this publication.
- *'FAIR DELINQUENTS'? Irish Famine Orphans of Colonial Bathurst and Beyond*. Leonie Glynn Blair & Perry McIntyre, 2019
- *A decent set of girls: the Irish famine orphans of the Thomas Arbuthnot 1849-1850*. Richard Reid & Cheryl Mongan, 1996.
- *Mayo's Forgotten Famine Girls – From Workhouse to Australia (1848-50) & Convict Journal*. Terry Reilly, 2017.
- *The Kerry Girls: Emigration and the Earl Grey Scheme - Emigration and the Earl Grey Scheme*. Kay Moloney Caball, 2025.
- *How to research and write the life story of Irish Famine Orphans*. Amanda Midlam, 2022.

- *Trevo's Irish Famine Orphans*. <https://earlgreysfamineorphans.wordpress.com>
- *Irish Famine Memorial Sydney*. [www.irishfaminememorial.org](http://www.irishfaminememorial.org)
- *Tintean – A Magazine for Irish Australia*. <https://tintean.org.au>
- *The Workhouse in Ireland*. [www.workhouses.org.uk/Ireland/](http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Ireland/)
- *Irish Aussies: Historical Perspectives*. <https://irishaussies.wordpress.com/> Click 'Press Portrayals' to see: *The Irish famine orphan girls, 1848-1850: reception and portrayal – Michael Collins*
- *Irish orphan girls at Hyde Park Barracks | MHNSW*. <https://mhnsw.au/stories/general/irish-orphan-girls-hyde-park-barracks>



## NOTES AND NEWS



**The State Library of NSW Macquarie Street Building Refurbishment** will begin in May 2025. Here's what to expect:

- an improved entrance providing a world-class welcome
- a refurbished Bashir Reading Room with more seating and study areas
- a modern, expanded cafe and bookshop
- more open and accessible spaces to enjoy.

To make this possible, the Macquarie Street building will close from 5 pm, Monday 12 May until the completion later this year. The entrance to the Library will be through the Library's Mitchell building. During this time, a temporary bookshop and cafe will be available in the Dixon Room, on the ground floor of the Mitchell Building, so you will still be able to take advantage of your Friends discount.

All services usually offered in the Bashir Reading Room (except study rooms and the Children's Library) will be accessible in the Mitchell building's Gallery Room, so the corridor leading to the Friends Room will be busier than usual.

For more information, news and updates, visit [sl.nsw.gov.au/buildingworks](http://sl.nsw.gov.au/buildingworks) or email your enquiry to [news@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:news@sl.nsw.gov.au)



### WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

is available at the Research Centre.

Please phone 9523 8948 to make arrangements.

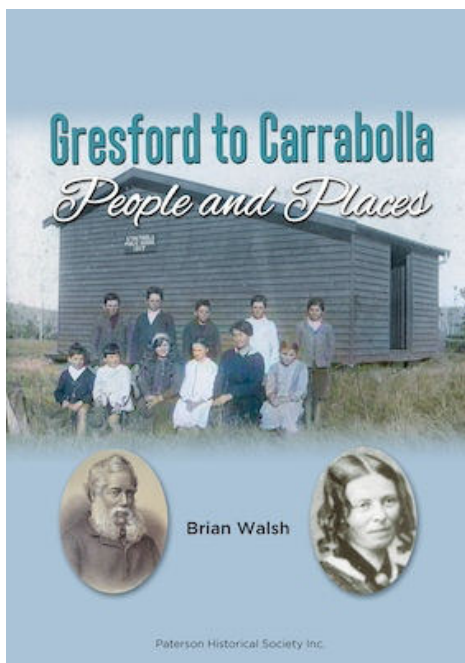


**History House welcomes researchers and visitors during State Library Refurbishment.** With the State Library of NSW's announced plans to close its Macquarie Street building in May, History House is available for research space and venue hire.

