

THE ENDEAVOUR



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BOTANY BAY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.
Discovering Your Heritage

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BOTANY BAY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

Discovering Your Heritage

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Meetings

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

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

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

Annual Membership Fees

From 1 Jul 2023: single – \$45; family – \$60; distance single – \$25; distance family – \$32. Joining fee for all categories – \$15; membership renewals due 1 July each year.

Research

Volunteers from BBFHS will research family history relevant to the Sutherland Shire for non-members: minimum fee of \$20 (first hour) and \$20 per hour thereafter.

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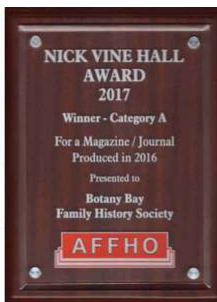
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CALENDAR



Members are advised to check latest details on our Events Calendar at www.botanybayfhs.org.au or see your BBFHS eNEWS.

2023

- Dec 2 Scottish Interest Group: 2-4pm Research Centre
Dec 6 **Christmas Meeting – 7.30 pm Tradies.** Speaker – John Hely.
Managing Your Family History Research
Dec 7 **Christmas Cruise – Bass & Flinders**
Dec 15 Last day that BBFHS Research Centre and Library is open
Dec 20 **Member’s Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom**

2024

- Jan 15 BBFHS Research Centre and Library re-opens
Feb 7 **Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom.**
Speaker and topic – TBA
Feb 10 Scottish Interest Group: 2-4pm Research Centre
Feb 17 Australian Interest Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom
Feb 21 **Member’s Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom**
Feb 24 Irish Interest Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom
Feb 27 Family Tree Maker Interest Group: 1.30-3.30 pm on Zoom
Mar 2 Meeting – 1.30 pm Research Centre. Speaker and topic – TBA
Please note new day (Saturday), time and venue.
Mar 5 Legacy Interest Group: 2-4 pm Research Centre
Mar 9 English Interest Group: 2-4 pm on Zoom
Mar 20 **Member’s Chat Meeting – 7.30 pm on Zoom**
Mar 23 DNA Interest Group: 1.30-3.30 pm on Zoom
Mar 28 Writers Interest Group: 1.30-3.30 pm Research Centre



Botany Bay Family History Society is a member of:



NSW & ACT
Association of
Family History
Societies Inc.

AFFHO

The Australasian Federation of
Family History Organisations Inc.



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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

As another year closes, the Management Committee and I continue to be grateful for all the work undertaken throughout the year by our wonderful volunteers – some of whom make important contributions without being rostered for duty at the Research Centre.

In this report I have two significant items to announce to you, with the first item regarding the use of Gymea Tradies for meetings.

Our Monthly Meeting on the first Wednesday of the month has seen a large overall decline in attendance since Covid. While this isn't an issue for the meetings held by Zoom it has now become untenable to hold our meetings at Gymea Tradies. Even with a significant subsidy, the cost of hiring the Elouera Room at \$400 per meeting is no longer covered by selling raffle tickets on the night. The smaller Kai'Mia room isn't that much cheaper, so the decision has been made to host the quarterly meetings – March, June, September, and December – in the Hall next to our Research Centre starting next year. However, because the Hall cannot be booked for night meetings, we will hold the **quarterly meetings ONLY on the first Saturday of the month** from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. All other monthly and mid-month meetings will remain on Wednesday nights starting at 7.30pm.

The other significant item is to do with Australian tax implications.

Until notice of a new Australian tax regulation popped up in September, it was assumed that BBFHS, as an incorporated Not-for-Profit (NFP) association, was exempt from paying income tax. However, we have found that this is not the case. Only NFPs that are listed as a charity are income tax exempt. And BBFHS is not registered as a charity. This has huge implications, not just for BBFHS but for all family history societies. Under ATO regulations, we fall into a taxable NFP classification for societies and fraternal organisations for any income over \$416 per financial year.

Income from donations and membership subscriptions, accrued by BBFHS is classified as Mutuality and is not income tax payable. However, income raised outside of the membership is taxable and this includes bank interest, advertising in *The Endeavour*, raffle tickets purchased by non-members, paid attendance at a BBFHS event by someone who is not a member of BBFHS, sales (after expenses) of any books we sell to non-members, proceeds from fundraising events, sponsorships and grants.

I have spent the last two months working through this issue and during that time discovered that while BBFHS are not registered as a charity we are registered

as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). Because of this discovery, I have followed advice from the ATO to apply for charitable status with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). We are not guaranteed to receive charitable status, however, already being a DGR puts us one step closer for approval. Ironically, since submitting the ‘miles’ of paperwork, I have been advised by the ACNC the approval process may take up to 12 weeks as they have been inundated by various NFPs for charitable status!

As this year draws to a close it is time to start organising lots of events for 2024 and I welcome any suggestions that members might have. Remember to stay up to date with all BBFHS events by visiting our website, reading the eNEWS, following our Facebook Group, and joining the private forum at groups.io.

Finally, with the New Year just around the corner, I’d like to wish all of you a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year and may your genealogy research grow in leaps and bounds.

Jennie Fairs



RESEARCH CENTRE OPENING TIMES

Monday, Wednesday and Friday – 10 am to 2 pm

1st and 3rd Saturdays – 10 am to 2 pm

Please phone 9523 8948 if going in after midday.

Centre closed after 15 December, reopens 15 January 2024

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



WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

is available at the Research Centre.

Please phone 9523 8948 to make arrangements.

VALE – MERLE KAVANAGH & BRETT HEATON

by Jean Campbell (Member)

It is with sadness we record the passing of the following two people and send our sincere condolences to their families.

MERLE KAVANAGH

Merle passed away on 21 October, just a few days before her 95th birthday. Merle was a foundation member of BBFHS, the first Minute Secretary and a long-term contributor. She was an author and published writer. In *By the Blue Lagoon – a family memoir* written for Marrickville Heritage Society, Merle linked her family history to the history of St Peters, describing her early childhood and her home which was near what her father had coined ‘The Blue Lagoon’ – a romantic name for a water-filled and debris-littered former brick pit, off May Street.



Merle Kavanagh reminiscing at the 30th anniversary of BBFHS, 2014.

(photo: Pat Fearnley)

In 2004, Merle published her semi-autobiographical book *Echoes from the Bay: The Yowie Bay Story*.

Merle also wrote *John Lees, the Chapel Builder*, the story of her 3 times great grandfather John Lees, originally a private in the NSW Corps and later a farmer. Following a ‘revelation’, he built the first Methodist (Wesleyan) chapel in Australia on his property at Castlereagh.

Merle used to write a regular feature for *The Endeavour* with her lovely touch of humour. She was a member of, and also wrote articles for, Sutherland Historical Society and was an interviewer for the Sutherland Library’s Local Oral Histories.

BRETT HEATON

Sadly, our active and supportive members, Margaret and Brian Heaton lost their son Brett on 20 October, to a rare form of cancer. He had been battling the disease for some time.

Coincidentally, the funerals were held on the same day at Woronora Cemetery: Wednesday 1 November 2023. It was a very sad day for BBFHS.

LYNDAL HOLLAND WRITING COMPETITION

by John Levy (Editor)

Congratulations to Ralph Dutneall and Pat Fearnley, the winner and runner-up in the inaugural **BBFHS Lyndal Holland Writing Competition**. The first prize of \$400 was awarded to Ralph, and the second prize of \$200 was awarded to Pat at the Annual General Meeting in September. The Competition's theme was 'My/Our First Ancestor Who Arrived In Australia'. Enjoy their articles on the following pages.

The **BBFHS Lyndal Holland Writing Competition** was established in 2023 in memory of Lyndal Holland, a Foundation Member and inaugural secretary of the Society. Lyndal's husband John and her daughter Megan attended the AGM to announce the Award.



Lyndal Holland
(photo: Holland family album)

Next year's theme will be announced in February, with entries closing on 31 July – plenty of time to get **your** entry researched and written!



Ralph Dutneall and Pat Fearnley (photo: Jean Campbell)

THE LYNDAL HOLLAND WINNER – MY GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER

EMMA NORMAN

by Ralph **Dutneall** (Member)

Was her father mad to think that he could grow vegetables in this crazy, primitive, bustling Melbourne town? Nine-year-old Emma **Norman** certainly thought so. They had arrived on the ship *Manchester* along with another 236 immigrants on the warm evening of 13 January 1849¹ in the height of summer². Despite being so different to her quiet sleepy birthplace of Thornton, Buckinghamshire³, the Norman family settled into their two blocks of land in Rose Street, Prahran where her father grew and sold vegetables as they had intended.

