

THE Cedar Log

Issue No 162 - December 2024

Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc.
Ballina NSW Australia



*The first Australian Christmas card 1881, by Charles Henry **Hunt** (1857 – 1938) Courtesy - National Library of Australia, nla.obj-140389786*
See Contents page for more details.

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We acknowledge the Bundjalung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and rivers where this journal is produced. We pay respect to their elders past and present and honour their culture, history and tradition of storytelling.

Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc.

(Incorporated in New South Wales)

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Front cover: Around 1880, Christmas cards with an Australian theme started being produced, to replace those representing a cold European Christmas. This one by Charles Henry **Hunt** won a prize in a competition organised by Sydney stationer, John Sands, and is often known as the first commercially produced Christmas card in Australia. It depicts a **fairy-like little girl, who has run up from a picnic party in the bush, proffering a Christmas pudding to a tired swagman, who has just sat down under a shady tree to drink a pannikin of tea.** 700 designs were submitted to the competition and displayed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in May 1881. 24 were chosen to be published in November of that year, this being No.1 in the series.

Editorial

By Carmel Crosby



Another year is coming to a close and hopefully our members have broken down some family history brick walls this year.

We have had many members' ancestors' stories presented at our Saturday meetings this year and some of these have been published in *The Cedar Log* in 2024. This issue we have stories by Meryl **Broadley**, Ann **Emery**, Lynn **Francis** and Jill **McCann**. Kerrie **Alexander** has written about a family she has researched for many years and how records, indexed using **Artificial Intelligence** (AI), have produced results that she may not have otherwise found. AI is being used by family history companies more and more to search for our potential ancestors as well as indexing records at extraordinary speed and detail.

Also included in the issue is an article by me which explains the *Biographical Database of Australia*, which we have a subscription to in our Marie Hart Library. It is a useful tool and finds not only the person we are searching for, but other people connected to them in the source material, such as shipping records, newspapers, biographies etc. Take some time to come in and use this great resource.

We have two **Christmas** features borrowed from previous issues of *The Cedar Log* and our thanks go to Joan **Fraser** and Frank **Harvey** for allowing us to use these.

Next year we will have a **writing competition** on the theme of **School Days – Stories of our own or our ancestors' days as a pupil or teacher**. More details will follow, but please get your thinking caps on or look through your family tree to find an interesting story just waiting to be told.

At the recent **planning meeting by our committee**, some great presentations have been organised for next year. The first few are listed on the back cover of this issue, so look and see if you can give a presentation to our members. Also at the meeting, it was decided to hold **three BBQs at Bunnings, Ballina, in 2025**, to help improve our financial situation and maintain the library and resources we have for our members. We hope local members can assist at the BBQs like they did this year.

Last but not least, we wish all members and readers a **Wonderful Christmas and New Year** and look forward to 2025 and the family history discoveries waiting to be made!

The Editorial Team, Judy, Liz and Carmel

Christmas Day to Hogmanay

By Joan Fraser

Joan Fraser was the leader of the RTFHS Writer's Group, when this article was first published in *The Cedar Log* in December 2012. She has kindly agreed to allow it to be republished in this issue.



(L to r): Agnes Taylor (née McIntock), Janet Sloss McIntock, Janet Bagshaw (née McIntock) and William McIntock

My grandparents, William and Janet **McIntock**, and their three children were Scottish immigrants who arrived in Australia on the steamer *Torilla* in October 1911 to take a position at a sawmill near Killarney, Queensland. Later Gran was postmistress at Koreelah, not far from the New South Wales (NSW) border, where my mother Janet McIntock was born, and from there they moved to a dairy farm near Woodenbong, NSW.

For many years, despite the hot December weather, Christmas and the Scottish New Year, known as **Hogmanay**¹, were always celebrated as though the family still lived in Scotland.

Christmas Always Started Early

In **September** each year, my mother would set about making the fruit cakes - her specialty. These she mixed with her hand in a huge china bowl, and tins were lined with brown paper and heavily greased. Next, the stove had to be 'fed' with 'good steady wood' to maintain the oven temperature throughout the day. Before long, delicious smells permeated the kitchen and the cooled cakes, still swathed in brown paper, were later wrapped in towels and anxiously inspected each week in case the ants had sniffed them out.

September was also the month to send cards and parcels 'home' to England and Scotland, and to attack the surrounding garden so there would be strawberries, cucumbers and melons, as well as flowering English annuals to share with admiring visitors.

It was also time to empty the 44 gallon compost drum to nourish the garden. The sandy paths were shaved with a hoe to remove weeds coming up like hair on a cat's back, while anxious looks were cast skywards, looking for a storm to replenish the water in the iron tanks.

About **November**, the dreaded letter from the taxation department would arrive. Dad would place this on the mantelpiece, refusing to face the bad news until after New Year.

Before Christmas all the curtains had to be washed and ironed, the furniture polished with odorous O'Cedar furniture polish, the windows of ruby and clear sculptured glass nail-brushed to remove dust, suds from the copper were used to scrub the verandah, biscuit tins must be filled, a new dress or shirt made for each family member and a rooster fed till his eyes bulged. And somehow we still found time to hang streamer chains and paper balls, decorate the cakes and send out the Christmas cards!

Another Ritual was the Home Brew

For a start, the laundry copper in which the hops and water were boiled, had to be scrubbed with steel wool pads until it shone a rich pink colour - my hated chore. Next the bottles had to be assembled, washed and dried, the spring caps checked. The other details performed by my mother have faded from my memory, but it seems to have added a creditable flavour. It was just a pity that it was usually quite volatile, often three-quarters of the bottles' contents hitting the ceiling or cascading over the tops of the glasses. More of an event than a thirst quencher!



James Edward and Janet Bagshaw (née McLintock), the author's parents

A dozen large bottles of soft drinks tantalised us from their wooden box under our Queensland-style house. These, and a bottle of port wine to drink, mixed with lemonade to wash down the Christmas cake, were our once-a-year treat.

Dad measured out the glasses wearing a big Christmassy grin and the comment, 'Cheers!' or 'Get this down you!' Santa would usually bring books, pencils, dolls or toy trucks, sweets and jigsaw puzzles. Other members of the family were given homemade treats or embroidered tea towels, aprons etc.

The Christmas Celebrations Begin

Often, up to 25 visitors would be present, so the day was given over to the preparation of the traditional baked dinner, the consuming of same and the clearing up afterwards, interspersed with gossip, family spats and inspection of the garden from the verandah wall. However, the overwhelming desire for sleep could not be assuaged due to the omnipresent herd of cows dreamily heading towards the dairy in the afternoon heat.

After tea at night, the cooler evening revived us and out would come the fiddles and 'squeeze box' (accordion). Grannie and Mac (Janet & William **McLintock**) would manage a Scottish reel and Mac would quote as much of 'Rrrabbie Burrns' as the family could endure. At the conclusion of this, he would throw his twenty stone (127 kg) frame onto a lounge chair, sometimes with dire results, earning a snarl from my father who would have to repair the springs again!

The very musical **McLintocks** from Coffs Harbour would get out the guitars and sing the mournful country songs of the forties, while the oldies drifted off home, having done Christmas proud once more.

