

# Tasmanian Ancestry

TASMANIAN FAMILY HISTORY  
SOCIETY INC.



Volume 45 Number 2 — September 2024

TASMANIAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.  
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# Tasmanian Ancestry

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## From the Editor

As I've been working on this issue of *Tasmanian Ancestry*, it has struck me (not for the first time) how collaborative the pursuit of family history is. We may spend hours sitting alone on our computers, searching for an elusive record, or wandering the cemetery seeking out an ancestor's headstone, but much of the time we rely on the work of others.

The officers elected at the recent AGM allow the Society to function. Volunteers like the late Beryl Dix enable us to produce quality publications.

And there are the hordes of contributors – are you among them? – who correct text on Trove, or add headstones to FindAGrave or BillionGraves, or transcribe records on DigiVol (see 'Updating Tasmanian Birth, Death and Marriage Records' in this issue).

Then there are the researchers who publish their results, whether in books, journals, or blogs – or who take the time to correct errors in other people's research!

And finally there are those who contribute to groups on social media, guiding new researchers to finding family: thank you all!

Elizabeth Spiegel  
A/g Editor

## Journal Address

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Our preferred format for articles is Word documents, sent by email. However, content may be submitted in other formats – even handwritten. Please ensure images are of good quality.

### Deadline dates:

**1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October**

If you wish to contact the author of an article in *Tasmanian Ancestry* please email the editor, or write care of the editor, enclosing a stamped envelope and your correspondence will be forwarded.

The opinions expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the journal committee, nor of the Tasmanian Family History Society Inc. While we do not intentionally print inaccurate information, responsibility for fact checking rests with the author of a submitted article. The society cannot vouch for the accuracy of offers for services or goods that appear in the journal, or be responsible for the outcome of any contract entered into with an advertiser. The editor reserves the right to edit, abridge or reject material.

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### Cover:

Photograph of James Ah Catt, Courtesy of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Chin Kaw Collection, QVM:2016:P:0071. Read about him on p100 of this issue.

## President's Message

I am writing this message shortly after the 44th Annual Conference and AGM organised by the Launceston Branch. It was a welcome opportunity to meet with members from various branches. Many thanks to the members of the Launceston Branch who worked so hard to give us such a successful and enjoyable meeting.

The formal part of the meeting (the AGM) went quite smoothly – the papers (President's and Treasurer's reports) that were tabled are included in this issue of *Tasmanian Ancestry*. There was, however, one problem that arose (which I hope will have been resolved before this issue is circulated). There were no nominations for the position of Society Secretary; Eddy Steenbergen, who has been Secretary for the last five years, was not able to nominate (according to the Society Constitution). This is clearly quite a problem – the role of Society Secretary is crucial. Eddy agreed at the meeting to continue as Secretary until a replacement could be found and he also offered to work with a new Secretary to provide support and training. Looking back over the last ten years or so, it is noticeable that the Executive positions (and hence workload) have been filled by a relatively small number of people. I am hoping that in future years more people will be able to find time in their busy schedules to contribute to the Society in this way.

On a more cheerful note, at the AGM there was a small bonus presentation by the Society Web Manager, Andrew Cocker.

Andrew demonstrated some of the benefits of the Members Only website, in particular the methods it provides for searching for birth, death and marriage records that are held in the Tasmanian Names Index. One example of something that (I find) can slow searching in the Names Index is when looking for (say) a birth of a child with a fairly common surname when I know the name of one or other (or even both) parents; from the long list of possibilities each one needs to be looked at to see if it is the "right" parents. On the Members Only website it is possible to search for a birth by both the surname and other information (e.g. a parent's name) – much quicker. There are links from the Members Only site to the records in the Tasmanian Names Index.

Andrew also gave some background information about the source of the records in the Names Index and what progress is being made on their digitisation. He explained that there is a way in which anyone can contribute to the (considerable) task of transcribing records so that they can be made available (for example on the Tasmanian Names Index). The project is called *DigiVol* which is used by institutions around the world (including Libraries Tasmania) to enable volunteers to contribute to transcribing digitised records so that they can be made available. There are authorized people who validate the transcriptions.

Robyn Gibson  
President

# President's Annual Report 2023–24

This year has seen changes in the Executive Committee. Several of the office bearers were ineligible to stand for re-election at the 2023 AGM as they had served the maximum number of consecutive years allowed by our Constitution. At the end of the 2023 AGM we had new office bearers: myself (Robyn Gibson) as President and Louise Rainbow as Vice President; Greg Clota joined the Executive as Treasurer a little later. I would like to thank the previous office bearers, especially Maurice Appleyard who has served in various capacities for many years and Ross Warren who stayed on as Treasurer until Greg was available and worked with the Treasurer, the Membership Registrar and the Web Manager to streamline the membership processing systems. Thanks also to the Executive Secretary, Eddy Steenbergen, who has provided an invaluable source of continuity in the Executive.

There have also been some changes in the appointed positions.

There is now a position of Awards Manager to oversee the administration of the Society awards – this task was formerly included in the (many) tasks of the Secretary. Thanks to Louise Rainbow who has carried out this role.

The position of Society Sales Officer has been removed as there are now only a small number of Society publications, the sales of which can be handled in other ways.

Leonie Mickleborough, who has served for many years as the Coordinator of the Lilian Watson Family History Award, has

resigned from this position. We are very grateful for all the work she has done over this time and to Ros Escott who has offered to take on this role.

Beverley Richardson is resigning from her position as Convenor of the Publications Committee. This committee plays a vital role in ensuring that publications from branches are compliant with the *Style Manual* guidelines and of a quality of which we can be proud. Beverley, along with Beryl Dix (who died earlier this year) have been stalwarts of this committee for many years and have also judged the Best Journal Article Award; we are very grateful for all their work.

The number of members for this year was 893, which is a small decrease on the previous year, but there were just over 90 new members (more than the previous year). Unfortunately, we have needed to raise the price of subscriptions for the 2024–25 year. This was necessary to make sure that the essential costs could be covered – the largest of these is the production and postage of our journal, *Tasmanian Ancestry*.

All the branches of the Society have been active with a range of meetings, presentations, workshops, indexing, and related activities. There have been two branch publications:

- *Index to The Advocate, People, Places, Events and News Items of Interest to Family Researchers, 1/4/1960 to 30/6/1960*
- *A Cemetery That Was – Devonport Mersey Bluff Pioneer Cemetery Tasmania*. Revised edition.