It was in Prahran that Emma was swept up and married George Henry **Smith** in 1858⁴, just before her nineteenth birthday. George, the dashing young entrepreneur, had an established carting business but switched to market gardening like Emma's father, but in nearby Hartwell. Tragically their first-born son died there just before his third birthday. To add to their gloom, a few years later, in 1866 a fire destroyed their house and shop with losses estimated at over three hundred pounds⁵. With nowhere to go, George now thirty-five, Emma twenty-nine and four children under eight years old, gathered what they could and moved to a shop in Burwood Road, Hawthorn where George established a produce business which he was to run for the next twenty-five years. Fire haunted them again in 1878 but quick action from employees and locals limited the loss to a storeroom at the rear of the shop⁶.

By around 1885 George had established businesses in brick making and selling produce in Croydon, northeast of Melbourne, then he turned to land development. His Croydon Township Estate offered *100 magnificent business and villa sites in this fashionable and favourable district,the terms are the best that have ever been offered to the public*⁷.



Emma Norman, age ~18
(photo: Dutneall family album)

All the while, Emma was bringing up children and having more babies. Emma was forty-six years old when Alfred was born, but he died at just three weeks old after a medicine mix-up from his nurse⁸. Alfred was to be her last child and the fifth of her children to have died in infancy. After having borne fifteen babies over twenty-seven years, she must have been exhausted.

The wave of development, land speculation and prosperity began to unravel around 1889 when land prices started to slip. But as a bright spot in the growing gloom, their eldest daughter Julia Anna was married to Arthur **Dutneall** in 1890⁹, in a flamboyant wedding culminating in a dance for one hundred guests all decked out in the finest current fashions. Despite the recent death of her mother, Emma attended in a magnificent black merveilleux gown. As tough times were building Emma must have despaired as the hope for repeat extravagant weddings for her other four daughters was disappearing.

A banking crisis was building and by May 1893 more than a dozen banks had gone to the wall taking their depositor's money with them, plunging Victoria into the worst depression on record¹⁰. George and Emma's businesses were suddenly in trouble. First to go were their nine rental properties in Hawthorn¹¹. Their cherished produce business in Hawthorn Road¹² went, along with their stores in Croydon. They had no option but to face disaster, so George put all their assets into a Trust Estate to be sold off to avoid bankruptcy. Included were 'Stock-in-trade, book debts, cattle, horses, drays, carts, &c.' totalling more than eight hundred and forty pounds¹³. Later that year his agent declared a first dividend of two shillings and sixpence in the pound to his creditors, who were probably glad to have any return at all¹⁴. Emma was faced with having to start all over again.

Then a bargain appeared – since they had no property, they were able to apply for block 9J in the Eight Hour Pioneer Settlement at Wonga Park, about 34 km north east of Melbourne, in late 1893¹⁵. Despite being heavily timbered with steep gullies this was to be their home. In typical entrepreneurial style, George set up the first post office in the district, delivering mail and supplies he brought in from nearby Croydon in his spring cart. Emma had to soldier on despite the difficulties of living in such isolation, so removed from her comfortable life in Hawthorn, but they lived there until George's death in 1901¹⁶.

There is a family story that Emma ventured overseas to visit her two married daughters in London, but whilst there had a premonition that her youngest daughter Alice would die. A telegram arrived days later in November 1905 that Alice had passed away after surgery at just twenty-three years old¹⁷. Later in 1912 she received more tragic news that her son Harry had died in an accident in Western Australia, he was forty-six years old¹⁸. Just as she must have thought her children were safely grown up, two more were taken from her.



Emma Norman (centre) with two of her daughters and their families, taken ~1910
(photo: Dutneall family album)

Increasingly affected by her arthritis and virtually bedridden she too passed away on 29 December 1915. She was buried alongside her husband George and seven of her children. Her funeral notice simply stated:

SMITH – On the 29th December, 1915, at 28 Kooyong road, Malvern, Emma, relict of the late George Henry Smith, of Hawthorn and Wonga Park. (Privately interred, Boroondarra Cemetery, December 30.)¹⁹

Surely an unfitting farewell for Emma, the busy, tragic, supportive wife, always under the shadow of her charismatic husband, but who nevertheless left a strong legacy in her children, seven of whom gave her twenty-four grandchildren and now hundreds of descendants, one of whom proudly wrote this story of her life.

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THE LYNDAL HOLLAND RUNNER-UP – HENRY HEDINGTON (1798-1874) – AN INDUSTRIOUS MAN AND A GOOD SAWYER

by Pat Fearnley (Member)

In the winter of 1837, 40 year old Henry **Hedington** stood alone at the foot of Wapping Old Stairs, arms akimbo, gazing out across the Thames, having made his way along the narrow alley beside the *Town of Ramsgate* pub which had existed there since 1758 and where he had downed many an ale at the end of a hard day's work.

A fetid stench arose from the murky waters as he took in the bustle of activity all about him and Bermondsey on the southern bank directly opposite. He strove to imprint on his mind the sights and sounds so familiar to him and which in two days' time he would leave behind forever.

Like his father and grandfather before him Henry was pit sawyer. A saw pit is a pit over which lumber is positioned to be sawed with a long two-handled saw by two men, one standing above the timber and the other below. Henry was an East Ender through and through, first seeing the light of day in April 1798 in Brick Lane, Spitalfields and baptised at Hawksmoor's Christ Church there in December of that year.

The East End's population grew enormously in the 19th century, leading to extreme overcrowding and a concentration of poor people and immigrants throughout the area. Spitalfields became a by-word for urban deprivation and by 1832, concern at a London cholera epidemic led *The Poor Man's Guardian*¹ to write of the area:

The low houses are all huddled together in close and dark lanes and alleys presenting at first sight an appearance of non-habitation, so dilapidated are the doors and windows: in every room of the houses, whole families, parents, children and aged grandfathers swarm together

At 40, Henry had decided to uproot his family from familiar London to Van Diemens Land, which within a few years, in 1855, would be renamed Tasmania. To reach this momentous decision, he had spent many long hours weighing up the pros and cons and in discussions with his wife Elizabeth. They longed to escape the dreary surroundings and sub-standard housing of the East End, with its endless sooty, choking fogs that enveloped the area and seeped into the houses. They were already parents of four children with another on the way and although Henry was held in high regard by his employer and acquaintances, he no doubt hoped that in the young Colony there would new opportunities for him, with the chance perhaps

of establishing his own business.

It was not as if he had blindly chosen Van Diemens Land as the family's destination. His wife, the former Elizabeth **Dell**, whom he had married in the church of St John's Hackney in 1821, had been born in Sydney in 1798², the daughter of a private in the 102nd Regiment who had arrived on the Second Fleet. Elizabeth had accompanied her father back to England in 1810 but she remained there when he returned to Australia in 1818, settling in Van Diemens Land, first farming, then serving for 11 years in the Launceston Police Force. His wife and father-in-law had thus been able to give Henry first-hand information about the colony, their personal experiences and insights into life there.

The ship *Orontes* departed London at 6.30pm on a fine, cloudy Friday on 3 December 1837, setting sail in a fresh breeze. On board were Henry, wife Elizabeth and children Mary Ann, 15, Clarissa, 11, George 14, and Henry 10 accompanied by Miss Hedington. The ship anchored at Deal overnight in thick fog and then sailed on at 7am the following morning in a fair wind.³ The voyage was rather long in consequence of her touching at Madeira and Cape of Good Hope where she remained for nine days.

Orontes arrived in Sydney on 18 May 1838⁴ and records note the birth on board of a son, John, three weeks prior, and that Henry had arrived on his own account, 8 shillings per day without rations. The immigrants were conveyed to the Emigrant Buildings in Bent Street and he was one of two sawyers on board.⁵

Somehow Henry fudged his birth records, no doubt to meet the immigration age criteria but it is difficult to imagine how he managed it, given that his eldest daughter, my great-great-grandmother Mary Ann, was aged 15 in 1837⁶ and in one shipping document his own age is recorded as 25, but in another he is shown as '35 last April'.

Henry and his family remained in Sydney until 14 January 1839 when they left per the *William* and arrived in Launceston five days later.⁷

Henry's character referees in London, Edward Turner & Company of Wapping, J. Hatch of Hereford Terrace and Collyer Millson of Lennon Street and 'several others' stated that he *had served 7 years and has always been employed at his trade*, providing respectable references of his being *an industrious man and a good sawyer*.⁸

Henry established himself in Launceston and his eldest daughter, 18 year old Mary Ann, married former whaling ship carpenter and pioneering ship-builder Alexander Blair in 1841 and began raising a family of 12 children. I like to fancy that Henry in his early Launceston years may have been employed by Alexander Blair and that is how Mary Ann became acquainted with her future husband.