Don't Forget Hogmanay

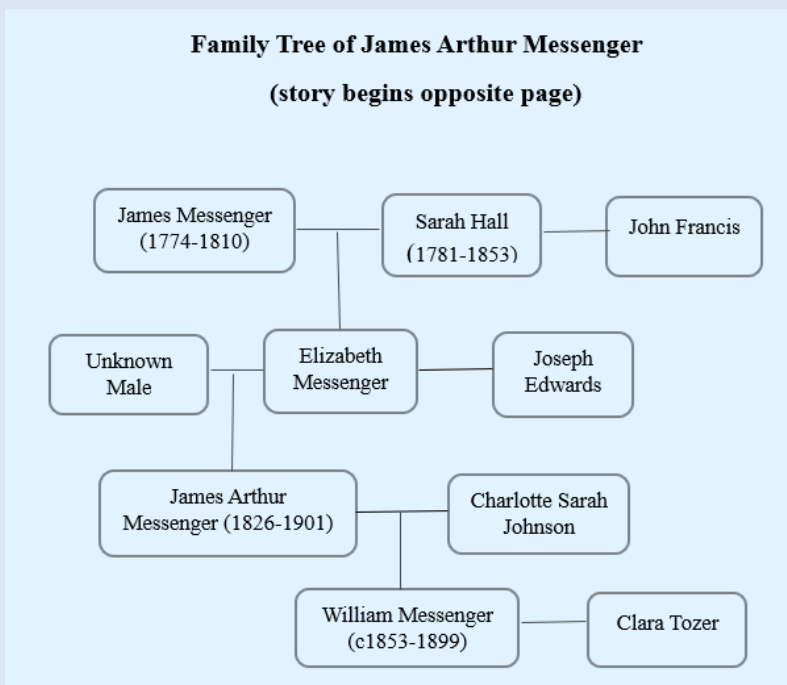
Being Scottish (except for my father, James **Bagshaw**, of course) quite a lot of this ritual was repeated at the home of Aunt Marion 'Minnie' **Watson** or Aunt Agnes 'Nancy' **Taylor** a week later to celebrate Hogmanay¹ (New Year's Day). It was then that my pretty blonde cousins from Coffs Harbour, Gwen and Betty **McLintock**, danced the Highland Fling and Sword Dance, their kilts and lace ruffles bouncing, to complete the festivities for another year. ©

¹ Hogmanay is mentioned in Scottish Church Records (with some disdain!) as early as 1692. However, its origins are much disputed, although some aspects of the celebrations, practiced throughout the generations— such as children going from door-to-door requesting gifts— are also found in other European countries.



Family Tree of James Arthur Messenger

(story begins opposite page)



Champion of the Thames

By Lynn Frances – Member 996

James Arthur Messenger (1826 – 1901) was born in Twickenham, Middlesex, the son of Elizabeth **Messenger** and “unknown father”. His mother married Joseph **Edwards**, but James retained the last name of “Messenger”. He was baptised at Holy Trinity, Twickenham, on 19 March 1826.

James married Charlotte Sarah **Johnson**, a dressmaker, on 01 Nov 1848 at the age of 22. His apprenticeship to his step-grandfather, John **Francis**, as a Waterman had finished, and he was “freed” on 07 Nov 1848. James and Charlotte lived at 20 Water Lane, Teddington. In 1851, the census shows James (aged 25) as head of the household living with his wife, a toddler and a baby, plus his grandmother, Sarah Francis nee **Hall** (her first husband, James Messenger, died in 1810) and his step-grandfather John **Francis** and 2 workers - Lightermen. (A waterman carries people and their luggage by boat and a lighterman carries goods.)



Doggett’s Race Champion

In 1851, he won the famed Doggett’s Coat and Badge, which claims to be the oldest sporting Championship in the world.

World Sculling Champion²

James Messenger won the Grand Thames Regatta in 1854. He beat Tom **Cole**, the reigning champion, to take the title, which he held for 3 years.

Queen’s Waterman⁶

James qualified as Queen’s Waterman on 14 August 1856, which allowed him entry into the Royal Household and attend the Monarch whenever she went afloat.

Queen's Bargemaster⁶

On 10 Nov 1860 James was appointed as **Queen Victoria's** Bargemaster, responsible for attending various State occasions and escorting the Royal Regalia at the State opening of parliament. He served for the remainder of Victoria's reign, in this role, dying in office in June 1901.



Queen Victoria's Royal Barge. This would have been the barge of which James Messenger was the Master in his service from 1862 to 1901. The photo is of an etching created in 1854.

A Scene on the River

There was a proposed visit by the **Shah of Persia, Naser al-Din** in June 1873 to Teddington, where he would travel on the Royal barge. It had been given that the Shah was to drive from Buckingham Palace to Kew Gardens and then proceed to Teddington and make his way by water to the seat of the **Duke of Buccleuch**. A Special Correspondent from the Daily Telegraph (London) was on hand to describe the scene.⁴

“In and out of Messenger's yard were hurrying the crew of the Royal barge, clad in what, next to a beefeater's, is surely the very quaintest of all possible costumes. A bright crimson tunic, with a gorget [article of clothing covering the throat. Ed.] of black velvet, crimson knee breeches, crimson stockings, and a black velvet hunting cap with a gigantic cheese cutter peak, is hardly the costume in which one would choose, on a hot June afternoon, to tug at a twelve-foot sweep. But when upon the breast of the luckless oarsman is affixed a huge rose, shamrock, and thistle, stamped in solid metal, and almost as large as a good sized frying pan, while a precisely similar device of equal bulk and weight is symmetrically affixed to the back, one cannot but feel a certain emotion of pity...It's all very well for Messenger himself, whose duty as commodore forces him to appear in a costume more than usually

gorgeous with gold lace, and stockings of the pearliest silk. Mr. Messenger has simply to steer, and he obviously enters into the spirit of his day's work with zeal and alacrity. A beautiful vessel she is, the Royal barge – all one blaze of crimson and gold, with red curtains aft to shield Royalty from the sun, and a standard in the prow, from which to fly the glorious old banner with its harp and its lions. Ten long sweeps urge her through the water, and she is manned by a good a crew as ever entered a boat. The visitors wax impatient. The Shah is an hour overdue and there is no symptom of his arrival. Messenger looks as nearly anxious as his cheerful features allow him. There is a brief consultation between him and his lieutenants, and finally the Royal barge starts for a short trial trip In the stern is Messenger in all his glory of crimson and gold; the ten red blades, each with its golden dolphin, take the water at once, and the huge boat drops downstream



Example of a Bargemaster's coat

as lightly, as easily, as gracefully, as if she were a thing of life. The spare galley, intended for his Majesty's suite, follows at a respectable distance. The great red barge returns and is once again moored off the steps. The "gay and fashionable assembly" which has filled the yard, perceptibly thins....And when, at last, Mr. Messenger begins to strip the barge of its crimson cushions and hangings, Teddington resigns itself to its fate, and, for the day at any rate gives up hope of seeing the Shah...It has been a glorious day; the river has been at its fullest beauty; and it is easy indeed to spend many hours more dreary than those whiled away on Messenger's yard, watching the river, and the happy crowd and the deftly-managed boats, and the quaint red uniforms all ablaze with gold".

(As it turned out, the Shah, so fascinated by the delights of Kew Garden, never had time to travel on the barge.)

Builder of the 5 Section Boat *Lady Alice* for Stanley's African Expedition²

At this stage in his career his reputation as a boat builder was growing. The 1871 census describes James as living at Ferry Road, (previously named Water Lane) Teddington; a Boat Builder & Waterman employing about 30 men.

In 1874 after Dr David **Livingstone's** funeral, Henry Morton **Stanley** commissioned Messenger to build a portable boat named *Lady Alice*, which Stanley had designed and

named after his fiancée, Alice **Pike**. The portable boat made from Spanish cedar, when assembled would be 40ft long with a 6ft beam and 30in deep capable of easy inland transit to the African lakes.