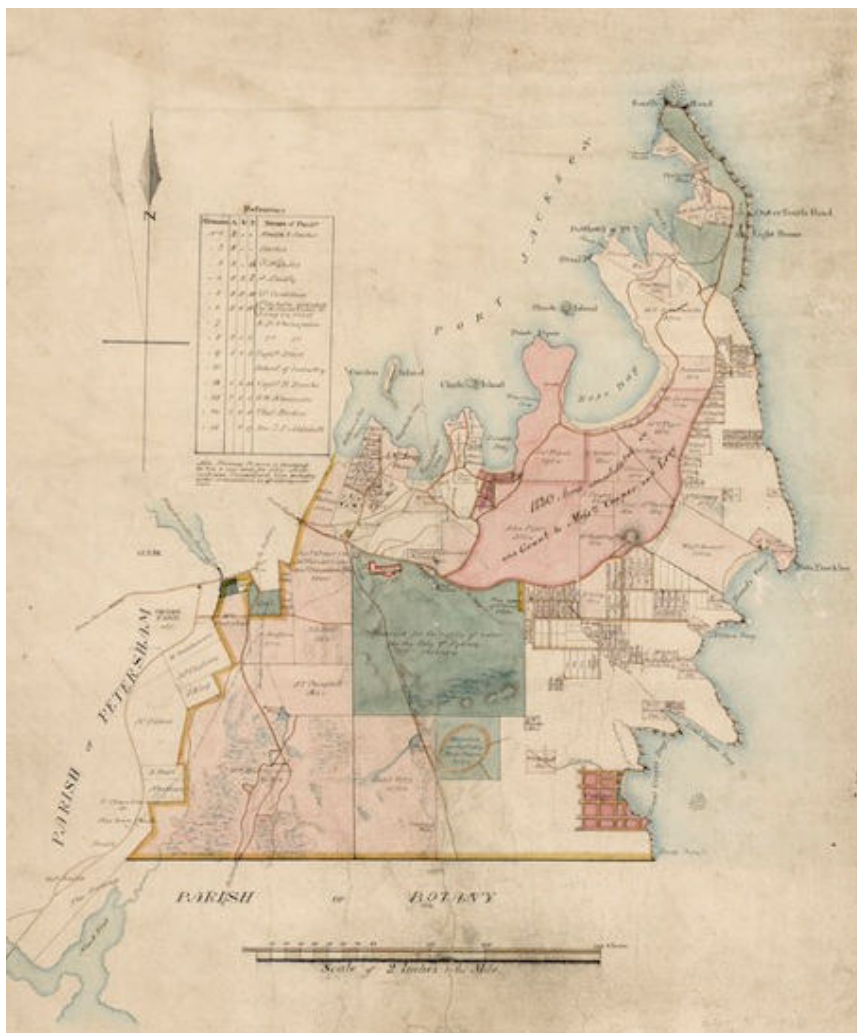
The C.H. Bertie and Hugh Wright Memorial Library contains a valuable research collection of more than 60,000 items on Australian history – all of which is available on-site and accessible to Royal Australian Historical Society members, visitors and members of RAHS Affiliated Societies. The collection includes publications, photographs, glass slides, manuscripts, press clippings, ephemera, maps, journals and newsletters of our affiliated societies, a complete set of the RAHS Journal, Sands Directories and the NSW Statistical Registers.

The library is open Monday to Friday (except public holidays) from 10 am to 4 pm. Visit our Library Overview website at <https://www.rahs.org.au/library-overview/> for further information. If you are interested in arranging a visit, please email [library@rahs.org.au](mailto:library@rahs.org.au)

**The Paterson Historical Society's** new book, *Gresford to Carrabolla – People and Places* by Dr Brian Walsh, was launched recently. The book reveals how European society emerged along the Paterson River from the 1820s, albeit at the expense of Aboriginal people. It provides information on the landowners, convicts, immigrants and colonial-born who worked on the estates or leased parts of them as tenant farmers. It features the many 'selectors' who took up small blocks in the upper Paterson's remote bushland, hills and mountains. The book also highlights the schools, churches and post offices that became a vital part of the social fabric. The 168-page book includes a comprehensive index and is illustrated with many photos, maps and diagrams. It can be purchased online from <https://patersonhistory.square.site/>.



**State Library of New South Wales.** For those researching house and land history in NSW, the State Library's collection of subdivision plans for over 250 suburbs and towns, parish maps, town maps, and town plans has now been digitised and can be accessed through the Library's online catalogue. These resources complement the Maps and Plans Collection on the Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV).



Parish of Alexandria  
<https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VvebOxo2yg>  
 (State Library of NSW)

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# SURPRISING FAMILY CONNECTION

by Peter **Londregan** (Member)

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The September 2024 edition of the Endeavour had an article of mine describing the shipwreck of the *Harriet* on the Taranaki coast of New Zealand's North Island in 1834. My three times great-aunt, Betty **Guard** (nee Elizabeth **Parker**) and her two young children were captured by a Maori tribe and held captive for several months. NSW Governor **Bourke** dispatched *HMS Alligator* and a civilian ship from Sydney to rescue them. Betty's husband, Jackie Guard, was on board *HMS Alligator*, returning to New Zealand to negotiate with his family's Maori captors. A contingent of Royal Marines made the rescue after a battle with the Maori warriors. Betty and her children, along with other surviving **Harriet** crew members were rescued and returned to Sydney, together with Jackie Guard.

I thought that there was nothing new to add to the shipwreck story from my family history perspective. However, a distant cousin in England recently contacted me to discuss some family history matters. He has documentation showing that his three times great grandfather, George **Williams** was a Royal Navy able seaman aboard *HMS Alligator* when the Guard family and others were rescued. George would very likely have seen Betty and her family come aboard after the rescue and during the voyage back to Sydney. However, interaction would have been negligible between the rescued and the crew.

George Williams spent some time in Sydney in 1834 while *HMS Alligator* was here. He saw the young colony and would have taken stories of Sydney and the rescue back to his family and friends in Portsmouth, England which was his home base.