Our Web Manager, Andrew Cocker has done a great deal of work to increase the resources available on the Society website. These include My Stories – a web resource where people (members or non-members) can post short stories about their ancestors. There are guidelines about writing stories and a straightforward interface to post stories.

The biggest innovation in the web presence of TFHS this year has been the introduction of a Members Only website. This has two great benefits – it is now possible to join the Society or renew membership online and members can be given access to resources that would not be appropriate to make available in a public website. Currently these resources include a searchable version of TAMIOT, a searchable version of the Consolidated Subject Index (CSI) (a database of references to people, places, objects, and events which gives sources where

information about the item can be found), and an alternative (and somewhat more powerful) way of searching (many of) the records found in the Tasmanian Names Index.

It is planned that the range of resources available in the Members Only website will be increased over the next year and hoped that this will encourage more people to join the Society, especially people from outside Tasmania. Many thanks to Andrew for this work.

I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee (office bearers and branch delegates) who have made my first year as President go smoothly, and to all the volunteers who work in various ways in their branches to achieve the aims of the Tasmanian Family History Society Inc.

Robyn Gibson  
**President**

# Financial Statements

## Year Ended 31 March 2024

### 2024 Independent Auditors Report to the Members of Tasmanian Family History Society Inc

I have audited the accompanying accounts for Tasmanian Family History Society Incorporated for the year ended 31 March 2024 in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

Included in income were amounts received from memberships, collections, sales, fund-raising and sundry income. Examination of these income items was limited to a review of cash transactions and amounts received as recorded by the books and receipting records of the Society.

Subject to the effect of the above statement on the accompanying accounts I am of the opinion that:

- a) The Society has kept proper accounting records and other books during the period covered by the accounts.
- b) The accompanying accounts are properly drawn up and in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (1964) so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the results for the period ended on that date according to the information given to me, the books of the Society and the explanations given.
- c) The accounts are properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the Society's financial position according to the information at my disposal and the explanations given to me.
- d) The rules relating to the administration of the Society's funds have been observed.
- e) I have obtained all the information required.

Devonport

3 May 2024



**NEIL WILKINSON**  
Registered Company Auditor



Tasmanian Family History Society Inc.  
ABN 87 627 274 157

Statement of Financial Performance  
for the year ended 31 March 2024

	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023
<b>INCOME</b>		
Donations	315	755
Collection Branch Membership	10,815	8,845
Collection Branch Donation	453	465
Transfer Huon Branch closure	--	3,953
Journal - Advertising/ Sales	160	200
Journal - Subscriptions	1,235	1,305
Membership Subs - Interstate	12,475	17,295
Membership Subs - Branch	4,140	3,880
State Sales - Books, CD's, Fiche	61	120
State Sales - TAMIOT Sales	99	80
AGM Registrations	1,760	498
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>31,513</b>	<b>37,376</b>
<b>LESS EXPENSES INCURRED</b>		
AGM Expenses	2,102	753
Audit Fees	165	165
Bank Charges	270	282
Executive Travel	82	91
Insurance	4,651	6,020
Journal Postage/ Printing	13,997	14,489
Lilian Watson & Other Awards	200	200
Computer Costs	30	--
Postage, PO Box, Phone, Internet	1,500	140
Printing and Stationery	155	29
Room Hire/ Meetings	159	106
Subscriptions (AFFHO & FFHS)	215	100
Tfer Collection Branch Membership	4,993	8,977
Tfer Collection Branch Donations	1,035	1,142
<b>NET SURPLUS</b>	<b>1,959</b>	<b>4,882</b>

## Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023
<b>CAPITAL</b>		
Opening Balance	23,825	18,943
Surplus for Year	1,959	4,882
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,784</b>	<b>23,825</b>
<b>THESE FUNDS ARE REPRESENTED BY:-</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Bank - Westpac	20,784	23,825
Cash at Bank - Westpac Deposit	5,000	--
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>25,784</b>	<b>23,825</b>
<b>WORKING CAPITAL</b>	<b>25,784</b>	<b>23,825</b>
<b>TOTAL WORKING &amp; FIXED CAPITAL</b>	<b>25,784</b>	<b>23,825</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>25,784</b>	<b>23,825</b>

### State Executive 2024

President	Robyn Gibson	PO Box 12	Perth	7300
Vice-President	Louise Rainbow	5 Kalang Ave,	Lenah Valley	7008
Secretary	Eddy Steenbergen	PO Box 245	North Hobart	7000
Treasurer	(A/g until 10 September 2023)			
	Ross Warren	12 Greenway Ave	Devonport	7310
	(Appointed 10 September 2023)			
	Greg Clota	74 Summerleas Rd	Fern Tree	7054
Public Officer	Eddy Steenbergen	PO Box 245	North Hobart	7000

# Branch Reports

## Burnie

<https://tasfhs.org/burnie.php>

**President: Peter Cocker 0427 354 103**

**Secretary: Sue Hutton**

**Burnie Tasmania 7320**

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Our guest speaker for the April meeting was Brian Rollins. His talk was a fascinating story about the burial sites and cemeteries that he has researched on Table Cape and surrounding areas. After half an hour or so, it was obvious that Brian had too much interesting material to cover in one night. It was decided that he return and present the second half of his talk at our next meeting. This enabled members to ask questions and for Brian to cover the topic more fully. The members looked forward to hearing the balance of the story at the end of May. Our AGM was also conducted on this day as well as a Mothers Day Raffle.

At the May meeting, Brian continued his talk on the burial sites of Table Cape. As a surveyor, he showed how was able to pinpoint various locations on a present-day map using old photographs that depicted current features.

At our June meeting members were invited to bring along a valuable, unusual or interesting item that they were given or that they found that belonged to one of their ancestors. They then gave a short talk about the item.

Also at the meeting we were shown a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Burnie Branch. This was followed by a quick run through on what you get with a digital subscription to one of our local newspapers: much more than just the paper.

Since we moved back from Spring Street to Cooe, we access the internet via mobile data using a Nighthawk M1 Modem/router. Over the last 12 months we have seen data download speeds drop to as low as 1.5 mbps. However there has been a recent upgrade of fibre optic cabling throughout the western side of Burnie which has increased the download speed to more than 20+ mbps at times.