As well as the *Lady Alice*, he built a Nautilus canoe for W. **Baden-Powell**, a sectional steam launch *Daisy* for the Church Missionary Society in Africa and the first racing punt to be decked in canvas.

By 1882 James was 56 years old and had moved into High St, Teddington. His son, William, took over the running of the boat building business. William was also a Queen's Waterman and gave swimming lessons to members of the royal family. In 1899, William died suddenly at 46 years of age. Both Queen Victoria and Princess Beatrice sent wreaths to his funeral. A former apprentice named **Porter** purchased the business in 1894 and in 1901, by the end of his life, James was living with his daughter-in-law, his son William's widow, Clara Messenger (nee **Tozer**) and her family at 3 Anlaby Rd, Teddington.

James had been awarded the solid silver Waterman and Bargeman badge by **Queen Victoria** in 1862. He carried out this role for 40 years.

James Arthur Messenger died on 21 June 1901 in Teddington, Middlesex, England, and is buried in Teddington Cemetery.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Sovereign regularly travelled on the river Thames for State occasions. King Charles III still retains 24 Royal Watermen, under the command of The King's Bargemaster, the original number of 48 having been halved by King Edward VII.

References: -

1. *Ancestry.com*: UK Censuses: 1841,1851,1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and Births & Baptisms, Marriages & Banns (London, England)
2. *James Arthur Messenger* article by Ken **Howe** accessed on *The Twickenham Museum* website
3. Trove: Various newspaper articles
4. Excerpts from '*Visit of the Shah*' - Daily Telegraph, London - 23 June 1873 - accessed via the NSW State Library newspapers online
5. Find A Grave
6. The Lord Chamberlain's Department, Royal Household 1526-1924, records. Available on The National Archives (UK) and *Find My Past*
7. Wikipedia – Queen Victoria's Royal Barge etching and some other facts

Jane Eaton's Sea Voyage

By Meryl Broadley - Member 841

The flow of convicts to Australia from Great Britain dwindled to a trickle in 1794 due to the preoccupation with the war against France. Because of storm clouds gathering over Europe, owners were reluctant to tender their vessels and some of those used for convict transport were old and unsuitable for the trip.

The ship, *Surprise*, because of her relatively small size of around 400 ton, and her build, a three-deck merchant vessel, was unsuitable for the length of voyage to Australia. Nevertheless, this 12 year old vessel made the trip to Australia in 1790 as part of the **Second Fleet**. She was grossly overcrowded, carrying 256 convicts, 36 of whom died on the way. Her owners were contracted to transport, clothe and feed the convicts for a flat fee of £17.7s.6d each, (\$3,600 in today's currency), whether they were landed alive or not. There were allegations that the Captain had deliberately starved his passengers, hoping to resell the food at a later date. The fleet was known as '**The Death Fleet**'.

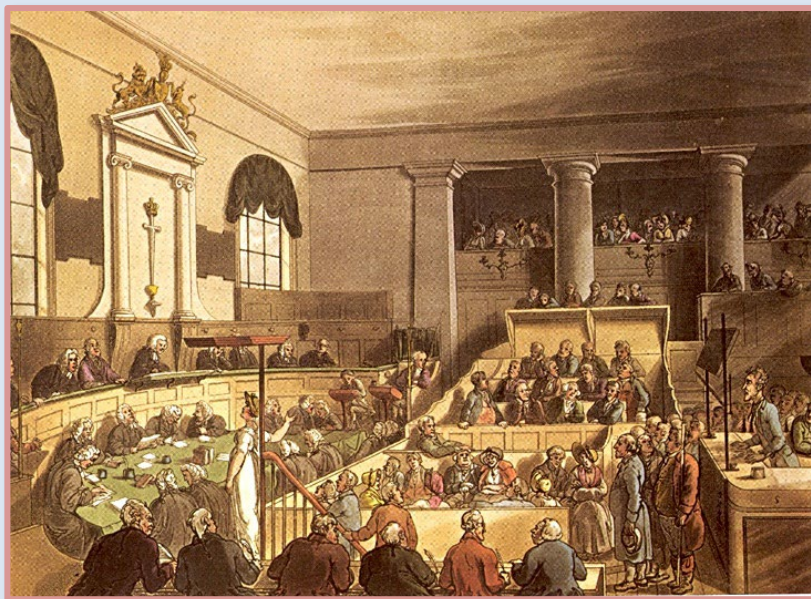
In addition to being overcrowded, the *Surprise* was known to be a 'wet' ship, even in moderate weather. Owing to the great quantities of water taken on board, the convicts lived in a state of perpetual misery and discomfort, and as the decks were swept continuously by seas in heavy weather, they necessarily had to remain for long periods confined below. In that damp, unhealthy prison, the water often reached waist height. At times waves even penetrated the cabins on deck, soaking the bunks of the passengers.

Despite the horrific voyage of the Second Fleet, the *Surprise* was again employed to carry convicts to the Australian colony in 1794. She left Britain in May in the company of a British convoy sailing as far as Rio de Janeiro. More humane measures and a different economic approach meant that her convict total was only 83, a third of the previous voyage. Women made up 59 of the number. Payment for the ship's human cargo was now £5.00 (\$1,058) for each convict landed alive, so there was an incentive to keep them in a healthy condition.

Among the convicts were the four men known as the '**Scottish Martyrs**', (political prisoners imprisoned for sedition). There were also a handful of free settlers, approximately 40 crew and 20 soldiers. Among the latter were deserters from other British regiments. The voyage lasted 176 days and almost the entire complement arrived in the colony, with the only death occurring being a baby born en route. Food was better and more plentiful with the convict

diet consisting of stock fish, port wine, rice, sugar, raisins, beef, pork, suet, bread, flour and pease. Female convicts were allotted a separate allowance of tea and sugar.

My 23-year-old, 3x great-grandmother, **Jane***, was a participant in this jolly company, as were three of her partners in crime! Their sentences had been commuted to transportation for life in February 1793, while they were waiting in *Newgate Prison* for the hangman's noose. There was a desperate need to address the imbalance of women in the fledgling colony in Sydney and the four were assessed as suitable - which mostly boiled down to being under 40!



The Old Bailey also known as the Central Criminal Court. One of the prints in "Microcosm of London" or "London in Miniature," with illustrations by Augustus Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson. 1809. Photo of the work courtesy Wikimedia Commons

A young widow by the age of 20, (married at 14), Jane had been convicted at the *Old Bailey* on 15 December 1792, of the crime of assault and robbery, and given the death sentence. Her part, in the company of four other women, was to bite the arm of the victim, Welsh drover, William **Ellis**, to encourage him to give up his purse. Jane languished in *Newgate Prison* for two years. During this time, she struck up a temporary relationship with an American 'gentleman', Thomas **Lloyd**, imprisoned for three years for libel.

On board the *Surprise* the soldiers and convicts could mingle, and the birth was later recorded of at least one baby conceived during the voyage. This was the child of Ann **Simmonds**, one of Jane's co-offenders. I could imagine Jane managed to find herself some male company during those six months.

The voyage was not without its excitement. At the end of May, information came to Captain **Campbell**, that the six previous deserters among the soldiers were planning to seize the ship. On further investigation, the Captain found that two of the Scottish Martyrs, **Palmer** and **Skirving**, were the instigators of the mutiny. They were confined to their guarded cabins, on 'bread and water', but on reaching Sydney Cove in October the matter went no further. While there were several witness reports, and there seems to have been a lot of talk - which one might expect from political prisoners - Captain Campbell's account was not corroborated by Ensign **Patullo**, who was in charge of the troops, and no action was taken.