Between 1848 and 1857 Henry had hired three convicts from which it can be inferred that he was in business for himself.⁹

Henry has a tenuous link to fame by reason of his granddaughter Elizabeth Alice Hedington's marriage to Macpherson Frederick Robertson in 1886.¹⁰ Later Sir Macpherson, known as the Chocolate King or Australia's Willy Wonka, Elizabeth's husband was founder of Robertson's Steam Confectionery Works, a famed entrepreneur and philanthropist, creator of Freddo Frog, Cherry Ripe and Old Gold chocolates who contributed £16,500 to the funding of Sir Douglas Mawson's Antarctic Expedition.

Henry Hedington prospered in Tasmania and his decision to emigrate proved the correct one. He died in 1874 aged 76.

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- 10 Referenced from the Australian Dictionary of Biography and *MacRobertson: The Chocolate King* by Jill Robertson



NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new Society members. Please take advantage of your membership by attending meeting nights, classes and the Research Centre (please ask for help if you need it).

1933	Wendy Agzarian	Bangor
1934	Danielle Kennedy-Syron	Woronora Heights
1935	Natalie Mangos	Cronulla
1936	Regina Hogan	Wyong
1937	Douglas Champion	Kirrawee

IMB BANK COOK COMMUNITY CLASSIC RAFFLE

by Barbara **Barnes** (Co-ordinator)

Our Society first took part in this fundraising endeavour in 2016. The Raffle is organised annually courtesy of Scott **Morrison** MP and his Cook electorate office staff who obtain prizes and sponsors, arrange ticket printing and oversee its administration.



All monies from ticket sales are kept by the individual community organisations participating. Each arranges its own ticket sales and internal promotion. Strict auditing controls are conducted each year, both in-house by the Society and externally by the Cook electoral office.

The Raffle was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID. Thank you to Society members who bought books in 2023. \$1,200 was raised to assist Society funds this year, bringing our total raised to \$10,720 since 2016. This money helps to keep membership fee rises to a minimum and to deal with ever-increasing costs for such things as the Research Centre rental, subscriptions to online genealogical databases, computer maintenance and general Society costs.

Our Society takes this opportunity to thank Scott Morrison and his staff member, Belinda **Brannock**, for promoting the Raffle. Thank you too, to the IMB Community Bank – a major supporter behind the scenes who donate a monetary prize in each year’s draw. Thank you to the other prize donors. The 2023 drawing of the Community Raffle will be on Friday 8 December. Hopefully this will be the year when a purchaser of a ticket from a Society-allotted booklet will be on the winners’ list! Of course, comes the reminder “You have to be in it to win it!”



Journal Contributions

All journal contributions – large or small – are welcome. Email your input to bbfhs_ed@yaho.com.au, leave it in the Editor’s folder at the Research Centre or hand it to the Editor or any Committee member at our monthly meetings. Please add your name and contact details.

PRIVATE JAMES THOMAS COLLINS – *RIP*

by John Shortland (Member)

James Thomas **Collins**, my maternal uncle, was born on 16 March 1889 on his parent's property at Redbank, in the south of Mudgee, NSW. His parents were William Collins (1861-1950) and Sarah Ann Collins nee **Cottee** (1860-1942). James's siblings were Florence Margaret (1885-1973), Alice Elizabeth (1887-1973), Sarah Matilda (1888-1970), William Bennett (1893-1962), Isabell Mary (1897-1996) and Doris Mafeking (1900-1973).

As a boy, James commonly known in the family as Jim, was an apprentice in the welding and blacksmith trade and worked in Mudgee. When war broke out in 1914 he made an application to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force at Murrumburrah near Harden, New South Wales and after a medical check was enlisted as a Private on 11 November 1916, stationed at the AIF Military Camp in Goulburn, with Service Number 32712¹.

Statement of Service

After training as a gunner James was assigned to the Medium Trench Mortar Batteries 27th AIF, 35rd Division for overseas service.

He embarked on 10 February 1917 from Sydney on the *RMS Osterley* to Plymouth, England and after a period of training then proceeded to France on 12 August of the same year.

James service records show that he was on active service from 15 September 1917 until 19 April 1918. During his active service, the 27th Battery was positioned at Ypres and the Menin Gate supporting raids on enemy trenches and involved in battles known as Menin Road and Polygon Wood, receiving return fire from enemy artillery whilst remaining in action as the battle for Passchendaele raged during heavy rain and deep mud. James and all gunners would have been regularly shelled by the Germans but final relief came with a withdrawal from firing positions on 5 January 1918 up until they were ordered to assist in blocking the advance of the Germans then underway in the Somme Region².

James saw action on the Somme Valley near Heilly firing on targets of opportunity and being shelled in return. At this time, with casualties both sides, he sustained injuries to both legs and an arm rendering him unfit for further active duty from 19 April. He was transferred to a Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) at Heilly then by hospital train to Amiens for processing and finally to Bethnal Green Military Hospital in England for return to Australia.

As an aside, it was on 21 April 1918 following that Baron von Richthofen (The Red Baron) was shot down in their neighbourhood.



27th Field Artillery Battery (photo: Australian War Memorial, EO 3506)

Heilly Station is situated at Mericourt-L'Abbe, north of the river Somme and about 9.6 km south-west of Albert. The CCSs were located close to the battlefield and the last location on route to the ambulance trains that carried the wounded to hospital.



Location of Heilly, between Amiens and Albert (map: John Shortland)

Heilly, today, is also the site of the Military Cemetery and the last resting place of 2890 Commonwealth soldiers and 83 Germans³.



Heilly Military Cemetery Today (photo: reference 3)

Return to Australia

James returned to Australia on HMAT A61 *Kanowna* Hospital ship during July 1918, and then transferred to the Prince of Wales Hospital at Randwick, Sydney, New South Wales for continued treatment and rehabilitation. He stayed with his sister Matilda at Cook Street, Randwick for some time until he was able to return to his home town of Mudgee on a war pension of six shillings a day⁴.

Over the years, my mother informed me that James spent most of his time in Bathurst, fossicking for gold as a pastime at Wattle Flat. He had to come to Sydney each year for a medical check at the Prince of Wales Hospital. He would stay for a time with his sister Matilda and family at her new location in Redfern and also pay a short visit to our home in Clovelly Road, Randwick before returning.

Finding James Grave Site

The NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages index reported James' death in Sydney (record 7848/1958), not Mudgee or Bathurst. The transcription obtained through our Botany Bay FHS member and Transcription Agent, Joy Murrin, revealed that James was buried in the Church of England Cemetery, Botany now known as Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park. The informant was his younger sister Doris M **Maxwell**, presumably the owner of the grave site but now deceased. James remained unmarried.

Following a visit to the cemetery and discussion with the administration staff, James' grave site was located within Section A5B Row 43 site 1426, and to my total dismay, the grave was unmarked! In further discussion with the staff I was informed that I would need to ascertain the current owner of the grave site before I could negotiate installation of a plaque. I contacted my cousin Norma, the elder daughter to my aunt Doris and obtained an affidavit as proof of ownership and then forwarded an application with all details to the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA), Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) for consideration of James' eligibility for official commemoration.



James' grave site, before and after installation of a memorial and plaque
(photos: John Shortland)

After a period of three months I received a most welcome letter from OAWG confirming James eligibility for official commemoration and was requested to supply details for an official plaque in accord with the instructions provided. Final work was completed within six months.

Concluding Remarks

The concept of official commemoration as adopted in Australia had its origin in World War 1. Commendation and placement of a memorial was conceived to recognise individually and in perpetuity the loss of life in war. Subsequently the Australian Government extended the concept to those who die after war or conflict, but of a war-caused condition, all veterans being treated having unmarked grave sites should make the effort to contact the DVA and apply for official commendation of their forebear.

James Thomas Collins RIP



Inscription on the plaque on James' grave
(photo: John Shortland)

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2. https://birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/27th_Field_Artillery_Battery
3. <https://www.walcmeteries.com/heilly-station-cemetery.html>
4. National Archives of Australia, Chester Hill, NSW



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KEEPER OF THE FAMILY TREE

by Jenny **Bissell** (Member)

After my mum, Cynthia Christine **Taylor** nee **Arnold**, passed away in March 2022 aged 89, I, as the ‘family historian’, took over her family tree information. Mum had started her research around 2000, a few years before I started working on my husband’s **Bissell** and **Crossman** families and also my dad, Russell Trevor Taylor’s side (1929-2021).

