



TRACKS

Journal of the
**Tweed Gold Coast Family History & Heritage
Association Inc**



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Front Cover

The cemetery headstone for William and Mary Ryan at Dapto Cemetery, New South Wales. William, Jenny Merrell's 3xgreat grandfather, is the subject of Jenny's article, starting on Page 8.

From The President's Desk

Here we are at the start of Autumn and such lovely weather after a rather tumultuous month and rather a lot of rain. I do hope everyone has come through the storms with no damage and all is well.

I would like to ask all members if they could consider finding some time (as little as a few hours every couple of weeks) to assist in the Research Room on a regular basis. Our current volunteers do a fantastic job, but it would be wonderful if we could get a few more permanent helpers to be trained up and back up our existing Roster. Every little bit helps and would be very much appreciated. Thank you.

It seems we have a regular requirement of more stories or articles that could be included in Tracks, which is put together for our enjoyment by Marion Kelso. It is amazing how small snippets we all have locked away in our archives are interesting or amusing to others and seem insignificant to us. Even stories of how you came across an exciting find in your research. So please.....dig deep and send some stories and tales through to Marion or we will have a very depleted journal in the future

Let's pull together and try and get our membership up. Welcome to our new members and keep spreading the word.

Wendy Marshall
President



Editorial

Another financial year is about to end and, along with it, our membership year. All members with email addresses will have received a membership renewal form a few weeks ago. We do hope that most, if not all, of our members will wish to renew. We continue to work hard to keep everybody up to date with what is happening in the world of family history. We also maintain a valuable resource, our Research Room, for all members to use. And we have commenced some workshops on various family history subjects—see Page 22.

We will shortly begin to prepare for our Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is to be held on Tuesday, 5 August 2025. The AGM is when we elect new office bearers and present annual reports from the President and Treasurer.

A notice for the AGM and a nomination form for the position of office bearers and membership renewal forms will be sent out soon by email. (For those couple of members who do not receive Tracks by email, the forms will be included with your Tracks.)

This issue we have another great article by Jenny Merrell, this time about her Irish rebel ancestor, William Ryan. Also an article by Marion Gardner on an incident in Broken Hill during WW1. Tom Fletcher's story of Harry Mann—or MacKay—raises questions as to why some people change their names. And President, Wendy, has provided a story found on Facebook about Jenny, the Titanic cat. Probably not factual, but a nice little story. Thank you, Jenny, Marion, Tom & Wendy for your articles.

October 2025 Tracks

The cut-off date for ordering hard copies is 15 October 2025. Each hard copy will be supplied at a cost of \$5. (This does not include members who pay for hard copies along with their membership fee.)



Get-Together Dates

Place: South Tweed Sports Club, 4 Minjungbal Drive,
Tweed Heads South

Time: 1.15 pm for a 1.30 pm start

Future get-togethers

Tuesday, 1 July 2025

Tuesday, 5 August 2025
Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, 2 September 2025

Tuesday, 7 October 2025 (Daylight saving time)

Details of the agenda of each get-together will be advised in the monthly Trails newsletters, closer to the date/s.

Membership Renewals to be paid by 5 August 2025

Membership of our group is due for renewal on 1 July 2025.

In line with our current procedure, the grace period for renewal of memberships expires on the date of our Annual General Meeting (5 August 2025).

Please note that if you have not paid your membership fee by 5 August 2025, you will no longer be a financial member. Members paying after this date will be charged another \$10 joining fee.

Please also remember to keep your membership of the South Tweed Sports Club current.

Websites of Interest

Scottish Indexes

<https://www.scottishindexes.com/>

When this website was originally reported in the October 2014 Tracks, it was brand new. Since then, many indexed records have been added, with more to come. The Scotland's Criminal Database is particularly extensive. The Scottish Paternity Index has over 40,000 entries. The 1841, 1851 & 1861 census entries are also increasing, with excellent full transcriptions of households. The indexes are free to use, as well as basic (sometimes complete) transcriptions of the records.

FreeBMD

<https://www.freebmd.org.uk/>

Part of the Free UK Genealogy family, FreeBMD has been around for decades. The website is a transcription of the GRO index which comprises the births, marriage and death records for England and Wales, from 1837 onwards. FreeBMD is, as the name suggests, free to use, and is manned totally by volunteers. If you are unfamiliar with the website, read the Help and FAQs pages on the site.

General Register Office (GRO) (England & Wales)

<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp>

Also free to use is the GRO's official website. Some years ago, the GRO re-indexed births and deaths from 1837, and the index on this site reflects this project. The new index includes a little extra information than the original version (mother's maiden name for births & age at death for deaths). However, searching is not as easy as on FreeBMD. I recommend using both sites. Registration is required on the GRO website. At this stage, marriages are not covered by this website.

FindAGrave

<https://www.findagrave.com/>

According to the website, this is the world's largest gravesite collection., with over 250 million memorials. Since 2013, the site has been owned by Ancestry.com, however, unlike Ancestry, it is free to use. The site is simple to use and many records include photos of headstones or plaques which can be saved to your computer. Even if there is no photo, a record may provide the details of where your family member is buried.

William Ryan - Irish Rebel

Aka – “Liam the Thubber” My 3rd great grandfather

One September night in the year 1815, in the village of Ballagh, in the Clonoulty parish, County Tipperary, Ireland, a young impressionable lad of 23 with a ruddy dark complexion, black hair, hazel eyes, and a height of 5 feet 9¼ inches, was about to make a decision to become involved in a situation that would change the course of his life forever. At this time in Ireland there was much unrest, disturbance, and hatred for the English overlords. Within troublesome Tipperary, the parish with the reputation for being the most lawless district of all was - Clonoulty. From 1813 there had been thirty cases of agrarian murders (violent incidents which can be related to land ownership, competition for resources, or other factors).