Shortly after arriving in Sydney, Jane took up with a convict, William **Bryant**, and had two daughters by him. After the expiry of his sentence in 1798 he disappeared, but she soon found the love of her life in freed convict, William **Eaton**, whom she married in 1800. The couple had six children and William became a wealthy landholder in the Hawkesbury area, west of Sydney.

Considering the poverty and desperate life that Jane had been leading prior to her arrest, and then her two years in Newgate Prison, I wonder how she would have rated those wet miserable months on the *Surprise*. At all events she had a 'happily ever after' ending to her life.

PS: If we think the *Surprise* was overcrowded on the 1790 trip to Australia with her 256 convicts plus crew and troops, it would be hard to imagine her six-week trip in 1793, when she transported 518 slaves from the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), West Africa, to Jamaica. For her sins, she was captured by a French Frigate, *La Forte*, in the Bay of Bengal in 1799 during the French Revolutionary Wars.

*Jane was known as Jane **Ison** at the time of her transportation. She had several other surnames over the years before settling on Eaton, when she married William Eaton in 1800.



An Unusual Journey

By Ann Emery – Member 353

The *Port of Spain Gazette*, dated 12 January 1849, recorded a list of passenger arrivals in Trinidad. Among those listed was the arrival of Messers **Bodington, Brown and Tucker** on board the schooner *Earl Dundonald*.

This is the only record we have of the arrival of my 2x great-grandfather, William **Bodington**, in Trinidad. His descendants advise that all the Bodingtons in Trinidad are descended from the one man and the records we have been able to get copies of, support this.

The *Earl Dundonald* was a timber schooner, a type of sailing vessel rigged with fore-and-aft sails on its two masts. The foremast was rigged with jib sails or Bermuda sails which are triangular sails extending forward to the bow.

There is an interesting story in the *Bermuda Royal Gazette* from 27 February 1849, just 6 weeks after it had berthed in Trinidad, where it was reported that the schooner *Earl Dundonald* belonging to D.R. **Tucker**, Esq. of Hamilton, Bermuda, under the charge of Capt. W.S. **Doe**, with passengers **Tucker** and **Brown** of New York, was struck by a swordfish east of Guiana. The swordfish pierced the hull of the schooner, just below the waterline, with the swordfish bill protruding 9½ inches inside the cabin. The helmsman of the schooner reported that the vessel broached a little and did not respond to the helm readily for a few minutes. The swordfish bill was so firmly lodged in the hull of the ship that it could not be removed. The schooner continued on its journey to Hamilton, Bermuda, for repairs as there was only a small quantity of water leaking into the cabin.

The incident is recorded in *The Naturalist in Bermuda*, an early work on the natural history of Bermuda, by John Matthew **Jones**, an English naturalist, who reported that, “it was his only opportunity to witness the amazing power of the *Xiphias Gladius* or swordfish”.

For me, this story shows the resilience of the sailors, the power of the swordfish and the potential perils of the ocean for seafaring travelers in the 1800s.

Sources:

Port of Spain Gazette 12 January 1849

Bermuda Royal Gazette 27 February 1849

The Naturalist in Bermuda by John Matthew **Jones**

RootsTech 2025

This conference, hosted by FamilySearch, is occurring again on 6 – 8 March 2025. It is free for online viewers and has a wide range of topics so follow the link to register.

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/registration/online/>

Hundreds of recordings of the 2024 and previous conferences are available on the site and can be accessed now at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/search>

CONNECTIONS

Past - Present – Future

17th Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry & 5th Qld History State Conference –

Hosted by the Genealogical Society of Queensland Inc.

21 – 24 March 2025, Brisbane.

Early Bird registration discount until 30 November 2024.

See the website for details. <https://www.connections2025.org.au/>

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It is time once again to renew your membership for 2025. Your support helps keep our *Marie Hart Library* and website up-to-date and operating! You have free access to our research officer, all our resources, including *Ancestry* and *Find My Past*, and also receive *The Cedar Log* four times a year.

Fees are \$40 for a single or \$50 for a joint membership and are for the calendar year 2025. Prompt payment early in the year would be appreciated. Please complete a Renewal Form, which will be emailed, or will be available when paying in person. Cash or cheque can be paid at the *Marie Hart Library* or at the Saturday afternoon meeting, or via direct debit.

Bank details are: -

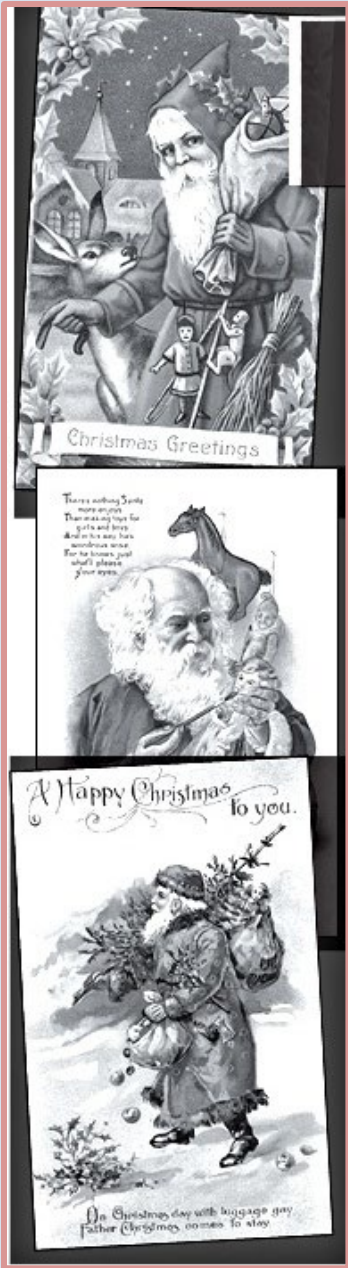
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Account No: 720036355

Name: Richmond-Tweed Family History Soc. Inc.

Please enter “**Subs**”, **surname** and **member number** as a reference, so our treasurer knows who has paid!

Christmas



DID YOU KNOW: that the European Winter Festival of Christmas probably gained momentum because of the intensely cold winters of the 1780s. Even when Charles Dickens (born 1812) was a boy, until the mid -1850s, winter was especially cold, with deep snowfalls and prolonged frosts. The River Thames regularly froze over during that period and it is reported that chamber pots, left under the bed at night, were frozen solid by morning!

DID YOU KNOW: that Christmas Crackers were invented by Thomas Smith in London in 1847. He produced sugar-coated almonds and sold them wrapped in a twist of paper. Later he added a motto ... and still later the 'bang' ... two strips of chemical paper that made a loud noise when pulled apart. To accommodate this new 'mechanism' the wrapper became larger and the sweet was replaced by a small gift. After he died, his sons took over the business, and to set themselves apart from competition they included hats and jokes in place of mottos – now a common sight on Christmas Day dinner tables around the world.

DID YOU KNOW: that warm December weather allows Australians to enjoy a unique tradition, 'Carols by Candlelight', which commenced in 1937. It is held each year during the week before Christmas Day, and held out in the open, usually in the cool of the evenings, in nearly every town and city in Australia. Families arrive with rugs, picnic hampers and folding chairs, whether it is rain, hail or shine. These days, thousands gather to sing Christmas carols whilst holding glow sticks.