At that time there was no family connection between George Williams and Betty Guard (nee Parker). That changed some eighty years later, when my maternal grandparents Evan John **Davies** and Charlotte **Newman** married in Nimbin in northern NSW in 1915. My grandfather Evan was a grandson of George Williams' sister, Mary Jane Williams. Mary and her family migrated to Sydney in 1849. My grandmother Charlotte was a granddaughter of Betty Guard's sister Sophie Parker.

We have known about the Williams and Parker families for a long time, but the connection with *HMS Alligator* and the shipwreck is a new discovery.

My newly-found distant cousin in England has done a lot of research into his ancestors' Royal Navy careers and knew about the *Harriet*'s shipwreck and survivors' rescue. But he was not aware of Betty Guard's family connection to me.

Isn't family history research interesting?

This article lists the new Library accessions. We remind members that there is a wealth of family history information accumulated over some 41 years in our Library. **Not everything is online!** Check out our library catalogue at <http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/library--research-centre.html>. You may be very surprised at what you find! **Come to the Research Centre and have a look.** Thank you for the donations from those members who are ‘downsizing’.

## AUSTRALIA

- Architecture in Australia – A History. [A.HIS.22.6LC]

## NEW SOUTH WALES

- A Very Present Help – Caring for Australians Since 1813. The History of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales. [AN.HIS.19.18LC]
- They Also Served – Men & Women Elected to Rockdale Council 1871-1995. [AN.LH.2216.15LC]
- Maitland City Council Burial Register [Information about Cemeteries]. [AN.SOU.5.2320.2]
- Government Schools of N.S.W. from 1848. [AN.HIS.27.16LC]
- Priceless Pictures from the Remarkable N.S.W. Government Printing Office Collection - 1878-1950. [AN.HIS.1.40LC]
- Concord Jubilee - A History of the Municipality of Concord – 1883-1933. [AN.LH.2137.3LC]
- Sydney Then and Now. [AN.LH.2000.38LC]
- Bywong – “Sometimes I have to Cry”. A History in Novel Form of the Story of Bywong Town, N.S.W. [AN.LH.2621.1LC]
- A Pictorial History of Bathurst. [AN.LH.2795.7LC]
- Church of St. Thomas, Port Macquarie – Early Parish Registers – Baptisms 1824-1864, Marriages 1824-1856, Burials 1824-1876. [AN.SOU.5.2444.2]
- The History of Failford and the Wallamba River District. [AN.LH.2430.3LC]
- Yowie Bay Public School – The First Fifty Years 1956-2006. [AN.LH.2228.3LC]

## OVERSEAS

- Tracing Your Ancestors in Northern Ireland. [I.SOU.2.3LC]
- Families of Ballyrashane – A District in Northern Ireland. [I.LON.1.1LC]
- Walsall [Staffordshire]. [E.STS.LH.1LC]
- Wexford History and Society – Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County. [I.WEX.HIS.1.1LC]
- In the Light of the Past – Stained Glass Windows in New Zealand Houses. [NZ.HIS.22.1LC]

- Mind Mapping Made Easy for Family Historians. Transform Your Genealogy Research with this Practical Guide. [INT.GUI.1.22LC]

## GENERAL

- Australian Army Lineage Book. [G.MIL.A.HIS.53LC]
- The McCowan Family from Argyll, Scotland to Australia. [G.FH.MCC.2LC]

Note: 'LC' indicates a loan copy, which can be borrowed; 'CD' a compact disc.

Compiled by Janette **Daly** (Librarian)

## DIGGINGS



*D*iggings are titles of articles in journals that we exchange with other societies. We do not list all articles appearing in that particular journal but those that are noted as articles unrelated to the journal's origins. We recommend that you read any journal which originates from an area in which your ancestors had connections.

Members may borrow from the collection of printed journals exchanged with other family history societies held at the Research Centre and Library for the years 2020 to 2024. Please ask a volunteer for the loan procedure. Digital exchange journals are also available at the Research Centre and may be viewed on the computers (click on the *Resources on the Server* icon on the desktop).

## AUSTRALIA

### Magazine of the RAHS Mar 2025

John Herbert Plunkett (Attorney-General of NSW from 1836-1856):  
Australia's unsung hero – Mark Tedeschi writes of the many legal reforms that changed the face of Australia

## BRITAIN

### Irish Roots 1st Qtr 2025

Visiting the National Photographic Archives – Dr Mary Hatfield gives hints on what to do before visiting the Archives  
Getting back to basics with genetic genealogy  
County Limerick – Local Resources for family history research  
Surnames of County Limerick  
Facebook Friends – continues with a list of names  
Australian Irish Connections – explores Biographical Dictionaries  
Cures of Ireland  
Genealogy without borders. Chris Paton examines the genealogy scene and diaspora  
Time for a computer tidy up! Tips for organizing your family history files

Compiled by Kate **Anderson** (Member)

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# THE VERY CIVIL SERVANT

by Glen O'Connor (Member)

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**M**y wife has a distant ancestor from Newry in Ireland, Sarah **McVeigh**, who with her brother Thomas and other family members arrived in Sydney as assisted immigrants in 1842. Among the later generations of that family was Clara Kate McVeigh who was born in Sydney in 1874.