In Ireland ‘tithes’ were introduced at the Synod of Cashel in 1171, but were, at the time, confined generally to areas under Anglo-Norman control. Tithes were a tax required to be paid by farmers. The collected monies went to support the local Church of Ireland clergymen. Some of the collectors (called Proctors) were Irish; these men were the most hated of all. By 1816 the tithes collected went to the English lords who took literally one tenth of the lands’ produce for the year. The tithe burden lay directly on the shoulders of farmers, whether tenants or owner-occupiers. More often than not, tithes were paid in the form of produce or livestock; those that couldn’t pay were evicted.

That fateful night in September 1815, about one hundred Irishmen (including young William Ryan) rioted through Ballagh, bent on destroying an infirmary (a dispensary; a kind of hospital) where English soldiers were about to be garrisoned. They were sent there by the English to uphold law and order by enforcing the Insurrection Act of 1814. The law was protecting the position of the Establishment, the landlords and the agents who collected the hated tithe and evicted those who could not pay. The lawless had banded together in an organisation called the ‘Whiteboys’. These ‘midnight legislators’ (as they were sometimes called) had no intention of allowing the constabulary to take a closer order on their activity. What makes it (the destruction of the building) the more extraordinary is that this house was used as a dispensary for giving medicine to the poor, so there was no way that the Whiteboys were going to let the English take possession of it to house their soldiers.

William’s nickname came about because he was a blacksmith. Smiths needed a water supply close by, handy to their forge. *Thubber* is close to Gaelic for well, so *William of the well* makes sense. But Liam’s friends might have occasionally toyed with the thought of amending this title to *Bill the Thumper*, as there was nothing of the hesitant in William Ryan’s make-up; it was William who brought his sledge to the September 7

party in Ballagh. With axes, saws and sledges, the bulk of the men attacked the building; a few stood at a distance on sentry duty. Their leader (rightly or wrongly identified as Pat Keogh) kept walking backwards and forwards between the sentries and the demolition squad. In the melee that followed the building was destroyed.

William Ryan, blacksmith of Ballagh, was named in one context as hailing from Killough Hill, some six miles to the northeast, in the direction of Littleton. Informer, Michael Dwyer, gave William a special mention in his sworn statement on the overturned dispensary:

William Ryan a smith who lived near the dispensary was active in pulling it down and had brought a sledge for that purpose.

Four months later, fourteen of the rioters were arrested and tried, William was amongst them. The identified leader, Michael Keogh was tried, found guilty and executed two weeks later. The remaining 13, including William Ryan, were convicted under the Insurrection Act for being absent from home. In exchange for a guilty plea, they were granted a conditional pardon in the form of transportation to New South Wales for 14 years. The 13 men departed from Cobh, County Cork in July 1816, aboard the convict ship 'Surrey 1 (2)', arriving in Port Jackson on 26 December 1816. If the convict records are accurate, apart from James Ryan who was 44 years old at the time of departure, the average age of the other twelve was only slightly above 24. What did it feel like for the new arrivals to be Irish in this setting? *Uncomfortable* would be a mild answer. They differed from the ordinary transportee from England where social and economic conditions had created a 'criminal class'. (The lag from London, when describing his trade, tended to answer: *thief*). By contrast the men of Ballagh were first offenders, and protestors against the socio-economic and political oppression in their country.

14 July 1816 Cork Ireland - The Surrey, (aka Surry), built at Harwich in 1811, was a square-rigged transport ship of 443 tons and was copper lined. She had two decks with a height between decks of 5 feet 8 inches, with a Minerva bust as a figurehead and was owned by the London firm of F & C F Mangles. Commanded by Thomas Raine, she sailed from London, departing Cork on 14 July and travelling via Rio de Janeiro, she reached Sydney after 159 days, on 20 December, with 150 male prisoners. Raine had been a junior officer on the Surrey's earlier ill-fated trip to Australia when typhus had broken out and, because of their close confinement, fifty-one had died. On the 1816 voyage he made sure the prisoners' quarters had better ventilation, were fumigated and allowed the prisoners to take turns on the deck for fresh air. The markedly improved treatment for the prisoners under the enlightened captaincy of Thomas Raine and the presence of naval surgeon, John F Bayley, were reflected by their safe arrival without one fatality. The prisoners themselves, on disembarking in Sydney on 26 December 1816 - *cheered repeatedly and expressed the liveliest gratitude for their good treatment on the voyage.*

16 December 1816 Port Jackson NSW - By the time of the Surrey's arrival in 1816, the colony was only 28 years old. The situation had improved immensely since the Scot, Governor Lachlan Macquarie came into office in 1810. He favoured emancipists (ex-convicts), granting them land, which suited the Irish convicts who were mainly from Dublin and Cork. Unlike their English counterparts, they were more likely to have rural experience and a trade. So many of them prospered in their new land, but their downfall was rum, which they seemed to consume in vast quantities. This caused untold problems in the colony, drunkenness, fighting, womanising, theft and debt were among the few.

This was a very accurate description of my ancestor, William Ryan, who, as mentioned earlier, was a blacksmith by trade. On arrival, William was assigned to John Oxley (who was an early explorer), on his farm named 'Kirkham' at Elderslie, Camden NSW.

William Ryan was born in Cashel, Tipperary, Ireland, c1792¹, and died in Dapto, NSW in 1884.

Mary Higgins, my 3rd great grandmother was born 5 January 1795 at Sydney Cove, shortly after her parents, Sergeant Robert Higgins and Lydia Farrell (a convict and his common law wife) returned from Norfolk Island, after a posting of several years, on the ship 'Daedalus'. (Lydia was the subject of one of my earlier stories). Robert Higgins was granted 50 acres of land at Upper Minto on the banks of the Nepean; he was assigned the convict, Thomas Seymour, who had arrived on the 'Admiral Gambier (2)' in 1811.

