

Ancestor

Quarterly Journal of The Genealogical Society of Victoria Inc



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Runner-up 2022 Writing Prize

When this you see

Sergeant Thomas Hill: a
Redcoat in the Black War

Stephen Stebbins:
son of a shipwright

Unlocking Susannah's
story with DNA

Family object
biographies

A beginners guide to researching
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GSV Notice Boards

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The [Special Interest Groups and Discussion Circles Notice Boards](https://www.gsv.org.au/search/node/notice/boards) will have announcements concerning future meetings, as well as items of interest from previous discussions or talks. There is a wealth of information to be found. They are at <https://www.gsv.org.au/search/node/notice/boards>.

Recently, Michael Rumpff of the International Settlers Group, posted news concerning German research on the ISG Notice Board. Did you know that there is a German Research Group that is part of the Genealogical Society of Queensland? They have links to resources that may be of interest. There is also a Newsletter excerpt from the Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society on Paul Dietz, born in Berlin who arrived about 1850. He became a schoolteacher and taught in Melbourne, Bendigo, and Swan Hill. In the Port Phillip Pioneers newsletter there is an article concerning non-British foreign residents and Naturalisation.

From the London Discussion Circle Notice Board, there is a book review you may have missed. *Vagabonds: Life on the Streets of 19th Century London* by Oskar Jensen, that gives a number of stories of what it was like to be poor and attempting to live at that time. If you are also interested in 'Poor Laws and Workhouses', then presentations on *London Poor Law Records* by Linley Hooper, and the *Workhouses of London* by Stephen Hawke may be of great interest.

The Notice Board for the Vic Tas Discussion Circle has some information for those of us who have a relative who served in the Boer War (1899-1902). There is a link to Military History and Heritage Victoria (www.mhhv.org.au) that features an article on 'The Boer War and its Influence on Modern Australia'.

GSV Members can subscribe to any of the Notice Boards that interest them to receive email notifications about new items.

There may be a number of things that will be of interest.

Why not have a look?

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The editors reserve the right to edit or abridge articles to meet space constraints and editorial considerations. Submissions should be the work of the author submitting the article and should not have been published elsewhere unless agreed. All material should be submitted in electronic format to ancestor@gsv.org.au

Please submit text as Microsoft™ Word doc or docx files. Printed papers will not be considered for publication. Images should not be embedded in the text file, but sent as separate email attachments as high resolution JPG or TIFF files (minimum 300 dpi). Provide captions for each image in the text file. Articles should not exceed 3000 words in length. Shorter articles with images to illustrate the article are preferred.

For further information on style to follow in preparing your article, please see <https://www.gsv.org.au/guidelines-for-authors>. If you have further questions, email: ancestor@gsv.org.au

DEADLINES

Regular contributors must submit material by 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October for publication in the March, June, September and December issues respectively. However, articles for consideration for publication are received at any time. Space constraints mean that edited articles have to sometimes be held over until a later issue.

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Kath Rutherford, runner-up of the 2022 GSV Writing Prize, traces the life of her convict ancestor George Robotham, who was transported at the age of seventeen, and left a convict love token for his mother, which is now in the National Museum of Australia. These tokens, created by engraving or stippling a penny, were made by prisoners awaiting transportation, and given to loved ones as a memento. Margaret Vines describes the army career of Sergeant Thomas Hill, in particular his role in the Black Wars in Tasmania in the 1820s and 30s, and his evident desire to remain in Tasmania to raise his family. Merle Pole writes of her ancestor Stephen Stebbins, who was a free settler in 1830s Tasmania and a beneficiary of Lady Jane Franklin's land rental scheme, and later joined the 1850s gold rush to Victoria. My article about my 2x great aunt Susan(nah) Beaumont indicates how a DNA test set me off on the right track to discover more about her life and that of her descendants. A further three family object biographies introduce us to a hand-written cookbook that reveals a sweet tooth, a child's wicker chair, which has been used by four generations of the family, and a mantle clock which sadly did not make the owner's fortune.

If you have ancestors who have 'disappeared' from the records elsewhere in the world, it could be worth checking to see if they ended up in South Africa. The 'How-to' article by Alison Dennison explores the basics you need to know to get started in South African research. Following on from their article 'Researching Australian First Peoples ancestry' in the September 2022 issue of *Ancestor*, Martin Playne, Margaret Vines and Bill Barlow have compiled a book list 'Books on the history of Australia's First Peoples' that may assist with family history writing involving indigenous people. Research Corner demonstrates how to access and search articles in digital journals in the GSV library's collection.

Barbara Beaumont
Editorial Team

Our cover: *View of Cape Town, South Africa from the Platteklip Gorge Trail on Table Mountain.*
Photo by Manon Dennison, 2022 with our thanks.



Pen of the President



Stephen Hawke

Scholarship winner

I am pleased to announce that Alan Rhodes is the winner of the inaugural GSV Scholarship, which was generously provided by the University of Tasmania to study the highly regarded Diploma of Family History, commencing in February 2023. Congratulations to Alan and we look forward to hearing of his progress with his studies.

We anticipate that the GSV Scholarship will be offered again this year and interested members should watch for an announcement later in the year. Full details on the scholarship can be found on the inside front cover of the September 2022 issue of *Ancestor*.

Trove

The funding and future of *Trove* is currently a 'hot topic' for discussion. GSV's view has been publicised and doesn't require any further elaboration here. However, I would like to reflect on just how valuable *Trove* has been to my own family history research and undoubtedly to countless other family historians.

Trove has enabled me to uncover lost stories and little gems that have greatly expanded my understanding of my family's history. One of these gems was published in Castlemaine's *Mount Alexander Mail* in 1855, a simple 'Reward notice' for recovery of a strayed or stolen horse, which provided the earliest surviving documented reference to my Cornish mining ancestor after his arrival here in 1854. Simply identifying through this notice that he was living and working at German Gully on Pennyweight Flat provided a great foundation for learning more about his early life on the goldfields. Many later references in that wonderful newspaper provided a real depth to his life story, with almost 100 mentions in the paper over the period to the mid-1880s. These items helped me establish that he had significant involvement in the Castlemaine Volunteer Rifle Corps (and by extension, his role as a dedicated member of the Rifle Corps' band which led the Burke and Wills funeral procession in Melbourne in 1863). Many other items provided details on his work as a contractor for the Castlemaine council. There were even reports on his exploits in building and operating a large pleasure boat on the lake in Castlemaine Botanical Gardens. None of these details had survived in our family memory.

In researching another branch of my family, I was astonished to find from the death certificate of a great great grandfather that he was murdered near Wangaratta in 1886. This story had certainly not been passed down in the family memory, but thanks to *Trove*, it has been rediscovered. The murder was quite a sensation at the time, with the extraordinary forensic and investigative work of the police in identifying and arresting the murderer receiving wide reporting. *Trove's* copies of *The Australasian Sketcher* provided detailed reports with all the gruesome evidence from the inquest, as well as illustrations of the perpetrator and the scene of the crime.

I found through *Trove* that another of my great great grandfathers was a pretty wild youth through the 1880s, with local newspapers building a picture of him as a determined troublemaker and larrikin in the streets of Collingwood and Richmond. His activities were also developing a presence in the *Victoria Police Gazette*. And then he disappeared from the records. A dogged search through *Trove* eventually found him again in the mid-1890s, now appearing in the sports-pages of newspapers in Broken Hill and western NSW as an accomplished footballer and cricketer. It seems he'd finally decided (or been told) to break loose from his larrikin mates in Melbourne and make a new start, far from home. It was a good move, he did settle down, and found work and a very good woman to marry. They moved to Collingwood in 1899 and thankfully there was no reversion to his old ways; my great great grandparents raised their family and lived exemplary lives. Many thanks to *Trove* for both revealing his time as a troubled youth and for helping build the story of his redemption as the kind and gentle man remembered by our family.

These are just a few examples of the incredible array of material I've found through *Trove*, which has helped me build and preserve my family's history. Many of you have no doubt also received enormous benefit from *Trove*, and we will watch with interest the developments over the next few months on future funding of this great community asset. ■

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We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the Genealogical Society of Victoria currently stands, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, their Elders past and present, and those young people destined to become leaders.

When this you see

by Kathleen Rutherford

Among the many important historical displays in the National Museum of Australia, the collection of convict love tokens tells a poignant story.¹

Convict love tokens were farewell keepsakes hand-made and given to loved ones by convicts sentenced to transportation. To make the tokens the convicts used copper coins, most commonly the 36-millimetre cartwheel pennies, filing them smooth before engraving an image and/or a message to a loved one.

The two methods of production were free-hand engraving and pinpricks, or stippling. Love tokens fashioned by convicts in this way emerged from a rich tradition of keepsakes in the eighteenth century, especially sailors' farewells.²

The evidence suggests that between 1815 and 1845 the production of love tokens was common practice.³ Many thousands of convicts were transported to Australia during that period, but only a limited number of tokens have survived. The National Museum's collection is the world's largest, but comprises only 315 tokens. The rarity of these objects today is partly explained by the social stain of transportation. Clearly, these sad little convict keepsakes did not rate as family heirlooms.

Most of the museum's tokens were purchased from British dealer and collector Timothy Millett, who had sought more information about the people featured on the tokens he collected, a task made difficult by efforts to conceal identity and to cover up evidence of a convict relation. Initials were regularly used rather than names, and in some surviving tokens the name has been removed altogether. In the National Museum's collection, the identity of only around 80 convicts associated with the tokens is known.

One of those 80 is George Robotham, my 3x great-grandfather.

Seventeen-year-old George unapologetically stippled his full name, age and the year 1827. On the other side of his token is the message, 'When this you see Remember me banishd from my country.' Those first six words, and variants of them, were common on the convicts' tokens, borrowing from earlier use of the rhyming couplet on a wide range of domestic objects, including ceramics and eighteenth-century glassware.⁴

What was the story behind George's banishment, and how did the ensuing chapters unfold?



▲ Images 1&2: *The convict love token of George Robotham, front and back, photographer Jason McCarthy, National Museum of Australia, Convict Love Tokens collection.*

George Robotham was born on 5 October 1809 to parents Robert and Keziah and was baptised on 29 January 1810 in the Parish of St Martin, Birmingham.⁵ By the time George was thirteen his father, a glass cutter, and three younger siblings had all died, leaving just George and his grieving mother to support each other.^{6,7} George worked as a plater in a Birmingham metal workshop.⁸

On 26 March 1827 George and two other teenage boys, William Cheshire and Charles Taylor, were convicted at the Warwick Assizes of housebreaking and theft. The offence is variously described in newspaper reports and George's convict record as stealing a watch, stealing in a dwelling house, robbing a cottage, and housebreaking. Breaking and entering was a capital charge, so the boys were sentenced to death. However, as increasingly occurred with capital sentencing, they received a reprieve, and on 11 June 1827 the *Birmingham Gazette* reported that the boys were to be put on board the *Retribution* hulk at Sheerness in preparation for being transported for 'the term of their natural lives'. It was presumably Keziah who was left with the copper token that two centuries later sits neatly in a Canberra display case.

George spent two months on the *Retribution* prior to his transportation to Van Diemen's Land (VDL) on the barque *Asia*, which arrived in Hobart on 30 November 1827. In the 1820s free immigrants to VDL were given generous areas of (unceded) land as an incentive to settle, and according to the system of convict administration then in place under Lieutenant-Governor Arthur, George would be assigned as a servant to one of these freehold landowners. As a convict with a life sentence, he would have to wait eight years before becoming eligible for a ticket-of-leave, a long time to wait, but he had youth on his side.⁹

George was first assigned to a Mrs Chiltern and soon after, in July 1828, to Dr William Crowther, a surgeon who had arrived in VDL in 1825. Crowther, whose son would become Premier 60 years later, had rooms in Hobart and land at New Norfolk. George spent a few uneventful years working for Crowther at New Norfolk before a bad patch, revealed in his conduct record. He received 25 lashes in December 1831 for 'neglect of duty, thereby injuring his master's horse, drunkenness and insolence to his master'. A month later he received a sentence of two months' imprisonment and hard labour for neglect of duty and drunkenness. A young man getting drunk and doing silly things is unremarkable in many other contexts but, as an assigned convict in Arthur's VDL, George was made to suffer the full force of a brutal penal system. Lashes, prison, hard labour – George's story is looking here like a convict cliché, and he needs to change the script.

What better way to atone for his past offences than to become part of the law enforcement effort? After three more years in assignments George was appointed a Police Constable in Launceston in January 1835.¹⁰ Deployment of convicts as field police was common at this time: in 1835 about two-thirds of VDL's serving police were convicts.¹¹ George's appointment suggests he was now regarded by the authorities as reformed and reliable.

When his ticket-of-leave came through a year later George resigned from the police force to take up work as a farm labourer in the North Esk area around Launceston.¹² There he met and married Ann Harris, also a convict, who had arrived in VDL on the *Edward* in 1834.^{13,14} The couple had seven surviving children, the third of whom was John Robotham, my great-great-grandfather. The first three children were born while George and Ann were living at the property owned by James Cox, *Whisloca*, near Blessington on the North Esk River. George was the stock keeper at *Whisloca*, learning the basics of pastoral farming, competencies that would enable him to improve his prospects and eventually become a successful tenant farmer. ▶▶

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▲ Image 3: *Winburn property 2018, author's photo*

▶ Image 4: *George Robotham, Evandale History Society Inc*



Given that George was on a life sentence he could become a free man exercising his own unrestricted choices only by means of a pardon. Following a Conditional Pardon in 1840 he was recommended to Queen Victoria for a Free Pardon on 9 February 1843, having served sixteen long years for stealing a watch from a cottage.¹⁵ He was 33 years old and that chapter of his story was closed; and he was now an emancipist.

Working for James Cox as a stock keeper had been a particularly lucky break for George. James Cox was one of the major landowners in VDL, a 'land baron' who eventually owned nearly 19,000 acres across various properties.¹⁶ George must have impressed Cox with his competence and work ethic, because soon after obtaining his free pardon George left *Whisloca* and was promoted to farm overseer at another of Cox's properties, *Winburn*, near Lymington (now Nile), eleven kilometres south of Evandale. Cox himself lived at nearby Clarendon Estate, whose neoclassical house is now a well-known National Trust property. George worked for almost a decade as Cox's farm overseer at *Winburn* before leasing 1,400 acres of the property and becoming a tenant farmer around 1852. Through good luck, hard work and his own ability, George was able to lease a significant area of prime grazing land, one of the largest leases in the region.¹⁷ With over fifteen years of experience George would have been a competent farmer, but managing a large pastoral lease would require a new set of skills, and in October 1852 he advertised for a tutor 'to impart a sound commercial education'.¹⁸ George was not just relying on good luck; he was mapping out a journey of further improvement and increasing prosperity.

Fundamental to George's prosperity through the variable economic conditions of the period was the fact that his was a sheep farming tenancy:

Sheep farmers were untouched by the depression of the 1860s. Wool prices remained high while the price of labour fell. It continued to be the principal export, earning 48 per cent of total export income at the end of the 1860s.¹⁹

George's thriving sheep tenancy occupied about half of Cox's *Winburn* property, and it would have been a point of pride for George that it came to be known in the district as Robotham's.²⁰ The other half was leased and eventually owned by John Whitehead, a Member of Parliament from 1869, and a prolific letter writer whose published letters make frequent reference to his neighbour Robotham and to 'Robotham's land'.^{21,22}

As well as running the farm at *Winburn*, George was active in the local community, and it is no surprise that he joined the organised opposition to transportation when the anti-transportation movement gathered momentum in the 1840s and early 1850s. George signed a petition posted in the *Launceston Examiner* on 25 September 1852 to James Cox Esq, MLC for Morven, acknowledging his opposition to the 'monster evil transportation'. George would have thought back to the fear and horror of his own transportation 25 years earlier. He must have also recalled the engraved token with its reference to his banishment. Did he wonder where it was now? Did Keziah have it? She had remarried and was living in Edgbaston.²³

The cessation of transportation in 1853 was celebrated throughout the colony. It would have been highly gratifying to George and other emancipists when, three years after the end of transportation, the grim words 'Van Diemen's Land' were officially replaced by the name Tasmania.



▲ Image 5: *The grave of George Robotham, author's photo*

Various items in the local press of the time indicate the level of George's contribution to community life. He held executive positions for the Morven Mutual Protection Association and the Evandale Road Trust, of which he was Chairman for several years.^{24, 25} He was also a foundation member of the Evandale and South Esk Ploughing Association.²⁶

A subscription library had been established in Evandale in 1847 by the Reverend Robert Russell, an influential and respected community and religious leader, and for a time George was a committee member. In 1857 James Cox was President and Robert Russell Secretary of the library, and in 1862 all committee members were pastoralists or professionals, so George was mixing on a regular basis with people of higher social status.²⁷ He borrowed from the library 58 times between 1848 and 1861, including Dickson's *Practical Agriculture*, donated to the library by John Glover, the celebrated landscape artist who had lived at nearby Patterdale Farm.²⁸ These precious snippets of information from the library's surviving loan records reveal George as a regular reader, seeking knowledge and pursuing improvements to his farming practice.

While George might have been active on committees and mixed with establishment figures at the subscription library, he was still an emancipist whose convict past would always limit his social aspirations. George stood twice in municipal elections for the Evandale Council. The eligibility criteria for candidates and electors at that time kept power in the hands of

the wealthy, with only about 30 per cent of adult males able to vote and multiple votes available to property owners.²⁹ The first time George stood, in December 1866, he received only six votes! The two elected councillors received 299 and 241 votes.³⁰ Undaunted by what must have been a humiliating rejection, George tried again in December 1868 and did better, managing to secure 91 votes, but this was still well short of the other three candidates' tallies of over 200 each.³¹ It was not just the electoral rules that worked against George's candidacy; the stigma of his convict background almost certainly disqualified him as an acceptable representative in the eyes of many electors, for while the income and lifestyle of successful emancipists like George indicated 'a secure place in the hierarchy of class, their convict past kept them in social inferiority where many of the institutions of polite society were

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closed to them'.³² George had done exceptionally well for himself, but the message from polite society here was that he was reaching beyond the limits of his social status.

By the time George stood for election the second time he had lost his wife Ann, who had died of uterine cancer at the beginning of the year.³³ George continued to manage the *Winburn* property and to build on his wealth for the next thirteen years until his death in 1881. In 1875 he purchased 1,369 acres of land in the Parish of Blessington for £460, so in addition to his large pastoral lease, George had become a significant landowner in his own right.³⁴

George died of 'a lingering illness' in December 1881 at *Winburn*.³⁵ The funeral was held at St Peter's Church, Nile, on Sunday 18 December 1881, and George was buried in the church cemetery near his wife Ann and other family members. The headstone still stands, tall and intact, in St Peter's churchyard.

Probate was granted on 7 January 1882, with George's estate valued at approximately £4,550.³⁶ Most of the value of the estate was the stock (including 3,200 sheep), grain and machinery at *Winburn*, as well as nearly 1,400 acres of land at Blessington. Accumulating an estate of that value through farming and pastoral activity was certainly an impressive achievement for a man of urban industrial origins and held back by his years of convict servitude and restrictions.

So, George Robotham, as I stand in the National Museum of Australia and see your rare token I wonder about its long journey from dingy prison to curator's shiny display, but mainly I think of you, banished as a boy from one place but enabled in another to embrace the opportunity of a better life. Through the combination of luck and your own capabilities you emerged from convict degradation to build a life of enterprise, prosperity and civic participation. Thus, as your descendant living a comfortable life in modern Australia, when this I see I think of you with pride and gratitude. ■

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Surnames

Arthur, Cheshire, Chiltern, Cox, Crowther, Glover, Harris, Millett, Robotham, Russell, Taylor, Whitehead

Sergeant Thomas Hill: a Redcoat in the Black War

by Margaret Vines

Thomas Hill was the first of our Hill family to arrive in Australia. Spending 32 years and 9 months in the British Army, he ended his career as a Sergeant in the Mounted Police in Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania. Arriving in 1829 and expecting a routine task guarding convicts in Hobart, he was instead pitched into the middle of the Black War with the Aboriginal inhabitants.

He had enlisted in the 63rd West Suffolk Regiment of Foot, in Ipswich, Suffolk, England, when he was 21 years old.¹ It was 1813 and England was still at war with France and Napoleon, but the prospect of being involved in the fighting did not deter him. Regiments in the British army had nicknames. The 63rd Regiment was 'The Bloodsuckers'. Their uniform was the traditional red of the redcoats, but distinguished by silver braid and deep green facings.

Kings Lynn, a port and market town in Norfolk, the next county, was his home town. His birth date from various records was between 1790 and 1793.² He had been working as a labourer so perhaps he wanted a more interesting life – the travel, adventure and camaraderie which army life might hold. Life as a labourer was one of low and irregular income and poor prospects – his two younger brothers who remained laborers in Norfolk both died in the workhouse. Thomas would have been working from age of twelve but may have attended school at least briefly, since he was literate – though he may have gained this skill later, in the army.