Traditions

DID YOU KNOW: that the first Australian Christmas stamp (at right) was not issued by Australia Post until 1957. It has since issued more than one hundred Christmas designs.



DID YOU KNOW: that over one hundred million Christmas cards used to be posted within Australia each year. This has decreased markedly with people turning to emails, texts and social media to send a Christmas greeting. However, there has been a large increase in parcel post in recent years due to people turning to online shopping for Christmas items and presents.

DID YOU KNOW: that British painter John Callcott Horsley reputedly created the first Christmas card in 1843. Horsley designed the card for his friend Sir Henry Cole, who was the first director of The Victoria and Albert Museum. The card showed a family celebrating Christmas, while outside their window were images of clothing the needy and feeding the poor. The card showed the happiness of the Christmas season as well as the need to look toward the destitute. It read 'A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You'. The tradition caught on quickly in England, and it was not long before the first Christmas cards began showing up in the United States and other countries as well. The first Australian Christmas card was produced in 1881 by the John Sands Company, and is shown on the cover of this journal.



*Adapted from an article in the December 2012 The Cedar Log. Written by **Frank Harvey** - Member #724, previous Editor and now an Honorary Fellow*

John Hubert Plunkett

By Jill McCann – Member 1010

A version of this article was first published in the
Journal of the Genealogical Society of Ireland. Vol 24, 2023



In 2021, after about 40 years of Ancestor research, I requested a DNA test for Christmas.

As a result, I discovered a connection to a very significant man in the history and development of early Australia, a man whose working life affected generations of Australians.

I had read about John Hubert **Plunkett** (see **photo on left**) a few years ago when I read a book called, “*Murder at Myall Creek*” by Mark **Tedeschi** QC. The Myall Creek massacre (1838) was a shameful episode in the history of Australia; the murder of at least 28 unarmed Indigenous Australians by

a group of eleven stockmen. This was by no means the first (or, sadly, the last) of such massacres, but the reason this one has become infamous is that there were two trials to prosecute the murderers, and after the second trial seven men were hanged for the crime.

Conspiracies of silence usually shrouded massacres of Aboriginal people and perpetrators were rarely punished. The main reason why this group was brought to justice was that the Attorney General in charge of prosecuting crime in NSW was John Hubert Plunkett.

Born in Roscommon, Ireland, in 1802, Plunkett was the younger of twin sons born to gentleman farmer George Plunkett and his wife Eileen O’Kelly. He was well connected

and counted many influential Catholics in his lineage. Saint Oliver Plunkett (1625-81) was a Bishop of Armagh, who was beatified by Pope Benedict XV (23 May 1920) and canonised by Pope Paul VI (12 October 1975.) So, John Hubert Plunket was fortunate to have been able to take advantage of the relaxation of the penal laws against Catholics and to enrol at Trinity College, Dublin. He graduated in 1823 and was called to both the Irish Bar and then the English Bar.

While working as a barrister on the Connacht circuit, his success, popularity, and support helped the O'Connellite parliamentary candidate, Owen O'Connor, known by the hereditary title, O'Connor Don, to win Roscommon in the crucial election of 1830. Daniel O'Connell showed his gratitude by adding his influence in London to that of Plunkett's kinsman, Lord Fingall, to secure Plunkett's appointment as Solicitor General of New South Wales (NSW) – the first Catholic to achieve high civil office in the colony.

Before leaving Ireland, Plunkett married (1832) Maria Charlotte (d. 1895), née McDonougha; they arrived at Sydney in June 1832. The marriage was apparently less than harmonious and remained childless.



Photo of the Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site - by Tracy Appel - image, meta-data, Copyright State of New South Wales and Office of Environment and Heritage 2019, CC BY 4.0, (permission to reprint) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7>

In NSW, he acquitted himself well and in 1836 he was appointed **Attorney General**. This was a crucial time in the fledgling colony. The arrival of increasing numbers of free immigrants in NSW in the 1830s was the beginning of the transformation **of the old penal colony into a free society**. As a Catholic lawyer in Ireland, Plunkett had firsthand experience of discrimination. While he was born into a degree of privilege, he was still part of a community that was affected by significant religious discrimination. As a young law student, he was aware that, by virtue of his Catholic faith, he was ineligible to sit in the United Kingdom Parliament or to hold the vast majority of senior government offices in the United Kingdom. He was also aware that Ireland had suffered a significant loss of autonomy through the Act of Union, which had abolished the Irish Parliament. He believed that legislation should promote civil and religious liberty and that it should work to alleviate social inequalities. Accordingly, he became the architect of legislation, which established the equality of all men before the law. This meant jury rights for emancipists (former convicts) and protection under the law for convicts and assigned servants.

Crucially, (and controversially) Plunkett extended these same protections to Aboriginals. In 1835 he had published, at his own expense, the first Australian legal practice book, *An Australian Magistrate*. Extended with each edition, it continued to appear until 1911. In the book, Plunkett instructed magistrates that the Aborigines were within 'the king's peace' and that murdering them was as much a crime as killing any of the king's subjects. With the support of **Governor George Gipps**, he set about the prosecution of the Myall Creek murderers. This was extremely contentious at the time, and the men were acquitted at the first trial. Undeterred, Plunkett brought a fresh charge and seven of the men were found guilty and hanged. It's interesting to note, however, that the hanged men were mostly convicts, who worked for the squatter on whose land it occurred. This squatter was **Henry Dangar** who was certainly the person responsible for the massacre. I recommend a visit to the site of the Myall Creek massacre – near Inverell, NSW.

Plunkett considered the **Church Act of 1836** the most important single achievement of his public career. It disestablished the Church of England and established legal equality between Anglicans, Catholics and Presbyterians; its provisions were later extended to Methodists, and Plunkett himself would gladly have included Jews and Independents. Mark Tedeschi believes that this act arguably set the scene for the separation between Church and State, which Australians generally take for granted.

He advocated for a **secular education system** along the lines of the National system in Ireland in which children of all religious bodies combined for secular education but separated for religious instruction. In 1844 Plunkett supported the Lowe committee, of which he was a member, in advocating the National system, and when it came into force in 1848 Plunkett became the first chairman of the board.

When the **Sisters of Charity** arrived in Sydney from Ireland in 1838, John Plunkett's special interest in their affairs led him to organise a public appeal to establish their first hospital in Sydney. He then helped the Sisters to acquire the narrow strip of land along Victoria Street in Darlinghurst to which the first **St. Vincent's Hospital**, which had opened its doors in Potts Point, was relocated in 1870. 153 years later, St Vincent's Hospital is still there.



St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst, Sydney NSW, in about 1900 -Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Amongst Plunkett's other achievements were his advocacy for the cessation of convict transportation, which happened in NSW in 1840, despite opposition from the squatter parties (for whom they were a source of cheap labour) and the establishment of Australia's first University, the University of Sydney in 1850. He was one of the original 16 Fellows of Senate of the University of Sydney, appointed in 1850 by proclamation of the Governor. He served until 1869. He was Vice-Chancellor from 1865 – 1869 and was also a founding fellow of **St Johns College**.

John Hubert Plunkett has no direct heirs. He was a cousin to my 4x great grandmother Catherine **Plunkett**. Although she and her husband Bernard **Murphy** never left Ireland many of their children and grandchildren followed their illustrious cousin to the new colony. 25 of them came on the Crusader to Sydney in 1840. They included my 3x great grandparents **Peter and Mary Power** (nee **Murphy**) and their children, one of whom was my 2x great grandmother **Bridget (Bedelia) Power**.