Mary was 18 when her first child, Ann, was born in 1813. Mary (Robert and Lydia's eldest daughter) married Tom Seymour, on 15 March 1814, at St John's Church, Parramatta. By 1822, the Seymour family, with their four children (Ann, George, James and John) were living in the Upper Minto district where they leased 80 acres of land. Unfortunately for Tom, their farm was opposite the entrance of 'Kirkham'.

William Ryan, the blacksmith at 'Kirkham', was in the habit of visiting the Seymour farm for a pot of rum when Tom was away. He often went there on Saturday night and returned to 'Kirkham' on Monday morning, usually too drunk to work. It was known locally that William was in the habit of making advances to Mary, and had been warned against it, but apparently they were not unwelcome (to Mary).

6 December 1822 - After servitude of six years, John Oxley wrote a reference for William, attesting to his good character. This enabled William to receive his 'ticket of leave'. He was 30 years of age.

We do hereby certify that William Ryan who came by the ship Surrey in the year 1816, has not been convicted of any crime or misdemeanour in this Colony; but is, to our certain Belief, an honest, sober, and industrious character, having served faithfully John Oxley Esq residing in the District of Cooke from the 6th December 1816 to the 6 December 1822. (John Oxley).

William received his ticket of leave, left 'Kirkham', and was employed by Mr Dixon of Bringelly, NSW.

1822 & 1823 - William was living in Liverpool, NSW².

1825 - Oh no - I had a suspicion it wouldn't last! In 1825, William was charged at Liverpool, with assault and sentenced to twelve months hard labour at the Sydney Jail, for fighting with Timothy Lacey (publican's son) and Charles Bailey.

3 August 1826 – William wrote a petition letter to Governor Darling requesting a mitigation of his sentence. It was accompanied by a note of recommendation from John Oxley:

The petitioner William Ryan lived in my service nearly ten years, during which period he conducted himself as an honest and industrious man. I never had occasion to complain of him and I had every reason to believe him quiet and inoffensive. As such I venture to recommend the Prayer of his memorial to the human consideration of His Excellency the Governor.

The annotation from Governor Darling stated: *let him be released.*

William returned to 'Kirkham' as the blacksmith, but on 8 October 1827, William was at it again, charged with drunkenness and indecent behaviour. As a result, he lost his ticket of leave on 5 November 1827.

1828 - William was working in the mineral surveyor's department at Parramatta. This was quite a change for William and may have been influenced by the death of John Oxley on 25 May 1828, at the young age of 44.

1829 - The 1828 Census stated that Thomas Seymour was a tenant farmer at Lower Minto and by then had 7 children. By 1829 he was a settler at Upper Minto and his wife Mary had left him and was living with William Ryan.³

2 January 1830 When William received his Certificate of Freedom in 1830⁴, he and Mary moved to Picton, taking with them Rebecca Margaret, Thomas Seymour's 2nd youngest child, or so I thought. I have since found evidence that William was in a relationship with Mary as early as 1825. When Rebecca Margaret Seymour was born

in 1827, she was baptised at St Peter's Church of England in Campbelltown, naming Thomas Seymour as the father⁵. When the family moved to Picton, she was baptised again in 1830 (that had me totally confused) at St Mary's, Picton, in the Roman Catholic faith and her name changed to Margaret Ryan⁶. From then on, Margaret's two marriages and her death certificate have named William Ryan as her father.

5 June 1831 –Sarah Seymour (known as Ryan), William & Mary's daughter, Sarah (my 2nd great grandmother) was born in Picton, NSW.

Note: There is a lot of confusion in some of the family trees on Ancestry. Many people have Sarah Ryan and her younger sister, Bridget (born 1832), attached to Thomas Seymour's line, as they were baptised with the surname Seymour, with Thomas shown as the father. However, that is not feasible. Mary left Thomas in 1829 and was living in Picton with William by 1830. Margaret (previously Rebecca Margaret), Sarah & Bridget, although baptised with the Seymour surname, were baptised at St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Picton. Thomas Seymour was Church of England. In the *Illawarra Pioneers Register: Pre 1900*, William Ryan is listed as having 5 issue: Margaret, Sarah, Bridget, William & Peter Ryan, also dates of their births, marriages and deaths all naming William Ryan as their father, plus whom they married and where. By all the evidence I have uncovered in my research of William Ryan, I firmly believe William is my 3rd great grandfather. Thank goodness for DNA, it will all be sorted one day.

7 November 1832 - William Ryan of Charcoal Creek was among those registered at the Post Office, Wollongong, as receiving letters. It would seem that this was our William.

17 November 1832 - Bridget Seymour (known as Ryan) was born in Picton NSW – see above Note.

March 1833 – the family moved to the Illawarra district.

1834 - William was involved in a court case with a neighbour, Thomas Hyatt, who stole a sack of sugar from him, but this time William was the plaintiff. not the defendant. When Mrs Hyatt withdrew as a witness, the case was dropped as it was reliant on her testimony.

1835 – William & Mary's 3rd child, a boy named William, was born, Dapto, Wollongong, NSW⁷.

1837 - the records of the Wollongong Bench of Magistrates include a case report involving a William Ryan of Illawarra. He and a Cornelius Whoolihan went guarantors for Hugh Kennedy who had opened an alehouse in Wollongong 'under the sign of the Governor Burke'.

19 April 1837 – William and Mary's last child, Peter, was born in Berkeley, Wollongong, NSW⁸. Peter was baptised that year and one of the sponsors was Matthew Ryan. The christening took place at Ryan's Vale, which was the name of Matthew's 220-acre property. This association led to speculation that the two (William and Matthew) were related, but even though they both came from Tipperary, it seems by my research that this is unlikely.

August 1838 - William purchased a sizeable piece of real estate: 72 acres in Camden County, near present day Dapto: *Bounded by the east by the New Road from Wollongong to Shoalhaven on the south corner by Mulletts Creek, on the west by the Veterans Allotments*, the purchase price was £120.10.0.