Thomas did not fight in France, nor at the battle of Waterloo. He spent the war guarding England and Ireland, though part of the regiment served in the Caribbean. From 1821 the 63rd Regiment was largely based in Ireland, in the barracks at Athlone, though some sections were from time to time in England in London, Windsor and in the Coventry area. Thomas's discharge papers from the army say he served sixteen years overseas,

all of it in Van Diemen's Land, and 'remainder at home'. While he did not serve with the regiment in the Caribbean, it is extremely likely he spent some time in Ireland, which was considered home service, where the regiment recruited new members.³

Thomas' life changed radically in 1828. The 63rd was to be sent to the Australian colonies as guards on the convict ships and as the garrison in Van Diemen's Land. They were split into small detachments under an officer on each ship, and were allowed to take wives and children with them. They served on eighteen different convict ships and they all travelled to Sydney arriving between 1828 and 1829. Having landed the convicts, the soldiers then went on to Hobart.⁴

Thomas arrived in Hobart in 1829. He was now a corporal and had a wife, Sarah. Thomas Hill and Sarah Cox had probably married in England, just before they sailed for Sydney, but so far a place and date for a marriage has not been found in England, Ireland or NSW. Soldiers' wives and children were permitted to travel with them on the same ship to Van Diemen's Land, so Thomas and Sarah would have arrived in the colony together. As part of the garrison, they settled in Hobart where their first son Thomas was baptised on 18 October 1829.⁵

Van Diemen's Land

Thomas Hill, with the 63rd Regiment, had arrived in a war zone.

Conflict between the British and the local Aboriginal people had begun in the Hobart area in 1804, only a year after the first settlement. Local warriors carrying spears surrounded the tiny British settlement at Risdon, to prevent it encroaching on their hunting grounds. Panicking soldiers fired a cannon and drove them off.⁶ The settlements at Hobart and Launceston remained small and grew only slowly until the

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Napoleonic Wars with France ended in 1815. A flood of convicts and settlers began to descend on the colony as more ships were now available and the British Government turned its attention to exploiting its colonies, giving land grants to settlers, and exporting its criminals.⁷

The First Nations people were caught in a two-pronged attack. Firstly, the new settlers destroyed their food supply, hunting their kangaroos, and then ran sheep on their traditional lands because settlers' land grants from the Governor ignored the prior occupation of all the First Nations people. No land anywhere was set aside for them.

Secondly, at the same time, the white population of the colony was overwhelmingly male. Convict and ex-convict rural workers and shepherds inland, and sealers on the coast, kidnapped Aboriginal women, raped them, used them as servants, and then often murdered them.⁸

The Black War between the First Nations people and the settlers began in earnest around 1824 and intensified into guerrilla warfare, particularly on the grasslands which were the traditional homes of the Oyster Bay and Big River Nations. Settlers on farms in the countryside were un-nerved by the fear of an unexpected attack when their huts or crops could be burned, or they could be speared. Men were even carrying a gun when ploughing. The government was under pressure to defend them, and was concerned that settlers were forming vigilante groups to attack Aboriginal camps at night.⁹

At the end of 1826, the colonial government formed military parties of between five and ten soldiers to patrol the war zone. They would rise before daylight to track down 'native smoke' and then ambush the camp while the Aborigines were sleeping and shoot at them.¹⁰

The 63rd Regiment arrived in 1828-29 and their headquarters were in Hobart, at the Anglesea Barracks. When in November 1828 Governor Arthur proclaimed martial law placing the colony under military rule, soldiers were posted to guard posts around the settled districts of the colony, and sent on patrols to secure the countryside and capture the Aboriginal warriors.

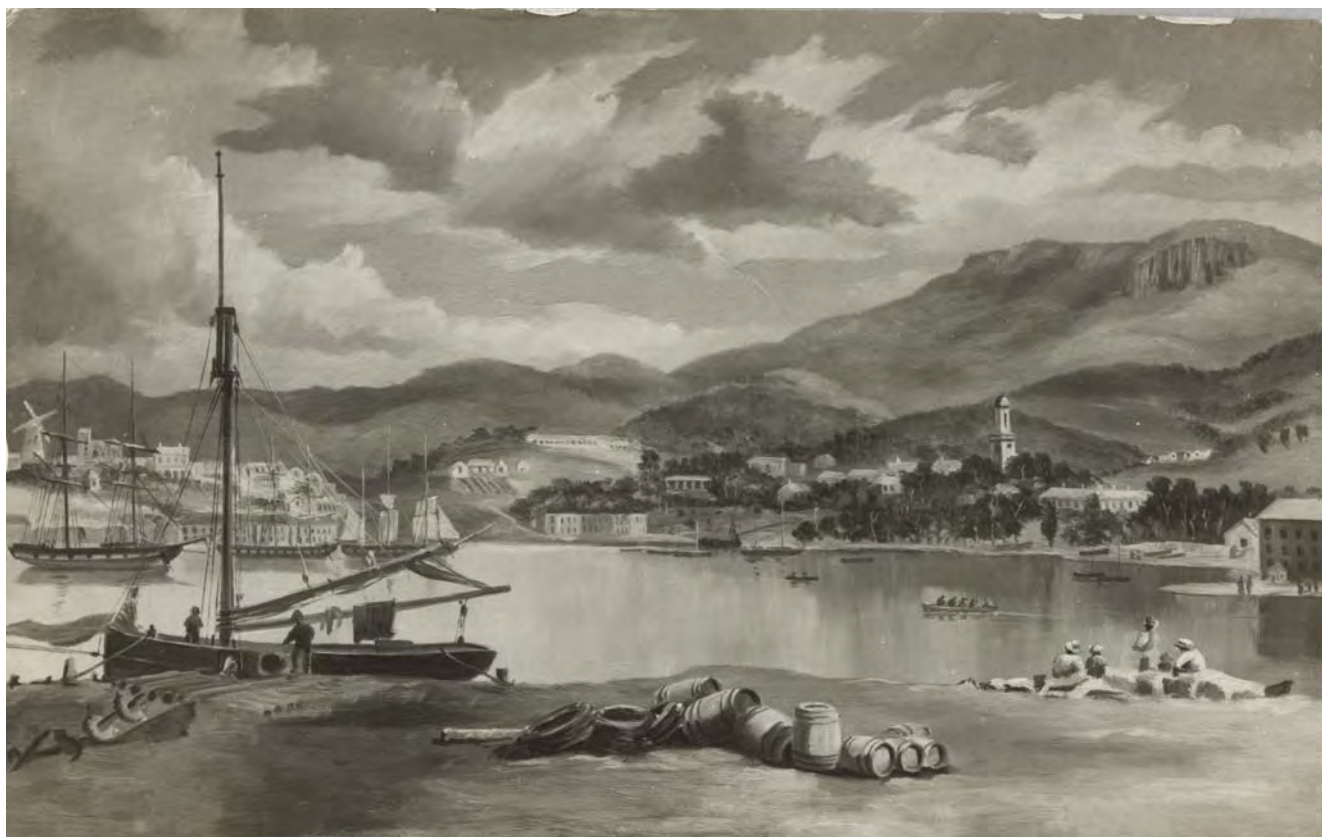
As a Corporal, Thomas Hill would have been in charge of a guard post or a small group of soldiers on patrol. He was probably out of Hobart frequently as the Black War was fought out to the north of the Derwent River. It would have been hard frustrating work in difficult terrain, leading a patrol of soldiers who did not know

the country against an elusive enemy who did. They were on patrol for twelve to eighteen days, often with marches of 30 to 40 miles a day. Some got lost in the bush for three or four days. Soldiers complained about the poor quality and insufficiency of their food and the rapid deterioration of their equipment, especially their shoes and boots. There were complaints that they 'will not exert themselves'.¹¹

They were unsuccessful in capturing Aboriginal people and in preventing attacks. Even pursuit parties after an attack usually failed. By the time the soldiers arrived at the isolated farm, the Aboriginal attackers were long gone, expertly hiding their tracks. Attempting to defend such a dispersed settlement from these unpredictable attacks would have been dispiriting for the soldiers and their leaders.

Governor Arthur's solution in 1830 was the Black Line. A mass mobilisation of all able-bodied men was called to defend the colony. A line over 300 kilometres long was to be manned to drive the First Nations people away from the settlement and then to capture them. The 63rd Regiment was to supply 550 soldiers and the three commanders. Free settlers, assigned convicts and ticket of leave men made up the rest of a force of 2,200 men. Between 7 October and 26 November, the line advanced towards the Tasman Peninsula.¹² The soldiers were reported to be generally well behaved but there were problems finding the provisions depots and coping with the terrain and the weather. Gaps opened up in the line which allowed the small parties of the Aboriginal people to slip through.

The Line proved notably unsuccessful and the war of attrition continued for another year as the First Nations were progressively decimated by soldiers and settlers. Neither the government nor the settlers realised how few Aboriginal warriors they were actually fighting in the final year of this guerrilla war. Not only had there been deaths, injury, illness and hunger but the loss of so many women and the difficulties of a life on the run, meant there was no natural increase. George Augustus Robinson had been travelling the colony since January 1830 with a party of Aboriginal guides, including Truganini. He went first to the west coast and then to the north east, attempting dialogue with the Aboriginal peoples and, after the Black Line began, encouraging them to surrender to the British authorities before they were wiped out. He made contact with the remnants of the Oyster Bay and Great River Nations late in 1831, and convinced them to accompany him to the Governor in Hobart.¹³




▲ Image 1: *Hobart Town in 1839, from the Old Wharf, postcard, State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection Accession No. H22568*

The Black War came to an end on 7 January 1832. Escorted by Robinson's party, the last survivors of the Oyster Bay and Great River Nations and their leader Tongerlongeter, the men armed with their four spears apiece, marched down Elizabeth Street Hobart, through a relieved and cheering crowd to Government House to surrender to Governor Arthur.¹⁴

The end of the Black War created a dilemma for Thomas Hill. The 63rd Regiment was to be transferred to India, late in 1833. He decided he preferred to remain in Hobart and managed to obtain a transfer to the incoming 21st Regiment. He may have had to accept a demotion to Private for a time to do so, and his rank can be traced on the birth certificates of his children. His son William had been born during the Black War on 15 September 1831, when his father was still a Corporal in the 63rd Regiment. On 9 November 1833, a daughter Elizabeth was born, and her father registered her on 1 January 1834, describing himself as a Corporal in the 21st Regiment. When the birth of daughter Jane, born 19 March 1835, was registered her father was a 'private soldier'. Then, for Richard's birth on 7 May 1837, and its registration on 7 June, he was a Sergeant in the 21st Regiment.

Thomas remained a Sergeant for the remainder of his military career. When, in 1839, the 21st Regiment was transferred to India, Thomas






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transferred to its replacement the 51st Regiment, as it arrived in Hobart. He had become part of the Van Diemen's Land Mounted Police and worked from their offices and stables in the Anglesea Barracks in Davey Street, Hobart. The Mounted Police was a small group set up by Governor Arthur and later in 1837 increased to 31 members. Their main tasks were carrying information between Police Districts and escorting difficult prisoners. Though working for the Police Magistrates, they remained under the command of the military establishment.¹⁵ In 1842 Thomas Hill was the responsible military official in newspaper advertisements tendering for suppliers of military uniforms for the Mounted Police.¹⁶ He seems to have been performing his duties most satisfactorily as he was recommended for an increase in salary in 1843.¹⁷ His service record was very good, entitling him to wear four good conduct rings on the lower sleeve of his uniform jacket.¹⁸

Retirement

Thomas retired from the army in 1846 when he was 53 years old, at his own request. He had

suffered a fall from a horse in the Mounted Police and had been injured. His pension record states: 'pain and weakness of the vertebral column generally, caused by a fall from a horse on duty in the Mounted Police'.¹⁹ He was granted a pension of one shilling and five pence per day for the rest of his life from 14 April 1846. It was probably a good time to retire – the Mounted Police were being reduced in number by a colonial government under budget pressure.²⁰

In the following years, Thomas made sure his boys did not become labourers. Thomas Junior became a cabinet maker, William a painter, and Richard a sailmaker and they and their sister Jane all married. They always identified themselves proudly as the children of Sergeant Thomas Hill.²¹

On 31 March 1864, 'after a long and painful illness', Thomas' wife Sarah died at home at 1 Queen Street Hobart.²² After Sarah died, Thomas went on one last adventure. His daughter Jane had left Hobart for Melbourne, Sydney and then on to Queensland and the goldfields. Thomas went to see her again. He died on 'The Gympie', a new



▲ Image 2: *Landscape, with mountains and valley, two people on road in the foreground, with sheep [1856?], Samuel Prout Hill, artist, State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection Accession No. H141332*

goldfield in Queensland, on 29 August 1869, and was buried the following day in Gympie Cemetery, with a Church of England service. His death was reported by Jane's husband Edward Thornton Gilbert, and the message reached Hobart for a death notice a month later.²³ Edward erroneously stated, on the death certificate, that Thomas was born in Suffolk, and had three living children, Thomas, Richard and William. Ironically this left out Edward's own wife Jane, who not only was still alive but did not die until 1909.

Jane had not had an easy life, and the fact that her father travelled so far to see her, her husband Edward and their daughter Charlotte, is an

indication of the strength of their relationship and of the character of Sergeant Thomas Hill. His decision to enlist in the 63rd Regiment back in 1813 had led him to a prosperous family life in the new colony of Tasmania.

The Black War, an intense and violent experience of guerilla warfare and 'per capita one of the more destructive wars in recorded history' was the only war he fought in.²⁴ ■

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Surnames

Cox, Gilbert, Hill, Robinson

Stephen Stebbins: son of a shipwright

by Merle Pole

At the time of Australia's Bicentennial in 1988 my father's cousins, George and Ruth Stebbins, were thrilled and elated when they traced our family's ancestry to the First and Second Fleets. George and Ruth's research has allowed me to tread the journey of our ancestors as they follow the patterns of Australia's colonial settlement and expansion.

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▲ Image 1: *Stephen Stebbins*. Source *George Stebbins*, courtesy of *Kaye Murphy*

It was in the early 1830s that my paternal great-great-grandfather, Stephen Stebbins emigrated as a free settler from Essex, England to Van Diemen's Land. In the 1880s Essex was a hub of shipbuilding and boasted at least fifteen shipyards. Stephen's father, James Stebbins was a shipwright, and came from a long seafaring tradition.¹

At times Stephen went with his father to the Baltic Sea to get Baltic Pine timber for building boats.² Shipbuilding, sailing and adventure were in Stephen's blood.

I wonder what motivated Stephen to leave his family and ancestral home in Essex and migrate to Van Diemen's Land. Both Stephen's parents were born in Essex, his father James on 29 June 1782 and mother, Mary (nee Overell) on

14 October 1782. Six children were born to the couple between 1804 and 1814: Sarah, William, Stephen, Richard, James and Joseph. Stephen was born on 11 July 1809.³

No record has been found of Stephen's passage to Van Diemen's Land, however his shipbuilding skills may have gained him employment as ship's carpenter for the voyage.

Perhaps stories from Stephen's maternal uncle, William Overell, reached Essex telling of the fortunes to be made in Van Diemen's Land. By 1821 Stephen's Uncle William, a carpenter, had arrived in Hobart Town from London with wife, Alice, and sons William and John.⁴ William Overell built a farmhouse and outhouses and began establishing himself at Glenorchy, just north of Hobart Town. Family letters also suggest Stephen immigrated to Van Diemen's Land to escape the press gangs going around Essex forcing men to join the navy.⁵ In 1831 the British Government also started encouraging migration to Van Diemen's Land due to unemployment problems in the United Kingdom.

We know from the record of his marriage to 18-year-old Mary Ann Oakley at St David's Church of England, Hobart on 2 June 1834, Stephen had arrived in Van Diemen's Land by age 25.⁶ Stephen and Mary Ann most likely met at Glenorchy, the area where Mary Ann's parents George and Dorothy Oakley and grandparents John and Hannah Barrisford settled following the forced closure of the Norfolk Island settlement in 1808. Glenorchy was the place where many Norfolk Islanders settled and also where Stephens' Uncle William had established himself.

It is Stephen's marriage to Mary Ann Oakley that links our family to the First and Second Fleets. Mary Ann's mother, Dorothy Barrisford born 1793 on Norfolk Island, was the daughter of First Fleeter and marine, John Barrisford (Beresford) and his wife Hannah.⁷ Mary Ann's father, George

Oakley, born 14 August 1791 on Norfolk Island, was the orphaned son of Second Fleeter and convict Mary Oakley and First Fleeter convict George Wood.⁸ The Barrisford family and George Oakley all arrived in Hobart Town on the *City of Edinburgh* in 1808.⁹ There were very few marriageable women in Hobart at that time and Stephen's choice would not have been wide when considering 75% of the people in Van Diemen's Land were either convicts, had been a convict, or were of convict ancestry. All levels of society, even the elite, became permeated with ex-convict families.¹⁰

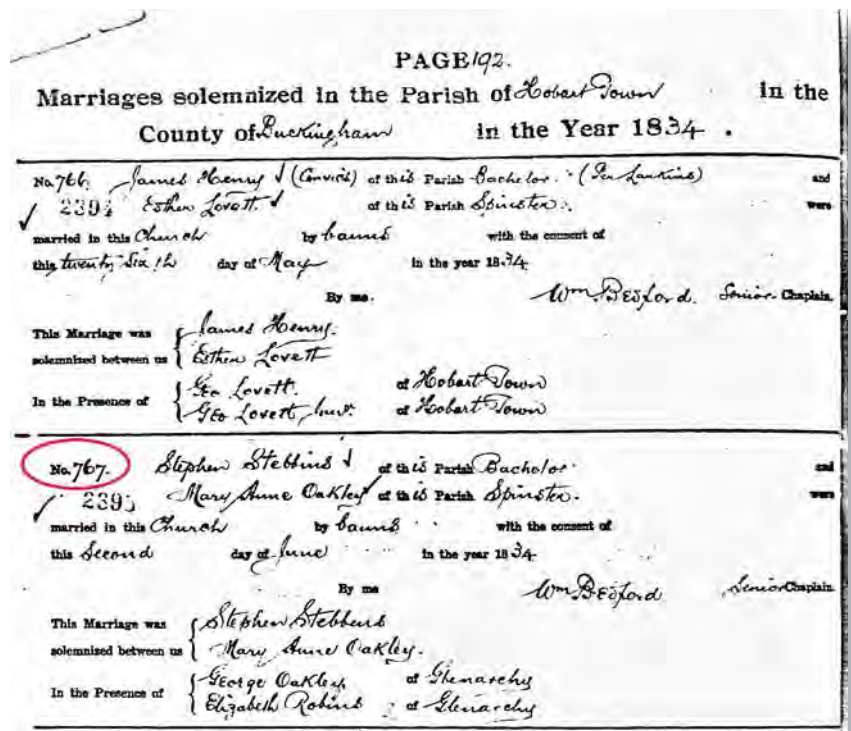
Attending Stephen and Mary Ann's wedding were her parents George and Dorothy Oakley and her 72-year-old grandmother Hannah Barrisford. George and Dorothy Oakley were married on 7 November 1808, the same day Dorothy's brother Joseph Barrisford married Mary Ann Levison to become the first colonial born lad to marry.¹¹

Mary Ann Oakley, born at Glenorchy on 29 July 1816, was the fifth of fourteen children born between 1809 and 1834 to George and Dorothy Oakley, their last child being born just three and a half months prior to Mary Ann's marriage to Stephen.¹² Mary Ann's father, one of the witnesses to the marriage, transferred 60 acres of Glenorchy land to the couple.¹³

Mary Ann and Stephen's first three children were Stephen, born 1835 at Glenorchy (died in his first year), Joseph born 1837 at Hobart Town and Mary born 1838 at O'Brien's Bridge, Glenorchy.

In 1839 Stephen and Mary Ann left Glenorchy with their two surviving children, Joseph and Mary, to settle at Huon River on Lady Jane Franklin's Fernland settlement.