Last year I went back to Ireland, armed with my new-found knowledge about the Plunketts. I wasn't able to find any evidence of the family in Elphin.

There is no memorial to John Hubert Plunkett in his home country and no apparent evidence in Ireland that his enormous influence on the fledgling nation of Australia has ever been recognised.



Researching an American Family And the Possibilities with AI

By Kerrie Alexander – Member 823

Imagine a tool that can sift through mountains of data, analysing every single word as a keyword, unlocking connections and references that we might never have discovered on our own. This is not just a dream; this is the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in family history research.

Traditionally, our research has relied heavily on manual searches through records, documents, and databases. While this method has served us well, it can be time-consuming and often leads to missed opportunities. AI changes the game by processing vast amounts of information at lightning speed, allowing us to focus on what truly matters: the stories of our ancestors.

With AI, we can input names, dates, locations, and even snippets of information, and the program will analyse these keywords to find relevant records across a multitude of sources. It can identify patterns, suggest connections, and even highlight potential relatives we may not have considered. This means that our family trees can grow taller and more intricate than ever before.

As we embrace this technology, we must also remember the importance of our human touch. AI is a powerful tool, but it is our passion, curiosity, and dedication that breathe life into the data. We are the storytellers, and AI is our assistant, helping us to weave together the threads of our family narratives.

How Does AI work?

Family Search and genealogy subscription sites are using AI to index their records. AI does not just index one or two names in a document, it indexes every word!

Christa **Cowan** works for *Ancestry* and at the *Roots Tech* conference she gave out some stats – between 1997-2013 *Ancestry* added 41 billion records to their database and indexed about 2 million records a month. However, between 2018-2023 about 2-3 million records were indexed not every month, but every day. This is not because they are using more volunteers, but because of the sheer computing power and the use of tools like AI. In 2022, the 1950 census for the USA was indexed in 9 days. There were 151,325,798 people enumerated on

that census. If humans were indexing this census we probably would still be waiting for the release of a full index and AI did it in 9 days.

Search for a Family begins...

Back in the mid-1990s, I had a friend who was keen for me to look into his family history. Stephen* had an interesting family background; his father's paternal side were Irish immigrants, who went to New Zealand before his grandfather sailed across the Tasman to New South Wales (NSW). His father's maternal side descended from convicts and a soldier, who had fought in the [Iberian] Peninsula Wars with the **Duke of Wellington**. But it was his mother's side that was far more challenging to trace and directed me into avenues of research I had not pursued before.



Margit Geiger, mother of Edna Geiger

Dr Edwin **Moore**, an American doctor stationed in Germany. They formed a relationship, and in February 1947, Stephen's mother, Edna, was born.

Much of what I learnt about Margit Geiger came from her immigration papers, which were compiled when she applied to come to Australia in 1949. These documents are held by the *National Archives of Australia* and have now been digitized and are online. In an interview

Stephem's mother was Edna* **Geiger**, who was born in Bavaria, Germany, in 1947, the daughter of Margit Geiger. Margit was born in 1925 in Czechoslovakia and was just 19 when she left her home and family and fled to Germany, escaping the Soviet advance into her country in 1944. After a two month perilous journey through war-torn Europe, she found herself in the region of Munich in Germany, where she was able to find work.

The war ended in May 1945 and luckily for Margit she was in the American occupation zone. She was multi-lingual and could speak Hungarian, Czech, German, Russian, Ukrainian, Yugoslavian and a little English.

After working for some months on a farm, by 1946 she had found work as a waitress in the American Officer's Club at Kempten west of Munich. It was there that she met

with immigration officials, Margaret stated that Dr Moore had acknowledged paternity of Edna and she had affidavits from him to this effect. She also gave Dr Moore's address as Gary, Indiana.

Dr Edwin Moore (pictured on right)

Armed with the information that Edwin Moore was a doctor in Indiana I delved into his life and discovered that he wasn't just any American doctor - he was an African American doctor.

Edwin Moore had graduated from *Meharry Medical College*, an historically Black institution**, in 1942. Both of his siblings, Alva and Hazel, had also become doctors. This was no small accomplishment for an African American family and was during a time when segregation was the law of the land in the United States, and opportunities for African Americans were limited.

I discovered Dr Moore's obituary from 2002. He had lived a long life - 92 years - and it revealed that he was born in 1910 in Missouri to Arthur and Touncil Moore.



Edwin Moore's Mother's Ancestry

Now that I had a clearer picture of Edwin Moore's life, I turned my attention to his mother's side. Her name – Touncil - was unique enough to make tracing her history slightly easier than her husband, Arthur Moore. I found her death certificate on *Ancestry*, which told me that Touncil was born in 1879 in Monroe County, Arkansas, to Griffin and Harriet **Barker**. The **1880 census** revealed that her father Griffin, was born c1850 in Alabama and was a farmer.

This information enabled me to find Griffin in the **1870 census** in Calhoun County, Alabama, where he lived with his parents Jefferson and Sarah Barker. Jefferson stated he had been born in South Carolina c1825. It also gave the information that Jefferson owned real estate to the value of \$600 and had a personal estate valued at \$200. This is an incredible success story for an emancipated slave to have accumulated so much wealth in just 5 years.

Researching African American Family History

This can be incredibly challenging, particularly when it comes to tracing ancestors who were enslaved. Prior to the Civil War, enslaved individuals were considered property, and they were rarely listed by name in official records. The 1870 U.S. census is often referred to as the "brick wall" for African American genealogy, as it is the first census to list formerly enslaved individuals by name.

This makes each discovery, each name, each piece of evidence all the more precious. These aren't just facts on a page - they represent lives lived under incredibly difficult circumstances and represent stories of survival and resilience.

The Magic of Artificial Intelligence

By 2004, I had reached a point where I felt I had uncovered as much as I could, using the traditional methods available at that time. However, this year, 2024, everything changed. And this is where the magic of artificial intelligence comes into play. Earlier this year, I came across a blog post by a genealogist who had attended the *RootsTech* conference in Salt Lake City. She mentioned that *FamilySearch* (FS), was beginning to use AI to analyse and digitize historical records.

Following the instructions from the blog, I logged onto the FS website and conducted a search for "Jefferson Barker, Calhoun County, Alabama." What came up next was astonishing. The AI had scanned and indexed historical records in ways that had never been possible before.

The first entry in the list of results looked promising and it revealed a document from 1865, where all the words I had requested were highlighted. What is very helpful is that there is a transcript of the document on the right-hand side of the screen. The document was an agreement between a man named William **Barker** and his former slave, Jefferson. This confirmed that Jefferson had been enslaved by William Barker and had taken his surname after emancipation, something many former slaves did.

The Agreement reads:

Calhoun County, Alabama. Article of an agreement between William Barker and Jefferson (formerly his slave), for himself and his wife and eight children. The said Jefferson and his family agree on their part to labor from the 1st of June 1865 until the 1st of December 1865 for the said Wm Barker. The said Wm Barker agrees on his [part] to give the said Jefferson and his family the following Articles - their food, 7 pounds Wool, 10 ten pair shoes, 300 binds fodder, 130 bushels corn and 55 yds of cloth. The agreement was entered into on July 28th 1865. Wm Barker signed and Jefferson made his mark.

It's interesting to note that Jefferson was paid in kind, not cash.

The civil war had ended on 9 April 1865 and this was an agreement written three months later, where a former slave called Jefferson, with a wife and 8 children (which was correct), and a former owner called Barker, all lived in Calhoun County, where I had found Jefferson in the following year of 1866 in a State census.