Peter Cocker  
Branch President

## Hobart

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The need for succession planning is foremost in Hobart Branch's thinking – ditto around the state. None of our volunteers are getting any younger and two key people have plans to go on prolonged holidays next year. This applies not just to the projects, but to the day-to-day tasks that are required to keep the Branch functioning

and to support the Society. We are appealing for volunteers – so far with only small success.

We have again joined the ‘Bellerive Hub’ Open Day for Seniors’ Week in October, as well as the DNA Interest Group hosting a ‘Back to Basics’ Meeting. These events will be promoted through the widely distributed COTA program booklet.

The DNA Interest Group is flourishing this year with new members arriving every month. This creates the challenge of having a mix of people at different stages of expertise, but we are hoping to keep them engaged by including something for everyone in our presentations. In April Richie Woolley told us about ‘Looking for Needles: using DNA when documentary sources are silent’, another of his fascinating talks on digging deep using small matches. In May, Ros Escott explained/demonstrated the new ‘What Are The Odds Plus’ (WATO Plus) tool on DNA Painter, how it is so much easier to use and interpret and why you might use it. Then in May, guest speaker David Boon shared his insights into using DNA to uncover some family secrets. This included the family story suggesting his great grandfather was a bigamist, and the story of James Mundy who disappeared from Tasmanian records in the 1850s only to re-emerge through DNA matches to his descendants with a new name, and on the other side of the world.

At the Branch AGM in April the Executive Committee all stood for re-election unopposed and most, but not all, of the committee stood again. Malcom Ward told us about the challenges he faced in unravelling his Ward family history,

and some of the solutions he employed. Malcolm grew up in Bellerive, where his mother worked at the Bellerive Post Office where the Branch is now is located.

At our May meeting, Maree Ring told us about her research into the diaries of Tasmanian soldiers at Gallipoli, what they ate, how they adapted their food to make it more enjoyable (or swapped rations with the Turks!) and some background to their diet.

In June, Richie Woolley talked about his explorations in the Recherche Bay area where he found, researched and documented some of the many relics associated with the rich history of human activity from the French explorers, to whalers, coal mines and sawmills. Christine Spry’s summaries of these two talks are elsewhere in this publication.

## Launceston

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**Secretary: Fran Keegan**

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The Society AGM was held on 15 June at the Windsor Centre in Riverside. The venue turned out to be everything we hoped for and numbers attending were around 55 people. The weather was cool but the heating at the venue and the scones and a cup of coffee on arrival warmed people up. The first speaker, Graeme Williams, had everyone well entertained using his Spurling postcard collection to take a virtual tour of Tasmania in the 1920s. He

included members of the audience in his commentary which had the audience well engaged.

John Dent and Jai Patterson told us about the 1827, 1828 and 1832 court records that the Launceston Branch have transcribed; they will soon be publishing an index listing the people involved. They gave some stories from the records showing how they could be used to find information not otherwise available and Jai gave some stories of the women who appeared in the records and some of the words they actually used in 1832. They also gave a list of other court records of Launceston that are held in repositories all around Australia and emphasized the colour and detail that court records can provide if your ancestor was lucky enough to be caught.

Sophie Appleby told the story of her ancestor, Harlequin Bob – Robert Cowburn – who kept escaping death, including escaping from Macquarie Harbour with the “Pieman” and surviving. He had a very colourful and long life; the depth of Sophie’s research was excellent and her delivery very entertaining. The day finished with the Society AGM and a pleasant meal at the Riverside Hotel for 25 people. Book from Mersey and Launceston Branches were available for sale on the day as well.

The catering was delicious and more than ample, and we thank Sue from The Oak Tree Café (opposite our library) in Tamar Street for providing the fare and our member Mary Landers for coordinating the catering team. We also thank those

members and volunteers who helped on the day with catering and book sales and just helping to set up and pack up. A big thank you to Fran Keegan for handling the registrations and the front desk on the day, a job well done. Thanks to those members from other branches who came along and made the day an enjoyable experience. We followed up on the Sunday with a walking tour from our library along Cameron Street, looking at the historic buildings and hearing about some that no longer exist. We started, after a cuppa at the library, in sunny weather, but unfortunately the cold wind funnelling along the street made us move more quickly towards the end.

We are continuing to answer research requests and to help people who come into our library on Tuesdays looking for their family roots. Our membership numbers are on par with last year, with the number of new members off-setting those who have decided to have a break or are just a bit late renewing their membership.

We recognise that it is not convenient for everyone to visit our library on Tuesdays so for Family History month in August we opened on a Saturday to enable members and visitors to view our resources. While there is no seminar planned for September, the DNA Discussion Circle, and anyone else interested, will meet on the 26th in a new venue at the UTAS Inveresk Library. Ros Escott, well known DNA expert from Hobart, will be guest speaker. Details are in the newsletter and on the website <https://www.launceston.tasfhs.org/>

## Mersey

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**Secretary: Gaylene Hays 0408 059 990**

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Members of the committee were so pleased to attend the AGM hosted by Launceston Branch at the end of June.

Launceston Branch is to be congratulated for presenting a great day in a comfortable venue, yummy food and very entertaining and interesting speakers.

One of these speakers, Graeme Williams, took us on a trip around Tasmania by postcards. This has inspired Mersey Branch – for Family History month in August – to have a display in Devonport Library as well in the front windows of our building in Latrobe: thanks Graeme.

Mersey branch has been the lucky recipient of four batches of books, easily numbering 60. They cover subjects ranging from the local area to the East Coast to English records. Included are family and historical records as well as a BDM index. Our librarian Rosie will accession the books as soon as possible.

Books that we already have in our library will be offered for sale.

Our newly formed writers' group, run by Dane McCormack, is so interesting and enjoyable. First prompt from Dane was to write about the particular place where a relative worked and why. In my case this led me to revisit family I hadn't looked at for a long time. Our group meets on the first Saturday of the month: for enquiries contact Branch Secretary Gay (details above).

Our latest publication – *FE Watts & Son Pty Ltd Funeral Directors of Latrobe Index 1924 – 1980* – is selling well. Copies of the original 8,000 entries of order, death, burial and charge are held at the Mersey branch and available to photocopy for a small fee. The publication costs \$30 plus postage and handling. Contact Branch Secretary Gay or order online at [mersey.tasfhs.org](http://mersey.tasfhs.org)

Mersey Branch are continuing to index births deaths and marriages from the East Coast donation. More information will be available as indexes are completed.

Even though it's been a cold, cold winter, our enthusiastic members have continued to visit our lovely warm branch.