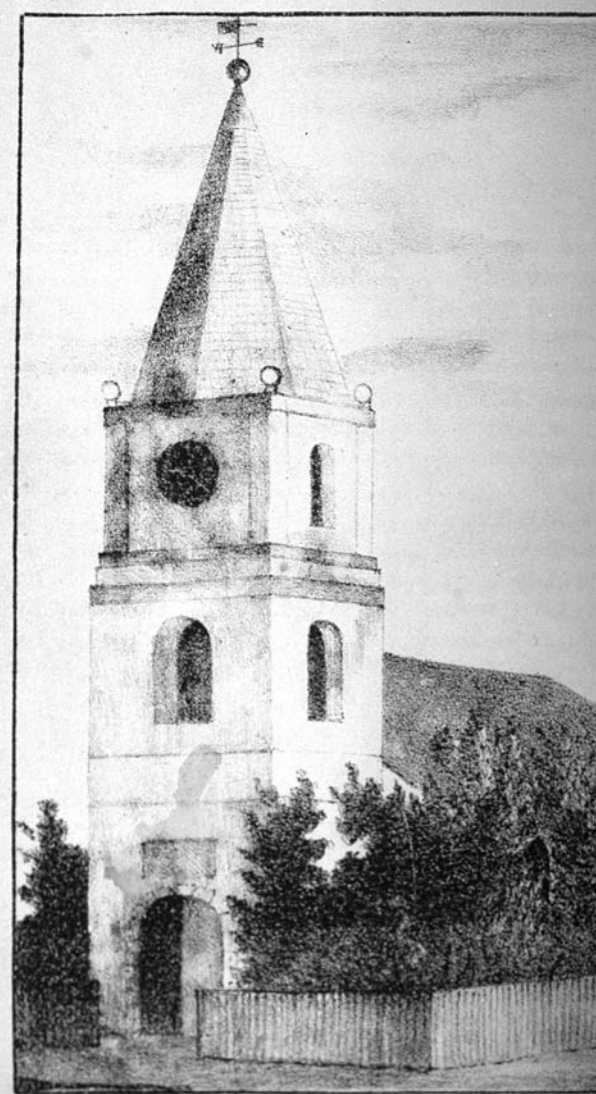
Lady Jane's husband, Sir John Franklin, a nephew of English navigator and cartographer Matthew Flinders, left England in August 1836 bound for Van Diemen's Land to take up the position of Governor General. Sir John Franklin was accompanied by his wife Lady Jane, who by mid 1837, had purchased land from John Price on the Huon River. Lady Jane decided to help immigrants by renting land to them. She gained little from her scheme except the satisfaction of assisting worthy people such as Stephen Stebbins, helping develop Van Diemen's Land and perhaps bringing lustre to her husband's rule. Lady Jane personally interviewed all the candidates, including Stephen, for their allotments. In her diary dated 22 August 1839 Lady Jane wrote: 'We met the Archdeacon and I told him that I had just had an interview ... with five applicants for land at the Huon and whom I had agreed to accept. They



▲ Image 2: Marriage of Stephen Stebbins & Mary Oakley, Register of marriages (pre civil registration), RGD 36/1/2 no. 2395, Tasmanian Archives

are worthy Methodists'. Stephen Stebbins is listed amongst those five Wesleyan households, the others being John Smith, Joseph Turner, William Amos and William Cuthbert. Lady Jane was very particular about steadiness of character. Married men were preferred, and they virtually had to be teetotal. Christianity was essential too. Stephen, being a family man and a local Methodist preacher, no doubt passed with flying colours. Lady Jane maintained a close interest in their welfare throughout the seven years her husband was Governor of Tasmania.¹⁴

Lady Jane Franklin's plan was to divide the land into 50- and 100-acre blocks to sell to settlers. The land would be leased to respectable free settlers rent free for the first year on the condition they buy the land within seven years.¹⁵ The priority at first was on clearing ▶▶



▲ Image 3: St David's Church, B&W Lithograph, Hobart Town: H Melville 1834, SD-ILS: 656242, WL Crowther Library, State Library of Tasmania

and cultivating land, lugging heavy trees and ploughing with oxen. The principal work of the settler, outside of growing crops, was splitting shingles, laths, posts and rails. This was paid for with supplies as money was seldom used as a means of exchange. The prepared timber was carted by the splitters on their backs to the water's edge. The early settlers principally lived on potatoes, carrots and turnips, selling the surplus to purchase groceries. They grew sufficient wheat to make grist for the mill. The other crops were barley and peas which were used to feed pigs. They supplemented their diet with fish from the river and eels which they caught on the mud flats.¹⁶

Stephen and Mary Ann settled on Block 13, comprising 100 acres, and were amongst the early settlers to make their homes on the heavily timbered banks of the Huon River. The settlers at the Huon did not have an easy time because every inch of land required clearing. The area of uncleared thick forest on the banks of the Huon River was known as a source of Huon Pine and excellent for shipbuilding.¹⁷ Family notes prepared in 1975 by Stephen's grandson, Stan Stebbins, suggest Stephen built the first boat at Shipwrights Point on the Huon River. By October 1839 Lady Jane was pleased to see how much progress had been made; land was cleared, huts built, crops grown, timber sold. The population numbered about 60.

According to the 1842 and 1843 census returns, by December 1842 Stephen and Mary Ann had three surviving children including James, my great grandfather, born at Huon River on 28 May 1840.¹⁸ They had no servants. Very few of the settlers employed labour, as the price of produce was so low there was little, if anything, left after they paid for groceries and clothing. Another child, Lydia was born at Huon River on 22 January 1843. On both census returns their religion is reported as Wesleyan Methodist, and in 1836 George Oakley, Stephen Stebbins and Joseph Barrisford are listed amongst the foundation members of the Methodist Church at Claremont.

When Lady Jane's party called on Stephen in November 1842, on one of her annual visits, the settlement was well established. Stephen obtained the title to his block on 3 June 1843. The land, once cleared, made splendid agricultural land in a river-valley with easy access to the town and the Port of Hobart.

A few sad months followed for Stephen with the death in October 1843 of his 9-month-old daughter Lydia, then a month later his 52-year-old father in law George Oakley passed away. George Oakley's death was recorded by Lady Jane

when the Franklins paid their farewell visit to the Huon settlement before leaving Van Diemen's Land in November 1843. Lady Jane Franklin wrote in her diary:

As we passed Stebbings cottage we heard some psalm singing and afterwards learnt that his father in law, (George) Oakley, the father of a man who is an applicant for one of Capt. Ross's allotments was lying dead in the house. Stebbings and Lloyds had gained the summit of the steep hills which rise in the rear of their dwellings and had a very interesting and striking appearance ... it was agreed that the Bishop rather than Mr Gell should perform the funeral service of old Oakley the next morning ... Mr Gell properly deeming that the offices of the Bishop would be more valued than his own and would produce a good impression.¹⁹

Three more children were born to Stephen and Mary Ann on their Huon farm; Sarah 1844, John Stephen 1845 and Stephen 1846 (died age 2). According to an extract taken from a letter written 1 January 1924 by son John Stephen:

My father knew him (Sir John Franklin) well, he was Governor of Tasmania and Lady Franklin owned the little settlement of Franklin on the Huon River ... My father had his block facing the river and it was the landing place on the settlement that was where I was born on 26 October 1845.²⁰

Around February 1848 Stephen and Mary Ann sold their Huon farm and moved to Hobart Town. Their ninth and last child, Rhoda was born on 22 July 1850. Tragedy struck again when eldest son Joseph, aged 13, died in October 1850 followed two weeks later by Stephen's wife Mary Ann aged 34 from 'fever'.^{21,22} Described on her death certificate as a 'timber cutters wife' and residing at Sandy Bay, Mary Ann died only three and a half months after her last child Rhoda was born, leaving Stephen with five surviving children to raise, Mary Grace aged 12, James aged 10, Sarah aged 6, John Stephen aged 5 and Rhoda 3½ months.

In 1852 Stephen and eldest surviving son James aged 13, travelled to Maldon, Victoria to join the Victorian Gold Rush.²³ Coincidentally Maldon was the name of Stephen's birthplace in Essex and possibly influenced his choice. Stephen, along with countless others, was lured to the Victorian goldfields hoping to 'strike it rich' looking for prosperity and the possibility of a better life for his family. Once gold discovery at Maldon became public knowledge the handful of diggers became thousands. The gold rush was on. Stephen left his fourteen-year-old daughter Mary, and her three younger siblings Sarah, John Stephen and Rhoda, who died in 1854 aged four, behind in Hobart.

Around this time Victoria's population rose from 77,000 to 300,000 in the space of five years, as large scale immigration set in from Van Diemen's Land to Port Phillip. In 1852, the year Stephen joined the gold rush, a third of Van Diemen's Land's population had left in search of quick wealth.²⁴

When Stephen made a return trip to Hobart Town, he tried to reclaim the 60 acres of Glenorchy land that George Oakley had transferred to him upon his marriage. It appears that George Oakley received his land on a Location Order, which should have been transferred to a Land Grant and the title. George had not done this, and Stephen had left the land unattended while in Victoria looking for gold. Following his return from the goldfields Stephen lost his claim. It appears he was not alone as a tribunal had been set up in Tasmania to hear similar claims.²⁵

Later, surviving children Mary, Sarah and John Stephen also sailed across to Victoria to join their father and brother James on the goldfields. According to the *Bendigo Advertiser* John Stephen left for the goldfields in 1859.²⁶ Mary must have come across earlier as by aged twenty she had met and married William Brockwell, a

mining manager, on 22 March 1858; her address Tarrengower. Youngest surviving daughter Sarah, who did not marry, left Van Diemen's Land aged seventeen in 1861.²⁷

In January 1862 Stephen married his second wife Mary O'Neil at Maldon. This was Mary's third marriage into which two children were born in Sandhurst (now Bendigo).²⁸ During the early 1860s Stephen lived in Bull Street Sandhurst and is listed in the rate records as a 'carpenter'.²⁹

By early 1868 Stephen, Mary and their two young children had moved to 37 Charles Street in the Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy. In March 1868 both their children died and a fortnight later, on 30 March, Stephen died from 'pleurisy'.³⁰ Disease and sickness were common on the goldfields, so Stephen probably moved his family to Fitzroy seeking a better life for himself and his young children. The following year Mary married widower John Clayton.

Stephen is buried in the Methodist Section of the Melbourne General Cemetery in the same grave as his two young children.³¹ At the time of his death Stephen Stebbins had four surviving children, Mary Grace, James (my

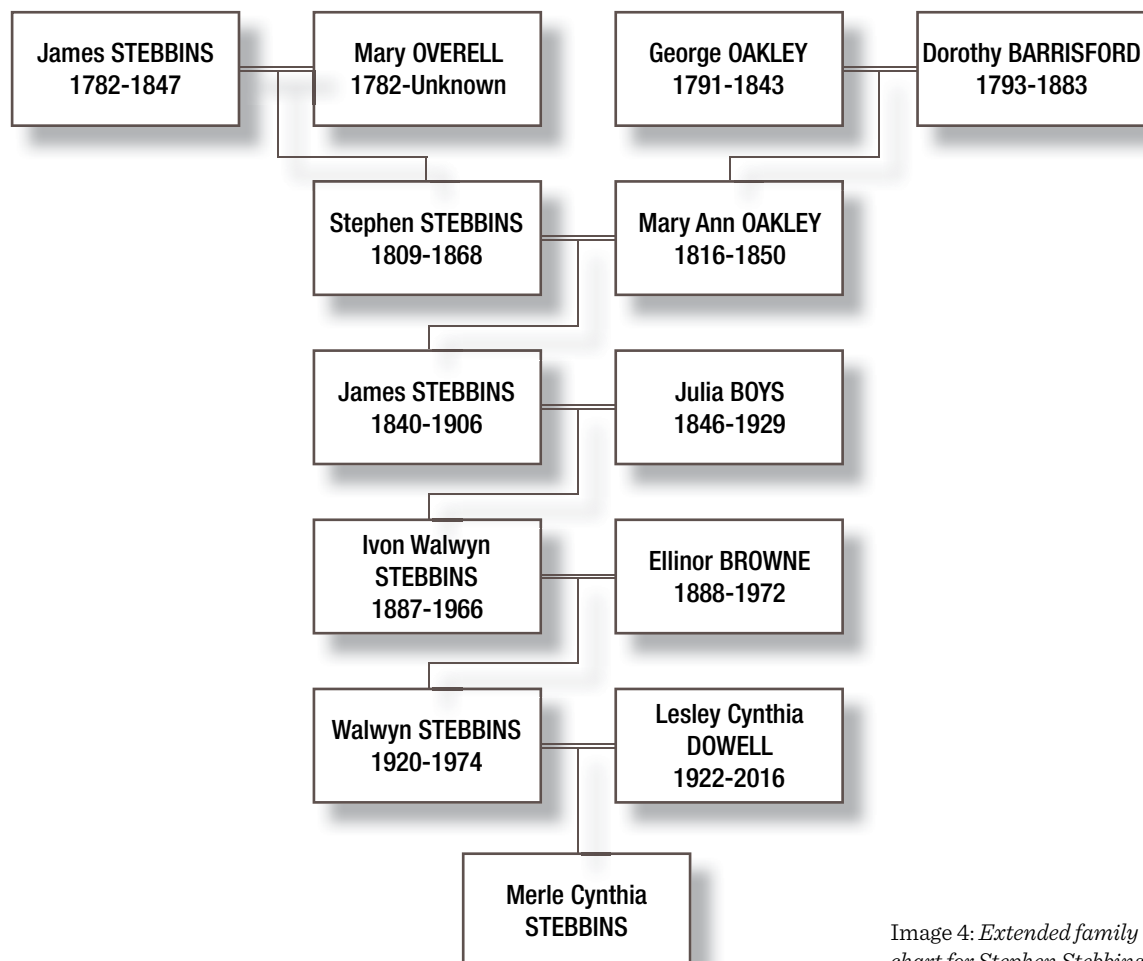


Image 4: Extended family chart for Stephen Stebbins

great-grandfather), John Stephen and Sarah. On Stephen's death certificate his father's profession is listed as 'shipwright'.

Eldest son James Stebbins, aged 24, married Julia Boys, aged 19 at Sandhurst on 2 August 1865. The couple had eleven children between 1866 and 1887, the youngest being my grandfather Ivon Walwyn Stebbins.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the meticulous past research undertaken by Ruth and George Stebbins, and Kaye Murphy for her caretaking and preservation of the Stebbins family history. ■

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Surnames

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Unlocking Susannah's story with DNA

by Barbara Beaumont

A few months ago, in my article about my 2x great grandfather, Joseph Beaumont, (*Ancestor* Vol 36, issue 2, June 2022) I wrote that I had not been able to follow the life story of his youngest daughter, Susannah, born in 1850.¹ Taking a DNA test has completely changed this picture.

For a long time I held back from taking a DNA test as I did not think I would get matches from people descended from my family of the 1850s, i.e. four generations back. In addition, there were very few descendants that I could trace. When I realised that it was possible to get a match, I decided it was worth a try, so I went ahead and took a test with *Ancestry*.

My main aim was to assure myself that my traditional genealogical research into the Beaumont and Casson families in Leeds, West Yorkshire, was correct. I was sure of my research as far back as the marriage of my great-grandfather, Joseph Beaumont (also known as Charles), who married Elizabeth Frier in 1879 in Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham.² Records indicated that he was born in Leeds, but as he lowered his age both on his marriage certificate and later censuses, it was at first difficult to find his birth, and therefore his parents. A breakthrough came with his death certificate, according to which he was 69 years old when he died on 12 January 1918, suggesting that he might have been born in 1848, several years earlier than the other records had led me to believe.³ When the 1911 census became available, it gave his age as 63, which was further confirmation. Searching births around 1848 enabled me to find out that his father was Joseph Beaumont, born in 1815, and his mother Elizabeth née Casson, born in 1818, both in Leeds.⁴

Joseph's marriage certificate from 1879 gave his father as Joseph Beaumont, a glassmaker, and records relating to this presumed father (e.g. birth and marriage certificates of his children) mentioned glass, either as cutter, merchant or dealer.⁵ Bearing in mind that several of his children were under ten years of age when their unfortunate father was confined in the West Yorkshire Pauper Lunatic Asylum, it is not surprising that the description of the nature of his work with glass might be varied.

Other children with the name Joseph Beaumont born in Leeds around the same time as my great grandfather, were eliminated for one reason or another, so I was pretty confident that I had the right person. But there was always the nagging doubt caused by the lack of connection between the first record of Joseph in Stockton – his marriage certificate of 1879 – and the records of the child born in Leeds in 1848 – his birth certificate and the 1851 and 1861 censuses.⁶ The only likely entry on the 1871 census showed a Joseph Beaumont of the correct place of birth, but a couple of years out in age (this time he had made himself older, not younger) in Manchester, working as a saw maker.⁷ While it was quite possible that Joseph had left Leeds and lived first in Manchester then in Stockton, I wanted a bit more certainty.

My DNA test result showed pages of matches. It was like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack until Alan Rhodes' series of talks at the GSV introduced us to *Thrulines*. I had heard of it, but didn't realise how useful it could be for following up a particular line. ►►

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▲ Image: Susan Beaumont/Lennox/Stewart in theatrical costume, with daughter Sarah Beaumont Lennox, c.1887, courtesy of Ada's great granddaughter. The dark eyes appear to be dark glasses, such as often worn by blind people.

ThruLines sets out your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents etc. in a chart. By clicking on the name of an ancestor you are able to see if you have any DNA matches with descendants of that person. When I clicked on my 2x great-grandfather Joseph Beaumont, I discovered a match with a previously unknown person, estimated by *Ancestry* to be a second or third cousin. We had 115 centimorgans in common, across seven segments and shared 2% of our DNA. The match had a public tree with a Susan Beaumont, born 1853, in it. Could this be my Susannah Beaumont?

The date of birth the match gave for Susan, which was based on later censuses, was 1853, not 1850, the year of birth of my Susannah. Of course, ages are not always accurate on historic documents, but I needed to investigate this Susan. Free

BMD had shown me that a Susan Beaumont had married either John Donely or James Lennox in Tynemouth in 1872. I obtained the marriage certificate which indicated that Susan had married James Lennox and that her father was Joseph Beaumont, a glass blower. I felt confident that I was on the right track.⁸

The name change from Susannah to Susan tied in with an 1861 census, taken very shortly after the death of her mother, which listed a Susan Beaumont age ten, a boarder in the home of a family named Renshaw in Leeds.

For Susan's husband, James Lennox, entertainment was a family tradition – his father was a professional actor/singer and James himself was an actor/comedian.⁹ This necessitated an itinerant lifestyle, living in lodgings, as he performed in different towns. James and Susan's first child, James Henry Lennox was registered in 1873 in Middleton, just outside Newcastle on Tyne and their second, Sarah Beaumont Lennox in 1877 in Brechin, Scotland.¹⁰ James Lennox died in Keith, in north-eastern Scotland, on 16 February 1879.¹¹ It is possible that James and Susan had separated before this time as she was not the informant on the death certificate, although she is named as his wife.

Susan's next child, Ada, was born in Pontarddulais, Llanelli, Wales on 5 November 1880.¹² Comparing her birth date to James's death, it is clear that Ada is not his child. No father is named on the certificate. Shortly after Ada's birth, the 1881 census tells us that Susan was the wife of Robert Stewart, so it is probable that Ada is his child.¹³ Robert was also an actor, so one wonders if he was a member of the same company that James Lennox belonged to. Robert and Susan were in lodgings in Wales, in Pontypool, the children now all bearing the surname Stewart. Although no marriage registration has been found to date, they stayed together for the rest of their lives and are buried in the same grave in Farnley, West Yorkshire.¹⁴ If in fact they were not married, the itinerant lifestyle of the theatre business would have made it easy to present themselves as a family when they arrived in a new town. Another child, Robert, was born in 1884.¹⁵

It is not clear if the acting profession was what led Susan to leave her home town of Leeds. Later censuses describe her as 'artist' and a 'show traveller', and a photograph shows her in theatrical costume with her daughter Sarah Beaumont Lennox, so obviously she continued to take an active part in the entertainment world.¹⁶

Susan remained connected to her siblings in Leeds although she travelled to and lived in many different places in Great Britain. In 1891 her children James and Ada were lodging in the home of her sister Elizabeth Lawson (née Beaumont).¹⁷ Her daughter Sarah was residing there in 1877 when she married Arthur Woolston, who was resident in Bristol Street, Leeds, the home of Susan's brother, John Beaumont.¹⁸

Both of Susan's daughters, Sarah and Ada, followed in their parents' theatrical footsteps, but the boys followed other occupations. Ada married Fred Denman, also in the theatrical profession, and together they had six children.¹⁹ The DNA match that opened the door to this story is Ada's granddaughter. ■

References

1. Birth, Susannah Beaumont, GRO Mar quarter, 1850, Leeds 23/431
2. Marriage certificate, Joseph Beaumont & Elizabeth Frier, 18 Oct 1879, Holy Trinity, Stockton-on-Tees
3. Death certificate, Joseph Beaumont, 12 Jan 1918, Stockton-on-Tees
4. Birth certificate, Joseph Beaumont, 21 Feb 1848, Leeds
5. Birth Joseph Beaumont 1848; birth certificate Sarah Beaumont, 22 Jan 1842, Leeds; marriage certificate Elizabeth Beaumont, 25 Feb 1888 St Luke, Leeds
6. UK census, 1851, Leeds HO 107/2320; UK census 1861 Leeds RG 9/3391
7. UK census 1871, Manchester RG 10/4047
8. Marriage certificate, Susan Beaumont & James Lennox, 17 Sept 1872, Register Office, Tynemouth
9. James Lennox, marriage certificate & death certificate, Scottish Statutory registers Deaths 1879 159/ 21
10. Birth, James Henry Lennox, GRO 1873 Sept quarter. Bellingham Union 108/316; Sarah Beaumont Lennox, Scotland Statutory registers Births 1877 275/ 149
11. James Lennox, Scotland Statutory registers Deaths 1879 159/21
12. Birth certificate, Ada Beaumont, 5 Nov 1880, Llanelli
13. UK census 1881 Trevethin, Pontypool, RG 11/5250
14. *Find a Grave* index, 1300 to present, Farnley Cemetery. New Farnley, Metropolitan Borough of Leeds, West Yorkshire, England
15. Birth, Robert Stewart, 1883 June quarter, Newcastle on Tyne, 108/06
16. UK Census 1891, Bishopwearmouth, Durham, RG12/4126; UK census 1901, Walker, Northumberland, RG13/4806; photo in the possession of my DNA match
17. UK Census, 1891, Leeds, RG12/3695
18. Marriage, St Clement, Sheepscar, 1878, Sarah Lennox Beaumont and Arthur Woolston, WYAS P60/17
19. England and Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index. 1916-2005, Chorlton, 8C/2582

Surnames

Beaumont, Casson, Denman, Donely, Frier, Lawson, Lennox, Renshaw, Stewart, Woolston

Ancestor articles

We welcome the submission of articles on family history topics for possible publication in our journal. We especially encourage new writers and we look for, and appreciate, stories and research which break new ground.