This is an amazing look into the future of research. I could not have found this record without using the AI search. The fact that AI could index every word in this document, making it searchable in ways that a human indexer might have overlooked, opened up a new area of research. Where the volunteers would have once indexed this record under William Barker and maybe Jefferson with no surname, now the AI “indexes” every word in the document.

Looking into the Slave Owner and his Family History

I was curious about **William Barker** and continued my search by checking the **1860 census** where I found him and his family. They were all born in South Carolina, which was where Jefferson was born.

Accompanying the census returns were the slave schedules and I found William Barker owned 9 slaves, a male aged 38, a female 35 and 7 children whose sex and ages corresponded with my Jefferson's family. I went back another ten years and looked at the **1850 census** slave schedule, where it again confirmed that this was my Jefferson's family.



Tombstone of William Barker (28 Jan 1815 – 21 Feb 1890) at Barker Cemetery, Comanche County, Texas

Doing a Google search for William Barker, I found that he was the son of a **John Barker** of Calhoun County, Alabama. This led me to the entry for John Barker on *Wiktree*, which stated that he had died in 1847. In the biography section of John's entry was a transcript of the probate inventory of his slaves. The second name on the list was Jefferson, who was valued at \$700. Jefferson would have been around 22 at this time, a young man coming into the prime of his life and this was reflected in his worth.

John Barker was born in North Carolina and moved to South Carolina c1805 and at some point, moved to Alabama with his wife, children and slaves. Jefferson was born c1825 in South Carolina and may have been born to a slave woman owned by John Barker or John Barker may have purchased him from a former owner.

After John Barker's death, Jefferson was either inherited by his son William or sold to him by his father's estate. Jefferson's story then followed that of William Barker's, until his emancipation in 1865. The fact that Jefferson took the name Barker as his own possibly indicates that he had a good relationship with John and William Barker.

In Conclusion

What had taken me years of painstaking research - poring over census records, death certificates, and immigration documents - had now been made incredibly faster through the power of AI. Without AI, I might still be stuck at the same brick wall I had hit in 2004. But with the help of this technology, I was able to reach back even further into history and uncover stories that might have been lost forever.

By piecing together the lives of individuals like Jefferson Barker, Griffin Barker, and Edwin Moore, their story is being told and they are given a voice. What began as a favour for a friend evolved into a meaningful exploration of history. The stories of our ancestors are waiting to be uncovered, and with the help of AI, we can bring them to light in ways we never thought possible.

Records Indexed with AI

Victorian probate records (1853-1976) along with New Zealand wills and probate (1834-1997) have been indexed with AI. Remember that AI will search every word in every will. Your ancestor may be mentioned in a distant relative's will. It may be best to put inverted commas around words that you want together e.g. "John Brown". Try searching with different keywords. Good luck and remember to check back regularly to see what new records have been indexed with AI.

Editor's notes:

*Names changed for privacy

**Colleges and universities, specifically for black people, were set up mainly by Protestant groups, before the US Civil War and the emancipation of enslaved people. After the war, to provide federally mandated higher education for African Americans, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (HBCU) were established by and in the educationally segregated States (all in the South). For more information consult

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historically_black_colleges_and_universities

Search AI-produced records on Family Search: Kerrie has previously emailed members a detailed description of how to search for records analysed with AI at Family Search. Try this link and it will hopefully take you there <https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>

Also check out the FS blog page for lots of great information

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/>

It includes the *AI Developments in Genealogy* blog

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/ai-developments-genealogy>

References:-

National Archives of Australia <https://www.naa.gov.au/> for immigration to Australia records

Family Search <https://www.familysearch.org/en/australia/>

Ancestry for BMD and census records

Wikitree <https://www.wikitree.com/>



Adding References to Articles for *The Cedar Log*

We would like contributors to add references or sources to their articles, as much as possible. This helps others know where they might look for similar research and it also legitimises the details provided in articles. As some of our articles have previously been given as a talk at the Society's general meeting, perhaps make a note of sources as you are preparing your talk, so they can be added easily to the printed version.

We would prefer if references are **NOT** added as endnotes or footnotes, which is available in Word. It makes the formatting in the production of the journal more difficult. Just add a number in the paragraph in the article (as *superscript* x² if you know how to or we can alter it) and add the number and reference manually at the end of the article. Some examples are:

1. NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Marriage Registration #1234/1922
2. Sydney Morning Herald 1 July 1895. Accessed on *Trove*
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_de_Groot
4. Francis Sheppard, *History of London*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971

If you are unable to be specific, a list of references used, without numbering or reference in your article, can be listed at the end of the article.

We look forward to your articles!

With Thanks from the Editorial Team editorcedarlog@gmail.com

Biographical Database of Australia

By Carmel Crosby – Member 762

The **Biographical Database of Australia** (BDA) is a research tool for historians and genealogists comprising transcripts and indexes of original records, and also published biographies of deceased individuals who arrived, or were born in, Australia. The Marie Hart Library has a subscription to the BDA, so members can search freely.

Searches can be done at home, where you will see whether your person of interest has a record or 'biography'. You can then come to the library, look them up again and see the details.

[BDA Online — Biographical Database of Australia \(bda-online.org.au\)](http://bda-online.org.au)

Some of the records on BDA are:

- Full text of many baptisms, marriages & burials (BMD) 1788-1850s (NSW), 1837-1842 (VIC) including marriage witnesses, noting whether they signed by name or an X mark. Names of Catholic baptism sponsors/godparents are included
- many Tasmanian BMD records & musters
- assisted immigrants to New South Wales (NSW), (1832-1896), to Moreton Bay, now Queensland (1848-1859) and to Port Phillip, Victoria (1839-1851)
- unassisted immigrants to NSW (1788-1857)
- multiple records of most convicts to NSW/Qld/Vic (1788-1840s); most Tasmanian convicts & immigrants (1803-c1824), and to Norfolk Island (1788-1855)
- most soldiers stationed in Australia (1788-1844)
- 160,000 NSW Colonial Secretary records
- NSW muster records (1788-1830s) and the only full online transcript of the NSW 1828 census
- 10,000 burials and inscriptions (1819-1901) from the Sydney Burial Ground
- some Church of England parish registers
- Full text of 31,000 colonial biographies, which cross-reference to other persons mentioned

New records are being added continually. BDA links records of life events to create a Biographical Record or Report. From one report, subscribers can hyperlink to another biography, which might be to their spouse, parents, children, witnesses, employers, employees etc, through the entire database. Click on List all Persons or the Group icon to see persons connected. The source of the record is listed e.g. a newspaper or BMD register. When searching, try less information first, and increase details of your person if there are too many results.

So come into the Marie Hart Library and make use of this excellent resource and see how many of your ancestors, their friends or relatives you can find.

Gleanings of Journals in the Marie Hart Library

By **Janine Thomson**

When is a tree not a tree? – a Cautionary Tale. A reminder of why you should never take someone else's tree as fact.

Cleveland FHS Journal – April 2024, P41

Great Grandpa John Holmes & Great Uncle Harry. A story about the evolution of Sydney's Botanic Gardens.

Links and Chains – Liverpool FHS – June 2024 Page 10

Local Resources for Family History Research – County Waterford. Puts an emphasis on resources specific to the county of Waterford.

Irish Naming Convention - Part 2. Further explains how family naming patterns can optimise your searches in the Catholic Church records.

Irish Roots – Issue 130, 2024 – Pages 10 & 28.

Ballina Heads to Logan River. The story of an overland trek in search of the *Elizabeth*.