By the time she was 20, Clara was a clever and amiable young woman who was also an excellent athlete, swimmer and cyclist, which was rather unusual for girls of the day. All of these abilities were tempered, however, by an obvious shyness and a lack of confidence in social surroundings which resulted in her late arrival to matrimony. She was 33 years old when she married 32 years old Edmund Patrick **Fleming** at St Mary's Cathedral in November 1907. Their only child, Patricia, was born many years later in August 1915.

Edmund Fleming only ever saw the best in Clara. He admired her many accomplishments while gradually drawing her out from her cloistered persona. Known to all his friends as Ted and to everyone else as Patrick, he was good at working relationships with everyone he came in close contact with.

Patrick, as I will now call him, was born in Parramatta and educated at the local Marist Brothers College. He played cricket and football and grew up to be a big man, both physically and intellectually. He first worked for the Government Railways in January 1891 but at the end of that year he transferred to the Lands Department where he would start a momentous rise through the public service.



*Edmund Patrick (Ted) Fleming (photo:  
O'Connor family album)*

Patrick steadily rose through the ranks of the Lands Department to become Officer in Charge of legislation and legal matters. He was considered by many as a most promising young public servant, destined for higher office, who could reliably perform confidential, difficult and responsible work.

In 1918 when he was 43, Patrick was appointed as a Commissioner to report on the condition of share farmers throughout New South Wales. Many farmers had

aged and could no longer farm their properties or had children who went to war or otherwise left the land leaving the farms shorthanded. Rather than hiring people or leasing farms to those who had no money, equipment or animals, a farmer could enter into a share relationship by providing everything necessary to a worker who would receive a share of the farm's return. There were many successful results but also plenty of failures.

Patrick brought his extensive knowledge of property management and the myriad land systems in New South Wales to his role as Commissioner and made many sensible recommendations for improvement of the scheme. He was later appointed secretary of a Royal Commission into the coal mining industry and then Chairman of the Land Settlement Board. During this time he helped establish the NSW Land and Valuation Court.

In 1922, he was appointed an Assistant Under Secretary in the Lands Department. By far his most difficult job was the reorganisation of the method of settling returned soldiers on the land in New South Wales. After the First World War, the Federal and State Governments implemented a scheme to turn soldiers into farmers by allocating land and providing assistance to get them started. The scheme was largely unsuccessful because the land allocated was often marginal for farming and the level of assistance was typically insufficient. Patrick's job over the following four years was to work his way through the mess and implement approved changes identified to make the scheme successful.

The Australian Prime Minister Stanley **Bruce** commented that Patrick had performed the onerous and difficult task with efficiency and sympathy. This led to Patrick being appointed a member of the Commonwealth Development and Migration Commission in 1926. The Commission not only reported on all aspects of migration (more correctly British migration) but also on broad economic policy on how best to develop industries around Australia.

By now Patrick had cemented a reputation for hard and diligent work on complex matters. He treated everyone with courtesy and respect and had a knack for diffusing angry and emotional moments with empathy and sometimes with humour. His grasp of detail was his standout ability.

A newspaper campaign in 1927 alleging graft and corruption by aldermen on the Sydney City Council led to the **Bavin** conservative Government passing an Act abolishing the elected Council and replacing it with three Civic Commissioners, at least until the affairs of council could be thoroughly investigated and the allegations addressed. The abolition of the Labor Party dominated council was largely seen as a political move.

Patrick Fleming was appointed as the Chief Commissioner, in effect becoming the unelected Lord Mayor. His term started on New Year's Day 1928



and his annual salary was £5,000. The role of Lady Mayoress had been extremely important in Sydney society. She was expected to be the patroness of many charities and host numerous fund raising and social events at the Town Hall and elsewhere. Clara being naturally shy and attention avoiding quailed at the thought of taking on such a role. However, under pressure and with assurances from her husband she could do it, she relented and set about fulfilling the demanding role, earning many accolades in the press as her confidence grew. The Daily Telegraph reported “The City was indeed fortunate in the wife of its first citizen”.

Clara had long been a proficient swimmer who enjoyed the surf. Swimming had by now become very popular for both men and women. In her new role she encouraged girls to learn to swim and was often found at baths around Sydney officiating as a judge or helping with instruction. She was also an enthusiastic spectator at cricket and football matches, even more so now with the best seats in the grounds.