Mum grew up in England, being born in Wales in 1933. She knew a lot of her aunts, uncles, grandparents and other relatives and so got a good head start on her **Arnold/Dearlove/Haycock/Martin** ancestors and their extended families.

Her family tree is reasonably up to date but I am having trouble trying to piece together where some of her relatives belong. There are many duplicate records to sort through and it has become a bit overwhelming, with too many people with the same name, (as we all as family historians find!), wrong dates, and information she was given which has not been checked yet. So I’ve put aside all the sorting until I can muster up some enthusiasm to start again.

When I do, I will start from scratch and check everything – choose one person and follow them through their life, (don’t get sidetracked!) clean out all her folders, files (now stored in a big tub plus her small filing cabinet) and do as much as I can to put some sort of order into her family tree.

That’s not including the many photo albums of both mum and dad’s family history photos, photos of grandchildren, great grandchildren, other family members, friends, trips etc. luckily most of which are named and dated, and the numerous duplicate folders on her computer that has old photos of family, again most of them duplicated from the photo albums.

I know I am not alone in this situation, but it has made me think about starting to go through my own family tree information and photos, updating, printing out the information of who’s who, and storing each family into their own folder so the person who takes over from me won’t find it all so daunting.

I attended the 2023 State Family History Conference in Toukley in early September, held by Wyong Family History Group Inc. Well done to the organisers of the conference, a huge task undertaken in eleven months. By coming together with others from Botany Bay FHS and having the face to face conference has given me the boost of enthusiasm I needed to get stuck into sorting mum’s family files. It was just the shot of family history I needed.



WHAT TO DO WITH UNCLE MICK'S TROPHY?

by Brian **Heaton** (Member)

Having recently cleaned out Margaret's mum's home ready for sale we have been made very much aware that there is a need to make a start on clearing the decks a little in our own place, with my garage and under the house a major priority! So far I am only part way through that with much more to do. With this in mind, the question arose of what to do with the trophy residing in the glass cabinet case in the dining room.

Ernest Henry **Lister** (known to our family as Uncle Mick) was born in 1896, the youngest of nine children to Thomas and Sarah Lister and youngest brother to my grandmother Mary Betty Mercy **Heaton** nee Lister. He enlisted when he was 20 and spent his 21st Birthday in the trenches in France according to family memoirs passed down to me from my dad's youngest sister. On his return from the War he worked in the timber mill owned by his father at Mount Vincent, New South Wales and according to details on his mother's death certificate in 1940 he lived in Hamilton, a suburb of Newcastle, and I think he was listed as a car salesman.

In December 1923, Speedway dirt track racing started at Maitland Showground and became very popular, with a special train leaving Newcastle to ferry attendees to Maitland and return. To coincide with St Patricks Day celebrations in 1925, there was a large and well-publicised event promoted, with races for pushbikes and motorcycles to be held. The main event was to carry prize money totalling £100 with the winner taking £60 and a 'magnificent silver cup'. This prize was won by 'E.H. Lister' and the cup found its way to my aunt, Minnie Isobel **Osland** nee Heaton who lived with uncle Arch at Mayfield. After she passed away in 1986 it was passed on to her daughter Betty **Ellis**, my cousin. One day when visiting Betty she mentioned the cup and said her kids would not be interested in it and so it was given to me for safekeeping. I found an article on *Trove* from the *Newcastle Herald* which reported the full results of the race



photo: collection.powerhouse.com.au

and it seems uncle Mick ‘did a Bradbury’ as he was running second in the final when the leader some way in front fell off and uncle Mick won riding a Harley Davidson motorcycle. I remember going to visit him in Concord Repatriation Hospital when in my teens and took with me an album a friend had compiled of photos from Sydney Empire Speedway which we used to attend some Saturdays. He was amazed at the frail looking frames of the bikes they raced in the early 1960s. “They are not much more than pushbikes with an engine” he said.

So now to our decision as to what should become of the trophy. I contacted Maitland Showground and their Office advised of an upcoming Centenary Celebration of Speedway on 15 December 2023 and gave me contacts for both Kurri Kurri Speedway and the Maitland Historical Society, who were jointly involved in planning the event. I decided that the Historical Society may be the best people to look after the cup as they have a museum. I spoke with Steve Bone who is the Secretary of the Society and also on the Committee of Maitland Family History Group. He offered to meet me somewhere closer than Maitland so we settled on the cemetery behind the Uniting Church at Brunkerville which was easy for him from Maitland and easy for us as we stayed overnight at our son’s place at



Handing over the cup - Brian Heaton, right, with Steve Bone
(photo: Heaton family album)

Wyoming. This cemetery was fitting, as there is a memorial plaque for E.H. Lister on the grave site of his two infant children directly behind the little church. His parents and mine along with Betty Ellis, our grandparents and many other relatives are buried here.

In Rose Cottage opposite, I can remember visiting my grandmother in the early 1950s. I handed the Cup to Steve and I am sure it will be well cared for and the history of it will live on into the future in the area it originated.



E.H. Lister MM. memorial plaque at Uniting Church Cemetery, Brunkerville (photo: Heaton family album)

Now for the Silver Coffee Pot presented to Mum's father, the captain of Girilambone Rifle Club in 1915 ... but that is another story!



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The Hauntings (photo: Jennifer Gibbling) – see Travel Tales.

Editor's Note: If you are viewing this digitally, zoom in to see the wonderful detail.

TRAVEL TALES

by Jennifer **Gibling** (Member)

Saturday 1st July – Sunday 12th November 2023

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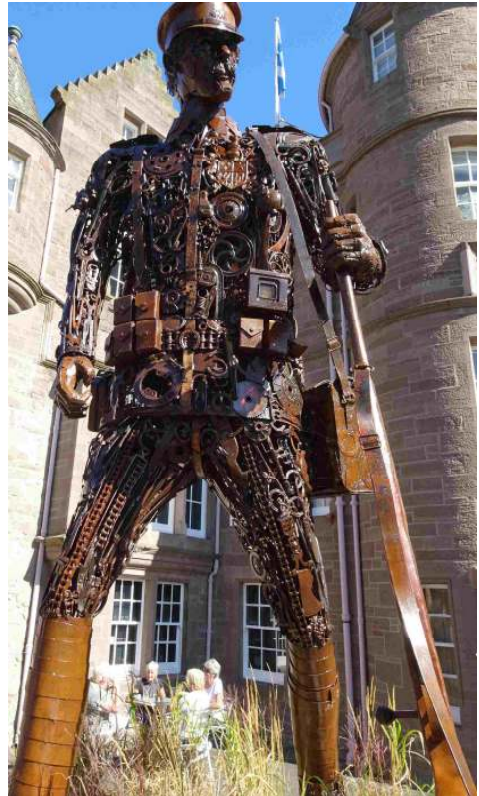
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At 6.5 metres tall, the scrap metal statue of a WW1 soldier is an awe inspiring sight. Titled *The Hauntings*, it was commissioned by Jo **Oliver** & Paul **Richards** and was fabricated in 2016 to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. Jo grew up in Somerset with stories of the ghost of a World War One soldier roaming the Somerset hills on his way home. The statue represents all those who served and didn't return as well as those who did return – weary, fragile and physically wounded.

Jo had the idea for a statue but it wasn't until chance had them driving past the Dorset Forge & Fabrication Yard and they saw several metal sculptures which fitted with Jo's ideas. After speaking with blacksmith Chris **Hannam** and artist Martin **Galbavy**, work was started on the sculpture. Over one thousand pieces of scrap metal were used including horseshoes, brake linings and car jacks. The finished statue weighs about 1.8 tonnes and was completed in 2016.

One beautiful sunny day on a visit to the Black Watch Museum in Perth, Scotland we were able to stand as many others had done and gaze in awe at this work of art. It has been exhibited only a few times and after this stay in Perth it will return to Jo & Richard's farm in Somerset.



The Hauntings (photo: Jennifer Gibling)

HENRY HOLLINSHED

by Helen **Bain** (Member)

Henry Hollinshed was born in London in 1801. He was a cabinetmaker and Hupholsterer by trade, as was his brother Allin. In 1832 Henry, his wife Marian and Allin chartered half a ship, the *Duckenfield* and sailed for Australia, arriving in Sydney 31 December 1832.