Mersey Branch, situated in the old police residence at the back of the State Library, Gilbert Street, Latrobe, is open Wednesdays and Fridays 10am to 3pm.

# Notes from Branch Meetings

## **From Home to Gallipoli: what our WW1 soldiers ate**

Presented to Hobart Branch, 21 May 2024, by Maree Ring

Ernest HAWKE, NZEF,<sup>1</sup> killed at Gallipoli in May 1915, was Maree's grandfather. Tasmanian-born Ernest was a diligent writer, and his diary and letters include many references to food, a matter always of interest to armies.

Ernest travelled in the convoy of ships carrying NZ troops to Europe that stopped briefly at Hobart on 21 October 1914. Support from the citizenry included giving fresh fruit to the departing ships. Ernest's diary records the antics at sea that some men got up to in stealing food, no doubt prompted by boredom rather than hunger. Messing arrangements, and the standard and choice of food – both in the training camps and on the ships – favoured the officers. In the field, such consideration was extended to only the very highest ranking officers.

During training in Egypt, before heading for Gallipoli, there was a good trade with the locals for dates, figs and oranges, a welcome change from the bully beef and dried biscuits that were part of army diet.

At Gallipoli, providing food for troops presented many challenges. Field kitchens needed fuel. Tinned and dried food had to be rehydrated and cooked, which was difficult for troops on the ground and in trenches. Surviving menus describe meals for one week, and reflected the intention rather than reality.

Corned meat, bacon and cheese were standard fare, and difficult to carry and prepare. As the Gallipoli campaign continued into summer, the heat and the flies made it hard to handle food. The rising death toll meant that the flies were an added health and sanitation problem, increasing the risk to food processing and consumption.

Water was always a concern, and the condensation plant that was set up, became a popular target for the enemy; damage reduced the production capacity. Conditions were perfect for the spread of gastro-intestinal disease.

As often happens in fields of battle, the troops at Gallipoli traded directly from the trenches with Turkish soldiers for the figs, dates and oranges they had come to enjoy in Egypt.

The retreat from the failed Gallipoli campaign was completed in December 1915, and Christmas dinner in Cairo celebrated the fine menu as much as the end of a bloody episode in the history of the war.

In popular culture, the dried biscuits lived vividly in the memory of veterans. A surprise visitor on the occasion of Maree's presentation was Sarah Adams from the Army Museum Tasmania, who brought along an original dried biscuit, with distinctive pin-prick design. As it was a cold, wet night, Sarah's generosity in venturing out to share this unique artefact was much appreciated.

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Expeditionary Force

## **Some Recherche Bay archaeology and its historical context**

Presented to Hobart Branch, June 2024, by  
Richie Woolley

Richie's family has a long-standing connection to the Recherche Bay area, which was a popular spot for holidays in the 1950s. He has spent more than a decade investigating sites related to European settlement in the area, travelling on foot, and by kayak in the less accessible places. His careful research using land title records, survey maps, newspaper articles and the detective's eye, has revealed much about the people and industries that existed in this isolated part of Tasmania.

Recherche Bay was named by French explorers, led by Bruni D'Entrecasteaux, who visited the area in 1792–93. A garden planted there during their stay was the cause of much attention in the early 2000s when it was thought to have been relocated. More recent work, including a major scientific study, has determined that a linear stone feature found at Coal Pit Bight may be the floorplan for a cottage which, ultimately, was not constructed. The site was included in a parcel of Crown Land selected in the early 1890s, but soon abandoned, by a local mill-worker, August ODIN, who may have been responsible for positioning the stones.

A stone wall at what is now known as Bennetts Point was also discussed. This was once suggested to be linked to the French expedition, which used the site as an observatory. However, much has happened in the location since then, including timber-cutting, shipbuilding and agricultural pursuits, and the wall is most likely to have been associated with the RYAN family, who lived at the point in the period from 1899 to 1925.

Other activities in the Coal Pit Bight area include coal mining during the 1840s, with a shaft and several stone features from this period still visible. The Crescent sawmill was also in operation here in the early years of the twentieth century, with some machinery, a significant tramway cutting and the collapsed chimney of the manager's house surviving.

Richie also highlighted Fishers Point, which was the site of a pilot station established in 1836 to aid navigation in D'Entrecasteaux Channel. The original wooden station was replaced by a brick building, much of which still stands, in the early 1840s. The station was closed in 1852, but reopened as a hotel, run by William CARVER and his son-in-law Richard WOOLLEY (no relation), shortly afterwards. The hotel soon closed, but the structure was leased in the mid-1860s by William FISHER, a former whaler. Fisher, who was renowned for the cabbages he grew, moved his family to a new six-roomed house at Pancake Bay in the early 1880s. Although this dwelling was occupied for more than 25 years, its site had been lost until Richie found it several years ago. Three collapsed chimneys are still visible, together with many discarded household items.

The talk finished with a brief look at the Leprena Sawmill, which operated from 1885 until 1938. Many artefacts from the sawmill and the associated settlement have survived, including no less than eight boilers, the mill's concrete fixtures, the foundations of the manager's house, many wharf timbers, and the remains of a bakery. Unfortunately, the later structure has suffered significant damage recently, with someone deciding it was a fine source of free bricks.



# Society Awards for Family History Writing

Dr Alison Alexander  
(Patron)

**A**t the 2024 Annual General Meeting of our Society in Launceston, the winners of the three Society awards for Family History writing were announced.

The first award to be presented was the **Lilian Watson Family History Award**.

Three books were entered this year and it was the most difficult choice in my years of judging, as all three were excellent. Here are the notes I wrote before I knew who the winner was to be:

*The Peacock Family* by Amanda J. Harper is a fascinating book about this family in Tasmania, with many different tales of people's lives. People dying in accidents, dying of disease. Different careers: the bushman, the surveyor, the yachtsman, the sportsman, the Japanese wife, war service, education, the dog family ... My favourite was Zillah Peacock, known as Boatie, born in 1883. She lived at Sorell, and was employed by a farmer to row daily the 2.5 km to Woody Island off Midway Point to milk his goats. There are great illustrations including some truly amazing hats, beards and dresses. People relax on the beach, lying on the sand in three-piece suits and ties. The book is well-written and well-presented with relevant letters reproduced.