Patrick took to his new job with much energy. He worked long hours seven days a week, attended copious meetings at all levels of Government and society. He was determined to win back the trust of the voters in the operations of the council. He commuted every day by tram from his home in Lane Cove to McMahon’s Point where he caught a ferry to the city. He then walked briskly up the hill from Circular Quay to the Town Hall, greeting more and more people on the way as the populace began to recognise their new Chief Commissioner. He was always keen on a good long walk as a means of exercise and to clear his head.

In May 1928, he was hurrying to a meeting at the Town Hall. He made a dash across busy George Street when he tripped and fell in front of oncoming



*Clara Kate Fleming*  
(photo: O'Connor family album)

traffic. The Town Clerk drove him to Sydney Hospital in Macquarie Street where he was treated for abrasions on his legs and shock. He was soon back hard at work but already people started to worry about his state of health. The shock of the accident and the constant overtaking of his strength were taking a toll.

The end for Patrick was not too far away. He attended the Randwick horse races on Saturday 29 September 1928 as the guest of honour at the Spring Carnival. On the following Monday he spent the morning in his garden at Lane Cove before working at the Town Hall for the rest of the day. He had meetings to attend on Tuesday including one with the Premier Thomas Bavin in the afternoon.

After working at the Town Hall on Wednesday morning, he left for a walk through the Domain where he had lunch at the kiosk near the Art Gallery. After lunch he was having coffee with John **Tillett**, the Crown Solicitor and Thomas **Waldron**, the City Solicitor when he became suddenly ill. His colleagues new it was serious and called an ambulance. He was taken to the Lister Private Hospital in Rosebank Street, Darlinghurst where Doctor Archie **Aspinall** treated him for a stroke.

Patrick was soon visited in the hospital by the Town Clerk, William **Layton**. On seeing him, Patrick said “*Hello, here’s the Town Clerk. I am not going to die Layton.*” But Patrick’s confident defiance was soon overturned when his condition worsened before he fell unconscious. A well-respected senior physician, Sir Jarvie **Hood**, was called in but nothing could be done. Patrick passed away at 6pm. He was 52 years old.

Patrick’s funeral at St Mary’s Cathedral two days later was one of the largest seen in Sydney. There were representatives from the Federal and State Governments (over half the State Cabinet Ministers), from business and community groups and from the Defence services and the Clergy. There were long lines of mourners, including thousands who passed his coffin in the church or who lined the streets of Sydney from the church to the Northern Suburbs Cemetery (Macquarie Park). Flags flew over Sydney at half-mast.

In the aftermath when people were looking for ways to honour and recognise Patrick, a fund was set up at the Town Hall to raise money for an appropriate monument. Six months later, the fund had raised over £560 but there was a lack of agreement on how to spend the money. Finally, a decision was made to commission the noted Australian portrait painter, Sir John **Longstaff**, to paint an oil portrait of Patrick from photographs, to be hung in the Town Hall. The balance of the fund was then allocated to a memorial tablet which was placed at Patrick’s grave. Inscribed on the memorial were the words: *Died in service of the City he loved so well.*



*Patrick Fleming Portrait – Sydney City Council*

John Longstaff consulted with Clara over the portrait. Clara favoured a profile portrait that showed a determined brow and strong jaw and she was very happy with the finished product. Clara and her 15 years old daughter Patricia were guests of honour at the official unveiling in March 1930.

A new elected council replaced the commissioners on 1 July 1930. Commissioners would again be appointed to replace Labor Party controlled Sydney City councils on two more occasions.

Although the position of first lady was taken over by the wife of Patrick's successor, Clara was invited to stay on as part of the official party and continue her services in many roles. The wives of the commissioners all got on famously and

Clara was always at the galas, fetes, tea rooms and on the podiums with the others. In recognition of her services, a portrait of Clara was hung in the Lady Mayoress' Rooms in November 1930.

Clara was 69 years old when she died in March 1943. Her daughter Patricia



*Clara and Patricia Fleming at the Unveiling of Patrick Fleming's Portrait at the Sydney Town Hall – The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 March 1930*

never married, instead joining the Daughters of Charity, a Catholic religious order first set up in Australia in 1930 in Melbourne. Patricia spent time working in various homes and missions run by the order which dealt mostly with aged and infirm care, mental health and crisis care. Patricia passed away in August 1987 when she was 62.



## **Journal Contributions**

All journal contributions – large or small – are welcome. Email your input to [bbfhs\\_ed@yaho.com.au](mailto:bbfhs_ed@yaho.com.au), leave it in the Editor's folder at the Research Centre or hand it to the Editor or any Committee member at our quarterly meetings. Please add your name and contact details.