Before leaving England they had enquired as to what would be the most useful articles to take to the new country, and were told a “flour mill”. Therefore a prefabricated mill occupied a large part of the hold of the ship, including the heavy mill stones. They also brought with them everything they could think of for setting up a home and farm, including a sundial, specially calibrated for Sydney.

After their arrival, their first venture was to set up a business making and selling a type of preserved meat for sea-farers. This business was soon purchased by a Mr **Bull**. The steam driven flour mill was eventually erected in Kent Street, Sydney and their home built nearby.

Out at Botany, where the suburb of Mascot is now, they set up what Henry referred to as his “model farm”, known as *Frogmore Lodge*. There are Hollinshed & Frogmore Streets and Lanes in Mascot approximately where the little farm was. A great deal of their time was spent at the farm, all their children being born there. They produced fruit and vegetables with the help of convict and indigenous workers.

In 1842, Henry tried his hand at politics. He became a member of the first Sydney Municipal Council, representing Cook Ward. The necessary qualification for a candidate for the election of Councillors was the possession of a £1,000 worth of property or that be rated upon an annual value of not less than £50. In his time on Council, Councillor Hollinshed favoured simplicity in Mayoral attire because he disliked the idea of blindly copying overseas tradition.



The sundial (photo: Helen Bain)

When the question of lighting Sydney's streets arose, the Australian Gaslight Company quoted a very high price. Henry proved that kerosene would be cheaper alternative. Consequently, AGC lowered their price and gas lighting was adopted.



The sundial, detail (photo: Helen Bain)

Henry only served one term as a Councillor, owing to the rule that the member with the lowest number of votes in each Ward had to retire and another one be elected. His political outlook was perhaps too radical for the times, so he did not prosper in that direction.

Continuing his public service, Henry was also on the Committee of the Mechanics Institute and lectured there on electricity, astronomy and other subjects. It was at the Institute that the famous episode (in our family at least) took place, of the lighting of a gas light. His brother Allin stood on a glass legged stool whilst Henry passed an electric spark from a battery, through Allin and up to the “numerous burners suspended from the ceiling and highly creditable to the taste of Mr Hollinshed, who fitted them”. In 1840 Henry was on the board of the Old Botany Road Trust and in 1844 on the committee of the Australian Floral and Horticultural Society.

In 1855 he leased the flour mill and spent most of his time at the farm thereafter.

The Hollinsheds had four daughters, Elizabeth Frances, Marian, Lucy Ann, Ada Annette and a son who died in infancy. The only one to marry and have children was Marian, my two times great grandmother.

Henry, a man of many parts, died from lupus cancer on 10 October 1866 at *Frogmore Lodge*. His widow lived in Forbes Street, Sydney until her death on 27 March 1877. Both are buried in Camperdown Cemetery

REFERENCES

Research by my late mother Margaret Booth one time member of BBFHS

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

CH Bertie *The Early History of the Sydney Municipal Council*. Sydney: Websdale, Shoosmith (1911)

NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au>

Sydney Herald, 8 June 1841



BBFHS RESEARCH CENTRE AND LIBRARY

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

The Research Centre is still open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 2pm and the . Please ring if you decide to come in after midday (9523 8948). Monday is still the most popular day!

There are six paid subscription sites at the Research Centre, available to all members: *Ancestry*, *Find My Past*, *The Genealogist*, *British Newspaper Archives*, *Biographical Database of Australia* and *Internet History Resources* (NSW). We have bought some more subscription sites for our members to use for their research. Have a look at the shortcut icons on the home page, to see where these subscription sites are located:

- *John Grenham's "Irish Ancestors": There are Irish names, Irish Placenames and information on researching, in Ireland and Abroad.*
- *"Sydney Morning Herald 1955 – 1995":* Trove stops at the end of 1954, so this has **forty more years of newspaper articles.**
- Another newspaper which members might like to investigate is *"Papers Past"* from New Zealand, which is also on some of the computers. You can access *The Press*, from 1861 to 1971; *The Star*, 1868 to 1935; *The Sun* 1914 to 1920 and the *New Zealand Herald* from 1863 to 1945.



Members at the Research Centre, 'Zooming' the State Conference (photo: Noele Watkins)

We held a very successful event in our Research Centre for the State Conference in September. Up to 20 BBFHS 'Zoomers' met in the Research Centre over the three days of the Conference, being held in Wyong. Three of our BBFHS members gave talks: John **Hely**, Jeff **Madsen** and Joy **Murrin**, (as part of the NSW BDM Transcription Team.) There was some interesting and helpful

information presented by all the Speakers. We all went home with new ideas each day.

It was a great three days for all of the BBFHS members who could meet up in person and talk, share and discuss what was happening.



Members at Wyong – attending the Conference in person (photo: Heather Clarey)

Nothing has happened with the veranda door or the front door of the building. We have a key and are happy to use that to gain entrance to the building.

I'm still asking if any member would like to be a Centre Volunteer. Just one day a month, for four hours, would be so helpful. We have new members coming in and it's a pleasure to help others with their family history... especially if you have a brick wall with your own!! Please email botanybayfhs@yahoo.com.au if you would like to be on the duty roster.

NOTES AND NEWS

Griffith Genealogical & Historical Society will close at the end of this year after 42 years because of the lack of people to run the Society. They are donating their resources to the Griffith City Library and many photos to the Pioneer Park Museum. Volunteers will be available to help family researchers at the Griffith City Library. A number of other smaller societies have closed recently. It is a situation that Botany Bay needs to be aware of. Please encourage your younger family members to take an interest in their family history and to join Botany Bay FHS.

A TWIST IN THE TALE

by Colleen **Passfield** (Member)

As I was concentrating my research on my mother's line, I decided it was about time to include Molly, her stepmother and my dearly loved step-grandmother. My maternal grandmother, Mary Maud **Hanley**, nee **Connors**, had died a year before I was born and my grandfather, John Francis Hanley, known as Jack, had married Molly when I was four years old. She was always a constant in the lives of my siblings and I and happy to be known as our step-grandmother in deference to Mary Maud with whom she shared the name 'M.M. Hanley'.

I knew Molly's real name was Mary Magdalene and I thought her family name was **Richards** so finding details of her marriage to Jack Hanley on the NSW BDM index was easy and confirmed her family name as Richards. Likewise, finding her death entry in 1953 was simple. But, finding her birth registration as Mary Magdalene Richards drew a blank. So, creative thinking clicked in.

Molly had a sister Bertha who married Joe **Cashmere** in later life, lived in Sylvania and I had known her since Molly married into the Hanley family. I also remembered that Molly had a brother, Alf. So back to the birth index, entered Bertha's name and found her parents' names, Edwin W and Annie, and her birthplace, Eden. Alfred Richards' birth entry confirmed the parents' details and his birthplace was Bega. Back to the birth index again. I entered 'Family Name' and 'Parents Given Names' and Bingo! Three children were listed – Alfred Henry, Bertha A and QUETTA E ! WHAT! Back to the birth index, entered Richards – Quetta E – which confirmed the details. And, it was then that I remembered.

I was thirteen and it was just after the birth and baptism of my brother Michael. Molly and I were talking about it when we were doing some gardening and she told me the following story about her own baptism as told to her by her parents.

Edwin and Annie Richards had brought their new baby girl to the Catholic Church to be baptised. As they gathered around the baptismal font and the service began, the priest asked 'How do we name this child?' and Edwin answered 'Quetta Eden'. Shocked, the priest retorted 'A doomed ship and Paradise Lost! Indeed we won't! She'll be Mary Magdalene' and then continued with the baptismal rites.

Throughout her life, Molly was known officially as Mary Magdalene, signed official documents as such or with the initials M.M. She probably never knew that her parents had registered her as Quetta Eden before the baptism was conducted until much later. It was just by chance that she told me this story and I don't think anyone else in my family ever knew.

Why Quetta? *RMS Quetta* was a Royal Mail ship that travelled between Brisbane and the United Kingdom. It was specifically built for the Australian run, with refrigeration for the frozen meat trade and designed to carry saloon and steerage passengers. It was launched in 1881, had made 11 London-Brisbane round trips, and was on her twelfth return when disaster struck on 28 February 1890.

The ship was being piloted through the Torres Strait bound for Thursday Island, when it struck an uncharted rock in the middle of the channel and sank in five minutes with a loss of 134 lives, one of Queensland's worst maritime disasters. There was much publicity at the time and investigation later. The remains of the *Quetta* is now a protected historic shipwreck and relics from the ship are in the Quetta Memorial Church on Thursday Island which was consecrated in 1893.

Molly's birthday was 21 March, 1890, just weeks after the wreck, when newspapers were still reporting on the tragedy. Why Edwin and Annie decided on the name is still a mystery.