William eventually settled on the New South Wales south coast at Dapto, and called his 70-acre property, Ansgrove. It may have been merely coincidence that there was an Annes Grove in the northerly sector of William's home parish.

13 March 1841 - William and Mary were living at Ann's Grove, Mullet Creek, in a dwelling made of wood⁹.

1855-1856 – William Ryan is listed in the electoral roll at Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia – Freehold – Near Mullet Creek¹⁰.

There is record of a marriage between a William Ryan & a Mary Higgins in Albury, NSW in 1866. I sent for the transcription as I was dearly hoping that it was my William and Mary, but it turned out not to be. It would have made me very happy if they had finally 'tied the knot' before her death in 1867. On Mary's death certificate, her son, Peter, had her married to William in 1827, but I have found no evidence to say that they were ever legally married. Maybe that is why she registered Sarah & Bridget as 'Seymour' as it was not an advantage in those early days to be branded 'illegitimate'. (I have a great grandmother who registered all her children in my great grandfather's name even though they separated after her first 2 were born.)

24 October 1867 - Mary died on 24 October 1867¹¹. She was buried at the small Catholic cemetery at West Dapto where some of her Seymour and Ryan descendants are buried. Mary's death certificate states she died of measles.

30 October 1868 – William writes his will leaving everything to his youngest son, Peter, who looked after him in his old age¹².

24 June 1884 - William Ryan died at Dapto, from 'natural decay' His death was registered by his son-in-law, James Williamson¹³.

*Mr William Ryan, who died recently in Dayton at the extraordinary age of 103 years, has relations in the Albury district. He was a colonist of over 70 years, having had a blacksmith's shop in Brickfield-hill, Sydney, in the beginning of the century. He married Mary Higgins, who was the first white woman born in the colony, and the daughter of a sergeant in the 40th regiment.*¹⁴

While researching for this article I have also discovered that Rebecca Margaret Seymour, who was renamed Margaret Ryan, must be the relative mentioned in his obituary, as she was living in Albury. So, another problem was solved.

1988 - In the village of Ballagh, in the parish of Clonoulty, Tipperary, Ireland, is a memorial stone unveiled in Australia's Bicentenary Year - 1988 - to the fourteen men who:

In 1815 at this place made their defiant protest against increasing military coercion when the landlords abused the law. Having steadfastly fulfilled their sentence, they contributed to the progress of their adopted land and forged links between it and their homeland.

Men such as these did much to forge the character and style of the developing lands they adopted and they and their descendants have left us with a proud tradition.

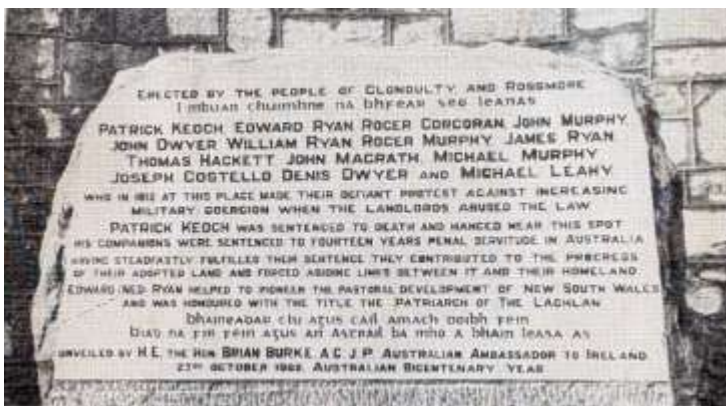
With William's death, all fourteen of the "Irish rebels" had been laid to rest.

The Gaelic on the Ballagh Monument reads:

In memory of the following men

They achieved fame and renown for themselves

The men involved, and Australia mostly, reaped the gain.



Further notes: The Edward Ryan & James Ryan, who were transported with William in 1816, were no relation. When I started writing this story, it wasn't going to be this long, but William Ryan was such a fascinating character, the more I found out the more I wanted to know! I've often wondered what made William so aggressive. A William Ryan was murdered November 1814 on the way home from Ballagh to Cashel (Cashel is where William was born). Could he have been my William's father and could it have been the cause of his aggression? It is a possibility, but there are so many William Ryan's in Tipperary, it's hard to know. I guess that leads to further research.

My father had Irish on both sides, his mother's and his father's, but he was a gentle soul compared to William. On a Friday night, after he had been to the local pub and had a few drinks under his belt, he would gather us kids (there were 5 of us) around the kitchen table and he would have us singing all the Irish songs, I miss those days! One of his favourites was 'It's a long way to Tipperary' and now I wonder if he knew of the connection. That I will never know. That's why it's important to ask all the questions of our older folk while we still can.

I have been to the Old Dapto Cemetery to visit William & Mary's grave, and I found it very emotional. Years ago, they wanted to build over it, but a petition was taken up (which I signed) and so far it is still preserved.

I love this paragraph taken from son, Peter Ryan's obituary which appeared in *The Kiama Independent* Saturday 26th May 1923:

The Cemetery is situated in a quiet peaceful spot, away from all the turmoil and bustle of life, where lie the remains of many of the old pioneers, whose tombstones record the great ages they lived, which is an object lesson to many of the present generation, who do not know the views their grandparents held, but who were wise in their generation than they mostly got credit for. One thing is for certain, we never knew their thoughts, but have since found out long since their works live after them. We cannot change yesterday – this is clear, or begin tomorrow until it is here. So all that is left for you and me is to make today as sweet as can be.