*Who gives a Figg: Snowy & Chris Figg* by Steven Figg is a very affectionate picture of the author's grandparents, their forbears and descendants. 'Growing up next door

to one's grandparents is both a life-affirming and life-changing experience for any child. Grandparents are uniquely positioned to be the calm in life's inevitable storms for they are the most patient of teachers who always seem to have ample time to listen.' Steven Figg was fortunate to have such grandparents, and their lives around Parattah and Tunnack are told with loving detail. The details of people's lives are fascinating, though – a very minor point, but one that interested me – I don't think a sportsman's future successful career is really foreshadowed by coming second in the Under 10 race at the Colebrook Sports in 1912! There are great illustrations and excellent background information.

*Who gives a Figg: William Figg* by Steven Figg is the story of Steven's convict forebear, transported for rioting and theft. Arriving in 1823, he married and had a family, but was too much given to drink. He left his wife to go to the mainland, but she survived and their children did well. There are many fascinating details here, and Steven is not afraid to admit to imperfections in his ancestors – sometimes hard for people. This book is beautifully written and presented with excellent illustrations.

Could you pick the winner from these enthusiastic appreciations? Marks the three judges gave the books in various categories were added up and the winner is: *Who gives a Figg: Snowy & Chris Figg* by Steven Figg. I'd say the well-deserved

winner, but any of these three books would be well-deserved.

The next award announced was the **Best Journal Article Award** for volume 44 of *Tasmanian Ancestry*.

This award was judged by Beryl Dix and Bev Richardson. There was a wide variety of articles on interesting topics in Volume 44; for instance, 'Wilkinson's Chemists and Druggists' by Amanda Johnson, 'Rev Jehiel Shippird' by Maree Da Costa, 'Burnt to Death' by Don Bradmore and 'John Hart, convicted Swing Rioter' by Julie Fitzpatrick. Also of interest were the articles written to help members with their research especially the humorous and informative article by Bill McGowen on Launceston Catholic Baptism records.

'Origins of *Tasmanian Ancestry*' by Leonie Mickleborough, published in Vol 44 No 3 was the winning article.

Leonie Mickleborough's short and comprehensive article contains a wealth of important information about the people who were involved in the development of the Tasmanian Family History Society Inc. and its journal, *Tasmanian Ancestry*. It is a personal and well written account of the early difficulties and the subsequent changes. Leonie must have undertaken a lot of research, not to mention having a prodigious memory, to produce such a valuable historical article

The final award announced was the **Patron's Award**.

This award is offered each calendar year for the best article published in *Tasmanian*

*Ancestry* and written by anyone who is or has been enrolled in the University of Tasmania Family History Diploma course.

Nine authors entered articles in Tasmanian Ancestry for the Patron's Award:

- Leon Chick, 'Allan Clifford Chick – Survivor'
- Raine Brand, 'Debauched or moral grannies'
- Julie Fitzpatrick, 'The path to servitude'
- Raine Brand, 'The power of Charlotte'
- Julie Pfaeffli-Hornibrook, 'Bernard Walford'
- Wendy Williams, 'Margaret Buchanan'
- Margaret Williams, 'William Baker'

It was extremely hard to rank them in preferred order. We were asked if articles were interesting. Yes, they all were! Stories include discussion of women's place in history, the history of a delightful family heirloom, the life of a war hero, a very interesting Jewish convict, and more. Were they well written? They were all either well or very well written. Were they thoroughly researched? Yes, the research seemed excellent and very thorough. Were they properly referenced? Yes!

As with the **Lilian Watson Award**, I would have been happy if almost any of these articles had won. The final tough judgement went to: 'Allan Clifford Chick – Survivor' by Leon Chick, published in the March 2023 issue of *Tasmanian Ancestry*, a well-deserved win.

# Vale Beryl Dix

## 3 March 1932 to 11 April 2024

Beverley Richardson (Member 3640)

**B**eryl joined the Hobart Branch of the Tasmanian Family History Society on 24 July 2004 and renewed her membership shortly before her death.

Her typing, shorthand, excellent writing skills and her previous work as a private secretary quickly made her an invaluable member of the Society.

She was an active member of the Writers Group run by Diane Snowden. Her first contribution was in *Our Female Ancestors Discovered and Remembered* which was published in 2007.

In 2008 she became an important member of the Society's Publications Committee. This involved keeping up to date with the *Style Manual* and writing publication guidelines to be approved by the Executive. All official TFHS publications, except *Tasmanian Ancestry*, are forwarded to the Publications Committee for approval prior to their publication.

During the 16 years when Beryl was a valued member of the committee, 218 publications were approved. In later years the work also included websites.

Beryl was also involved in the yearly prize for the Best Journal Award and the Patron's Award.

Beryl quietly went about whatever task she was given, always tactful about other people's efforts. She was confident, reliable, loyal and sensitive. Whatever she



did well with integrity and goodwill, even the most difficult tasks.

Because she was so unassuming many did not know the extent of her work for the Society. She will be missed.

For more information about her very interesting life see the eulogy written by her granddaughter, Camille Barton. It is on the TFHS Inc. website under Resources – My Stories.

# Abraham Wren, of Cumberland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales: a Correction

Graham Webster (Member 8183)

In the March 2024 issue of *Tasmanian Ancestry*, a story of Abraham WREN was published.<sup>1</sup> I had identified him as my grandson's fifth great grandfather on his mother's side. Whoops, I had it all wrong! This article is by way of a correction, an apology to those who had assigned persons described to their family trees, and a *mea culpa*. I outline how the error occurred and what, I now believe, is the family connection.

I knew that an Abraham Wren was 72 years old when he died in New South Wales in 1888. This date would have given Abraham's birth circa 1817. Many sources and researchers identified that on 12 July 1817 at Loweswater, Cumberland a boy of this name was baptised; parents were Isaac and Mary (nee TICKELL – widow SCOTT). Gilbrow, Cumberland, was often cited as his place of birth and indeed the Abraham that died in 1888 had on his death certificate a place that looked

like this place. Based on this detail I constructed a detailed story<sup>2</sup> around Isaac's family and associated Wrens in the Keswick, Cumberland area. There were a great many Wrens and as primary sources were few, untangling families was confusing.