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# BBFHS INTEREST GROUPS

by Barbara **Barnes** (Interest Groups Coordinator)

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**T**o all members, long timers, new why not give an interest groups are available to give your Family Trees and to with suggestions by fellow discussion and interaction also assists the Society's for community enjoyment. We yours! Please feel free to contact a coordinator for further information.



members and those in between, group a try? These smaller research assistance with break down brick walls participants. The during a group's session function to be a social hub all love stories. Let us hear

The group coordinators are:

Irish Interest – Elizabeth **Steinlein** (care of [info@botanybayfhs.org.au](mailto:info@botanybayfhs.org.au))

Scottish Interest – Jean **Campbell** ([jeanhcampbell47@gmail.com](mailto:jeanhcampbell47@gmail.com))

Writers Interest – Leonie **Bell** ([LeonieNB65@gmail.com](mailto:LeonieNB65@gmail.com))

Family Tree Maker for Windows and Macs –

**Pam Heather** ([pamheather@gmail.com](mailto:pamheather@gmail.com))

DNA for Family History – John **Levy** ([j.levy@bigpond.net.au](mailto:j.levy@bigpond.net.au))

Technology Interest – Jennie **Fairs** ([fairsj@gmail.com](mailto:fairsj@gmail.com))

## UPCOMING PROGRAM

### IRISH INTEREST:

Saturday 23 August 2 – 4pm

By ZOOM

### SCOTTISH INTEREST:

Saturday 9 August 2 – 4pm

At the Research Centre

### WRITERS INTEREST:

Thursday 22 May 1.30 – 3.30pm

By ZOOM

Thursday 24 July 1.30 – 3.30pm

### FAMILY TREE MAKER

Tuesday 27 May 1.30 – 3.30pm

### FOR WINDOWS & MACS:

Thursday 26 August 1.30 – 3.30pm

By ZOOM



**DNA FOR FAMILY HISTORY:** Saturday 24 May 1.30 – 3.30pm

By ZOOM Saturday 26 July 1.30 – 3.30pm

**TECHNOLOGY INTEREST:** Saturday 12 July 2 – 4 pm

By ZOOM

**AUSTRALIAN FOCUS ONE** Saturday 21 June

**DAY SEMINAR:**

At the Research Centre

**NOTE:** Session dates are organised months in advance, so members are advised to check the latest details on our Events Calendar at [www.botanybayfhs.org.au](http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au) or see your fortnightly BBFHS eNEWS. You can book and pay the \$5 fee to attend an interest group meeting at <http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/payments.html>, preferably 24 hours prior to the meeting.



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# PAPER CHASE

by Helen **Bain** (Member)

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**W**hile researching the life of my great grandfather's sister Elizabeth, it quickly became apparent she was a prime example of why researchers should exercise caution and not take details given on official documents as the truth.

At the beginning of my search I was fortunate to make contact with a distant cousin. One of the first things she asked me was, "Do you know the name 'Conger **Kellar**'?" She immediately had my full attention as it was one of my brick walls. It is a name whose origins and correct spelling have never been established and is possibly the result of the misheard version of a foreign name.

The first time I saw the name was on the 1883 birth certificate of one my grandmother's brothers, Francis Sottero **Alexander**. It was the name of the person present at his birth – Mrs Conger Kallar. An uncle of Dad's confirmed she was his aunt but didn't seem keen to expand on the subject.

So along with another cousin we were fortunate to meet along the way, we set to work on a paper chase which extended on and off over a period of eight years until 2019.

Elizabeth was born 25 March 1858 with the surname **Abbott** in Leicester, England, the second of the three children of James Abbott, shoemaker, and his wife Elizabeth (nee) **Davidson**. My great grandfather Frances (Frank) was the youngest and also born in Leicester. The name Abbott was in itself a revelation to us because we only knew Frank with the surname Alexander.

The eldest of the three children was Mark William Abbott, born 1855 in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (more about him later, see postscript). He could not be definitely traced past the 1871 Census of Wellingborough, where as an apprentice shoe maker, he was living in the household of a shoe finisher.

After James Abbott died, Elizabeth's mother's second marriage was to James Alexander, and the young Elizabeth and brother Francis, took that surname. What was thought to be Elizabeth's first recorded use of the name Alexander was found in the 1871 Census of Battersea, Surrey, England. It was a girl of that name, born Leicester, circa 1857, age 14 – a servant to coffee house keeper Robert **Cornbill**. The family had moved south to an area close to the Docklands in London as step-father James Alexander was an engine fitter and millwright.

In 1874, at the age 17, Elizabeth Alexander obtained an assisted passage to New Zealand as a nurse maid. Within a year she had married Charles Bailey **Nurse**, age 40, to whom she had two sons, Charles Alexander and James Herbert. On 14 March 1879 the ship *Hudson* arrived in Wellington, New Zealand bearing



assisted migrants James and Elizabeth Alexander and family. Their sponsor was listed as Mrs Elizabeth Nursey.

Between 1879 and 1883, there is a gap in our knowledge but by 1883 Elizabeth had left New Zealand and was living at 5 Hart Street, Millers Point, Sydney, near the docks, a slum area in a street which no longer exists.