Some time ago, I told the story to Joy and Allan Murrin and, recently Joy asked me for permission to repeat it which she did at the State Conference in Wyong. I know Molly would have been as surprised and delighted as I was. Thank you, Joy.

REFERENCES

NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au>
Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org>
Trove, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>



COPY DEADLINE

Please submit copy for the March 2024 journal as soon as it is available but the deadline is **Wednesday 7 February** – preferably by email to the Editor at bbfhs_ed@yaho.com.au. Copy may also be left in the Editor's folder at the Centre, handed to the Editor or a committee member at a monthly meeting or posted to **PO Box 1006 Sutherland NSW 1499**. Please add your name to the copy and state if you want any materials returned.

PROBATE GRANTED 65 YEARS AFTER MY ANCESTOR'S DEATH – WHAT HAPPENED?

by Peter **Londregan** (Member)

I recently discovered that probate¹ for my great-great-grandmother, Mary Jane **Davies** (nee **Williams**), was granted by the NSW Supreme Court on 9 September 1952². I already had a copy of her NSW death certificate³ showing she died on 1 November 1887 at her property *Sungrove Farm* at Milton, near Ulladulla on the New South Wales south coast. I was intrigued by the near 65-year time gap between her death and the grant of probate. I had to find out more.

My great-great-grandparents Daniel and Mary Jane Davies emigrated from London to Sydney in 1849, with their seven children. They arrived on the *Kate*, which landed 337 assisted immigrants to start their new lives in the colony⁴. An eighth child, my great-grandfather Daniel Henry Davies, was baptised at Nowra All Saints on 7 October 1855. The baptismal record states that Daniel Henry was born on 21 November 1850, the family lived at Ulladulla and his father Daniel Davies was a farmer⁵. This was the first evidence of the family's movements after their arrival in 1849.



Milton Pioneers Memorial, Groobyar Road, Milton. Daniel Davies name is recorded here. Photo:Peter Londregan (2009)

A NSW Stamp Duties document⁶ I found in September 2023 shows that Daniel and Mary Jane selected a 16.6 hectare (41 acres) parcel of land at Milton on 16 December 1853 and title to the land was granted on 20 November 1856. The family called the property *Sungrove Farm*.

Three generations of the Davies family worked *Sungrove Farm* until 1952. The last family member to work the farm was Walter Everett Davies, a grandson of Daniel and Mary Jane. Walter was a prominent citizen in the Ulladulla district, serving as an alderman on Ulladulla Council from 1930 to 1948, including a term as mayor in 1939⁷. In 1952 Walter was about 72 years old, his wife had died about ten years earlier, they had no children, and it seems that no other family members wanted to take over the farm. It was time to sell. That was when Walter's legal problems started. He thought he had owned the farm for 30 years, having inherited it from his Aunt Margaret in 1922. But he was not the sole owner!

Daniel Davies died in 1883⁸, predeceasing his wife. His will⁹ stated that the farm was to be passed to his son Benjamin and his daughter Margaret as tenants in common, with the proviso that his wife Mary Jane Davies could live on the property until her death if Daniel died before her. Daniel's will strongly inferred that he believed he owned the farm in its entirety. Benjamin Davies died in 1916¹⁰, having never married and having no children. His will¹¹ passed his half share of *Sungrove Farm* to his sister Margaret. Margaret was now the sole owner of the farm (or so she thought). Margaret Davies died in 1922¹². She never married nor had children. Her will¹³ left the farm to her nephew Walter Everett Davies.

When Walter wanted to sell the farm in 1952 the lawyers discovered that his grandmother Mary Jane Davies had died intestate, not having left a will. Further, Daniel and Mary Jane had each owned one half of *Sungrove Farm*¹⁴. On Daniel's death in 1883, the shared ownership of the farm passed to his wife Mary Jane, who became the sole owner. The instructions in Daniel's will to pass the property to a son and a daughter were invalid.

Walter Everett Davies took on the onerous task of obtaining letters of administration for his grandmother's estate from the Supreme Court of NSW, about 65 years after her death. This would allow *Sungrove Farm* to be legally sold, and the proceeds distributed in accordance with the Court's instructions.

The legal process for obtaining the letters of administration involved finding all of Mary Jane Davies living relatives in 1952. By then her eight children had died and evidence of those deaths was needed. This was difficult. Two of her sons had died in the 1880s, both unmarried, and were hard to track down. Only two of the eight children, Ebenezer John Davies (Senior) and Daniel Henry Davies (my great-grandfather) had married and had children of their own. In 1952, Mary Jane had seven living grandchildren (including Walter) and two living widows of deceased grandsons. The task of finding some of those people in 1952 was difficult. Affidavits were obtained from the seven living grandchildren and the two widows as part of the legal process. Several of them lived interstate. The NSW Supreme Court granted probate¹⁵ for Mary Jane Davies' estate to Walter Everett Davies on 9 September 1952.

The Supreme Court also instructed that Mary Jane's estate be divided among the surviving relatives with Walter Everett Davies to receive 40/75ths of the estate, his three siblings to receive 5/75ths each and his five cousins or widows of cousins to receive 4/75ths each. The estate was valued in 1952¹⁶ at £1840, so 1/75th was equal to about £24. I am yet to find out how much the property sold for, but after legal fees and stamp duty each beneficiary would probably have received a modest payment. Although Walter inherited over half of the property, I think he could have felt poorly treated by this outcome, as he and his wife had worked the farm for many years. The legal problems he encountered were essentially not his fault.

Walter died on 8 May 1955¹⁷, aged 76, and was living in GyMEA Bay. He has a memorial plaque at Woronora Memorial Gardens.

Sungrove Farm is still there at Milton, although it has been subdivided since 1952. A 12.5 hectare portion (about 75%) of it was for sale in 2019 for \$2.5m, based on advertisements at the time.



One of the houses on the now subdivided *Sungrove Farm*. Photo: Peter Londregan (2011)

REFERENCES

- 1 Probate is a court order made by the NSW Supreme Court that confirms a will is valid and authorises the executor of the will to distribute the estate's assets in accordance with the will. If a person dies without a will the NSW Supreme Court can appoint an administrator who acts as executor of the estate, with the Court deciding how the assets are to be distributed using certain rules.
- 2 Probate Packet MHNSW-StAC: NRS-13660-32-10707-Series 4_394235
- 3 NSW Death Certificate 12674/1887
- 4 Assisted Immigrants Shipping List MHNSW-StAC: NRS-5316/4_4786/Kate_23 Sep 1894. The surname Davies is misspelt as Davis.

- 5 All Saints Nowra baptisms 1855 page 2
- 6 This document is in the probate packet for Mary Jane Davies.
- 7 *Meet the Pioneers: Early Families of the Milton-Ulladulla District* by Mrs J Ewin, published 1991.
- 8 NSW Death Certificate 11566/1883
- 9 Probate Packet MHNSW-StAC: NRS-13660-3-[17/2035]-Series 3_9104
- 10 NSW Death Certificate 11606/1916
- 11 Probate Packet MHNSW-StAC: NRS-13660-7-303-Series 4_75588
- 12 NSW Death Certificate 12999/1922
- 13 Probate Packet MHNSW-StAC: NRS-13660-9-328-Series 4_113784
- 14 Letter from Mr P T McAuliffe, solicitor, Milton, NSW to the Registrar of Probates, Probate Office, Sydney dated 8 July 1952. This letter is in Mary Jane Davies' probate packet.
- 15 Probate Packet MHNSW-StAC: NRS-13660-32-10707-Series 4_394235
- 16 Valuation Report by Mr A M Shepherd dated 22 March 1952. This is in Mary Jane Davies probate packet.
- 17 NSW Death Certificate 9860/1955



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This article lists the new Library accessions. We remind members that there is a wealth of family history information accumulated over some 39 years in our Library. **Not everything is online!** Check out our library catalogue at <http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/library--research-centre.html>. You may be very surprised at what you find! **Come to the Research Centre and have a look.** Thank you for the donations from those members who are ‘downsizing’.