The story was also published by the Cumbria Family History Society<sup>3</sup> and Genealogy South Australia<sup>4</sup>. However, it was as a result of the former that I was contacted by a reader of the article who was a direct ancestor of Mary Scott, the supposed mother of Abraham. She agreed with the baptism date but then highlighted the following:

At Longclose, Underskiddaw, on the 31st ultimo, Abraham, son of Mr. Isaac Wren, aged 9 years.<sup>5</sup>

This, of course, completely upended my research. Sure enough, the records show that this Abraham died on 31 July and was

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<sup>1</sup> Webster, Graham (2024a), Abraham Wren of Cumberland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales. Part One, *Tasmanian Ancestry*, March 2024, vol 44, no 4, pp202-207

<sup>2</sup> Webster, Graham (2024b), Abraham Wren of Cumberland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales. Part Two, *Tasmanian Ancestry*, June 2024, vol 45, no 1, pp10-23

<sup>3</sup> Webster, Graham (2023), Abraham Wren. Part One. His early life in Cumberland and

Madeira, *Newsletter of the Cumbria Family History Society*, December 2023, no 189, pp26-34; Webster, Graham (2024c), Abraham Wren. Part Two. His life in Australia, *Newsletter of the Cumbria Family History Society*, March 2024, no 190, pp19-25

<sup>4</sup> Webster, Graham (2024d), Abraham Wren of Cumberland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales, *The South Australian Genealogist*, February 2024, vol 51, no1, pp40-45

<sup>5</sup> *Carlisle Patriot*, 5 August 1826, p3

buried at Crosthwaite, Keswick, Cumberland, on 2 August 1817. So was there a record of another Abraham Wren in the 1816–17 period in Cumberland? Revisiting the previously mentioned death certificate shows that rather than ‘Gilbrow’ it was ‘Gilcrux’, also in Cumberland. Using this quickly identified an Abraham baptised on 7 January 1816<sup>6</sup>, whose parents were Joseph and Elizabeth (nee SELBY). These are the birth date and family of Abraham Wren who married Fanny Ellen ENOCH/ENOCK and went on to live in South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales.

Joseph and Elizabeth married in Dearham, Cumberland on 26 March 1816<sup>7</sup>. Joseph was baptised in Dearham on 19 December 1776 – his father was John Wren;

Elizabeth was baptised (as SEILBY) on 1 February 1784 in Lorton, Cumberland – her father was Abraham Selby/Seilby. Several generations of Wrens lived in the area of Dearham, a mining village in the northern part of Cumberland. Earlier they may have lived in Hertfordshire, some distance from Cumberland, though this is yet to be confirmed. Elizabeth’s family came from an area to the north and northwest of Bassenthwaite Lake, Cumberland.

I am, of course, grateful that my misidentification of Abraham Wren has been revealed. I am, however, confident that my research on Abraham’s life away from Cumberland is accurate and readers can be assured that the publications need no further corrections.

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<sup>6</sup> England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975  
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JMR6-NXT>

<sup>7</sup> England Marriages, 1538–1973  
<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NKB N-LVZ> [Elizabeth’s family name is given as SEALBY]

# The Butcher of Market Street

Jennifer Jacobs (Member 1826)

It seems that Russell WILLING was less compliant than his name might suggest. Since 1938, the Hobart City Council had been planning to widen Criterion Street from 14 to 40 feet, for two thirds of its length.<sup>1</sup> Originally a narrow track known as Sun Alley, for the wild drinking house *Rising Sun* positioned at its upper end, it had been named Market Street in 1855 then in 1921, Clyde Street.<sup>2</sup> Finally in 1939 the name of the nearby *Criterion Hotel* was adopted. When work began in 1954, Mr Willing, who occupied a butcher's shop and home on the corner of Criterion and Liverpool Streets, refused to vacate his premises, despite the residence having been condemned as unfit for human habitation or occupation. Court action had been unsuccessful, as the council owned the land, but not the building. Businesses behind his shop were unable to access their premises and the whole project was in limbo, yet Russell Willing continued to operate. Finally in December 1954, he advertised:

THE premises now occupied by RUSSELL W. WILLING, at 101 LIVERPOOL STREET. HOBART, will be closed on exhaustion of supplies, owing to an eviction order from the City Council to vacate the premises by December 31st next to

allow for city improvement. We take this opportunity to wish our many clients a happy and prosperous New Year.

R. W. WILLING.<sup>3</sup>

Ramshackle it may have been, but this building had stood for over 100 years. The original entrepreneur was Samuel LORING, who with his wife Jane DANIELS arrived from Clerkenwell, Middlesex in 1838. When their month-old daughter died in early January 1839, the death was registered by a butcher, John NEWMAN, with Samuel classed as a labourer.<sup>4</sup> Was this the man who introduced Sam to the industry?

By 1841, Samuel had purchased land on the corner of Liverpool and Market Streets, extending back for 262 links (52 metres) , and his butchery was soon fully operational.<sup>5</sup> In August he advertised that he had now taken a partner, Mr HAMSTON to enable him to keep up a better supply of good meat. A fine in December for having meat for sale outside his door, and another a month later, for having seven deficient weights, did not hold him back.<sup>6</sup> In March 1842 he thanked his numerous customers and announced that he had Colonial Beef, Mutton and Lamb from the estate of Mr John ESPIE at

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<sup>1</sup> 'Russell Willing', *Mercury*, 16 June 1954, p13

<sup>2</sup> 'Shop Holds up Street Plan', *Mercury*, 29 Sept 1953, p4.

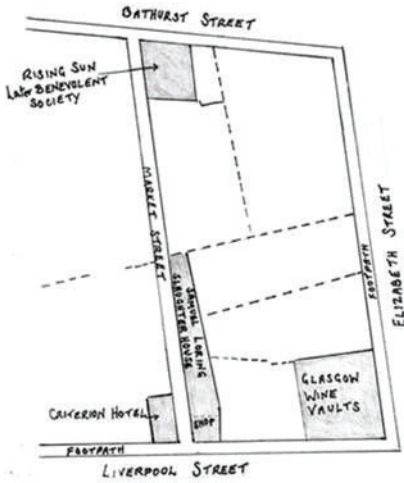
<sup>3</sup> 'Public Notices', *Mercury*, 30 December 1954, p11.

<sup>4</sup> Death Jane Mary LORING, 2 Jan 1839, RGD35/1/1 no 40 Hobart.

<sup>5</sup> The LIST, Historic Deed, Loring 02/4899

<sup>6</sup> 'Hobart Town Police', *Courier*, 10 Dec 1841, p3; 'Mornings at the Police Office', *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 4 Jan 1842, p 2.