- Articles should be written in a clear, approachable style and be of interest to our readers.
- Articles should be up to 2400 words in length.
- Articles with images are preferred.
- At the end of the article include a list of all surnames mentioned and an email address if you would like readers to be able to contact you.

In preparing your article, please see our Guidelines for authors (<https://www.gsv.org.au/guidelines-authors>).

We do not publish articles of historical fiction. ■

Family object biographies

Continuing on from the December Ancestor we feature pieces by Ian Penrose, Penny Mercer and June Torcasio from the 2022 GSV Writers Discussion Circle 'Family object biographies' writing exercise.

The wicker chair

by Ian Penrose

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It had pride of place in our lounge room, the room reserved for when visitors called, certainly not a playroom. But surely the little chair is a child's toy? 'No', said Mummy, 'it's flimsy and might break'. Only much later as an adult did I learn that it was given to my mother, Marion, when she was just a baby, so perhaps it was special to her after all. And wouldn't she be surprised to know that this fragile chair has survived over a century, and been sat in by four generations of our family?

The little wicker chair was probably bought by Marion's parents in Adelaide in 1914, the year she was born. Its frame is made of ratan wrapped in seagrass and its seat and back are a decorative weave of the two materials. Wicker chairs were popular in Victorian times being lightweight and inexpensive; and their use of natural materials saw their revival during the Arts and Crafts Movement of the early 1900s. Traditionally they were made of ratan and cane, but the Australian climate made cane brittle, so softer, more flexible seagrass cord



▲ Image 1: *The wicker chair in 2022. Author's collection*

was used for the weft. One problem, though, is that seagrass deteriorates quickly outside, so this little chair's life indoors has helped its longevity. Another problem is that seagrass weave prickles a child's tender skin, a feeling I can still sense on the back of my legs. A little soft cushion helped.

Despite my mother's protestation, the chair has not always been handled gently. I can remember it frequently being used as a step to reach high shelves, being upended to prop up makeshift cubby houses. And many heavy, wide bottoms have plopped into it, forcing its arms apart. Not surprisingly some of the ratan has split and a few strands of seagrass have come loose. But it has survived – just – and with luck it will be enjoyed by generations to come. ■

► Image 2: *The author (seated) and his two elder brothers, 1949. Family photo*



▲ Image 3: *Carrie Mercer. c1880, Author's photo*

Sweet tooth

by Penny Mercer

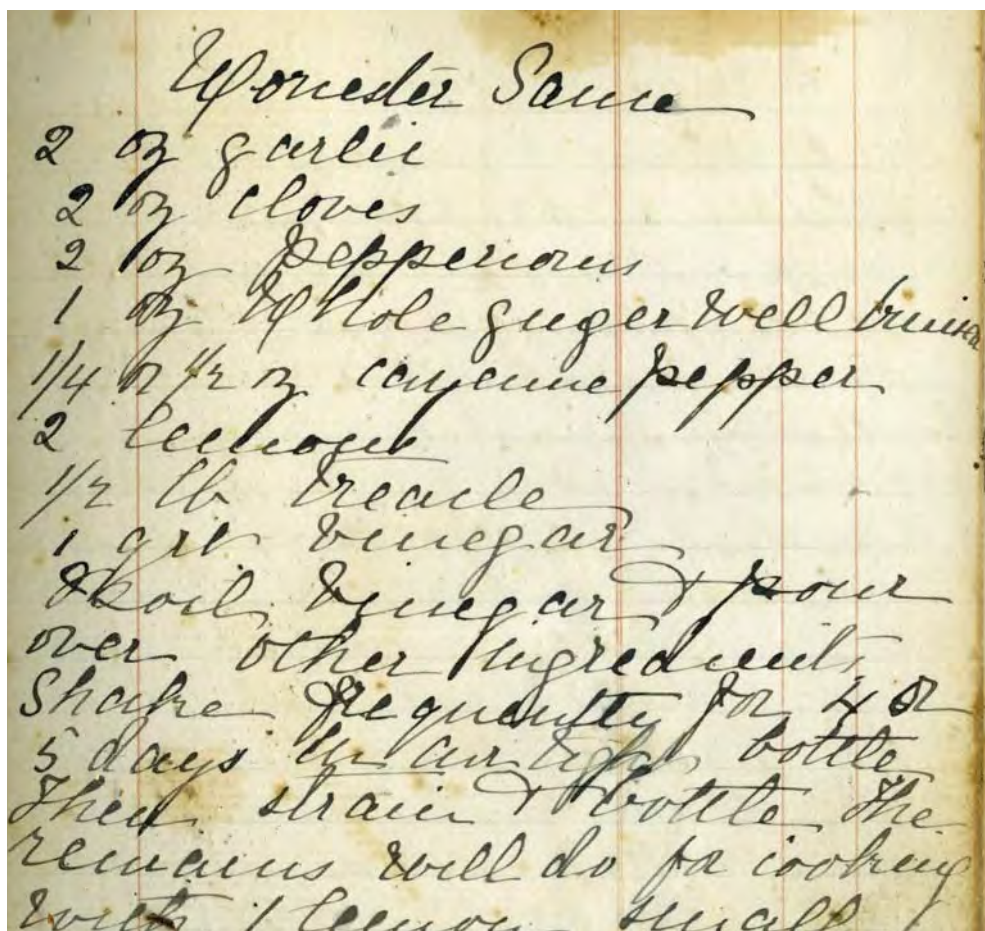
My great-grandmother Carrie (Caroline Louisa Hearle) married James Stewart Mercer in 1880.

As she began a new life as wife and mother, Carrie began her own handwritten cookbook. Starting with a simple accounting book, she added an inscription to the inside cover to mark the beginning of her new role. The recipes are written in ink, on pages that are now quite marked and yellow with age. A faint scent of smoke wafts as it is opened.

The first page is headed 'Cakes' and includes recipes for soda cake, rock cake and rice cake, a theme that reveals Carrie's sweet tooth. The overwhelming majority of the 291 recipes in her cookbook were for cakes and puddings.

Carrie gave birth to four children between 1883 and 1891, Charles, Harold, Helen and Arthur. As they grew up, she kept notes on how to make ►►

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▲ Image 4: Carrie's recipe for Worcester sauce. Author's photo.

cough mixtures, a syrup for hooping [sic] cough and fruit salts. The children must have enjoyed the chocolate drops, coconut ice, Everton toffee and Turkish delight.

As the children grew up and began attending school nearby, Carrie collected recipes for savoury foods include potted steak, macaroni cheese, Indian fritters, a salmon casserole and meat rolls for lunch.

There are recipes for household basics, including starch, one for blacking kid boots and three different instructions for washing clothes. Carrie noted how to make yeast, vinegar, baking powder and Worcester sauce. Perhaps the instructions for 'an excellent restorative' were for her very busy days as a young mother.

Carrie was closely involved with her local church, playing the organ and volunteering at church fairs. The orange marmalade, melon jelly or beetroot pickle were ideal for donation to the church stalls. Her recipe for scripture cake illustrates her commitment to her religion.

The cookbook also hints at friends and relatives, including Mrs Wright's gingerbread recipe, Uncle Tom's pudding and Arthur's cakes. While most are in Carrie's handwriting, there are quite a few with a distinctive rounder writing style, perhaps her mother, a sister, sister-in-law or friend.

Carrie's loyalty to the royal family is recognised with Victoria pudding, Albert pudding and Princess Royal pudding. She had a collection of international dishes, including Indian fritters, Swiss rolls, German biscuits, American doughnuts, West India cake and French pancakes.

The final recipe in Carrie's cookbook is simply titled 'Cake'. She finished as she started, with something for the sweet tooth.

Carrie was ninety years old in April 1945. Her cooking days were long over. She handed over her precious cookbook to Ruth Mercer, her granddaughter, who was about to marry and begin her own new life, family and cookbook. ■

Surnames

Hearle, Mercer

My mantle clock

by June Torcasio

My mother gave me this old-worldly steeple clock one summer afternoon in the 1980s. It had been sitting in a storage area above the ceiling, probably since my brother and I were children for we used to meddle with things, especially wind-up toys. This clock ticks obligingly for several days after winding. Although it is able to chime, I have removed its chiming mechanism until I have a mansion with a soundproof room.

Mum believed that the clock may have been ordered as a kit from America and assembled in Australia. It was a possession of my father's parents. The painting on the glass door is a reproduction of the 'President's House' painted in 1839 by artist William Henry Bartlett. Now known as the White House it was built and rebuilt between 1792 and today. Very little of the original building remains owing to several disasters.

I briefly flirted with the idea of selling my clock and contacted an antique clock dealer in Massachusetts. I emailed him the photograph and a description as follows:

I am most interested in establishing an approximate date of manufacture for this clock as well as its value. It was made by Brewster Manufacturing Co., Bristol, Connecticut (as per the paper slip attached to the backboard). The mahogany veneer (near the top) has been damaged, the pointed steeples have been replaced with rounded knobs, and the dial repainted. It is in working order.

The reply was prompt and precisely clinical. I learned a new word and was disappointed that I would never be able to afford a mansion via the sale of this 'antique'. Here is what he wrote:

They were in business from 1855-60. The repainted dial and damage to the case and finials make it of little value.

My family included practical people who fixed things and thought nothing of replacing splintered finials with knobs. I was the one who had the dial repainted. Discovering the low value of my beloved mantle clock has been a relief - now I have no reason to sell it.

Soon after I received the email from the gentleman in Massachusetts, his company sent me an advert for a fine French antique clock valued at about A\$8,000.

Meanwhile I am comforted in this time of COVID by the steady tick of my mantle clock. It reminds me of my mother, for her heartbeat was audible ever since her heart surgery long ago. ■

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▲ Image 5: *Antique mantle clock. Author's photo.*

Books on the history of Australia's First Peoples

by Martin Playne, Margaret Vines and Bill Barlow

This list follows on from the article about researching First Peoples' ancestry in the September 2022 issue of Ancestor. It is aimed at assisting authors who are writing family history articles involving indigenous people, by recommending a selection of books which could provide a background to their story. The list includes general texts as well as some with specific Victorian focus. We have not included journal articles here, nor websites. We encourage you also to refer back to the references given in the September article.

Boyce, James, *1835 – the founding of Melbourne and the conquest of Australia*. Black Inc. Press, Collingwood, 2011.

Boyce describes how south-east Australia, and particularly Port Phillip, was settled and how uncontrolled land grabs and disease brought the Aboriginal people to the point of extinction.

Broome, Richard, *Aboriginal Victorians – a history since 1800*. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2005.

This book is a most relevant book to read first if wanting background to Aboriginal history in Victoria in recent decades. It is divided into four parts: wild times 1800–1850; transformations 1850–1886; assimilationism 1886–1970; renaissance 1970–onwards.

Broome, Richard, *Aboriginal Australians: a history since 1788*. 5th edition, first published 1982. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2019.

This classic book covers the story of Aboriginal Australia from 1788. This edition continues to reflect the approach taken in the fourth edition in revealing 'the significant transformations Indigenous people made to the challenges of an altered world. It reveals the conflicts, adaptations and transformations Indigenous people have made over 230 years.'

Clark, Ian D., editor. *The journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate*. Clarendon, Heritage Matters: Ballarat, 2nd Edition, 2000.

This book (along with Presland's earlier limited publication of the journals in *Records of the Victorian Archaeological Survey* No.5, July 1977) give us a great insight into early land settlement and

the life of a squatter, and of Robinson's inability to provide protection to Aboriginal people.

Critchett, Jan, *Untold stories: memories and lives of Victorian Kooris*, Melbourne University Press, 1998.

Biographies of many Aboriginal families in Victoria's Western District.

Dowling, Peter, *Fatal contact: how epidemics nearly wiped out Australia's First Peoples*, Monash University Publishing, 2021.

A study of the disastrous impact of epidemic diseases on First Peoples, from the smallpox introduced by the First Fleet to measles, flu and TB, to COVID now, including detail on particular districts. See book review in *Ancestor* Dec 2021 for more detail.

Flood, Josephine, *The original Australians: story of the Aboriginal people*. Allen & Unwin. Crows Nest, NSW, 2006.

A balanced and accessible primer of Australian Aboriginal history and society from pre-history to present day framed by answering common questions that Australians and visitors often have.

Gammage, Bill, *The biggest estate on Earth: how Aborigines made Australia*, Allen and Unwin, 2011.

Gammage, an ANU historian, provides an extensive synthesis of historical European writing and art that describes how Aboriginal People in 1788 consciously and sustainably managed the flora and fauna of Australia and shaped its landscape for their needs; primarily, but not only, through the planned use of fire.

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Gunditjmara people with Gib Wettenhall, *The people of Budj Bim: engineers of aquaculture, builders of stone house settlements and warriors defending country*, em Press Publishing for the Gungitj Mirring Traditional Owners Corporation, 2010.

A guidebook for visitors to the eel fishing settlements in western Victoria.

Landon, Carolyn, *Jackson's Track revisited: history, remembrance and reconciliation*, Monash University Publishing, 2006.

Landon revisits Daryl Tonkin's memoir of life at Jackson's Track, Gippsland, with added interviews and new insights into these black/white relations.

Mitchell, Thomas L. (1839) *Three expeditions into the interior of eastern Australia, with descriptions of the recently explored region of Australia Felix, and of the present Colony of New South Wales*, 2 vols, 2nd ed. 1839. Library Board of South Australia, Adelaide, originally publ 1838, London, vol2, chap 3.12 [available online via Project Gutenberg Australia www.gutenberg.net.au]

The story of perhaps the most important journey of discovery of Victoria. Mitchell describes his meetings and sometimes conflicts with first inhabitants.

Pepper, Phillip and Araugo, Tess de, *The Kurnai of Gippsland*, vol.1, Hyland House, South Yarra, Victoria, 1985.

150 years of Aboriginal families and the missions in Victoria. Many portrait and group photos and a detailed name index are included.

Perkins, Rachel & Langton, Marcia (eds). *First Australians: an illustrated history*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne University Publishing, 393pp, 2008.

This richly illustrated and large volume provides the reader with a wonderful collection of images from the archives, and a detailed overview of the First Peoples' nation from the arrival of white settlers to the High Court's historic Mabo decision on land rights.

Presland, Gary, *Aboriginal Melbourne – the lost land of the Kulin people*. McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, Victoria, 1985.

This small book provides an insight into the lives of the Kulin people prior to the arrival of white people in the Melbourne area. Presland starts by describing the impact of sea levels rising 10,000 years ago on the previous landscape, and skilfully knits together the influence of landscape and vegetation on the indigenous population.

Presland, Gary, *First people: the eastern Kulin of Melbourne, Port Phillip & Central Victoria*. Museum Victoria Publishing, Melbourne, 2010.

Presland begins by describing the landscape of Victoria, then describes the language groups and clans and their typical way of living. He does this using many examples of locations with which we are familiar today. The third part of this book discusses the impact of white settlement on the Koorie population. Finally, he describes archaeological findings in Kulin country.

Public Record Office, *Victoria Historical records of Victoria – the Aborigines of Port Phillip and Protectors 1835-1839* (eds: M Cannon and Ian Macfarlane) Vols 2A and 2B, Victoria Government Printing Office, Melbourne, 1982-83.

These volumes cover the most relevant official documents of interactions with Aboriginal people, including the evolution of British policy, the operation of Government missions, and the conflicts with squatters between 1835 and 1839. The second volume records the roles and actions of the Government-appointed Protector of Aborigines and Assistant-Protectors and their districts.

Reynolds, Henry, *Aborigines and settlers. The Australian experience 1788-1939*. Cassell Australia, 1972.

In this work, Reynolds examines Australian race relations by using quotations from many sources to illustrate the issues he covers which include: frontier conflict, the aftermath of violence, disease and deprivation, the morality of settlement, and the missionary impulse.

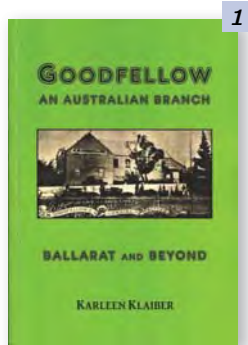
Thomas, William, *The journal of William Thomas: Assistant Protector of the Aborigines of Port Phillip & Guardian of the Aborigines of Victoria 1839 to 1867* (edited by Marguerita Stephens, 4 volumes) Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages: Melbourne, Vic., 2014

This is one of the few historical diaries devoted to describing the lives of Aboriginal people under the oversight of an Assistant-Protector in great detail.

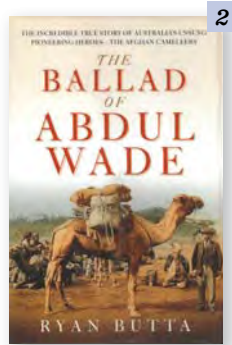
Readers are invited to submit to the authors any further books in this area which have assisted them in writing their family histories. For a more extensive but older bibliography of Australian First Peoples, see the State Library of Victoria publications that are available online. ■

Book Reviews

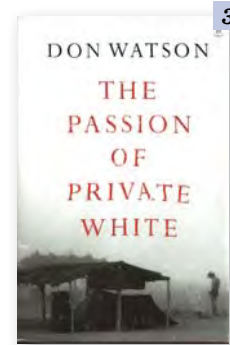
Reviews by Margaret Vines



1



2



3

1. Goodfellow: an Australian branch: Ballarat and beyond

Author: Karleen Klaiber 481pp No ISBN
 Pub: Self, Canberra, 2021. Contact goodfelagh8@gmail.com
 In GSV Library

This beautifully illustrated large print book tells the story of the Goodfellow family in four large chapters. It begins with Richard Mogg Goodfellow, the first to arrive in Australia, a typical middle class Gold Rush migrant travelling from Falmouth, Cornwall, to Ballarat. Richard was variously a clerk, bookkeeper, merchant, mining investor and director and, finally, a cordial manufacturer. Particularly interesting are the descriptions of life in Ballarat from the 1850s to the 1890s, the cordial business and the effects of the 1890s depression. Goodfellow's 'Coca water' was the Australian equivalent of Coca Cola, first marketed at the same time, but like their 'Cloves Cordial', it has passed into history.

Each of following three chapters focuses on new generation – Richard's son George, his grandson Dick and finally on Dick's children. The cordial factory, where George had become manager, was lost to the family in the 1890s and the entire family headed to the Western Australian Gold Rush. George's parents died in Perth, but George and his children later returned to Melbourne. They were a highly mobile extended family and their stories cover both World Wars, Soldier Settlement, battles with the Repat Department in the 1930s Depression and a wide variety of relationships, business ventures, employments and locations.

The author has used interesting formats, worth a look for those planning to write up and publish the family history research from these last few years of lockdowns. The Appendices containing documents and additional material are not hidden at the end of the book, but located at the end of the appropriate chapter so the reader will not miss them. The biographies and lineages of those the Goodfellows married, Bulley, Crook, Garrard and Hughes families, are included in detail when the marriage occurs but these digressions from the Goodfellow story are clearly differentiated with the use of an italic font. Sadly there is no index, but there is an extensive resources list and a large family tree foldout at the back. It is a physically heavy book – a problem for postage – but the style is easy to read, the presentation attractive and the varied family stories are lively and engaging. *MV*

2. The Ballad of Abdul Wade

Author: Ryan Butta 301pp ISBN 9 781922806000
 Pub: Affirm Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2022

The Ballad of Abdul Wade aims to correct a major omission from the story of the Australian bush in the 1890s. It highlights the importance of the Afghans and their camels by retelling the story of Abdul Wade, born Abdul Wahid.

Australians have often heard of the role of camels and their Afghan drivers in building the Overland Telegraph from Adelaide to Darwin in 1872, commemorated in the name of the Ghan train. We are less familiar with their role in supplying the outback, especially in western NSW and Queensland.

Ryan Butta begins his story in Bourke on the Darling River, the port and railhead for supplying the outback and for the movement of wool bales and livestock. When steamers could not get up the Darling and horse and bullock teams bogged in wet and died of thirst in drought, the camel trains got through. In April 1890 Gunny

Khan drove a train of 56 camels through flood waters to rescue Cunnamulla from starvation. Camels had proved their value but the Afghans and their camels now faced a battle with the teamsters and bullockies who had just formed the Carriers Union.

Gunny Khan was the first, paving the way for Abdul Wade, his cousin, partner and later competitor. Gunny remained a traditional Afghan, but Abdul assimilated into Australian society, in appearance and behaviour, becoming the major shareholder and manager of the Bourke Carrying Company with local partners, including Dalgettys, and contacts including mining companies in Cloncurry, Cobar and Broken Hill. He was also the owner of *Wangamana* station, where he ran sheep and bred camels, and a 'harbourside mansion' in Sydney, with an Irish born wife Emily and a family of seven children.