Footnotes

1. According to his death transcription and an obituary in the *Illawarra Mercury* of 8 July 1884 'Death of a Centenarian', William was 103 years old. There is some conjecture about this, some say he was 92. In any case, he lived to a good age. Going by the court and ship records, I tend to think he was 92, which would make him born about 1792
2. Liverpool Population Book 1822 (Ancestry.com)
3. Early Settlers at the Cowpasture River New South Wales 1810-1830

4. New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1827-1867 - Name: William Ryan, Birth Year: 1793, Native Place: County Tipperary, Ireland, Vessel: Surrey
5. NSW BMD 1827 V18279454 1c
6. NSW BMD 1704/1830 V8301704125 district LD
7. NSW BDM 597/1835V1835597 129
8. NSW BDM 2484/1837 V18372484 127
9. Illawarra Pioneers Register: Pre- 1900; Ryan William – Return no 345 – Place of residence: Ann’s Grove, Mullet Creek, and Illawarra –Person in charge of house, William Ryan – no of residents Ten – no of free persons nine – Location 4/1243B.
10. New South Wales, Australia Historical Electoral Rolls, 1842-1864
11. NSW BDM 8526/1867 Dapto/Wollongong
12. William Ryan's Last Will & Testament - witnesses: John Cutt and Percy Owen.
13. NSW BDM 10241/1884 Transcription: Date of death: 24 June 1884, Cause of death: natural decay, Informant: Son-in-Law, James Williamson, Fairy Meadow
14. *Evening News*, Sydney, New South Wales, Friday, 25 July 1884, Page 2. This item includes a few, shall we say, inconsistencies. William was not 103, he didn’t have a blacksmith’s shop in Brickfield, and his wife, Mary, was certainly not the first white woman born in the colony.

Bibliography:

Ancestry.com

“Because of These” – Irish background, Australian Surround of Thirteen Tipperary Transportees - Author - Father Max Barrett, C.SS.R

NSW Early Church and District codes.

Murder, Mayhem & Misdemeanours, Early Settlers At the Cowpasture River New South Wales 1810-1830 Author Marion Starr.

NSW Births, Deaths & Marriages

Trove Australia – Newspapers & Gazettes

Submitted by Jenny Byrne Merrell (Member number 558)



The Titanic Cat

Most people know the tragic story of the Titanic, but few have heard about Jenny — the ship's resident cat, and possibly the only soul on board who sensed what was coming.

Jenny wasn't just any cat. She was the Titanic's official mouser, brought aboard to keep the rodent population in check. During the ship's sea trials, she gave birth to a litter of kittens, and was lovingly cared for by a shipworker named Jim Mulholland.

Jim made a cozy nest for her and her babies near the ship's galley, close to the warmth of the boilers. He even shared kitchen scraps with her during breaks, and their quiet little routine brought him a sense of peace amidst the chaos of preparing the most luxurious ship in history for its maiden voyage.

But something strange happened.

Just days before the Titanic was set to depart from Southampton to New York, Jenny's behaviour changed. She began acting restless. And then — without warning — she started picking up her kittens one by one, gripping them gently by the scruff of the neck... and carrying them off the ship.

Down the gangway she went. Again and again. Until all of her babies were safely ashore. Jim stood and watched her. And in that moment, something clicked. "This cat knows something... something we don't."

Trusting his gut — or maybe trusting hers — Jim packed up his belongings and quietly left the ship. He never boarded again. The Titanic set sail without him. We all know what happened next.

Years later, Jim, now an old man, shared the story with a journalist. He credited Jenny with saving his life. Her instincts — ancient, silent, and unshakable — may have been the only real warning that ever came.

Sometimes, heroes don't wear uniforms. Sometimes, they have fur, whiskers, and a heart that just knows.

Source: Facebook (*Editor: True or not true, it makes a nice story!*)

Submitted by Wendy Marshall (Member number 980)

World War 1 in Broken Hill

In the early days after the discovery of the magnificent ore body in Broken Hill, far western New South Wales, in 1883, it was found necessary to build a railway to the South Australian border at Cockburn, thirty miles away, to carry concentrates to Port Pirie Smelters for refining. The New South Wales Government refused to do so. South Australia had brought a narrow-gauge line to the border, so the Silverton Tramway Company Limited was established and a line built.

On New Years Day 1915, a public holiday, citizens of "The Hill" were going by train to a picnic to be held at Silverton, 15 miles away. The Tramway had provided 40 open concentrate trucks, in which seating forms had been installed for the passengers.

While waiting for the train to arrive, some people noticed Gool Mahomed, accompanied by his friend, Mullah Abdullah, driving his familiar ice cream cart past the station, flying the Turkish flag. The men were from Afghanistan, one of whom was a former camel driver, and, as they were flying the Turkish flag, were referred to as Turks. On the platform people waved to the men as they drove by.

Shortly after the train left the station and was a couple of miles out of town, the Turks, hiding behind their cart in a verge, opened fire on the train & passengers. Alma Cowie, an 18-year-old girl, was killed instantly, as was William Shaw, whose young daughter was wounded in the arm. A line inspector, Alf Millard, riding his bicycle, checking the line, was also killed.

Amid the turmoil, Shaw Hendry and Paddy Lowe risked their lives by running to a nearby house to phone for police and medical attention. The train was moved to the Tramway Company's dam where the victims were removed and further details phoned to Broken Hill.

A number of police then began to hunt down the Turks who had hightailed it into the low hills at the outskirts of the town. Tom Campbell, who lived in a one room cottage on Rocky Hill, who saw them coming with their rifles, slammed his door, a bullet shot through the door wounded him. He was hospitalised, but later recovered from his injury. The Turks then took cover behind a white quartz outcrop near the Cable Hotel on the northeast side of town.

The police, local militia men and rifle club members spread out, firing hundreds of rounds of ammunition at the Turks who kept on firing. A stray bullet killed 98-year-old Jim Craig, who was chopping wood at his nearby backyard. At about 1 o'clock the Turks position was rushed where it was found that Mullah Abdullah was dead and Gool Mahomed injured. He died in hospital several hours later.

That night, incensed citizens burned down the German Club and police and militia were able to block the road to the Camel Camp, as people were angrily attempting to take revenge on the Islam community.