In January that year she gave birth to a son whose name she registered as Sottero Cougher Keller Nursey. The father's name on the birth certificate was given as Nicholas Nursey, labourer, born in Greece, and one male child living but not named. The new child's parents' date and place of marriage on the certificate were given as New Zealand, October 1875, which matches that Elizabeth married Charles Bailey Nursey. The mother's birth place was given as Glasgow, Scotland.



*Elizabeth Alexander, Stella Nursey and her father James Herbert Nursey, Elizabeth Alexander, snr.  
(Bain family album)*

No record of a divorce from Charles Bailey Nursey has been found and it has been confirmed he lived until 1905. There was no trace of the “one male child living” mentioned in the certificate or her other son.

In March 1883 an Elizabeth **Habbatt** married Nicolos **Conger-Kalar**, mariner, of Athens, Greece. The bride's place of birth given was Scotland. In August, five months later, Nicholas Congerkeller died of heart disease at 5 Hart Street, Millers Point, Sydney. His death was registered by Elizabeth's brother, Francis Alexander (my great grandfather), who states his brother-in-law's spouse to be Elizabeth, formerly ABBOTT and Nicholas' nationality as Italian. Because a third party supplied the information, there was no opportunity to alter facts.

When the child Sottero was two years old, Elizabeth married again; to a German shoemaker, Joachim “John” **Warning**. The wedding took place in the

Garrison Church in the Rocks, Sydney. Keeping the myth going, the bride gave her place of birth as Scotland and her parents' names as James Alexander and Elizabeth Davidson (her step father's name and her mother's maiden name).

From her death certificate I found that Elizabeth Warning was buried in Waverley Cemetery and a visit to the site revealed more. Buried with her is "ROBERT "SOTTERO" NELSON – 1883-1936", as per the headstone. On Robert's death certificate his father is named as John Nelson, a wharf labourer. Robert Nelson's relationship to Elizabeth is not mentioned on the headstone but his year of birth, 1883, the same year of birth of the previously mentioned Sottero Nursey is. Interestingly, the Alexander family home in New Zealand happened to be in Nelson, New Zealand.

A revisit to the *Trove* newspaper collection uncovered more articles not previously seen. These detailed the career of the teenage Sottero Conger-Keller, also known as Robert Nelson or Sottero Warning. He was being sought by authorities as an absconding *Sobraon* apprentice.

With my late father's interest in naval history, I knew *Sobraon* to be the name of a sailing ship which, at one time, he intended to build a model. The *Sobraon* became part of the fledgling Australian Navy as a training ship and late in its career it became an industrial school – a reformatory for delinquent boys. It was anchored in Sydney Harbour off Cockatoo Island. The boys lived on board, sleeping in hammocks, wore naval attire and undertook a naval training regime to give them some education and discipline. From there, placements were sought for hopefully gainful employment or apprenticeships.

Fortunately the Entrance Books with admission details for the 'cadets' on the *Sobraon* are available on *Ancestry.com* and those of Lottero (sic) Conger Kaller came up. In Sottero's case, it was his mother who had him placed there – not through the courts which was usually the case. He was said to be out of control and did not get on with his step father whom he claimed beat him. He was not attending school, stole money from his mother's purse and slept rough in the streets at night.

Regular family days were held on the ship for boys to keep in touch with their families. His mother paid 2/6 per week for his keep and visited him on family days. By this time Elizabeth also had new family to John Warning.

While going through Sottero's admission papers I noticed a cross reference to another 'cadet' onboard – "See Noisey file". Noisey was unusual, could it be Nursey? What were the chances? The Noisey admission documents were in fact for James Herbert Noisey, a misspelling of the name Nursey. To my utter amazement Elizabeth's youngest son to Charles Nursey and Sottero's half brother who we were previously unable to trace, were both on the *Sobraon* at the same time!

It was obvious from the notes on the file that the authorities were aware of the connection between the two boys and Elizabeth Warning. It was recorded on James' file that Elizabeth visited Sottero on family days but not James. It was clear from the notes that James was aware of his mothers' visits to his half brother but not him - something he bitterly resented.

Another letter on James file, purporting to be from his natural father in New

203

**11845** Name Robert Nelson alias George Williams

Date when Portrait was taken 12 - 5 - 1911 Hawkins

Native place Sydney

Year of birth 1882

Arrived in { Ship B.B.  
Colony { Year

Trade or occupation { Coach driver  
previous to conviction {

Religion CoP.C.

Education, degree of R. and W.

Height, without shoes, ... 5 feet 11 7 inches

Weight { On committal 154  
in lbs. { On discharge

Colour of hair Fair

Colour of eyes Blue

Marks or special features R.H. outside  
left forearm, one  
large and four small  
birth marks on stomach  
small scar on right  
knee




5 R (Q1) 15  
3  
(No of previous Portrait / O.C.I.R...)

9 - 10 - 07.