The Carriers Union had refused to countenance the use of camels, and its members feared for their livelihood. Racism fomented by local politicians like Millen and Waddell led to the foundation of an Anti-Alien Labour League aiming to exclude migrants, and competitors, from Afghanistan and India. Their NSW Immigration Restriction Act became the model for the federal White Australia policy in 1901.

With this biography, Ryan Butta challenges the picture of Bourke and the Australian bushman drawn by Henry Lawson, and shows the pervasive racism even Abdul Wade had to face down all his life, despite his success and his generosity. *MV*

3. The Passion of Private White

Author: Don Watson 326pp ISBN 9 781760855079
 Pub: Scribner, Cammeray NSW, 2022

Don Watson met Neville White when they were both students at Latrobe University fifty years ago when Neville, a Vietnam War conscript, had returned to study anthropology. His biography of Neville incorporates two case studies: the Vietnam War and its reverberations through the veterans' lives and Neville's lifetime anthropological study, a Yolngu homeland at Donydji in north east Arnhem Land. They combine when the Vietnam vets come to Donydji with Neville for two months each year to work, build and teach skills like plumbing, building and car maintenance.

Neville first went to Donydji as a PhD student and has been back every year since. He developed a close friendship with Tom, the leader and last guardian of traditional lore, learned the language, became a trusted custodian of country and culture and recognized the trauma inducing history of Yolngu – with Makassans, British invaders, cattlemen, missions, miners and incompetent administrators and always a fear of losing their land and culture.

Donydji exhibits the dilemma of all the Australian First Peoples: 'humanity at Donydji was trapped between the need to preserve tradition and the need to create a viable future.' The traditional semi-hereditary gerontocracy at Donydji with its polygyny and few available accepted marriage partners severely restricted the lives and futures of young men and of women. Many left. Individual stories of Tom, of Yilarama, of Ricky, of Joanne and others, even of Cowboy, illustrate the tensions playing out in individual lives. This raises questions about how places like Donydji can survive. For family historians this is an important, fascinating book for its detail of the long-term effects of trauma like war and colonisation on both individuals and societies. There is a valuable map, great photographs, endnotes and two bibliographies. *MV* ■

Around the Groups and Circles

Groups and Circles are continuing with **Zoom** meetings. Book via the GSV website. Consult the Groups and Circles Notice Boards for all up-to-date information.

ISG Discussion Circle

Next Quarterly meeting: **20 May 2023 at 1.00pm**
Speaker: Lyn Johnson, *A little bit of my French research*
Convenor: **ISG@gsv.org.au**

Irish Ancestry Discussion Circle

Next Quarterly meeting: **13 May 2023 at 1.00pm**
Speaker: Graham Thorley, *Migration Schemes available to Irish emigrants and ports of departure*
Contact: **irish.ancestry@gsv.org.au**

GSV Writers Circle

Next meetings: **1 March, 5 April, 3 May and 7 June 2023 at 12.30pm**
Contact: **gsvwriters@gsv.org.au**
All GSV members welcome.

DNA Study Group

Next meetings: **7 March, 4 April, 2 May and 6 June 2023 at 10.00am-12.00pm**
Convenor: **maureen.trotter@gmail.com**
Working together collaboratively to learn more about DNA analysis. Not for beginners.

Good Oil Discussion Group

Next meetings: **17 March, 21 April, 19 May and 16 June 2023 at 1.30-3.00pm**
Convenor: David Down **thegoodoil@gsv.org.au**
Discussion considering topics closely allied to Family History research

Scottish Ancestry Group

Next Quarterly meeting: **18 March and 17 June 2023 at 2.00pm**. All GSV members, SAG subscribers and visitors welcome.
Facebook page: **<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gsvscottishancestrygroup>**

Early English Discussion Circle

Next meeting: **31 March and 2 June 2023 at 1.30-3.00pm**
Recent meetings covered researching ancestors in the Civil War and using DNA for 1700s research.

Counties of Northern England Discussion Circle

Next meetings: **14 March, 11 April, 9 May and 13 June 2023 at 1.30-2.30pm**
Convenor: David Down **cone@gsv.org.au**
Covering the counties of Northumberland, Durham, Westmorland, Yorkshire, Cumberland, Cheshire, Isle of Man, and Lancashire.

Victoria and Tasmania Discussion Circle

Next meetings: **24 March, 28 April, 26 May and 23 June 2023 at 10.30am**
Conveners: Gayle Nicholas, Jackie Van Bergen and Janine Wood **victas@gsv.org.au**

British India Discussion Circle

Next Quarterly meeting: **16 May 2023, 7.30pm**
For members with the common interest of British ancestors in India from 17th to the 20th centuries. Convenor: Mary Anne Gourley **maryanne.gourley@bigpond.com**

South West England Research and Discussion Circle

Next meetings: **10 March, 14 April, 12 May and 9 June at 1.00pm-2.30pm**
Convenor: Stephen Hawke **swerdcircle@gmail.com**
Covering the counties of Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire.

Midlands Discussion Circle

Next meetings: **8 March, 12 April, 10 May and 14 June 2023 at 1.00pm-2.30pm**
Convenor: Jenny Redmond **midlands@gsv.org.au**
Counties: Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire.

London Discussion Circle

Next meetings: **23 March, 28 April, 26 May and 23 June 2023 at 10.30am-12.00pm**
Convenor: Vicki Montgomery, **london@gsv.org.au**
Discussion topics include electoral rolls, taxes, land records, maps and gazetteers, poor laws, apprentices, guilds and freemen.

A beginners guide to researching South African ancestors

by Alison Dennison

My known ancestry is almost exclusively Scottish, which gives me the luxury of researching in the same archives, with similar records and systems for most of my ancestors. My husband's family tree, on the other hand, is diverse with tentacles reaching across the globe to places as far apart as Australia, Ireland, Borneo, India, Kenya and South Africa. Every new discovery sends me back to learning the fundamentals of that location and its records.

In this introductory guide, I explore the basics you need to know if, like me, you encounter South African connections in your research. It is aimed at those who are just beginning to look into South African ancestry and are hoping to trace the vital records for their ancestors. The focus is on the online resources that are available for undertaking research from outside South Africa. The information in this article applies to the area which is now known as the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

Alison can be contacted at:
alison@alisdennison.com

Even if you don't think you have any South African ancestors, it can be worth a search there if you have any ancestors who have 'disappeared' from the records elsewhere in the world. One of the branches I've been researching vanished from records in Ireland in the 1930s, only to reappear in South Africa.

Start with the geography and the history

The starting point for research of any new location is to understand its geography and history. Take a look at historical maps to understand where your ancestors were located and which province boundaries applied to determine which archives may hold relevant records.

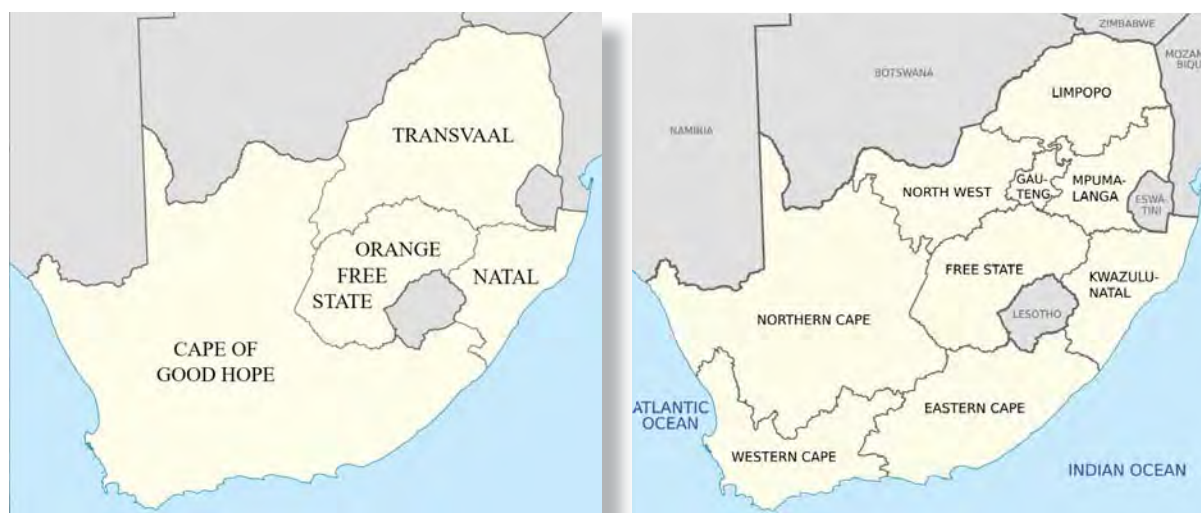
The William and Yvonne Jacobson Digital Africana Program collaborative initiative between the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stanford University has digitised a selection of African historical maps and these are available on the UCT Libraries' discovery platform - <https://digitalcollections.lib.uct.ac.za/william-and-yvonne-jacobson-digital-africana-program-uct>. There are also a number of maps of South Africa at the *Old Maps Online* website - <https://www.oldmapsonline.org/>.

South Africa has a complex history. The first inhabitants were the San and Khoekhoen people, who were later joined by Bantu-speaking agro-pastoralists from the north around 2,000 years ago. In 1652, the Dutch East India Company established a shipping supply settlement at

the Cape of Good Hope, and British forces seized the Cape Colony at the turn of the 19th Century. Dissatisfied with British rule, the Boer Voortrekkers (Afrikaner farmers) left the Cape in the late 1830s and headed inland which resulted in the establishment of the independent Boer republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

The discovery of diamonds and gold in the late 19th century sparked a rush of immigrants from the rest of the world. Between 1880 and 1902, British forces and the Boers engaged in a series of conflicts known as the Anglo-Boer Wars, resulting in the British gaining control of the region, and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. From 1948, a policy of racial segregation (apartheid) was implemented which ended with the first democratic election in 1994.¹

Today South Africa is made up of over 60 million inhabitants encompassing a diverse range of ethnic and religious backgrounds and speaking eleven official languages (including English and Afrikaans) Formal written record-keeping only began with European colonisation (and then initially for European families only), however oral



▲ Images 1&2: *The provinces of South Africa in 1910² (left) and since 1994³ (right)*

traditions recall connections that stretch back beyond that. Wide reading of sources relating to the history of Southern Africa prior to the 17th century can be useful in accessing this information.

South African History Online (SAHO) website is a not-for-profit website offering information about South African and African history and culture - <https://www.sahistory.org.za>.

Explore the history of your ancestors' timeframe. Did they migrate to South Africa? If so, what factors may have influenced their migration to (or within) South Africa? Where did they come from? Where did they settle? What industries and occupations were in demand at that time?

The GSV collection includes books, articles, web and intranet links about various aspects of South Africa's history and genealogy - <https://www.gsv.org.au/our-collection>. The State Library of Victoria also has a broad collection of South African holdings.

First step is *FamilySearch*

FamilySearch is the best place to start in your research for two reasons; it has more South African record collections than any of the other genealogy websites; and it offers a comprehensive Research Wiki which will point you towards online records held elsewhere. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provides *FamilySearch* free of charge to everyone, it just requires that you set up a user account to access it.

From the initial South Africa location page, you can access some learning centre courses, current indexing projects, and the complete list of *FamilySearch's* holdings of historical records (indexed and non-indexed), genealogies and catalogue material - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/location/africa/south-africa>.

There is a button at the top of the location webpage which links to the Research Wiki. Once there, select 'Online Records' to get a table of what records are available online (at *FamilySearch* and elsewhere) under category headings such as: births, marriages, deaths, church records, directories, immigration, military, cemetery records and probate records - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Online_Genealogy_Records.

Only a percentage of what is available for South Africa on *FamilySearch* is indexed. Some records are image only, and relevant records can only be found by browsing through what is available. The 'catalog' tab can be used to search by place for South African genealogical materials (including books, online materials, microfilm, microfiche, and publications) made available by *FamilySearch* online and/or in their libraries and family history centres.

A very helpful webpage authored by Cornel Viljoen consolidates lists of links direct to specific sources both on *FamilySearch* and elsewhere - https://southafrica.mypeoplepuzzle.net/GEN_Links.html.

Next step is the National Archives of South Africa

Before diving too far into research on *FamilySearch* or elsewhere, you should also familiarise yourself with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA) online indexes at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.za/node/737>.

The indexes act as a finding aid to assist you to identify and locate archival material such as death notices, estate files, property records, legal proceedings and other government documents. The entries contain information about records but not the actual records themselves. Once you



have identified records of interest, you can follow up whether they are available anywhere online (e.g. *FamilySearch*, *Ancestry*), or you can hire a researcher to visit the repository concerned to look up and take images of the record (see 'On the ground research' on page 35).

NARSSA is in the process of migrating entries from the old NAAIRS (National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System) database to a new database. At present, both are available for use by the public, and both should be searched as the migration process is not complete. Links to each database appear on the webpage link above.

Within NAAIRS, using the 'RSA' database will search across all the archive repositories and national registers of non-public records. There is also the ability to choose a single database (e.g. KAB for the Cape Town Archives repository).

On the 'South African Genealogy' *Facebook* group (see 'Facebook groups' on page 35), Linda Farrell has posted links to two extremely useful PDF documents she prepared outlining the availability of online records – one for 'References found on NAAIRS that may be online' and the other covering a variety of records including collections of civil registration and church records. Check the 'Guides' tab within the group page to find 'links and files' in the pinned post.

Death notices

Of particular interest to family history researchers are the 'death notices', which may be contained within estate files. Many of these estate records are indexed and available as images on *FamilySearch* however there are some collections that are browsable as images but not indexed, which is where familiarity with NAAIRS/NARSSA will be useful to locate the desired record.

South African death notices are genealogically rich resources as they usually contain the full name of the deceased, date and place of death, birthplace, age at death, nationality, names of parents, occupation, place of residence, marital status, place of last marriage, names of surviving and pre-deceased spouses and children's names; as well as whether the deceased owned movable and immovable property, whether this was over a certain value and whether the deceased left a will. The details were provided by an informant who was often, but not always, the next-of-kin.

Death notices are not death certificates. Death certificates contain less information than a death notice, except they do contain the cause of death.

Civil registration

The following table shows the approximate commencement dates for the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in each of the four

provinces that made up South Africa in 1910.⁴ Civil registration was intended to be for all the population, but it is important to note that not all of our ancestors obeyed local laws or regulations 100 per cent of the time!

| Province | Births | Marriages | Deaths |
|-------------------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Cape | 1895 | 1700 | 1895 |
| Natal | 1868 | 1845 | 1888 |
| Transvaal | 1901 | 1870 | 1901 |
| Orange Free State | 1903 | 1848 | 1903 |

Birth records: The RSA Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is responsible for civil registrations, but birth registration information is not released publicly, nor indexed at their website. To order a birth certificate from DHA, you must supply the exact details of the birth – and access is restricted. Instead, for family history purposes, transcriptions or indexes to birth registers, church baptism records, newspaper birth transcriptions and/or Government Gazette transcriptions are often relied upon to determine birth details.

More recent birth and death certificates can be ordered through the South African High Commission in Canberra – <https://www.sahc.org.au/certificates.htm>. However, the person's thirteen digit identity number must be known, and their website states that processing of applications is likely to take twelve months or longer.

Civil death and marriage records can be searched for various time periods and locations on the *FamilySearch* website. The Wiki page for South Africa Civil Registration lists all the collections available and whether they are indexed and/or images – https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Civil_Registration

The 'South Africa, Civil Marriage Records, 1840-1973' collection indexes marriages from Cape Province, Transvaal, Natal, and Orange Free State. It also contains images of the records – <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2821281>.

Collections of civil death registrations on *FamilySearch* are less comprehensive, and you should look at the Research Wiki pages for the province in question to see what is available and over what time period.

Church records

Before the introduction of civil registration, the recording of births (baptisms), marriages and deaths (burials) was the concern of the various churches. When the Dutch East India company formed a settlement at Cape of Good Hope in 1652, it also established the state church of the



▲ Image 3: *National Bank building, Cape Town c1920-c1930 (Linton Brothers, photographer). State Library of Victoria Picture Collection, Accession No: H92.339/84*

Netherlands – the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk. The arrival of the British and immigrants from other parts of Europe brought with them other Christian churches.⁵ Each denomination has its own archives, so it helps if you can narrow down your ancestors' location and religion before seeking church records. Historical background about each of the churches and their records, together with contact details for archives are contained in a wiki page – https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Church_Records.

The 'South Africa Online Genealogy Records' wiki page shows what church record collections are available online both at *FamilySearch* (free) and also at *Ancestry/MyHeritage* (subscription) – https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Online_Genealogy_Records. Also refer to Linda Farrell's PDFs referenced above.

South Africa has a substantial Jewish population, and there is a homepage on *JewishGen* for the Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG) which offers a page of lists and directories with information about tracing records for Jewish ancestors in South Africa – <https://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>.

Other sources of BDM details

The eGGSA branch of the Genealogical Society of South Africa (eGGSA) website contains a database of transcriptions of extracts from a selection of South African newspapers and government gazettes over various time periods. There is a search facility which can search across all the newspapers – <https://www.eggasa.org/newspapers/index.php>

There is also an eGGSA project to transcribe church birth, marriage and burial registers, which is a work in progress – <https://www.eggasa.org/bdms/BDM-Introduction.html>

Ancestors South Africa, a website maintained by genealogist Heather MacAlister contains a selection of free and subscription databases of records – <https://www.ancestors.co.za/databases>

Probate

FamilySearch contains collections of probate records from each of the pre-1994 provinces which contain death notices/estate records. These records are indexed and have images. The documents can be very rich in family detail.

Links direct to the following five of these collections can be found on the Probate Records wiki page - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Probate_Records

- 1832-1989 Orange Free State, Probate Records from the Master of the Supreme Court
- 1869-1958 Transvaal, Probate Records from the Master of the Supreme Court
- 1834-1989 Cape Province, Probate Records of the Master of the High Court
- 1871-1937 Cape Province, Kimberley, Probate Records of the Supreme Court
- 1846-1950 Pietermaritzburg Estate Files

However, there are many more available, and a list of these can be found via Linda Farrell's PDFs referenced in the section about NAAIRS/NARSSA on page 32. ➡

Burials and monumental inscriptions

The Genealogical Society of South Africa (GGSA) has a Cemetery Recording Project underway which aims to systematically record cemetery and gravestone inscriptions in South Africa. There are also several local projects run by GSSA branches, including the online eGGSA branch. See the GGSA website for details of this initiative – <https://genza.org.za/index.php/en/gssa-projects-focus1-death-related-events>

See also the *FamilySearch* wiki for other online resources for cemeteries and gravestones, which includes links to sources such as *FindaGrave*, *BillionGraves* and listings of Jewish cemeteries – https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Cemeteries

Websites dedicated to specific topics

- *The First Fifty Years* is a project collating Cape of Good Hope records which relate to the individuals who lived there in the first fifty years after European settlement in 1652 – <http://e-family.co.za/ffy/>
- *South Africa's Stamouers* website is a project to capture the stamouers (progenitors) of South Africa (the individual considered to be the first to arrive in South Africa of a specific 'surname') – <https://www.stamouers.com/>
- *The 1820 Settlers* website is dedicated to the research of British settlers who arrived in South Africa in 1820 – <https://www.1820settlers.com/>
- Resources related to German South Africans are collated to the *German South African Resource Page* website – <https://safrika.org/>
- More than 150,000 Indentured Indians arrived in South Africa between 1860 and 1911. The *Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre* at University of Kwazulu-Natal collates information including the ships' lists and a SA Indian *Who's Who* on its website – <https://gldc.ukzn.ac.za/ships-list-1860-1911/>
- *The Huguenots Society of South Africa* offers information about the history of Huguenot immigrants to South Africa – <https://huguenotsociety.org.za/>

Where are the South African census records?

Unfortunately for family history researchers, censuses conducted in South Africa were purely for statistical purposes, and once the data was aggregated, the individual returns were destroyed.

Immigration records

There is currently no central database of all passenger arrivals to or departures from South

Africa, instead several sources have collated shipping lists from archives, newspapers, gazettes etc. These are listed on the *FamilySearch* 'South African Emigration and Immigration' wiki page – https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Emigration_and_Immigration.

The eGGSA branch of the Genealogical Society of South Africa (eGGSA) however has a project underway with volunteers transcribing 'all the passenger lists in the South African Archives that the archivists can find for us'. The database is found on the eGGSA website – <http://www.eggasa.org/arrivals/lists.html>

There are several other select databases compiled by dedicated individuals who trawl through the available sources, such as:

- *South African Genealogy* – <http://sagenealogy.co.za/search-database/>
- *OliveTree Genealogy* – <http://www.olivetreegenealogy.com/ships/tosafp01.shtml>
- *German South African Resource Page* – https://safrika.org/schiff_en.html

You can also search passenger arrivals and departures of other ports (e.g. in the UK) for ships going to or coming from South Africa. It was a chance discovery on a UK arrival list on *Ancestry* which provided the initial link to South Africa for one of the branches I have been researching.

Genealogy and family history groups

The **Genealogical Society of South Africa** (GSSA) is a non-profit organisation with twelve branches including the eGGSA which is the virtual or online branch of the GSSA, intended for those who are unable or do not wish to belong to one of the land based branches – <https://genza.org.za/index.php/en/>.