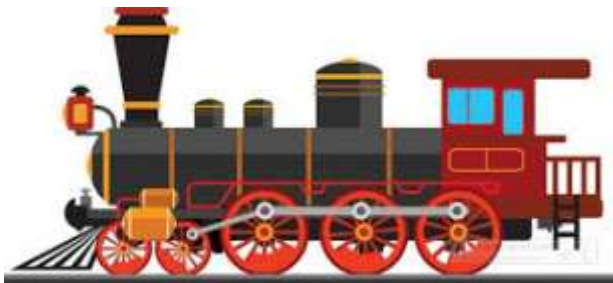
After searching the area later, three statements were found under a rock. Two of the documents gave the reasons for the attack and the third was Gool Mahomed's enlistment form for the Turkish Army. He wrote *"I kill your people because your people are fighting my country"*. Mullah Abdullah had been concerned over a recent court fine for killing a sheep on private property, in his capacity as a Muslim official.

The Local Muslims were horrified at the tragedy and refused to be responsible for the burying of the men. The bodies were later interred in an unhallowed, undisclosed spot in Broken Hill. This incident was the only action taken in Australia during the First World War.

Footnote

When the Sulphide Street Railway Station was decommissioned after the Indian Pacific train was constructed, it became a museum. On visiting the museum at one time, I came across an excerpt from a German newspaper of the time. It was worded something like this: "Our troops had an excellent victory in Broken Hill, Australia, recently. 40 of the enemy were killed with the loss of only two of our troops. Broken Hill is a mining town on the east coast of Australia. The capture of Broken Hill is a step towards the taking of Canberra."

Submitted by Marion Gardner (Member number 84)



Private Harry Mann

With Anzac Day Celebrations not far behind us, I would like to add this little story about a Private Harry Mann/MacKay.

In 1966, my Australian Post Office career took me on promotion to Walcha, New South Wales as Senior Postal Clerk or Assistant Postmaster where I worked with Jim Case who had spent his entire life there.

When I told Jim I began my Postal career at Killarney, Queensland, he was indeed surprised and said his uncle, Harry Mann had moved from Walcha to Killarney marrying a May Lamb. He asked me whether I knew of Harry and I said the person I knew was a Harry MacKay who had married my grandmother's cousin and they lived at Daisy Hill Farm, Killarney. In the conversation I also told him, my father had previously said, he knew Harry MacKay was originally from the Walcha area. Anyway, Jim said Harry served in the AIF in the Great War and had changed his surname to MacKay after he returned to Australia. He said the reason for this change was due to a family problem of which he would not elaborate.

Forty years later, researching the Lamb family and forgetting the discussion between Jim and me, I searched in the computerised 1st AIF Database for a Henry MacKay, rather than a Harry or Henry Mann.

I located a Henry Donald MacKay and his brother Robert who enlisted in the 1st AIF and who, coincidentally gave their address as Killarney, King Street, Mascot, Sydney, New South Wales. This Henry Donald McKay appeared to be the Harry for whom I was searching but I had a problem as he had served in the Artillery under Regimental Number 34786, whilst the Harry MacKay, for whom I was searching, had served in an Infantry Battalion.

I was determined to find the elusive Harry MacKay and this time checking through all surnames in the database beginning with the letter M, I found: *236, Harry Mann, Tia Diggings, Walcha, New South Wales, enlisting in A Coy, 36th Infantry Battalion AIF on 18 Mar 1916*. This jogged my memory, remembering the discussion all those years ago at Walcha. I had found our Harry MacKay.

Later, upon examining a collection of my mother's letters, I found a letter written to my parents from Walcha. In it, I mentioned the conversation between Jim and myself and I could also remember telling my father about this conversation who said Harry was a decent person but he had always thought of him as a mystery man.

I now suggest that Harry may have been one of the unsuccessful World War One soldier settlers farming land in the Killarney District under the Federal Government Soldier Settlement Scheme.

The scheme was to locate employment and obtain trades for soldiers returning to Australia at the end of hostilities. Some soldiers were taught trades and others were offered parcels of land, often reasonably poor land or land well away from points of commerce or some parcels of land which were too small to be viable. The land was not free, just bought with government loan assistance. Some of the former soldiers were successful. Some weren't.

The Killarney scheme was unsuitable due to the small land parcels. However, other established settlers such as the Homan family enhanced their farms by purchasing abandoned farms and this may have also been the case with the neighbouring Lamb family of Daisy Hill Farm. Whatever - James Lamb employed Harry who later married James' daughter, May Eveline and upon James' death, Harry and May purchased all the shares in the old Lamb farm.

In 1965, Harry's name change also caused a problem with the Warwick Branch of the Returned Services League in connection with the award of life membership. In correspondence between the Branch and Central Army Records, certain suggestions were made that Harry was an impostor. Obviously, the problem was finally resolved as Harry continued an active member of the Killarney subbranch until his death in 1990.

As far as his choice of locations, I believe Killarney was the better climate-wise as I have experienced living in both areas. When the climates are compared; Killarney may have a cold winter but Walcha, being on the New England Tableland of New South Wales, has a much more severe one which sometimes extends almost throughout the full year. At least, Killarney does experience a summer, although it can be rather changeable at times. However, the reason Harry changed his surname is anyone's guess.

Obituary - Unnamed Newspaper - Known by the name of Harry, he was born in Newcastle New South Wales about 1900. He was reared in the Dulcha [Walcha] district of New South Wales and from there joined the army in 1916 and was issued with the Army Number of 236. He served in the 36th Battalion 3rd Division AIF and saw extensive war service in France and was stationed in England, later serving in Belgium and Africa. After discharge from the Army he came to Warwick and thence to Killarney, being influenced in his choice of location by other Killarney soldier mates whom he met on the ship when returning from Europe.

Submitted by Tom Fletcher (Member number 193)

Family History Workshops

We have commenced running a series of workshops for interested members. Each workshop will have a different subject. The workshops are in the form of hands-on practice sessions, with a little instruction and sharing of experience involved.

The first workshop was held during May, on the subject of Trove and various other newspaper based websites. It may be repeated in the future, if enough members are interested.