NEW SOUTH WALES

- Gladesville Hospital Cemetery – The Forgotten Cemetery – The Forgotten People (Revised & Updated Edition). [AN.SOU.5.2111.2]
- Advice to a Young Lady in the Colonies. [AN.HIS.26.5LC]
- Murrumbidgee Irrigation Sketchbook. [AN.HIS.41.10LC]
- A Pictorial History of Sutherland Shire. [AN.LH.2232.20LC]
- Notes and Sketches of New South Wales During a Residence in that Colony from 1839 to 1844 (by Mrs. Charles Meredith). [AN.HIS.1.30LC]
- St. Patrick’s Cemetery, Parramatta - Cradle of Faith – Grave of the Faithful. [AN.SOU.5.2150.7]
- A Place Called Tahlee – A Short Historical Narrative Covering the Fascinating History of Tahlee, Port Stephens Since 1826. [AN.LH.2324.1LC]
- The River – Sydney Cove to Parramatta. [AN.LH.2150.6LC]

OVERSEAS

- Familia – Ulster Genealogical Review, No 36, 2020. [I.HIS.1.17LC]
- Familia – Ulster Genealogical Review, Vol.2, No 3, 1987. [I.HIS. 1.13LC]
- Tracing Ancestors in Northamptonshire. [E.NTH.SOU.1.1LC]

GENERAL

- The Convict Settlers of Australia. [G.CONV.HIS.45LC]
- Guide to Convict Records in the Archives of N.S.W. No 14. [G.CONV.SOU.1 (second copy)]
- The Sirius – Past and Present. [G.IMM-SHP.AN.HIS.2.7LC]
- From Blue to Khaki – The Enlisted Voluntary AIDS and Others who became Members of the Australian Army Medical Women’s Service and Served from 1941-1951. [G.MIL.A.HIS.48LC]
- The Original Australians – Story of the Aboriginal People. [G.ABOR.17LC]

NOTE: ‘LC’ indicates a loan copy, which can be borrowed; ‘CD’ a compact disc.

Compiled by Janette Daly (Librarian)

AN ENGLISH MATRON AND HER AUSSIE POMS

by Karen **Bates** (Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group)

I came across an article about Matron Blanche **Lee** that prompted me to find out more about her life. Blanche Lee came out from London in 1889 as a 30-year-old single woman and commenced her career as a Matron in Goulburn. She was employed in many hospitals around NSW, Queensland and Victoria and her credentials were very highly praised with every job interview. Blanche became very well known as a Pomeranian breeder and judge of these dogs. She had at least 14 of her own, which travelled with her wherever she went. These dogs were the cause of Blanche being fired from one hospital. She commenced work at Hill End hospital in 1921 where she was commended for her work as a Matron and numerous charity acts. But one act toward her dogs may have been the cause of the decline in her health and the sad state she was found in towards the end of her life.



Hill End Hospital and Morgue is now a museum and art gallery. The Hospital has become the National Parks and Wildlife Service Visitors Centre, with a room displaying an original birthing table and other surgical artefacts.

On Christmas Eve 1889, 30-year-old Blanche Lee disembarked from the *RMS Orient*, setting her white leather shoes firmly onto the Sydney docks. For the next 46 years those shoes carried her to every state around Australia. Why an English-trained Matron would work in as many district hospitals as she had dogs remains a mystery. But one can't help humming along to Geoff **Mack's** Aussie classic, *I've been everywhere man*, when browsing the online National Archives of Australia in search of an answer.

*I've nursed everywhere man; I've nursed everywhere man
 Saved lives at every chance man, across the desert with these dogs, man,
 I've nursed everywhere.
 I've nursed Sydney, Goulburn, Wagga, Gympie, Wallsend, Coolgardie,
 Government House and Bendigo, Kilmore, Dunning, Zeehan, Bourke, Mount
 Morgan, Inverell, Queanbeyan and Narrandera, I've nursed everywhere man. I've
 nursed everywhere.
 I've nursed at Hastings, Temora, Vegetable Creek and Mudgee, Cootamundra,
 Merriwa, Dunolly and Mansfield, Daylesford, Peak Hill, Walhalla, Mount
 Wycheproof and Heathcote, Pambula, Tingha, Nyngan and Gundagai, Jetty
 Private, Balranald, Urana and Manilla, Walcha, Tumbarumba, Hill End and
 Goodooga. I've nursed everywhere man; I've nursed everywhere...*

Blanche took up her first assignment the day she moved into Sydney's Philpot Street Nurses' Home. Starting as Head Nurse of the Children's Hospital in 1890, it wasn't long before she began to advance her career. In fact, just about every job Blanche applied for, she got. Her testimonials were faultless, which made hospital committees overlook her transient history.

Picture this – Kilmore Hospital 1899 – committee hiring a Matron. Twenty applicants and the long process of elimination begins. Finally, it comes down to just two: Miss Lee and Miss **McLeod**. After much deliberation on whether there should be a toss-up to decide, the president stated, “This matter is too important to be decided by a toss-up! Miss Lee would make the better Matron even though she hasn't been able to show us any evidence of being certified.”



Blanche, however, was certified. She had trained for four years at the General Hospital in Nottingham England, was certified at St Saviour's Hospital in London and then spent 18 months as a Sister at the East Dulwich Infirmary. In May 1889 Blanche, appointed Sister of the Monsall Fever Hospital, decided (for reasons we can only speculate about) to board the *Orient* for Australia.

So on went the deliberations at Kilmore. Mr **McBurney** tried one last time to discredit Blanche, declaring, “She doesn't stay in one place very long”. Nevertheless, Mr **Watson** had the final say, “Her testimonials are outstanding!”

There was no doubt Matron Lee was a wanted woman. In the 1910 issue of *The Brisbane Courier*, May 12, page 3, in the MISSING HEIRS AND KINDREDS column, an advertisement posted by Sidney H **Preston** of 26 Chancery Lane

London revealed that name 51 on the list was Blanche Lee.

Who was this Matron who travelled Australia with the collection of Pomeranian dogs she called Leeholme Kennels? Not to be confused with Leeholme horse stud at Bathurst owned by the Lee family dynasty ... or was it? Whoever she was, she always seemed to make an impression on others. In taking up her new position at Temora Hospital, Matron Lee was seen driving her three beautiful show-winning horses and buggy into town, having come all the way from Port Macquarie.

As Matron of numerous hospitals, Blanche saw her fair share of coronial inquiries, wrongful dismissals and maybe some rightful ones. But whatever the issue, Matron Lee managed to get herself out of trouble. Like the time a passing bike spooked two of her horses as she rode her buggy down the Ginninderra Road near Queanbeyan. Off they bolted! The rattling sound of failing brakes increased the speed



of the horses. Once again her driving skills were noted. “Miss Lee is evidently possessed of splendid nerve,” stated the *Queanbeyan Leader*, “for she never once lost her presence of mind, sitting firmly behind the galloping pair, guiding them safely past all obstacles.” Down hills and over bridges at phenomenal speeds raced the horses. Past the notorious turn at Union Club Corner, up the hill toward the railway station, coming to a stop near the goods yard.

On many occasions Blanche wished she could apply the same level of control over her Pomeranians as with her horses. Not only did the temperamental show winners cost more to buy than her monthly wage of £4, they also cost the Matron her job, 1918 being a particularly bad year. The *Glen Innes Examiner* reported that a member of the Nyngan District Hospital Committee went to confirm complaints made about Matron Lee by a probationary nurse. These complaints included, “dogs being kept in the matron's room, the feeding of dogs from hospital crockery and then there was the issue of a corpse being left in the morgue undressed for a couple of days...” After examination, the member noted “the dogs were like bees and the undertaker simply did not know how he was going to put the corpse, whose arms laid straight and stiff, into a coffin.”

Blanche resigned, and it wasn't long before Tingha District Hospital and Gundagai Hospital experienced the English Matron and her Aussie Poms. It only took one day for the Gundagai Hospital Committee to receive a complaint. “There seems to be more dogs at the hospital than humans”, reported an unknown source. Two members of the committee investigated by visiting the Matron's room.

Blanche did what she could to keep her dogs quiet. Sure enough the committee found 14 little Pomeranians being treated like babies. The dogs were immediately removed, along with Blanche's furniture. When fumigating the room, a sentry on duty heard growls coming from the wardrobe. On opening the door three more pixie faces, who would not be silenced, came out yapping. Nobody puts Wee Laddie, Wee Lassie and Chocolate Cream in the closet! Matron Lee collected the little rebels and left.

In October 1922 Blanche Lee and her partners in crime arrived at Hill End near Bathurst. She was in her sixties, with failing health, when she commenced duties at the local hospital. Establishing Leeholme Kennels on an isolated property at Hill End, it wasn't long before the icy mountain winter took the life of a couple of her poms. Despite the extreme temperatures, Blanche was gripped with the charm of the former gold rush town and made it her home for the next ten years. A strong member of the community, she was noted for her caring nature as a nurse and charity fundraiser.