Bashan Plains, equal to any ever imported.<sup>7</sup> For convenience, he had also purchased land near the wharf in Sackville Street.<sup>8</sup> Residents here were lucky in 1844, when his forethought in installing a pump at this property enabled the fire services to successfully extinguish a fire threatening their houses.<sup>9</sup>



*Liverpool and Criterion Streets, 1840*<sup>10</sup>

Back in the city, the stench from the several slaughterhouses in the closely confined neighbourhood was unbearable.<sup>11</sup> On warm days, complaints regarding the foetid atmosphere in the vicinity of Bathurst, Liverpool and Elizabeth Streets were noted in the daily

press. More homes were being built in the area and families were suffering illness from the pestilence. Over the next decade, the Loring family too was decimated by the loss of many of their children to various diseases. Sam was well aware of the problem and the first to make amends. In April 1844, the development of his new abattoir was announced.<sup>12</sup>

Described as ‘complete as anything seen outside of London,’ the slaughtering area was close to the pens holding the live bullocks. Sheep were to be stuck on a frame with compartments separating each from one another, all blood spilling into a reservoir which drained to a distant part of the premises. One might wonder how much of this might have seeped into the nearby Hobart Rivulet. All filth including offal not suitable for sale fell into a cellar beneath and was emptied daily. Salting and smoking houses of a convenient size graced the premises along with a well, sunk at great expense to provide the establishment with clean water. Newspapers described it as sanitary as possible but neglected to mention that the main method for the disposal of unwanted offal was to feed it to pigs kept in styes on the property. In all, Sam had spent £1000.

Loring was one of a number of butchers in Hobart, in fact by 1855 there were 60.<sup>13</sup> He developed his business by supplying meat

<sup>7</sup> S Loring Butcher Liverpool Street’, *Tasmanian and Australian Advertiser*, 11 Mar 1842, p 1.

<sup>8</sup> The List, Historic Deed, 02/6175

<sup>9</sup> ‘Domestic Intelligence’, *Colonial Times*, 12 Mar 1844, p 3.

<sup>10</sup> Tasmanian Archives, Sprent’s Maps, p26, AF393-1-27

<sup>11</sup> ‘The Town Surveyor’, *True Colonist Van Diemen’s Land Political Despatch and Agricultural and Commercial*, 7 Oct 1842, p 3.

<sup>12</sup> ‘New Slaughtering Establishment’, *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 9 April 1844, p 3.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Slaughterhouse’, *Courier*, 21 April 1858, p2

to large government agencies. He was paid regularly by the audit department for provisioning the Colonial hospital, Mounted Orderlies, the orphan school, the gaol, and other large establishments. Not all deals ended amicably. In December 1842, one transaction came to court. Mr BAYNTON who had the contract for Port Arthur, had been 6000 lbs short and sent his agent, Mr CHILDS, to Loring's butchery.<sup>14</sup> Loring having only 2000 lbs in his shop, agreed to kill seven bullocks to make up the difference. When payment was made, a dispute arose as to whether the offal was to be included. The judge felt that Loring had been dishonest in the deal but allowed him costs for slaughtering the animals.

Although Loring seems to have run a profitable business, many of his customers did not. Insolvents owed him huge amounts of money and he spent substantial amounts of time in the courts applying for the settlement of debts. Insolvencies increased in the 1850s, by far the greatest debt owing to him was £1007 from H C COZIER in 1854, but John ANDREWARTHA, Henry John BEAUMONT, FELTHAM and HODGSON owed amounts between £37 and £158.15.9.<sup>15</sup>

His extensive government contracts had earned Samuel the privilege of renting sections of the Domain for depasturing his sheep and cattle, but locals had used this area to reach Cornelian Bay for over

twenty years and were not happy to relinquish the shortcut. A dispute broke out when John WATERHOUSE and Sam Loring padlocked gates leading to New Town Bay and the Domain blocking locals from visiting the Horticultural Gardens or reaching New Town.<sup>16</sup> A public reply from the Government aide-de-camp, Eardley WILMOT, accepted that Waterhouse and Loring had the right to prevent access to Cornelian Bay but the whole area from Liverpool Street to Stoke Street, New Town was another matter. His offer of the provision of gates designed to swing shut and prevent the loss of stock, seems to have resolved the matter.

My initial interest in Samuel Loring was that he had engaged two convicts, John HORNSBY and John BYRON, about whom I have written in past editions of our journal, but it seems that he had employed many more of these miscreants.<sup>17</sup> The Tasmanian Names Index lists around ninety under his care in just 1849 and 50, each for three or six months.<sup>18</sup> He also took on at least three skilled free German immigrants in 1855 and advertised for staff in the daily press. The task of controlling such a huge number of convicted men must have been extremely challenging and according to John Hornsby, many lined their pockets at his expense. Animals held in agistment were always an easy target. Five head of cattle disappeared from Restdown Ferry at

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<sup>14</sup> 'Civil Sitings', Hobart Town Advertiser, 23 Dec 1842, p2.

<sup>15</sup> *Courier*, 9 Nov 1854, p2.; *Hobartton Mercury*, 16 Dec 1854, p23.; *Launceston Examiner* 2 Oct 1856.; *Courier*, 3 Mar 1857, p2.

<sup>16</sup> 'Local', *Courier*, 12 Nov 1844, p3.

<sup>17</sup> *Tasmanian Ancestry*, Vol 43 No 3 (Byron); Vol 44 No 1 (Hornsby).

<sup>18</sup> *Tasmanian Names Index*, Con 31/1/1, p 132



Richmond in 1843.<sup>19</sup> In 1846, the stockyard at the back of the Theatre Royal Hotel was opened and eight cattle and a number of sheep disappeared<sup>20</sup> John DRAKE was charged with twice attacking his master's cattle with a stockwhip to the extent that one was blinded and had blood flowing copiously down its back.<sup>21</sup> He was returned to Government service and punished with 30 lashes. By far the most publicised event was the theft of 21 sheep, stolen and sold at the roadside to another butcher in 1850.<sup>22</sup> The deal had passed through a number of people and took some time to resolve, the guilty party being sentenced to transportation for life. Within a week, another dispute arose, this time over an underpayment received for an order of calves' feet from a Mr BENJAMIN.<sup>23</sup> Although Samuel was successful in his application to the courts, the local Jewish butcher, Mr JOSEPH, was incensed that Benjamin, a Jew, was not buying from him and felt that Loring should have refused the transaction in the first place. A theft of three hundredweight of hay from the property *Albert Park*, at New Town, of which he leased part, concerned Sam in 1851, his wife taking a gentler stance and declining to prosecute when her hairbrush was stolen.<sup>24</sup>

Convicts were also apt to take unpermitted leave or to disappear into the nearest drinking establishment while on duty.