The Bulletin - Richmond River HS – May 2024 –Page 1.

The Convict Trail Project. Tells of how the group was established to protect and care for the convict-built, Great Northern Road.

The Chalmers Street Fires. On 25 May 2023 the Henderson Building in Sydney's heart went up in flames – but it was not the first big fire to occur on that block.

Traces – Edition 26 – Page 11 & 14

Rescuing the Past from the Wreckage. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy's destruction of Darwin.

How the Car Changed Australia. How it defined our life in the 20th Century.

Traces – Edition 27 – Page 9 & 13

Nuts and Bolts of Census Taking. What it was like to be a census enumerator in 1881.

Timespan - Nepean FHS – June 2024 – Page 16.

The Best Free Websites to Find your Family. Reveals the free websites you can't afford to miss.

Sporting Ancestors. Rounds up sites for researching different sports and their individual players in Britain.

Around Britain. Newly digitised resources can help you research your roots in **South Yorkshire**.

Who do you Think You Are – August 2024 – Pages 14, 35 & 61

Monthly Speakers



L to R: Ann Emery, Victoria Evans, John Broadley and Dawn Lotty

3 August 2024 – The Ships We Came On, coordinated by Ann Emery. Members spoke about the ships and the hardships their early ancestors experienced on their voyage to Australia. It was not all smooth sailing.

Dawn Lotty told us about the plot on the *Barwel*, a ship used to transport convicts – there was a conspiracy and mutiny to seize the ship.

John Broadley talked about Jane Eaton's sea voyage on the *Surprize*, a

small ship unsuitable for the long voyage to Australia. It sailed, very overloaded, in 1790 as part of the second fleet. Jane is Meryl Broadley's 3x great-grandmother.

Ann Emery recounted the story of the voyage of her 2x great-grandfather from England to Trinidad in 1849 on the timber schooner *Earl Dundonald*. Meryl (John) and Ann's stories are published in this issue of *The Cedar Log*.

Victoria Evan's story was about her ancestors, the Toose family, and how circumstances fortunately prevented them from sailing on the *Dunbar* in 1857. The *Dunbar* was wrecked on its entry into Sydney Harbour and all aboard perished except for one person. Her family instead sailed on the *Boanerges* and arrived in October 1857 after a 3-month journey.

7 September 2024 – our IT co-ordinator, Sue McCulloch (in photo on right), gave us a very instructive talk about using Ancestry, including searching *All Records*, *All Locations* and the *Card Catalogue* and how it is possible to save all the information we collect to an Excel spreadsheet.

Ancestry is now available in our *Marie Hart Library*. Hands-on Workshops, an Ancestry Support group and an Ancestry Q & A on our website will be coming soon – watch this space!





L to R: Judy Cosgrove, Carmel Crosby, Patricia Wilson and Kerrie Alexander

5 October 2024 – Judy Cosgrove coordinated the afternoon and we had 3 presentations on different topics.

Firstly, Patricia **Wilson** talked about two men who had influenced her in her life – her father and her grandfather. Her grandfather taught her how to read but they both taught her other things about life including asking questions, volunteering and treating everyone with respect.

Kerrie **Alexander** told us how she used AI as a breakthrough in her research. The **power of AI in family history research** seems incredible with its ability to analyse vast amounts of data quickly. **Kerrie’s presentation is printed in this journal.**

Carmel **Crosby** told us about the wealth of information that can be obtained from the online **Biographical Database of Australia** including shipping, BDMs, assisted and unassisted migrants, Tasmanian and Norfolk Island records, biographies and much more. If you find a person in the BDA it will link to other persons connected with them in the source material, meaning you might find people you didn’t know about. **The BDA is available in our Marie Hart Library and there is a more detailed article about it in this journal.**

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members:

Member No 1055	Deb Reimann	Ballina
Member No 1056	Ross Smith	Alstonville
Member No 1057	Denise Quintal	Ballina



SOCIETY and JOURNAL DETAILS

The Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc. was established in 1983 to serve the family history needs of researchers initially with a special interest in North East New South Wales, Australia, in the area bounded by the Richmond and Tweed Rivers, often referred to as the Northern Rivers.

The Marie Hart Library (MHL) holds numerous local records including the Local Schools Admission Registers, Cemetery and Burial Records, Honour and Memorial Rolls from many locations within the Northern Rivers, plus death and funeral notices and obituaries from *The Northern Star* (1876 – 2020).

Over the years, the library has expanded and now holds a wealth of information from across Australia including electoral rolls, historical and pioneer records, war records, shipping lists, probate records, landholder returns, Colonial Secretary papers and cemetery books. There are family history journals from within Australia or overseas countries, either as hard copies or in electronic form. The latter can be accessed on the computers in the MHL or from home.

Access is available to microfiche, CDs and computers connected to genealogical websites, to which we subscribe, including *FindmyPast*, *Ancestry* and the *Biographical Database of Australia*. We are also a *FamilySearch* affiliate, which gives access to more than the standard *FamilySearch* site. Ask the member on duty, during opening hours, if you need assistance with any of the library's resources.

Family History Research Requests can be done by the Society for a fee of \$15 per hour. Please include a 22x11 cm stamped, addressed envelope and research fees where applicable. Email the secretary or send details to our PO Box (addresses are on the inside front cover).

The Cedar Log – Journal of the Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc. Published March, June, September and December

The Editor would be pleased to accept articles for inclusion in this journal. Ideally, they should be sent by email to editorcedarlog@gmail.com but hard copy is also welcomed. Contribution deadline is 6 weeks before the month of publication. The format preferred is Times New Roman font; 11 point; single spacing. Please have any surnames in bold, the first time they appear in your article, after the heading. Add sources or references at the bottom of your article if possible. Please add your contact details as the Editor may need to discuss editing of material submitted for publication. It is your responsibility to ensure that your article does not infringe copyright and the views of authors are not those of the RTFHS. **Items remain the copyright of the Richmond-Tweed Family History Society and/or the author.** Members' input is important and makes for interesting and diverse reading and you might be lucky enough to connect with someone who has read your article, either in Australia or overseas. We would love to hear about how you broke down those brick walls or any interesting information you have found out about an ancestor or research sources or techniques that others may find helpful. **Material and articles in this journal may only be reproduced with written permission from the Society. Please contact the editor via email.**



SOCIETY EVENTS

Society meetings are at the Players Theatre, 24 Swift Street, Ballina at 2pm on the first Saturday of each month. There is no meeting in January or December.

DATES TO REMEMBER 2025

Contact the Secretary or the Co-ordinator if you would like to participate in one of the presentations listed below.

Christmas/New Year Closure of the Marie Hart Library: Closed 4pm Saturday 14 December 2024 to 10am Monday 6 January 2025.

Saturday 1 February Meeting: History of European Settlement in Ballina – the first 100 years. Presented by RTFHS member **Patricia Wilson**.

Saturday 1 March Meeting: In the Steps of My Ancestor – What might I learn? Zoom presentation by Brisbane-based genealogist, **Eric Kopittke**. How to visit the places your ancestors inhabited and what insights might it give us into their lives.

Saturday 5 April Meeting: For King and Country - stories about our ancestors' military service. Co-ordinated by **Jill McCann**

Saturday 3 May Meeting: For Better or For Worse – Show your ancestors' (or your own) wedding photos, dress or memorabilia and tell their story. Co-ordinator TBA.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees for the year 1 January to 31 December 2025 are \$40 Individual or \$50 Joint Membership. Journals will be sent to financial members only.