GSSA is undertaking a number of projects such as transcribing cemetery records, photographing gravestones, collecting digital images of family bibles, and creating an album of old postcards of South Africa. *Familia* is the journal of the GSSA and it is available in the GSV collection: GSV: 968.005 FAM (Pre-2015 issues at RHSV). The eGGSA website contains some transcription lists and databases such as the previously mentioned passenger list transcription project, and a collection of transcriptions from South African newspaper extracts – <https://www.eggasa.org/newspapers/>

Helpful 'how-to' videos

Matthew Bode has an excellent collection of videos related to aspects of South African

genealogy on *Youtube* including 'A beginner's guide to South African genealogy' – <https://www.youtube.com/user/matthewmarkbode>

The 'On-Demand' video library at *FamilySearch's Rootstech* website currently contains videos by Sue McNelly and Linda Farrell that are particularly helpful for those starting out. See (among others):

- <https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/session/getting-started-in-south-african-research> (Sue McNelly, 2021 *Rootstech*)
- <https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/session/concise-guide-to-researching-south-african-ancestors> (Linda Farrell, 2022 *Rootstech*)

Facebook groups

There are some very active *Facebook* groups specifically focused on South African genealogy where members are knowledgeable and helpful in responding to posts such as:

- South African Genealogy – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SouthAfricanGenealogy/>
- Using DNA for Genealogy – South Africa – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DNAGenealogySouthAfrica/>

On the ground research

If a document located in an archive via NAISSS/NARSSA is not available online, you can contact the archives directly to order a copy of the record, or use someone on the ground to go into the archive to photograph or copy it.

The eGGSA offers a document retrieval service for Pietermaritzburg (NAB) for Natal, Bloemfontein (VAB) for the Orange Free State and Pretoria (TAB) for the Transvaal. The service is available to all via the online shop, but current members of GGSA receive a 50 percent discount on the fees charged – https://www.eggasa.org/sales/eshop_e_dc_docs.htm

The eGGSA is not able to access records at the Cape Town Archives (KAB), so a private researcher would need to be arranged for it and other archives not mentioned above. As details regarding researchers change, you could ask for current recommendations via the *South African Genealogy Facebook* group.

Location and email details for the National Archives and each of the provincial archives can be found on the NARSSA website – <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.za/node/1278>

Beyond the basics

Once you have established the basic details for your ancestors, there are many other South African resources available to further your family history research which are beyond the scope of this brief introduction such as: military records, compiled genealogies, records of the Anglo-Boer wars, land records, South African university collections, photo and postcard collections, emigrant guides, and almanacs/directories.

Before too long, you will have a rich and textured picture of your South African ancestors' lives.

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the very helpful information, encouragement and feedback provided to me by Linda Farrell, Mary-Anne Gourley, John Stanford and Cornel Viljoen. ■

References

1. See these useful timelines for historical detail: 'South Africa Profile – Timeline', 4 April 2018. BBC News [website], <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094918>, accessed 23 Nov 2022); *History: Official Guide to South Africa 2020/21*, October 2021, RSA Government Communications and Information Systems [website], <https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/pocketguide/3History2021.pdf>, accessed 23 Nov 2022
2. 'Map of the provinces of South Africa 1910-1976 with English labels', by Htonl, licensed on Creative Commons under CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_provinces_of_South_Africa_1910-1976_with_English_labels.svg
3. 'Map of South Africa with English labels.svg', by Htonl, licensed on Creative Commons under CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_South_Africa_with_English_labels.svg
4. 'Research Wiki – South Africa', *FamilySearch* [website], 12 July 2022, https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/South_Africa_Civil_Registration, accessed 23 Nov 2022
5. Richard Ball, 'Church Registers in South Africa – a brief outline', eGGSA [website], 17 Nov 2014, <https://www.eggasa.org/index.php/en/church-registers-in-south-africa>, accessed 25 Nov 2022

Research Corner

GSV's new

Full Text Digital Journal Search

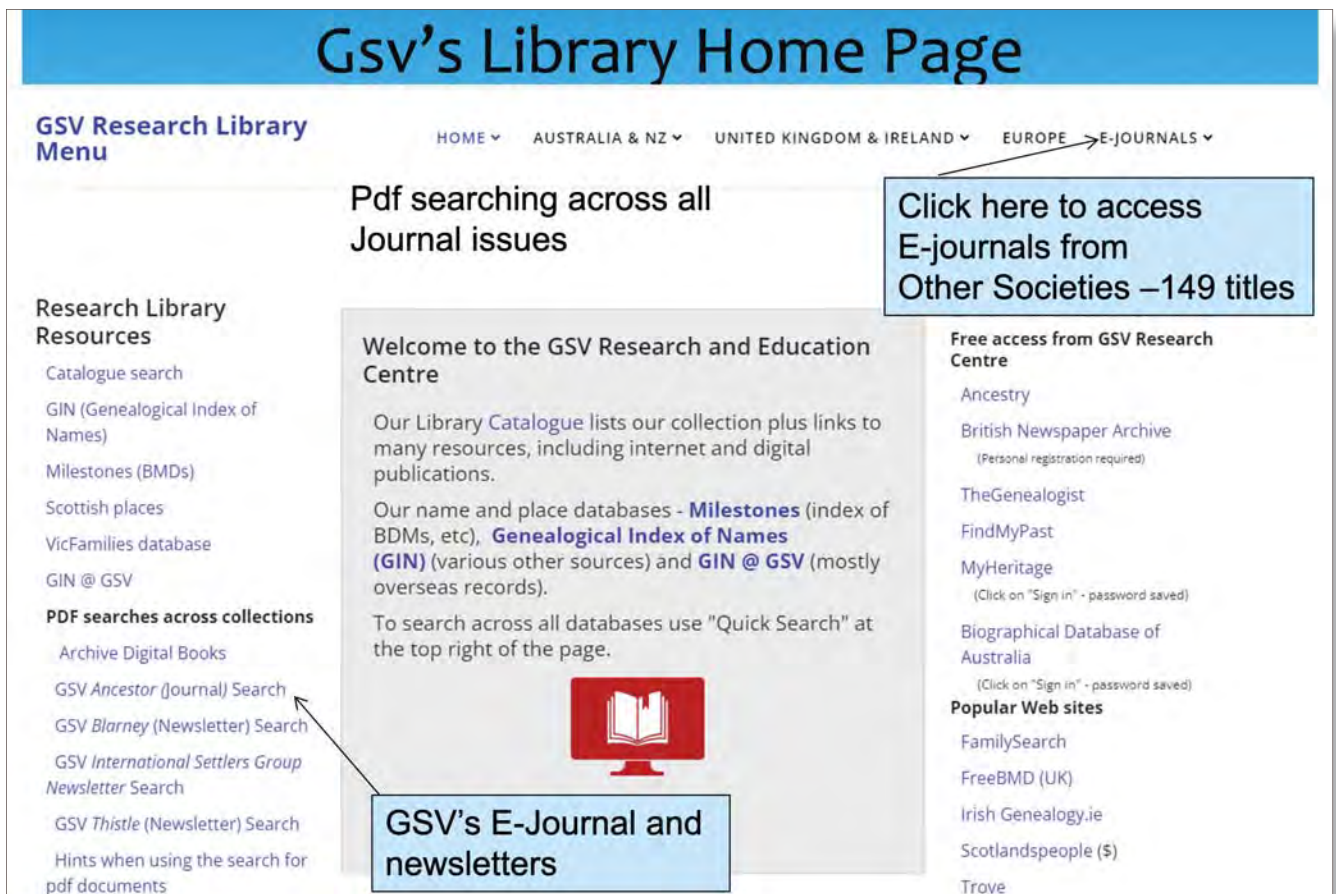
by Joan Schoch and Meg Bate

The **Genealogical Society of Victoria** has a large collection of journals from various family history, genealogical and history organisations from around the world. These days many of these journals are received as a digital copy or in e-journal format.

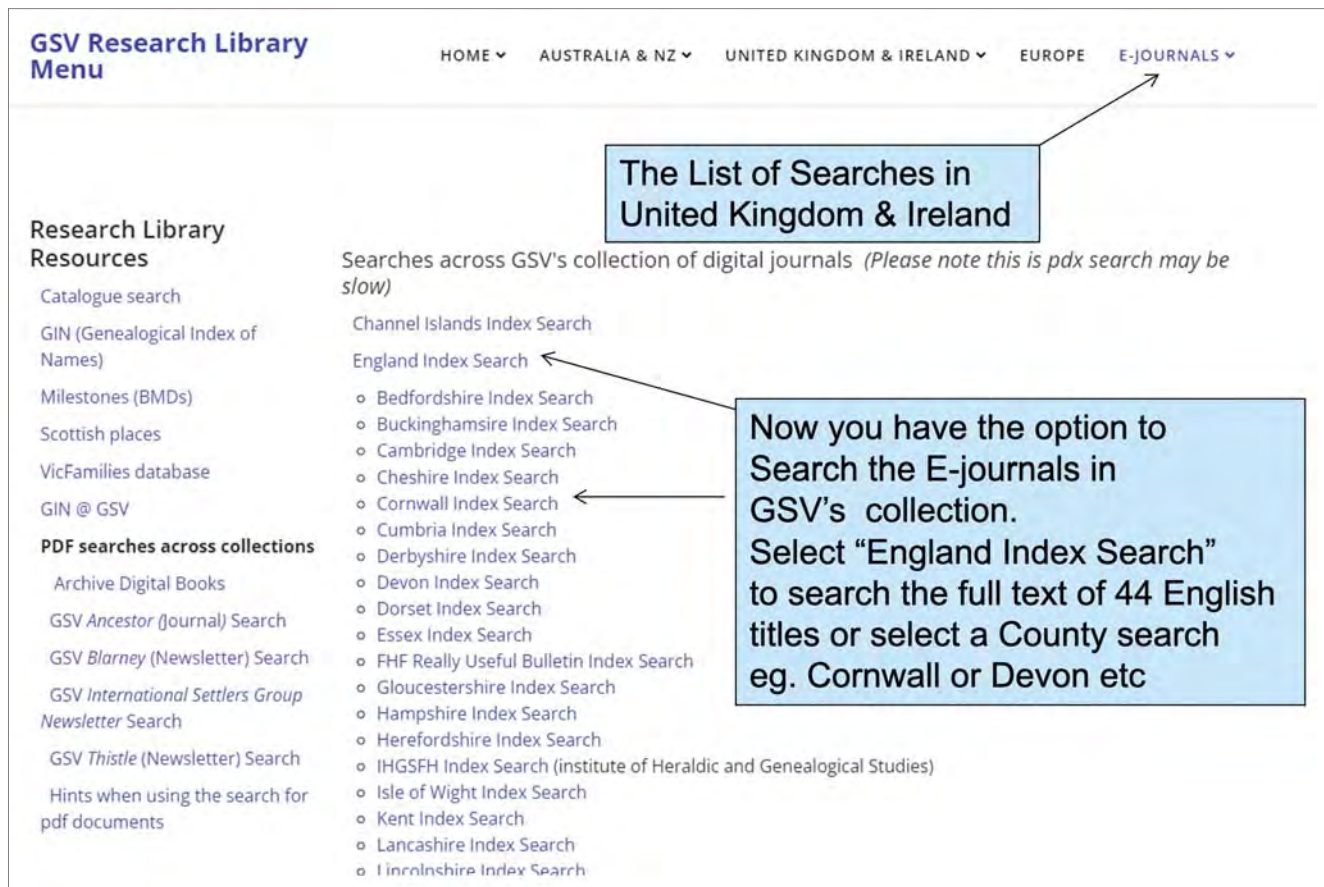
To make it easy to find an article on a particular family name or place of interest we have created a pdf (pdx) search. This provides a full text search across groups of e-journals. It has been set up so you can search by country e.g. England, Australia, Canada or just a county or state. (See image 2). Separate searches are also available for all copies of GSV's *Ancestor* (journal), *Blarney*, *International Settlers Group* and *Thistle* newsletters.

Copyright and other restrictions mean that this search is **only available on the GSV library computers**. Image 1 (below) is a copy of GSV's Library's home page displaying where you can access this search.

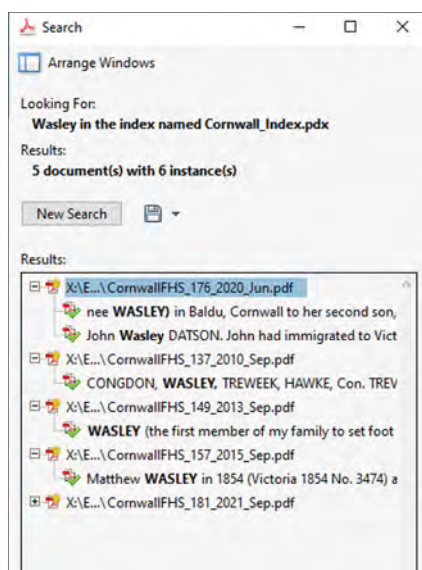
We have approximately 149 e-journal titles. At the moment the areas covered are: England 44 titles, Scotland 9 titles, Ireland 12 titles, Wales 3 titles, Channel Islands 1 title, Europe 5 titles, Victoria 39 titles, New South Wales 18 titles, Queensland 12 titles, Canberra 1 title, and Canada 2 titles. For some of titles we have a comprehensive collection such as the *Aberdeen & North-East Scotland family History Society journal* from 1979 to 2022. For some organisations we only have their more recent journals.



▲ Image 1: GSV Library website home page: from here click on E-journals to view the variety of searches available



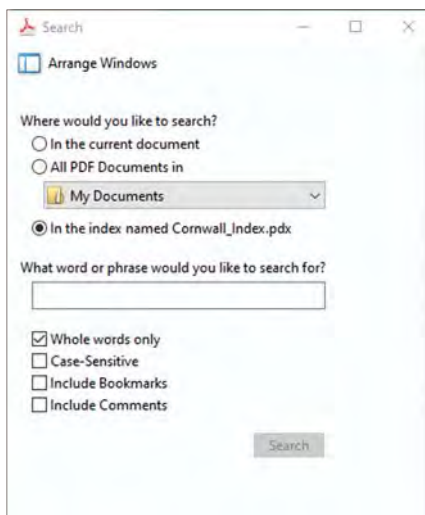
▲ Image 2: The new GSV Digital Journal Search - search for England shown



◀ Image 3: The search for the area indexes - this example is for Cornwall

Once you have clicked on the 'Index search' follow instructions until the search page is displayed (see image 3). Now type in your search terms. It important to note you can search a word or a phrase. Also note the other search options that are available in particular 'Whole words only' and 'Case Sensitive' (see image 4). Whole words will search the word and not truncations of the word. Also, if you are searching a surname such as 'Eagle' type 'Eagle' in the search box and tick 'Case sensitive' and this will find Eagle as a name/noun. It's also worth noting that some publications always highlight surnames using all capitals e. g. EAGLE so try that search as well.

If you would like to be able to find out more about this searching, the webcast GSV new *Digital Journal Search* is available for you to view from home. So visit the GSV soon and give it a try or if you are looking for something particular then use GSV Research Services for a Members 'Quick Look-up'. ■



► Image 4: Other search options

Additions to the Library

See the library catalogue for full details, exact format, and location of material within the library – available online at www.gsv.org.au or in the library.

Compiled by Meg Bate

Thank you to all donors to the library collection.

Webcasts are available to members at home.

Abbreviations used:

\$ = Society Purchase

(...) = Donor's name, if not the author

GENERAL

The good genealogist: how to improve the quality of your family history research. Lautrec, Danielle. GSV: 929.1 LAU

FAMILY HISTORIES

Rags to riches to rags: scenes from the life of John Curtain.

MLA, MCC, JP, 1835-1905. Burton, Hazel (Cherie). 929.2

CURT BUR **Curtain, Goggin, Peacock, Woods** families

The Duggan story from Richard to Ron. Duggan, Colin. GSV:

929.2 DUGG DUG (Author)

Duggan, Meaker, Raymond, Gregory, Turton, Rowe,

Maccance, Macmillan, Mayberry families

Who were John Large's parents? Research report. Ibrahim,

John. Digital copy @ GSV premises

Large, Bunting, Bunton, Neave families

Blown in: my migrant ancestors. Stephenson, Geoffrey D, GSV:

929.2 STEP STE (Author)

Stephenson, Bennett, Long, Metcalf, Finlayson,

Robertson, Batten, Bayes, Laing, Burnard, Potts, Burns,

Bromell families

AUSTRALIA

Australian genealogy online. Hicks, Shauna. GSV: 929.194

HIC \$

First Fleet families of Australia: containing genealogical

details of four hundred & fifty six First Fleeters, their children

& grandchildren. Smee, Craig James. GSV: 994.092 SME

(RHSV)

Irish workhouse orphan emigration to Australia 1848-1850.

Perry McIntyre and Richard Reid, GSV: 325.94 MCI \$

Third Fleet families of Australia: containing genealogical

details of three hundred & eleven Third Fleeters, their children

& grandchildren. Smee, Craig James. GSV: 994.092 SME

(RHSV)

Second Fleet families of Australia: containing genealogical

details of three hundred & forty nine Second Fleeters, their

children & grandchildren. Smee, Craig. GSV: 994.092 SME

(RHSV)

VICTORIA

The history detective: family history research; how to guide

basic, family history, where do I begin. Reid, Derek. Digital

copy @ GSV premises (Author)

The history detective: house and land research, how to guide

basic. Reid, Derek. Digital copy @ GSV premises (Author)

Walata tyamateetj: a guide to government records about people

in Victoria. Public Record Office Victoria and National

Archives of Australia, Melbourne Office, with an historical

overview by Richard Broome. GSV: 994.5 PUB

100 years of the Merbein RSL Sub-Branch. 'We will remember

them.' Compiled by Lisa Cooper. GSV: 994.59 MERB COO

Merbein RSL Sub Branch

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GSV: R 929.1489 NEI \$

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GSV: R 929.1489 NEI \$

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GSV: 929.1485 WOO \$

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Criminal children: researching juvenile offenders 1820-1920.

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Stuart A. GSV: 942 RA \$

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(Austell Prior - Saltash). Devon and Cornwall Record

Society, edited with an introduction by Norman J G Pounds.

GSV: 942.35 DEV (Hawke, Stephen)

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of Scilly - West Antony and Manors in Devon). Devon and

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Church Kirk 1813-1851. Lancashire Parish Register Society,

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Roberts. GSV: 929.3342 LAN LAN \$

WEBCASTS - Members only

Four Richards and an Arthur: the Cox family in Dorset &

Devon 1696-1796. Cox, David. **Cox, Poyntz** families

Nenagh, County Tipperary: an example of life in a military

town. Reynolds, Michael J. **Hennessy, Doran** families

Ship diaries and journals on the voyage to Australia.