Sadly, tragedy of a sinister kind struck Blanche and her poms in 1924. Returning home from a holiday spent with Mrs **Smith-Marr** at Dee Why, Blanche discovered all of her Pomeranians had died. Poisoned. A cruel and fiendish act of placing powdered glass in their food was committed by person(s) unknown.

The *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative* described her great loss. "Matron Lee, of the Hill End Hospital [right], took a pride in her pets and spared no expense to make them happy and comfortable. Off duty; she devoted her time to them and found in her hobby relaxation and pleasure. Little pairs of sharp eyes were always on the lookout for her. Little ears were pricked when her footsteps approached and staccato barks expressed the doggies' delight when playtime arrived. They will play no more."

The Hospital Committee posted a reward and the local Sergeant hired a tracker to find the culprit, but it wasn't enough. The devastated Matron left Hill End to take up duties at Goodooga Hospital. It is not known when Blanche returned to Hill End, but return she did, to her secluded cottage on Hawkins Hill to rebuild her family of Poms.



In 1929 Blanche was hospitalised with acute hepatitis and heart failure. She bounced back and came out of retirement in 1930 for a short period following the death of the only doctor, her friend Dr Smith-Marr. When a new matron was appointed, Blanche returned to spending her days with her Poms.

Friends and neighbours must have been very few for Blanche in 1932 as she was discovered by the local doctor at home in an appalling state of health. Having suffered a paralytic stroke, Matron Lee lay helpless in bed surrounded by her furry friends. She was there long enough for the prize-winning poms to become mangy. Blanche's body was covered with eczema. Blanche was transported to Bathurst District Hospital by ambulance, then off to Lidcombe Asylum – where she died. Her little friends came under the radar of the council and 11 out of 15 were destroyed by the Mudgee Stock Inspector.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding Matron Lee's many departures, she always left hospitals and patients in a better condition than when she started. Testimonials are numerous:

- “The nursing staff, with Miss Lee as the Matron, is an efficient one.” – Government Hospital Coolgardie Western Australia.
- “Miss Lee would prove an efficient officer, as the testimonials which had been received with her application were in every way excellent.” – Wagga District Hospital.
- “The hospital in general under Matron Lee's care has never presented a cleaner and better appearance.” – Hill End Hospital.
- A letter from a patient's mother to Wallsend Hospital thanked Matron Lee for her unremitting attention to her child.
- “The **Gaynon** family of Hill End wished to especially mention Matron Lee in their time of bereavement.”

Blanche Lee died on 11 September 1935, aged 75. She was interred at Rookwood cemetery in an unmarked grave. Area Zone D, Section 14, GN: 1458.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you to author Karen **Bates** and convener Lorraine **Purcell** for permission to reprint this article which first appeared in the Hill End & Tambaroora Gathering Group Newsletter. They would be happy to hear from any BBFHS members who have a connection to Hill End. They have a small Family History Centre, staffed by volunteers on weekends who are happy to assist those with family from this area. Contact: www.heatgg.org.au

Thank you to Rhonda **McKinnon** who found the article while indexing the Vertical File at the Research Centre. It is one of thousands of interesting snippets, organised by post code. It's worth a look!



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BBFHS INTEREST GROUPS

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

What a great year 2023 has been for our Society's activities including Interest Group participation by members, either via Zoom or at the Research Centre. Although Covid has retreated it is wise to continue to heed the lessons learnt. The continuing use of Zoom also allows house bound members to remain an active part of their chosen Interest Groups.

For these revised presentation challenges, we are indebted to the behind scenes people who are VERY active in their area of Society communication. Through the eNews and the Society website, we are regularly informed of 'what's on, when and where'. It is up to us to respond. We thank the Committee for their encouragement of Interest Groups, especially Jennie Fairs who regularly hosts many ZOOM sessions and assists me.

To each of the Interest Group co-ordinators thank you for your efforts in 2023. The smaller Interest Group gatherings are a core part of the Society with the invitation to focus on a personal area of interest and learn from the experience of others. New participants are always welcome to bring their story to a Group.

Thank you to Elizabeth **Steinlein** for stepping into of Barbara **Wimble's** shoes to co-ordinate the Irish Group. Although feeling daunted at the beginning, Elizabeth elected to hold the Irish sessions by Zoom and brought her personal enthusiasm and knowledge for all things Irish. Elizabeth and the chatty members of this Group would love to have new people log in and enjoy the sessions.

The times they are a-changing! The rostered Saturday for the Scottish Interest Group has changed. Since its inception Jean **Campbell** has been gathering the clans on the first Saturday of its scheduled month. Internal matters arose needing this to be changed to the second Saturday which Jean graciously agreed to. Scottish Group's first 2024 meeting will be Saturday 10 February.

The Family Tree Maker Group co-ordinators, Pam **Heather** and Geoff **Dawes**, have also elected to hold Zoom sessions. Also, Pam and Geoff are offering to assist members with their FTM problem. Pam is happy to help outside of session times and Geoff will give individual help at either the Research Centre or by a home visit. If you would like this assistance please contact Pam.

I invite any members, especially new and distance members, to join one or more Interest Groups. Participation can open our minds to unexpected research directions. There is the community bonus of meeting fellow members, hearing their stories and brick wall problems and inviting them to hear yours. We all love stories! Coordinators will be pleased to add your name and email address to their

listing, to become part of their family. Please see the contact list below.

Interest groups are led by co-

ordinators who have a strong

interest in the subject but are not necessarily 'an expert'.

Sessions are conducted at the

Research Centre or by

Zoom. Session dates are

organised months in

advance. Members are

organised months in

details on our Events

Calendar at

www.botanybayfhs.org.au

or see your BBFHS

eNEWS. You can book and

pay the \$5 fee to attend an

interest group meeting on the

BBFHS website at

<http://www.botanybayfhs.org.au/payments.html>,

preferably 24 hours prior to the

meeting.



ordinators who have a strong

not necessarily 'an expert'.

Research Centre or by

organised months in

organised months in

advised to check the latest

Calendar at

or see your BBFHS

pay the \$5 fee to attend an

BBFHS website at

preferably 24 hours prior to the

meeting.

The group coordinators are:

Australian Interest – Lilian Magill (lily@researchbylily.com.au)

English Interest – Jennie Fairs (fairsj@gmail.com)

Irish Interest – Elizabeth Steinlein (care of botanybayfhs@yahoo.com.au)

Scottish Interest – Jean Campbell (jeanhcampbell47@gmail.com)

Writers Interest – Leonie Bell (LeonieNB65@gmail.com)

Family Tree Maker for Windows and Macs –

Pam Heather (pamheather@gmail.com)

Legacy – Sue Jones (scjones@optusnet.com.au)

DNA for Family History – John Levy (j.levy@bigpond.net.au)

UPCOMING PROGRAM

AUSTRALIAN INTEREST: Saturday 17 February 2 – 4pm

By ZOOM

ENGLISH INTEREST: Saturday 9 March 2 – 4pm

By ZOOM

IRISH INTEREST: Saturday 24 February 2 – 4pm

By ZOOM

SCOTTISH INTEREST: Saturday 2 December 2 – 4pm

At the Research Centre Saturday 10 February 2 – 4pm.

WRITERS INTEREST: Thursday 28 March 1.30 – 3.30pm

At the Research Centre

FAMILY TREE MAKER Tuesday 27 February 1.30 – 3.30pm
FOR WINDOWS & MACS: By ZOOM
LEGACY INTEREST: Tuesday 5 March 2 – 4pm
At the Research Centre
DNA FOR FAMILY HISTORY: Saturday 23 March 1.30 – 3.30pm
By ZOOM



*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year
in 2024
to All Our Readers*

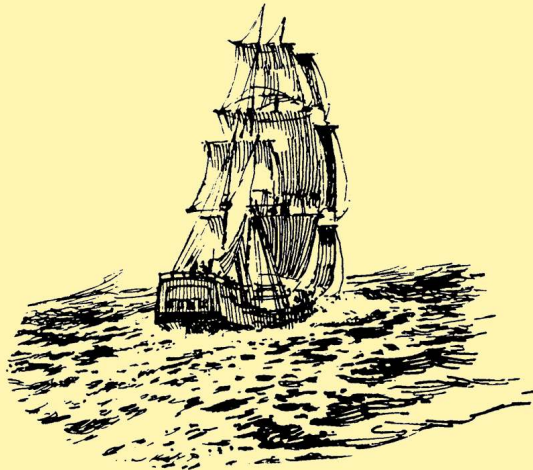
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Norfolk Island 1788-1844.....	\$11.50
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