The next workshop will be held on Monday, 16 June 2025, with the subject being the Australian States' birth, death and marriage indexes (online).

Numbers are limited at each workshop—a maximum of 6.

Interested members should please send an email to tweedfhs@hotmail.com.

We welcome any suggestions of subjects for future workshops.

Hilarious Cemetery Tombstones

*Harry Edsel Smith of Albany, New York
Born 1903—Died 1942
Looked up the elevator shaft to see if the
Car was on the way down. It was*

*In a Ribbesford, England, cemetery
Anna Wallace
The children of Israel wanted bread,
And the Lord sent them manna.
Clark Wallace wanted a wife,
And the Devil sent him Anna*



Tweed History—Obituary from 1925

The Tweed Daily (Murwillumbah, NSW) Tuesday, 19 May 1925, Page 2

Death of Mrs M A Stoker, an old resident of the Tweed

An old and respected resident of the Tweed district, Mrs Mary Amelia Stoker, died at the residence of her son, Mr William Mack, in Railway Street, South Murwillumbah, on Saturday night. Deceased, who was 60 years of age, had been ailing for some time. Coming to Australia from England with her parents when 12 years of age, the late Mrs Stoker experienced a deal of the hardship inseparable from the days of early settlement. For the last 40 years she had resided at Crabbe's Creek, but prior to that she lived at Brunswick Heads.

Her first husband, Augustus Mack, was accidentally drowned at Murwillumbah about 35 years ago. That was during the time when the only transport across the river at Murwillumbah was by means of a hand-ferry which plied between where the southside wharf now stands, and the Tweed Shire Council's ferry dockyard.

Deceased's second husband, Robert Stoker, died in Sydney in 1919. Mrs Stoker is survived by a family of five daughters and three sons. They are: Mrs L F Johnston (Tyagarah), Mrs H S Evans (Marrickville), Mrs N J Johnston (Crabbe's Creek), Miss Ella Stoker (Turramurra), Miss Gladys Stoker (Crabbe's Creek), and Messrs William Mack (Murwillumbah), Thomas Mack (Crabbe's Creek), and Albert Mack (Crabbe's Creek).

The funeral took place on Sunday, when the remains were interred in the Presbyterian portion of the Murwillumbah general cemetery. Rev M G Hart conducted the burial service.



Photos From Our Archives



Christmas 2012



Some of our ladies having a quiet moment—Antique Fair 2016

Acquisitions to April 2025

BOOKS

Family History Handbook 2023 & 2024

Book - English Parish Register Transcripts by Nick Vine Hall 1985 edition (donated by Carolyn Catt)

Book - Monumental Inscriptions – Parish of Bressay (Shetland FHS) (donated by Lynda)

EXCHANGE JOURNALS (Hard Copy)

Blayney Diggings (Blayney Shire FHG) November 2024

Links 'n' Chains (Liverpool GS) February 2025

The Explorers' Tree (Blue Mountains FHS) March 2025

Blayney Diggings (Blayney Shire Local & FHG) January 2025

The Tamworth Family Historian (Tamworth & District FHG) March 2025

Timespan (Nepean FHS) March 2025

EXCHANGE JOURNALS (Electronic PDFs – Computers 1-8)

Relative Thoughts (Fleurieu Peninsula FHG) January & April 2025

Crossing Place (Casino & District FHG) February 2025

Spreading Branches (Narre Warren & District FHG) February 2025

Lachlan Valley Gold (Forbes FHG) February 2025

The Argyle Bulletin (Goulburn District H&GS) February 2025

Cedar Log (Richmond-Tweed FHS) March 2025

Lithgow Pioneer Press (Lithgow & District FHS) February 2025

The Gazette (Toowoomba & Darling Downs FHS) March 2025

Golden Links (Bendigo Regional GS) January-March 2025

Caloundra Clipper (Caloundra FHR) March 2025

The Log Book (Tweed Heads HS) March 2025

The Hawkesbury Crier (Hawkesbury FHG) March 2025

Illawarra Branches (Illawarra FHG) December 2024

GhostBuster (Campbelltown District FHS) March 2025

Time Traveller (Shoalhaven FHS) April 2025

Hambledon Herald (Parramatta & District HS) April 2025

MAGAZINES

Family Tree January, February, March & April 2025

Irish Roots 1st Quarter 2025 (PDF – Computers 1-8)

Who Do You Think You Are (3 issues) (donated by Trish Oldham)

Family Tree, Traces & Irish Roots (1 issue each) (donated by Trish Oldham)

OTHER (all PDF – Computers 1-8)

Newsletter of the Parramatta Female Factory Friends January/February & March/April 2025

Really Useful Bulletin (Family History Federation UK) January, February, March & April 2025

RIP – Rookwood in Profile (Friends of Rookwood) December 2024 & March 2025

Newsletter of the NSW & ACT Association of FHS February 2025

Featured Articles from Magazines and Journals

Following is a sample of articles found in journals received from other societies on an exchange basis and other magazines and journals:

Blayney Diggings (Blayney Shire Local & FHG) November 2024

-Blayney Shire Boer War Memorial project history

Newsletter of the Parramatta Female Factory Friends January/February 2025 (PDF)

-Our girls – the Mariner women part1

Family Tree January 2025

-Discover the science behind your DNA test

-Help! I've hit a brick wall – what next?

-A guide to the post 1921 military records digitisation project

-Free family history software online & offline

Family Tree February 2025

-Finding your way with historical maps (part 1)

-Beyond Irish birth records

-Evidence in the parish registers

-Where was my ancestor finally laid to rest?