Presentation by Carmel McEvey, Claire Dunlop and Graham

Thorley. (0:36) Carmel McEvey introduces the topic. (6:12)

Claire Dunlop follows with a talk on ship newspapers

published on some boats for passengers on their journey

to Australia. (11:54) Graham Thorley gives an account of

his great-grandfather John **Enright's** voyage from Kerry

to Australia on the *Golden Empire* in 1863, based on the

diary kept by Daniel **Baldwin.** (34:06) Lastly, Paul Harris

speaks about the journey a decade earlier of his forebear

Tom **Denny,** also a Kerryman, aboard the *California* in 1853

based on the diary of fellow traveller George **Gladstones.**

Finding & using wills & probate records. Presented by Jenny

Redman and Susan Wight. ■

GSV Member Societies

Further information on our Member Societies
can be found on the GSV website at
www.gsv.org.au/activities/member-societies-list
📄 Website or email address 📧 Mailing Address 📞 Phone

Ararat Genealogical Society

✉ PO Box 103, Ararat VIC 3377
📧 araratbooks@gmail.com

Ballarat & District Genealogical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 1809, Ballarat Mail Centre VIC 3354
📞 Carol Armstrong 03 5335 7630
📄 www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au

Barham/Koondrook Genealogical Group

✉ PO Box 48, Barham NSW 2732
📞 Helen Hall 03 5453 2091

Benalla Family Research Group Inc

✉ PO Box 268, Benalla VIC 3671
📞 Bill Willett 0429 947 696
📄 www.benallafamilyresearchgroup.org

Bendigo Regional Genealogical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 1049, Bendigo VIC 3552
📄 https://brgsbendigo.weebly.com

Clan MacMillan Society of Australia

📧 oreillykaye@gmail.com
📄 www.clanmacmillanaustralia.com.au

Cobram Genealogical Group Inc

✉ PO Box 75, Cobram VIC 3644
📞 Liz Diamond 0438 652 201

Colac & District Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 219, Colac VIC 3250
📞 Colac History Centre 03 5231 5736
📄 www.colacfamilystory.org.au

Deniliquin Genealogical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 144, Deniliquin NSW 2710
📞 Val Hardman 03 5881 3980
📄 http://members.bordernet.com.au/denifhg

Descendants of Convicts Group Inc

✉ PO Box 312, Dingley Village VIC 3172
📧 docs.vic@gmail.com

East Gippsland Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 1104, Bairnsdale VIC 3875
📞 Teresa Collis 03 5152 5590
📄 www.egfhg.org.au

Echuca-Moama Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 707, Echuca VIC 3564
📞 Janice Smith 0404 872 524
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~emhist

Footscray Historical Society Inc

✉ 66 Napier Street, Footscray VIC 3011
📞 03 9689 3820
📧 foohist@bigpond.com

Geelong Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 1187, Geelong VIC 3220
📞 Susie Zada 0414 666 017
📄 www.geelongfhg.com

Gisborne Genealogical Group Inc

✉ PO Box 818, Gisborne VIC 3437
📞 Julie Dworak 0400 099 159
📄 www.ggg.org.au

Hamilton History Centre Inc

✉ PO Box 816, Hamilton VIC 3300
📞 History Centre 03 5572 4933
📄 www.hamiltonhistorycentre.org.au

Heyfield Family History Group

✉ 5 George Street, Heyfield VIC 3858
📧 famhistsec@gmail.com

Hotham History Project Inc

✉ C/- North Melbourne Library
66 Errol Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051
📞 Stephen Hatcher 03 9329 9724
📄 www.hothamhistory.org.au

Huguenot Society (Victorian Chapter)

✉ 2/2B St Georges Road Toorak VIC 3142
📞 Sue A'Beckett 0408 201 422

Jamieson & District Historical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 26, Jamieson VIC 3723
📄 www.jamiesoncommunity.wixsite.com/jdhs
📧 jamiesonmuseum@gmail.com

Kerang & District Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 325, Kerang VIC 3579
📞 Bev Nethercote 0447 304 667
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~kerangfh

Lakes Entrance Family History Society Inc

✉ PO Box 674, Lakes Entrance VIC 3909
📞 03 5155 3843

Lilydale & District Historical Resource Ctr Inc

📞 Sue Thompson 0475 219 884
📧 info@lilydalehistorical.com.au

Mansfield Family History Group Inc

📞 Sheena Daykin 03 5775 1659
📧 mansfieldfamilyhistorygroup@gmail.com

Maryborough Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 59, Maryborough VIC 3465
📞 Helen Ritchie 0409 611 170
📄 www.maryboroughvicfamilyhistory.org.au

Melton Family History Group Inc

✉ C/- Secretary, 17 Sutherland Avenue,
Melton South VIC 3338
📞 Deb Slattery 0409 306 640
📄 http://meltonfamilyhistory.org

Mid-Gippsland Family History Society Inc

✉ PO Box 767, Morwell VIC 3840
📧 mgfhs.inc@gmail.com
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mgfhs

Mildura & District Genealogical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 2895, Mildura VIC 3502
📞 Kaylene Charles kckcpiscs3@gmail.com
📄 www.milduragenalogy.com.au

Narre Warren & District Family History Grp Inc

✉ 1/65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road,
Cranbourne VIC 3977
📞 Eileen Durdin 0439 720 557
📄 www.nwfhg.org.au

Nathalia Genealogical Group Inc

✉ PO Box 11, Nathalia VIC 3638
📞 Lyn Franklin 03 5866 2543
📧 lfranklin@bigpond.com

Ouyen District History & Genealogical Ctr

✉ Box 131, Ouyen VIC 3490
📄 http://ouyen.vic.au/history

Phillip Island & District Genealogical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 821, Cowes VIC 3922
📧 piadgs@gmail.com
📄 www.piadgs.org.au

Port Fairy Genealogical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 253, Port Fairy VIC 3284
📞 Ian Perry 0447 265 759
📧 pfgenealogy@hotmail.com

Port Phillip Pioneers Group Inc

✉ 21 Apex Avenue, Hampton VIC 3188
📄 www.portphillippioneersgroup.org.au
📧 info@portphillippioneersgroup.org.au

Portland Family History Society Inc

✉ PO Box 409 Portland VIC 3350
📞 Martin Boyer 03 4508 4218
📧 portlandfamilyhistory@gmail.com

PMI Victorian History Library Inc

✉ 39 St Edmonds Rd, Prahran VIC 3181
📞 03 9510 3393
📄 www.pmi.net.au

Richmond & Burnley Historical Society Inc

✉ 3/415 Church Street, Richmond VIC 3121
📞 03 9427 1800
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~rbhs

Sale & District Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 773, Sale VIC 3850
📞 Heather Pocknall 0428 411 603

Shepparton Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 1529, Shepparton VIC 3632
📞 Peter Matthews 0427 330 132
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~shepfh

South Gippsland Genealogical Society Inc

✉ 10 McCartin Street, Leongatha VIC 3953
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sggs

Southern Peninsula Family History Society Inc

✉ PO Box 2189, Port Phillip Plaza,
Rosebud VIC 3939
📞 Annette Buckland 0402 858 878
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~spfhs

Sunbury Family History & Heritage Society Inc

✉ PO Box 601, Sunbury VIC 3429
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sunburydha1989
📧 sunburydha1978@hotmail.com

Swan Hill Genealogical & Historical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 1232, Swan Hill VIC 3585
📞 Lyn Cunningham 0437 643 686
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~shghs

Toora & District Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 41, Toora VIC 3962
📄 http://toora.org

Victorian GUM Inc

✉ Suite 4, 318 Stephenson Road
Mt Waverley VIC 3149
📄 www.vicgum.asn.au
📧 info@vicgum.asn.au

Wangaratta Family History Society Inc

✉ PO Box 683, Wangaratta VIC 3676
📞 Val Brennan 03 5727 6229
📄 www.wfhs.org.au

West Gippsland Genealogical Society Inc

✉ PO Box 225, Warragul VIC 3820
📞 Barbara Clayton 03 5611 3871
📄 www.westgippslandgenealogy.com

Wimmera Association for Genealogy Inc

✉ PO Box 880, Horsham VIC 3402
📞 Ian Rees 0429 953 054
📄 http://home.vicnet.net.au/~wafg

Wodonga Family History Society Inc

✉ PO Box 289, Wodonga VIC 3689
📞 Wendy Cooksey 02 6056 3220
📄 http://wodongafamilyhistory.org

Wonthaggi Genealogy Inc

✉ 23 Murray Street, Wonthaggi VIC 3995
📞 03 5672 3803
📧 secretary@wonthaggigenealogy.org.au

Yarrowonga Family History Group Inc

✉ PO Box 7, Yarrowonga VIC 3730
📞 Jan Parker 0427 883 264
📄 www.yarrowongafamilyhistorygroupinc.com



Telling children's stories

It's easy to gloss over the children in family history. Their births and baptisms get a mention and possibly their education, but is more possible?

Recently members of the GSV Writers Circle were challenged to take part in a writing exercise to write a story about a child's experience. We were asked to consider if focusing on a child's experience would be an opportunity for a different way to tell a story. Could a story be more powerful, or more interesting, if told from a child's point of view?

We were encouraged to write either a completely new story, or to convert an existing story previously written from an adult's or neutral point of view to a child's.

Some ideas about children's experience to think about before beginning to write included:

- children's attitude to adults
- their place in the family and feelings towards older or younger siblings
- how their gender and parents' occupations might have affected their daily life
- what might have been the impact on them of a major event, such as a death in the family, or a political situation.

An important consideration is whether to use first person or third person, past or present tense. First person combined with present tense has immediacy, but also has the danger of straying into fiction. The place of 'creative non-fiction' in family history has been much discussed in the Writers Circle. Opinions vary, and there is no one right answer that is applicable to all situations. A first person creative piece may arouse the interest of younger family readers in a way that a more traditional approach might not.

We identified a variety of strategies to establish that a child is the narrator or the subject. These included references to siblings, older or younger, how parents are referred to, mention of toys and games, or school experiences, as well as the type of vocabulary used.

What sources might be available for such a story? Of course having access to letters or diaries written by family members is invaluable, but not everyone is so lucky. In general, much of what is known about the past is because a major event occurred, probably a dramatic or a sad one, e.g. a suicide, insanity, a violent act, etc. In such cases newspaper reports of the incident, or transcripts of trials or coroner's inquests provide a rich source of material, and sometimes even spoken words that can be used as dialogue in the story.

Alison Dennison's family suffered a terrorist attack on their family home in Dublin in 1923. She incorporates information and dialogue from newspaper reports, and imagines the event from the point of seven-year-old Sean:

A persistent banging wakens Sean. He pulls the blankets up under his chin to block the chilly air of his bedroom, but the thumping becomes louder and he can't go back to sleep. It sounds like someone is pounding on their front door.

He hears his big brother downstairs in the hallway.

'Who is there?' Thomas calls out.

A man's voice shouts, 'The postman. Let me in.'

'I won't,' Thomas replies.

Sean wonders why the postman is delivering mail at night. He usually comes during the day. And why does he need to come in?

In a few lines Alison has skilfully established the age relationship of the brothers – the younger one is already in bed, the older one still up – and the confused thoughts of Sean trying to make sense of why the postman is at the door at night time.

As well as details based on historical research, family traditions and anecdotes handed down in the family can be utilised, to fill out the texture of everyday life. Jane MacIsaac was inspired by a recording her grandmother made when she was 77 years old, to imagine her as a ten-year-old, and write in her voice. Jane incorporates a traditional family game with serviette rings into

*By Penny Mercer and
Barbara Beaumont,
following a writing exercise
and discussion
at the Writers Circle*

the description of Saturday dinner time:

Saturday night around the dinner table is my favourite meal of the week. I am allowed to sit next to Mother, and I love playing with her big serviette ring which I roll all the way down the table to Earnest. But suddenly Father grabs it and inserts it in one eye, impersonating an old man with a monocle. We all laugh and have a go ourselves. As the youngest, Earnest, Jimmy and I generally have our meals in the day nursery with Mary supervising, but on the weekend, all seven of us children plus Mother and Father sit at the big table – this is much more fun.

Penny Mercer's vivid first person account of her ancestor Carrie as a 'barrack rat' (army child) in the Melbourne of the 1850s includes details and events from that time, all based on thorough research.

Dust blows everywhere here in summer and there are lots of mosquitoes. Mother says not to scratch the bites, but it's too hard. The soldiers swim in the waterhole nearby, but it's not safe for children. Duncan Flynn from our barracks drowned there last summer. He was only a bit older than me. Instead, we have been to see the new row of trees planted from our gate to the road. They had to build iron fences to stop the wandering goats and cows from trampling all over them.

The tone is chatty, the detail vivid, and the reference to what 'Mother says', and the implied prohibition on swimming, places the researched facts clearly in the child's experience.

Sally Johnson's story is set in London during the Second World War. Two little sisters, unable to sleep for excitement at the imminent prospect of a baby sister or brother, mischievously tie together the shoelaces of the doctor who is attending their mother. Sally brilliantly evokes their limited view of the room from beneath a Morrison shelter*:

Muriel and Shirley watched as Doctor Hacker sat with his legs outstretched toward the flickering flames. From where they sat, they only saw his cuffed trousers and black-laced shoes. The doctor settled back, and the girls listened to his steady breathing as he dozed off.

Looking at the doctor's shoes, Muriel wished she could tie shoelaces. Shirley had tried to show her how, but Muriel would impatiently tuck the laces into the sides of her shoes and run off to play. The five-year-old didn't like it when she wasn't able to do something her big sister could do.

'I dare you to tie his laces together,' whispered Muriel in her quietest voice.

Worried about not doing a dare, Shirley carefully reached out through the wire mesh and with deft



▲ Image 1: *Freda. Author's photo.*

fingers quickly set about her task. When she was done, Muriel looked at her with great admiration.

'There!' Shirley was pleased at having impressed her tomboy sister.

Period details such as an open fire and cuffed trousers with lace-up shoes paint a picture, and the difference in age and temperament of the two sisters is clearly brought out.

Those of us who attempted this exercise found it enjoyable and easier than we at first thought it would be. Of course a solid basis of researched facts is necessary, but thinking about how a child might have been affected by them may give you a fresh angle on your story. Why not give it a go? ■



▲ Image 2: *Shirley and Muriel. Author's photo.*

**Editor's note: a Morrison shelter was a bomb shelter designed for indoor use. It was made from heavy steel, with wire mesh sides, and could also be used as a table. People sheltered underneath it during an air-raid.*

Jottings... and library news

Linley Hooper, FGSV

'Secrets taken to the grave revealed by DNA' by Brittany Pearson, in *The Scottish genealogist* 70:3 (Sep 2022) shows how a 20th century criminal family's connections were uncovered, and a far-flung family reunited. This issue also covers 'Crimes of a heinous nature – the story behind the crimes' along with an article on the first Edinburgh Music Festival in 1815: 'The original gilded balloon?'

Two old English customs are discussed in the *Lincolnshire FHS journal* 33:4 (Nov 2022): 'Beating the Bounds' (also known as perambulating the bounds, and Ganging Day) and 'Mumping in Lincolnshire'. The latter was also known as 'Thomasing', 'Gooding' or 'Doleing'.

Cockney ancestor 176 (Autumn 2022) includes 'The Thatched House Society' from *Jesse Pound's London*. Its object was to relieve poor debtors who were confined in prison for small sums.

The Devon family historian 184 (Nov 2022) offers 'After 150 years in print, a fresh insight into the novel Lorna Doone'. This explores some links to the Ridd, Red and Snow families along with other Exmoor farming families.

North Irish roots 33:2 (2022) discusses the 'Griffith Valuation Field Books: a useful and underused source' – a case study showing the additional information in the Field Books compared with the printed editions which are readily available online. The house books are also worth exploring – see <https://timeline.ie/griffiths-valuation-house-books/>. The Mill Books, Quarto Books and Tenure Books are also available but not so useful for genealogists. Read more at: <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/guide-archives-valuation-office/>. From 1828 the records for Northern Ireland are held at PRONI – <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/valuation-records>. For the rest of Ireland much is online, <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/search/vob/home.jsp>.

Suffolk Roots 48: 3 (Dec 2022) explores some of the wild weather experienced in the last centuries.

If you're struggling with DNA, check out the *Manchester Genealogist* 58:4 (2022) which reports a talk by Hilary Hartigan using a wonderful chocolate analogy. 'DNA-matching cousins?' compares a bar of chocolate with a tin of 44 assorted chocolates of 22 varieties to illustrate grouping and interrogating your DNA results to find common links.

The Glamorgan FHS journal 148 (Dec 2022) provides articles on the Glamorgan Constabulary from 1841. It also reminds us that many Irish and English immigrants went to the Welsh coalfields. Next to the United States of America, Wales can boast the second highest rate of immigration in the decade before the First World War.

Over the previous centuries internal migration was not unusual, for example, during the 1850s and 1860s some one and a half million people left the rural areas in Wales and England, with two thirds moving into the expanding towns and industrial districts, the balance emigrating overseas.

'The Disgrace of Selling Butter in Ballycroy: 19th century ethnographic studies and their value in Genealogical Research' by Paula Jones in *The journal of the Genealogical Society of Ireland* 23 (2022) examines ethnographic studies that took place in the west of Ireland in the late 19th century and the value they offer from a genealogical perspective as well the emigrant experience compared to those who stayed behind during the 'Forgotten Famine' of 1879.

'John Dade of Fressingfield, and Witton: his ancestry ... pt 1' appears in *Suffolk roots* 48:3 (Dec 2022). This article illustrates the need to review older publications and gives suggestions on how to bring them up to date. Many of us 'give up' when we hit the 16th century, but this article should encourage us to continue researching – although I doubt if my 'ag labs' will be found.

Barnsley Roots 30:4 (Oct 2022) was previously known as *Domus Historiae*, which I doubt few bothered reading in our library. As Yorkshire is the largest county in England, and west Yorkshire alone has over 20 family history societies it can be hard to know which to follow. It's useful to visit the *GENUKI* website, which will give an overview of the Societies in your area of interest along with many other items for research in that county/town. Yorkshire research has received a boost with the co-operation of the Borthwick Institute of the University of York and *Ancestry*. The Doncaster & District FHS is another Society that covers many parishes in Yorkshire.

The Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire FHS announced in the 28:3 (Autumn 2022) issue of their journal, that they have also signed an agreement with *Ancestry*, so the digitisation of all the parish registers held in the County Archives, and the matching work to their transcripts can begin. It is a big project as they have around 2.7 million records that will be included.

Kew Historical Society newsletter 141 (Dec 2022) features 'The history of Kew East Primary School'.

The Genealogists' magazine 34:4 (Dec 2022) includes 'Agricultural Hiring Fairs in England'; 'The Separate System of prison discipline at Wandsworth and elsewhere'; 'Little Italy: London's Italian quarter'; along with 'Some ideas for looking at genealogy brick walls before 1847'.

The Mail 208 (Nov-Dec 2022) tells the story of the Khoisan convicts transported to Australia from the Cape of Good Hope. ■

Blogging with Meg

Meg Bate

Tracing a British Seaman in the Royal Navy before 1853
by Judith Batchelor

<https://www.gsv.org.au/royal-navy-before-1853>

Judith provides a details blog of the challenges of locating British Naval seamen before 1853. The problem arises as they were only engaged by the Royal Navy for the duration of a particular voyage. Here she mentions some of the records that can be used to piece together their service using the example of John Woodbine.

Parish Chest Records – a rich resource
by Teresa

<https://www.gsv.org.au/parish-chest-records>

Here Teresa details how she explored the valuable information that is available in the Parish Chest Records. Information such as church warden accounts, overseers' accounts, apprenticeships, and indentures are only some of the documents you might find. These records are rich in name, relationships, residence, occupations, and other assorted details. Then she explains how to find them using the familysearch catalogue. Many of these resources can only be viewed at an affiliate library such as the GSV

ScotlandsPeople releases 1921 census – initial thoughts
by Chris Paton

<https://www.gsv.org.au/scotlandspeople-releases>

In his blog Chris reviews his success in searching these new census records. The biggest problem he encountered was the use of wild cards (*). Definitely worth checking before you start your searching these records.

Alice le Fynch and new ways of seeing medieval society from below
by Christopher Dyer

<https://www.gsv.org.au/alice-le-fynch>

Christopher focuses on story of a serf, Alice le Fynch, a woman defending the interest of her family after her husband died in the village of Sedgeberrow, Worcestershire. This blog will no doubt give you a taste of his book *Peasants making history: living in an English region 1200-1540*, (2022). This book demonstrates the significance of peasants, using the themes ranging from agriculture to religion around Gloucestershire, Bristol and Warwickshire.

Researchers with County Kildare ancestors are in for a treat!
by Claire Santry

<https://www.gsv.org.au/with-county-kildare>

Here Claire reports on three online collections available in the Kildare County Archive. These collections are the Athy Poor Law Union Indoor Relief registers from 1878 to 1918; Naas Poor Law Union Minute books from 1839 to 1858 and the burial registers of Ballybracken, Kildangan; Crosspatrick, Kilmeague; Fontstown, Athy; Laraghbryan, Maynooth; St. Conleth's, Newbridge; St. Corban's, Naas; Nicholastown, Athy; and Yewtree, Monasterevin. The span of dates varies from graveyard to graveyard with the earliest dating from 1887. She also mentions that the

archives have an additional five municipal burial records. Unfortunately, these burial registers may be difficult to read and some are only a couple of pages.

Cemetery records part one & two
by Berkshire Record Office

<https://www.gsv.org.au/berkshirerecordoffice-1>

<https://www.gsv.org.au/berkshirerecordoffice-2>

In these blogs, the first part looks at Reading cemetery, on London Road, while the second part looks at the Caversham and Reading cemeteries, these being the Hemdean Road Cemetery, the Henley Road Cemetery and the Reading Crematorium. Tips are provided so you can make the most out of them. These records can be consulted at the Berkshire Record Office.

Hidden in plain sight: finding working-class women in The National Archives

by Elspeth Tolan

<https://www.gsv.org.au/working-class-women>

This blog is an interesting case study of the lives and work pit brow women in Lancashire. The women's lives can be revealed through analysis of documents from sources available in the Copyright Office and the Ministry of Power collections. The 'pit brow girls' is the local term for the women worked above ground at mines and collieries across the North West of England.

Surveyors through the ages: a glimpse into the Lloyds Register archive

by Jan Ronson

<https://www.gsv.org.au/surveyors-lloyds>

Heritage and Education Centre (HEC) for Lloyds Register (LR) began an inventory of the archive holdings as large parts of their uncatalogued collections. Some of this work has highlighted the individual experiences of some of the surveyor's working for LR. These records cover a period of nearly 200 years consisting of surveyor letter books, notebooks, and journals. They provide an insight into these unique individuals and their roles. Again, this requires a trip to the archive.

Lone women and the Royal Navy

by Carrie Long

<https://www.gsv.org.au/lone-women>

The Caird Library & Archive's new display highlights first-hand accounts of women's experiences and contributions to the nineteenth-century Royal Navy. The stories and experiences of these women have often been overlooked or acknowledged. Research using the manuscripts collection at the Caird Library and Archive reveals a rich collection of material written by women throughout their lives. They explore how women survived on their own for long periods, handled the challenges of long-distance marriages and parenting, and experienced widowhood. ■



Public Record Office Victoria

News from Public Record Office Victoria

From Tara Oldfield

For further information visit www.prov.vic.gov.au.

New to the collection

Did you know, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Public Records Act 1973, and Public Record Office Victoria? Keep an eye on our social media channels and website throughout 2023 to learn more about our history and this important milestone.