**CONVICTIONS.**

Where and When.				Offence.	Sentence.
<u>Tare. P.B.</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Drunkennes</u>	<u>5/ or 24 hours</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>Resist the police</u>	<u>15/ or 7 days Hk</u>
<u>Tare. Q.S.</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>Stealing in a dwelling house</u>	<u>18 mons Hk</u>

*Sottero's gaol entry record, 1911.*

Zealand, stated that Elizabeth left the country with James, after stealing and selling her husband's belongings in his absence at sea, to make her escape from New Zealand. According to details given in the court hearing, James was abandoned in Sydney and ended up living on the streets after his adoptive mother became terminally ill and could no longer care for him. His records state he was in poor physical shape when picked up by the authorities. From there he appeared in court and was sent to the *Sobraon*.

From Trove newspapers we learned that Robert/Sottero absconded from the apprenticeship to which he was assigned, something which resulted in his first mention in the New South Wales Police Gazette. He became a petty criminal and has two 'portraits' in the Darlinghurst Gaol rogues gallery, using aliases: Robert Nelson, Sottero Conger Kellar, Sottero Warning, George Williams or Hawkins – taking a leaf out of his mother's book with his collection of names. Finally, he went on to marry and was employed in several jobs and died in 1936.

James Nursey also married, raised a family and likewise had a rather short life, dying in his 50s. From New Zealand records on *Ancestry*, James' older brother Charles Alexander Nursey was also located. He is listed as a mariner and himself in and out of the courts for petty crime.

Elizabeth Abbott, Alexander, Nursey, Habbatt, Conger Kellar, Warning, or Nurse Warning as she became known, went on to become a respected midwife working in the East Sydney area. Of her family of five children with John Warning, only two survived infancy. She died in 1920 in Sydney Hospital from an obstruction to the oesophagus. Sadly, James, Sottero and Charles were ultimately collateral damage along the way as their mother made a life for herself.

The final pieces of the puzzle which commenced in 2008 came together with the *Sobraon* admission papers and the *Trove* newspaper articles located in 2019.

Research for the origin of the name 'Sottero' is not definite but I found a Greek family living and operating businesses in the Miller's Point area at the time that Elizabeth and Nicholas Conger-Kellar lived there. As fellow Greeks they possibly fostered a friendship. Who knows?

The spellings of all the names are as they appeared in official documents and the press.

One item from Trove caused me a rueful smile. The Elizabeth T~~aye~~, mentioned as the defendant in the accompanying article, was closer to the truth than she knew. Elizabeth Warning obviously remembered to take the correct marriage certificate with her for her day in court.

## **Feminine Vituperation.**

At the Water Police Court yesterday before Mr. Lee, S.M., Elizabeth T~~aye~~ was summoned by Elizabeth Warning for having used to her insulting words, to the effect that the latter had had "six bastards by a Dutchman." The complainant and her mother swore to the language, and the former indignantly produced her marriage certificate, which completely disproved the defendant's statement. Her husband, who is a gas-stoker, gave corroborative evidence, and the defendant, who carried a stout child in her arms, was fined 20s, with £1 1s professional costs, and 4s 10d costs of court, or 14 days' imprisonment in default.

*Trove: Evening News (Sydney, NSW), 12 November 1890*

## POSTSCRIPT - Mark William Abbott

*Mark Abbott 5'6", approx DOB 1855, Wellingborough, Northampton. 10th Regiment of Foot. Labourer, Hair Brown, Eyes Brown, Fair Complexion. Source: Ancestry/Fold3 – UK Military Deserters*

It is probable but not proven that the Mark Abbott I mentioned earlier in my narrative is described above. It was one entry amongst a staggering list of names of those who deserted from the British military.

However there was an interesting twist when my sister was researching the history of the 10th Regiment of Foot (later the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment), she found that their headquarters are located in the *Sobraon Barracks*. The name commemorates an action in which the Regiment took part in the Anglo- Sikh war and known as the Battle of Sobraon. Co-incidence?

**RESEARCHERS** – Helen Bain, Cheryl Leach, Jenny Baldwin, Anthea Booth

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- Trove. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>
- Military Records of the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F221116>



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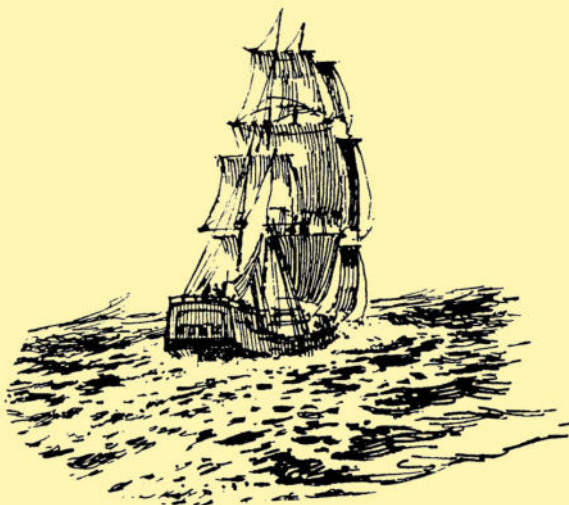
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