The Argyle Bulletin (Goulburn District H&GS) February 2025 (PDF)

-The Shoalhaven

Really Useful Bulletin (Family History Federation UK) January 2025 (PDF)

-Old Dissent in England up to 1914

Links 'n' Chains (Liverpool GS) February 2025

-Margaret & Elizabeth

-What I remember

Family Tree March 2025

- All things Welsh for the family historian
- Making the most of the GRO indexes
- Researching your ancestors who were overseas
- How will DNA help me if I don't have a full tree?
- Finding your way with historical maps (part 2)

Really Useful Bulletin (Family History Federation UK) February 2025 (PDF)

- Boatmen ancestors

Irish Roots 1st Quarter 2025 (PDF)

- Getting back to basics with genetic genealogy
- Local resources for family history research – County Limerick
- Facebook Friends (Facebook groups)
- Surnames of County Limerick
- Cures of Ireland

Lithgow Pioneer Press (Lithgow & District FHS) February 2025 (PDF)

- Portland, NSW

The Gazette (Toowoomba & Darling Downs FHS) March 2025 (PDF)

- Stepping through the Portal

The Hawkesbury Crier (Hawkesbury FHG) March 2025 (PDF)

- Family heirlooms matter – how to keep the memories alive
- Travels with my ancestors: Robert Eather & Mary Lynch – The lure of the land (part 2)

Caloundra Clipper (Caloundra FHR) March 2025 (PDF)

- AI and genealogy: trouble ahead?

The Log Book (Tweed Heads HS) March 2025 (PDF)

- Joan Ada Smith 1937-2025
- The Back Channel – the end of an era (Part D)

Blayney Diggings (Blayney Shire Local & FHG) January 2025

- Showground to school site

Family Tree April 2025

- Illegitimacy on the record: stigma, concealment & the law
- Perfect pictures for your family history
- Making a start with autosomal DNA testing

Members' Interests

NAME	TIME PERIOD	TOWN/CITY	STATE/COUNTY	COUNTRY
AINSWORTH	1700+	Ballina	NSW	AUS

Liz Olson (Member number 317)

NAME	TIME PERIOD	TOWN/CITY	STATE/COUNTY	COUNTRY
ANDERSON	1835-1900	Liverpool	LAN	ENG
BAXTER	1800-1922			IRL
BAXTER	1900-2000		PA	USA
BEATTIE	1820-1950			IRL
CATHCART	1800-1950			IRL (NORTH)
HOLT	1800-1950	Charters Towers	QLD	AUS
HOLT	1800-1900		DUR	ENG
MADDEN	1800-1950	Bega	NSW	AUS
OWEN	1835-1900		LAN	ENG
PICKARD	1800-1950	Bega	NSW	AUS
SHANNON	1850-2000			ENG
SHARPE	1800-1950	Bega	NSW	AUS
STREET	1849-1909		DBY	ENG
WATSON	1922-2000		QLD	AUS
WATSON	1800-1922			IRL
WEBSTER	1820-1859	Liverpool	LAN	ENG

Michelle Sharpe (Member number 608)

NAME	TIME PERIOD	TOWN/CITY	STATE/COUNTY	COUNTRY
DENHAM	1900s	Islington	MDX	ENG
PARSONS	1870+	Notting Hill	MDX	ENG
POCOCK	1800s	Notting Hill, Hammersmith & Kensington	MDX	ENG
RAWLE		Kensington	MDX	ENG
SHEPPARD	1890+		MDX & BRK	ENG
SPENCER	1840+	Clifton	GLS	ENG
SPENCER	1876+	Westminster	MDX & BRK	ENG
THOMAS	1819+		GLS	ENG
VENNALL	1800s	Farnham & Hastings	SRY & SSX	ENG
WHYBORN	1813+	Hastings	SSX	ENG

Joy Oswald (Member number 979)

NAME	TIME PERIOD	TOWN/CITY	STATE/COUNTY	COUNTRY
McGOWAN	1800s		MAY	IRL
O'HARA	1800s		MAY	IRL
REDMOND	1800s	Dublin	DUB	IRL
RUANE	1800s		MAY	IRL
WHITE	1800s	Dublin	DUB	IRL

Maureen Ruane (Member number 636)

These members may be contacted by sending an email to tweedfhs@hotmail.com or writing to PO Box 6729, Tweed Heads South NSW 2486.

There are many more entries on our website (see the inside the front cover and the back cover of Tracks for the website address).

Note: We use the Chapman codes to abbreviate the State/County and Country fields of our members' interests. If you are unfamiliar with the codes, google "Chapman Codes Genealogy". There are a number of sites with details.

New Members

1142 Tracey Langford
1143 Monica Raison
1144 Julie Ellis
1145 George Ellis
1146 Janet Curtis

Rejoined Members

317 Liz Olson
1029 Helen Phelan
1030 Michael Garrett

*A warm welcome to our new members & welcome back to our re-joined members.
Happy ancestor hunting!*

*Members should note that we hold **free** classes in several subjects (beginner's, internet resources, Family Tree Maker, etc.) Please ask a Room Assistant in the Research Room or send an email to tweedfhs@hotmail.com if you are interested in a class.*



RESEARCH ROOM
SOUTH TWEED SPORTS CLUB
4 MINJUNGBAL DRIVE, TWEED HEADS SOUTH
TELEPHONE: 07 5524 3655 Ext 238 (Room Hours only)

RESEARCH ROOM HOURS
TUESDAY — 10AM TO CLUB BADGE DRAW (APPROX 7PM)
*(CLOSED FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH BETWEEN 1PM & 4PM FOR
GET-TOGETHER)*
WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY — 10AM TO 4PM
SATURDAY — 10AM TO 3PM

ROOM ASSISTANTS

The Research Room is voluntarily staffed by members of the Association. We are always in need of assistance. Your assistance would be appreciated whether morning, afternoon or whole day, even in the event of an emergency. Please contact the Roster Secretary, Peter Johnston, or place your name in the Roster Book located in the Room.

JOURNAL

The Editorial Committee is appreciative of all articles provided for our Journal and we hope for continued support during the year. Material for inclusion may either be left at the Research Room, posted or emailed to the Editor.

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