In the past few months we have had a wealth of new records added to our collection ready for researchers to order, including land and Royal Melbourne Hospital records.

Many researchers will be familiar with the breadth and complexity of Victorian Government land records. We have a large number of these records in the collection, including Soldier Settlement files, Parish Plans, and Applications for Certificate of Title. Land records are some of the most commonly viewed record types in the North Melbourne Reading Room.

We are excited to announce the completion of a large and significant transfer of land records from Land Victoria – the library of the Registrar-General's Office. Records include Registers of Crown Grants, General Law Plans of Subdivision, Application Examiner's Notes for General Law land conversions, and the full set of Memorial Books for General Law deeds.

Records from Royal Melbourne Hospital and its predecessor hospitals dating 1859-2002 are also now available to order and view in the North Melbourne Reading Room. Some highlights include Nursing graduate record cards, Medical Ward Books, Patient Registers and Case Records, Secretary's and Manager's Correspondence Files, and minutes and papers of the Brunswick Sheltered Workshops.

The nursing graduate record cards in particular will be of great interest to any researchers with connections to a Melbourne-based nurse of the 1950s or 1960s. The cards contain name, dates of training and hospitals attended, grades, summary of performance, exams passed, next of kin information, physical description and a photo.

Section 9 openings

Under Section 9 of the *Public Records Act 1973* files of a personal or private nature are

closed for a set period to prevent the violation of personal privacy. Every year on the 1 January, hundreds of state archives are made public as part of Public Record Office Victoria's annual Section 9 openings. On the 1 January 2023, the files opened for the very first time include records related to the 1940s underworld, social worker patient histories, and the case of the Bentleigh burger murder, to name a few.

The social worker patient histories are particularly interesting. In the first opening of this series, these books contain the patient histories of those going through the Royal Park Receiving House between 1944 and 1947. Written by the social workers of Royal Park, the histories include background on the patients' families, schooling, work, and friendships. Royal Park was opened as a Receiving House in September 1907. Receiving Houses were used to provide accommodation for those patients who required only short-term mental health diagnosis and treatment. Around the time of these records there were about 200 patients there at any one time.

Provenance

Have you read the 2022 issue of our online *Provenance* Journal? This issue, now online, includes four original articles based on research of Victorian archival collections. Drawing on records of government activity within the state's collection held at PROV – including urban planning, resource management and public health – these articles explore the ways in which the ideas, processes and decisions of public officials have influenced the development of Victoria in distinct ways. From stories of fishery inspectors and the pioneering network of women at the Mission to Seafarers, to the story of a small-pox victim in Walhalla, and the 1960 Housing Commission's plan for inner Melbourne – there's much to be explored and enjoyed.

Podcast

Subscribe to our *Look History in the Eye* podcast on your favourite podcast app to be the first to hear new episodes as they arrive in 2023. The first to come will tell the tale of the Kamarooka Panther.

Visit us at prov.vic.gov.au for more information.



Royal Historical Society of Victoria

For more information, visit www.historyvictoria.org.au

From Cheryl Griffin, RHSV volunteer

Queen Elizabeth, Annie Besant, Oscar Wilde and the Cyclax Company

One of the joys of undertaking historical research is that you never know what you might find when you least expect it. Serendipitous research is a wondrous thing!

The following is an example of one of the fascinating finds in the RHSV's ephemera collection, and there are plenty more.

You see here some examples of early 20th century advertising for Cyclax of London and the cover of the program for the company's 50th Anniversary celebrations held in the Myer Mural Hall on 7 and 8 October 1947: a pageant featuring fashion history against the backdrop of the huge Napier Waller murals featuring women famous in history. It seems appropriate that Myer should provide the venue for the event, as Cyclax products were available only through the Myer Emporium and the Myer Beauty Rooms were the place to go to discover more about the 'Cyclax Way to Beauty'.

The Cyclax Company originated in London in 1897, but established itself in Australia in the 1930s with headquarters at 75/77 Little Flinders Street, Melbourne. This was an era when beauty products were more universally accepted, no longer the province of the 'fast' woman, the femme fatale, and Cyclax was among the big names of the beauty industry – think Revlon, Max Factor, Helena Rubenstein, Elizabeth Arden.

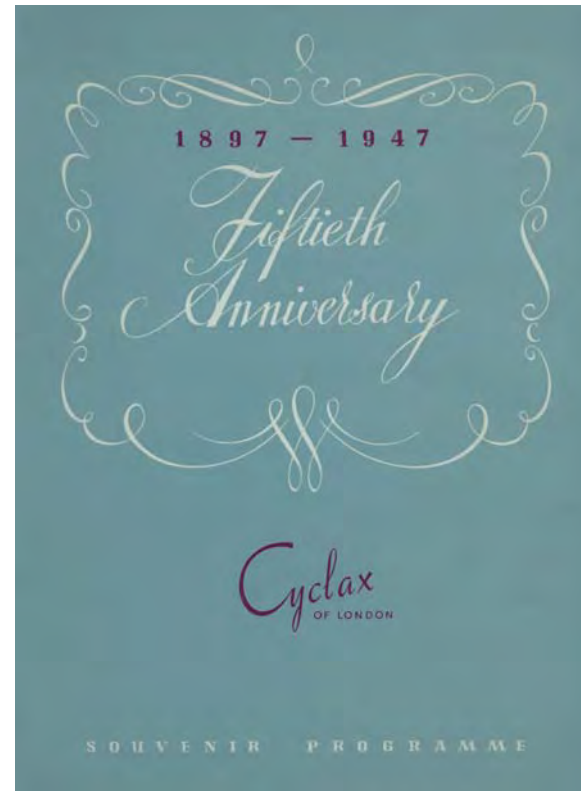
But how do Cyclax and its anniversary celebrations link to the recently deceased Queen Elizabeth, to a long-dead theosophist, and to one of the most controversial figures of the late nineteenth century?

It all boils down to the fact that the producer and compere for the celebration was Mrs Vyvyan Holland (Miss Thelma Besant). Hers is an interesting story. Born in Bendigo in 1910, Dorothy Thelma Helen Besant (known as Thelma) was the great grandniece of Annie Besant (1847-1933), theosophist, socialist, women's rights activist and campaigner for Home Rule in India. As a young woman, Thelma moved to London where she worked for the Cyclax Company and where she was beautician to the young Queen Elizabeth II for over a decade.

Then in September 1943, Thelma married Vyvyan Beresford Holland, son of Oscar Wilde, whose mother had chosen the surname Holland to protect her sons from the intense public scrutiny at the time of her husband's indecency trial. Four years later, Holland, a publisher and writer, sailed for Australia with his wife, who was to oversee the anniversary celebrations and give a series of lectures on 19th century fashion. They brought with them their two year old son Merlin. They must have liked it here, because the Hollands were based in Melbourne until 1952 when they returned to London.

The October 1947 pageant might be seen at one level as a frivolous indulgence, far beyond the reach of mere mortals, but there was a more serious side to the event – it raised money for the Whernside auxiliary of the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Details relating to items in the RHSV's ephemera collection are to be found in its *eHive* catalogue and researchers can access the Society's collection at the Drill Hall, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. ■



▲ Image 1: The cover of the Cyclax of London Fiftieth Anniversary souvenir programme



▲ Image 2: Advertisement for Cyclax products from *The Throne and Country*, 6 March 1909



The Genealogical Society of Victoria Inc

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Melbourne, Victoria, 3000
Australia
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Email gsv@gsv.org.au
Phone **03 9662 4455**
ABN **86 947 919 608**
Reg No. **A0022763D**

Why become a member of the GSV?

Tracing your family tree is one of the world's most popular pastimes. **The Genealogical Society of Victoria** is a leading Australian family history society and exists to assist members in tracing their ancestors and to promote the study of genealogy.

At our centrally located **Research & Education Centre** in Melbourne you can work with our experienced volunteer research assistants. With their guidance, you can efficiently organise and record the family information you already hold. Then you can investigate our many resources and background information to confirm the facts and fill in the gaps.

Enjoy socialising with people who have like-minded interest in the people and circumstances of the past.

Membership Benefits include:

- **Access to research assistants** – friendly volunteers trained to help with library resources
- **Access to our comprehensive library collection** of family history records not available in commercial databases. It includes indexes, books, family histories, digital resources and unpublished material. Members may also bring a friend for one visit a year
- **Access to commercial databases** within our library: *Ancestry, Findmypast, TheGenealogist, British Newspaper Archive, MyHeritage, Biographical Database of Australia*
- **Login from home** and access to parts of our collection, including the library catalogue, the Genealogical Index of Names (GIN), cemeteries database and guided research
- **Our quarterly award-winning journal, *Ancestor***
- **Monthly email newsletter**
- **Regular online blog** 'Family History matters', *Facebook* and social media groups
- **Discounted or free events:** orientation, training courses and classes, seminars, library research days and talks
- **Special Interest Groups and Discussion Circles**
- **Online Forum 'members HELP members'** for sharing research queries and experience of other members
- **Over 170 webcasts** on subjects of interest to genealogists, viewable from home
- **Quick Lookups** – free for members
- **Discounts** on extended research services and education events
- **Free annual research query** (up to 2 hours) for distant members (over 100km from Melbourne)
- **Reciprocal rights** with other major societies in Australia and New Zealand
- **Save 20% on Findmypast** annual Pro subscription

About the GSV

Membership Options

A\$

Joining fee (Australia/international) 20.00/20.00

Annual Membership

One person (Australia/international) 105.00/125.00
Two, same address (Australia/international) 150.00/180.00
18–25 year-old Next Generation Genie 50.00

Ancestor only

Australia (no joining fee) 75.00
International (no joining fee) 98.00

Member Societies

130.00

Day Visitor

Full day with free Library access *30.00

*Fee rebatable against membership fee, within 14 days.

Library Hours

Monday Closed
Tuesday to Friday 10.00am – 4.00pm
Saturday 2nd & 4th Sat Booking necessary

Office Hours

Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4.00pm
Saturday Closed

Please check the website for updates.

Patron

The Honourable Linda Dessau, AC
Governor of Victoria

Honorary Office Bearers and Councillors

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| President | Stephen Hawke |
| Vice President | Peter Johnston |
| Secretary | Claire Johnson FGSV |
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| | Michael Rumpff |
| | Cherilyn Tillman |
| | Jackie van Bergen |
| | Rod Van Cooten |

Staff

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Library and Resources Manager | Rebecca Landy |
| Assistant Library Manager | Meg Bate |
| Office Administrator | Linda Farrow |

Research Services

Free Quick Lookup

There is a free eResearch service for a library lookup or research advice taking **up to 30 minutes** for members who cannot visit the library. Replies are by email but if prints are required a cost estimate will be given. Members may send in one eResearch query at a time. Another may be submitted after receipt of results.

To submit a request by email, see the Research & Resources page online at <https://www.gsv.org.au/research-services>.

To submit a request by mail, download and complete the Postal Research Request Form located on the website, or collect one from the GSV. Submit with a SSAE. Prints are \$0.25 per A4 page – a quotation can be provided on request if an additional SSAE is provided.

Extended Research

The Research Team at the GSV can spend time researching a family or topic of your choice.

Per hour: Members \$30.00 / Non-members \$50.00 pre paid. Includes limited copying and postal charges.

Members residing more than 100 km from Melbourne are offered one annual session of complimentary research taking up to two hours.

Consultations

Stuck with your research? Arrange a consultation in our library with a member of the research team.

Consultations are for one hour.

Members \$30.00 / Non-members \$50.00

Victorian Probate Papers post 1925

Researchers will obtain copies from Public Records Office Victoria (PROV).

Members: \$50.00 / Non-members: \$75.00

Other Public Records

Researchers will obtain copies from Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) where specific reference [VPRS/Unit etc] is provided.

Per hour: Members: \$60.00 / Non-members \$85.00

Starting Your Family History classes

Bookings for these introductory classes for Members are via the Events page at: <https://www.gsv.org.au/civcrm/event/list?reset=1>. Remember to log in first.

Member Research Interests Database

Members who have logged in can access this database to Submit your Interest, View Member Interests or Update your Interests. See the Access from Home section in the Members Area at <https://www.gsv.org.au/access-home>

Further information about our Research Services can be found on our website <https://www.gsv.org.au/research-services>. **Contact** research@gsv.org.au **if you need specific guidance.**

Self Help Guide

General Register Office (GRO) certificates

England and Wales birth, death and marriage certificates, births and deaths at sea and events registered with UK Consuls and armed services personnel may be purchased online: https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp

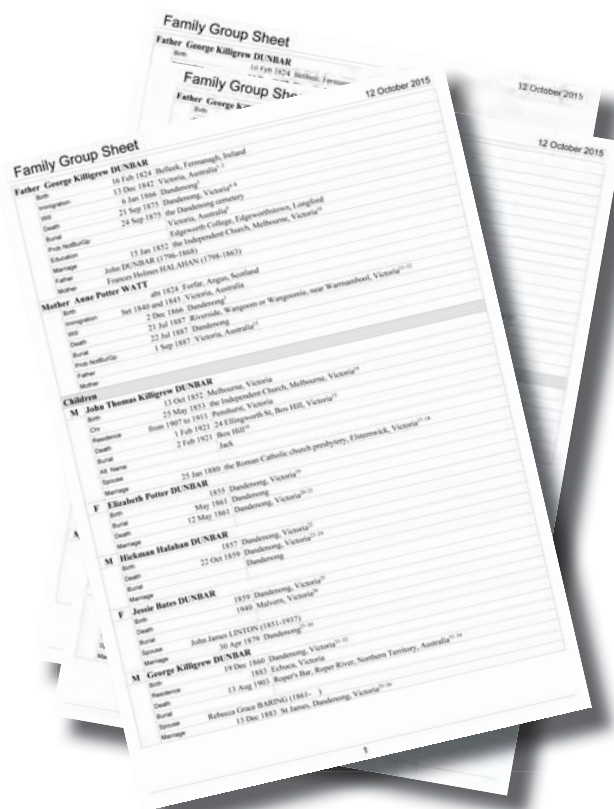
Scottish birth, death and marriage certificates

Images of Statutory (civil) registrations may be purchased online. Church registers, census records, divorce records and wills are also available: <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> To learn more you may like to attend the **monthly class on ScotlandsPeople**. Check the GSV website for the latest.

England and Wales Wills and Probate

Wills and probate may be searched and ordered for people who died in or after 1858 to current times. A 'grant of representation' gives someone the legal right to deal with a deceased person's estate but not all grants of representation contain a will: <https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate>.

If you have any queries or need some help in using these websites ask for some assistance in the library.



News

The Gutenberg Project

Project Gutenberg Australia aims to digitally publish at their website, books, which are out of copyright, both fiction and non-fiction and other records. For example, one can find lists of burials of several Sydney cemeteries and in some NSW goldfields cemeteries. It also has, as downloadable e-books, dictionaries of Australian biography, volumes on Australian discovery, and on explorers and their journals. It carries a wealth of early publications on our history. Of particular interest to me are the Thomas Mitchell journals of the exploration of south-eastern Australia, published in 1839. Nearly all our early explorers' journals are available in this collection.

GSV Writing Prize announced for 2023

Now in its eleventh year, this writing competition encourages all family historians to write their story in a compelling way. Details of the 2023 competition can be found on our GSV website and on inside back of the cover of this issue. Entries close at 4:00pm on Friday 25 August 2023.

Trove funding

Recent media coverage indicates that the National Library of Australia is struggling to cover its overall costs of operation. This is putting the *Trove* search service, which we so much admire, in jeopardy. *Trove* provides free access to a superb amount of information contained in Australian newspapers, and much more. Family historians would be much worse off without it. *Trove* is the envy of the genealogical world, let's do our best to save it. Many historical and genealogical societies are encouraging their members to write to Minister Burke to impress on him the importance of *Trove*. See the *Federal Australian History Society eBulletin* No.205, 14 January 2023, for more details.

PROV acquires land records from the Registrar-General's Office

The Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV) recently announced a large and significant set of historical land records from the library of the Registrar-General's Office have been transferred into PROV custody. Researchers will be familiar with the breadth and complexity of Victorian Government land records. PROV has many of these records in the collection already, including Soldier Settlement files, Parish Plans, and Applications for Certificate of Title. Records included in this transfer include Registers of Crown Grants, General Law Plans of Subdivision, Application Examiner's Notes for General Law land conversions, and the full set of Memorial Books for General Law deeds. This will make it much easier for users to access at PROV's North Melbourne facility.

Ryerson Index

In a recent State Library blog, Barbara Carswell reminds us of the value of this Index.

She writes: 'Nineteenth century family history resources are plentiful, but it can be a challenge to find information on people who lived in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Here's where the *Ryerson Index* can be a wonderful help to family history researchers. It's a research tool for finding information about deceased family members and friends: a free online index of Australian newspaper death and funeral notices, right up to date. Ryerson does not include the full death notice, but it provides the vital information to find it: the title of the newspaper and the date of the death notice.' Once you have this information, you can look up the newspaper on *Trove*, microfilm in the Newspapers & Family History Reading Rooms or find the online newspaper at the State Library Victoria. However, be aware that most entries are from NSW newspapers.

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The publication *Writing and Publishing Local History: A Guide for First-time Authors and Historical Societies* provides essential advice from preliminary planning to final publication. Readers of this manual will follow a logical set of steps as well as complete activities that provoke thinking beyond conventional approaches to content and format.

Authors: Rosalie Triolo, Helen Doyle and Katya Johanson
Available free as a download from the RHSV website

Canberra and District Historical Society – Telopea Park School Canberra centenary 11 September 2023

On 11 September 1923, the school was officially opened as the first public school completed by the Commonwealth. The school community is anxious to reach out to all former staff and students. Planning for the centenary is well underway. The school will be open to the public on both days of the weekend prior to actual date of centenary. Further Information can be found on the school's website <https://www.telopea.act.edu.au>.

TNA's Colonial Office Records

Last August, UK's National Archives (TNA) released this podcast, which you can hear on their website. It runs for some 60 minutes. The podcast is supported by relevant research guides, also accessible at TNA's website. TNA offers a great range of such video and audio podcasts on subjects of great interest to genealogists, and it's well worth your while browsing their website for subjects of interest to you. ■

GSV 2023 Writing Prize

The GSV and the *Ancestor* Editorial Team are pleased to announce that the GSV 2023 Writing Prize Competition is open for entries from **Monday 3 April**.

Entries should:

- be between 1200 and 2400 words
- have a family history/genealogy theme
- be the author's own original work
- not have been previously published in any form
- contain appropriate citations to documents and other works.

Entries can include up to four images.

Members of the GSV and the GSV Member Societies are eligible to enter. Full details will be posted on the GSV website in late March.

Don't leave it to the last minute to submit your entry. Start writing NOW!

Entries close **4:00 pm on Friday 25 August 2023**■

Have you enjoyed a webcast yet?

The GSV has approximately 200 webcasts on a variety of subjects of genealogical interest. Many are recordings of talks given by members of the GSV, while others are talks by visiting experts. Some also have handouts.

It's easy to find them!

Just log in to the GSV website, click on the [Our Collections](#) tab, and scroll down to [GSV webcasts](#). By clicking on [All Webcasts](#) you will be able to see the following details for each webcast:

- the title
- an image from the talk
- the name of the presenter
- a brief description of the talk
- a list of topics covered.

There's sure to be something to interest you.

What are you waiting for?



Image: From the webcast of 'Cholera in South-West England' by Stephen Hawke

The Port Phillip Pioneers Group



▲ Image: *The Landing Place and Market Reserve in 1839*. Liardet WFE 1799-1878, artist. State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection, Accession No. H28250/5

The Port Phillip Pioneers Group (PPPG) exists to understand and commemorate those who arrived or were born in the Port Phillip District before Victoria became a separate colony in July 1851. We recognise that there were perhaps 60,000 indigenous people here before Europeans and others arrived from 1803. The boundaries of the Port Phillip District, if recognised in Sydney or London at all, varied over time, but by July 1851 became the boundary of the Colony of Victoria.

You can apply to be a member by submitting evidence that you are descended from at least one pioneer. Others who are interested in the history of the District but do not have, or have not yet proven ancestors, may become Associate Members.

PPPG meets on the second Saturday of February, May, July, September and November, at Wesley Hall Gardiner (near the junction of Malvern and Burke Roads) as well as on *Zoom* for more distant or less mobile members. At each meeting there are interesting talks and discussions about Victoria's history before 1851, with recent topics covering early

education, the first doctor, portable buildings of early Australia, and stories of women pioneers. Visitors are welcome, for a gold coin donation.

We also have an extensive library, expert help through our members and, mainly through the member area of our website www.portphillippioneersgroup.org.au, significant original resources for family historians and others, including a unique record of contemporary references to pioneers identified in newspapers, official documents and elsewhere.

We produce a member magazine, *Pioneer Echo*, five times a year, and from time to time publish collections of stories of pioneers (*Pioneer Profiles*, Vols 1-7, available to purchase through the website). On the public part of the website we also list all those pioneers who have been 'claimed' as ancestors by members, showing which have had Profiles written on them. This list provides a useful starting point for research.

Find out more about us through our website or by emailing us at info@portphillippioneersgroup.org.au. ■