Such was the case with William WRIGHT, Loring's cook, who disappeared on his way to buy the breakfast bread for the family, only to return half an hour later, having imbibed rather heavily.<sup>25</sup> His drinking day had begun just after 7am when he detoured to the Glasgow Wine Vaults in Liverpool Street where he met with a number of sailors. Upon returning to his employer, he was noisily drunk, having consumed at least a quart of rum to settle a bet with his new friends and win the sum of £1. His condition appearing grave, Loring sent for the constables who took him to the Colonial Hospital, where he expired at 5pm. In order to share the blame, there was some discussion by the owners of the wine cellars, as to whether Wright had also imbibed at other establishments in his 30-minute binge, along the way.

As always in business, one had to adjust to suit local developments. Since 1842, the council had been discussing plans to build a new public abattoir at New Town Bay.<sup>26</sup> Health officials had always been alert to the difficulties of bringing in and storing cattle before slaughter and delivering in a hygienic manner to the consumer. Butchers had opposed the idea of a shared facility as they feared there would be problems when too many wanted the space at the same time. New Town was also some distance from the city and would not

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<sup>19</sup> 'Lost, Strayed or Stolen', *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 3 Mar 1843, p 1.

<sup>20</sup> 'Mischievous Villainy', *Britannia and Trades Advocate*, 26 Mar 1846, p 3.

<sup>21</sup> 'Police Report', *Britannia and Trades Advocate*, 17 Mar 1850, p 2.

<sup>22</sup> 'Mr Loring's Sheep Robbery', *Britannia and Trades Advocate*, 7 Nov 1850, p 2.

<sup>23</sup> 'Butcher Meat', *Britannia and Trades Advocate*, 14 Nov 1850, p 2.

<sup>24</sup> 'Thursday Report', *Hobart Guardian or True Friend of Tasmania*, 13 Apr 1850, p 2.

<sup>25</sup> 'The Late Case of Rum Drinking', *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 5 Apr 1853, p 3.

<sup>26</sup> 'New Slaughtering Establishment', *Colonial Times*, Tuesday 28 May 1844, p 3.

suit those who wanted to butcher animals at short notice. Meat would be adversely affected by being carried so far. Even in the city, transport of cattle to the many abattoirs and butcheries had become quite a problem. Not only was there difficulty in keeping moving mobs of cattle separate, particularly around the Domain where there was no fencing, but some animals were difficult to control. When an enraged bullock escaped into Argyle Street and killed 11 year old Alfred JOHNSON, in July 1854, there was quite an outcry.<sup>27</sup> In particular, authorities wanted to move pigsties away from residential areas.

Sam made a momentous decision to put his establishment on the market in 1849, with £1,000 remaining on the mortgage.<sup>28</sup> Much of his operation was now in Market Place, near Sackville Street, a bustling and expanding commercial district near the wharves. Unable to find a buyer, he held onto the property until early 1854.

Just days before his planned auction, a huge conflagration lit the night skies as gunpowder stored at a business opposite his shop in Liverpool Street, exploded, incinerating several buildings.<sup>29</sup> Fire quickly spread, decimating Cat and Fiddle Alley with its historic inns and squalid housing. Residents rushed to remove more accelerants from other buildings. It seems that almost every business had stocks of gunpowder. Several premises were deliberately dismantled to halt the

progress of the flames. Sam's agent was quick to alter his advertisement to point out that buyers should be aware that values in the area would increase as the heart of Hobart was now cleared for renewal. Thomas STUMP who also had butcher shops in Elizabeth and Murray Streets became the new proprietor and the Loring family moved to lease a rather commodious eight room dwelling near the Theatre Royal Hotel in Campbell Street close to Market Place.<sup>30</sup>

However, the new operation was not as smooth as might be hoped. In 1858, Sam was prosecuted for not keeping his premises clean, with two pigsties again being used for disposal of offal.<sup>31</sup> It is unknown whether it was a downturn in business or a yen to pursue new opportunities that caused him to decide to move to NSW. Jane Loring advertised the household goods including a piano and chaff cutter for sale, as they were about to leave the colony.<sup>32</sup> Yet events in NSW did not pan out as they had hoped. After Jane died suddenly of a heart attack in 1862, and a dispute arose over the ownership of land which the government seems to have concurrently sold to two separate people, Samuel left with his daughter, Anne to join his son John in Nelson, New Zealand

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<sup>27</sup> 'Coroner's Inquest', *Tasmanian Colonist*, 15 June 1854, p 2.

<sup>28</sup> 'Valuable Property', *Colonial Times*, 9 Feb 1849, p 3.

<sup>29</sup> 'The Late Terrific Fire', *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 23 Jan 1854, p 3.

<sup>30</sup> 'Two-Storey Stone House', *Courier*, 1 Mar 1854, p1.

<sup>31</sup> 'Legal Intelligence', *Tasmanian Daily News*, 25 Nov 1856, p 3.

<sup>32</sup> 'Local', *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 26 Apr 1860, p3.

where he continued to work as a butcher until the late 1880s.<sup>33</sup>

Samuel Loring endured many difficulties in business. Dealing with convicts, government regulations, price control and

insolvent customers must have wearied him, yet his benevolence was recognised in 1852 for his practise of donating meat to the poor on Saturday nights.<sup>34</sup> His influence in the butchering business in early Hobart was far reaching.

## Tasmanian Family History Society Inc.

2024

### Lilian Watson Family History Award

for a **Book**, however produced or published on paper, dealing with a family or biographical history and having significant Tasmanian content.

Historical fiction is not eligible.

Prize is currently \$200 plus one year's membership of TFHS Inc.

Entries Close 1 December 2024

Further information and entry forms are available from:

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Or

The Secretary

PO Box 326, ROSNY PARK, TAS 7018

email [secretary@tasfhs.org](mailto:secretary@tasfhs.org)

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<sup>33</sup> *Mercury*, 23 Jan 1862, p2; *Nelson Evening Mail*, 15 Aug 1857, p2 :Obituary', *Mercury*, 17 Mar 1895, p 2.

<sup>34</sup> 'A Benevolent Example', *Colonial Times*, 25 May 1852, p 3.

# My Model Mother

Helene Chung

**Y**ou should have been put in a bucket and drowned at birth,' shouted the Chinese village-bred mother.

Accustomed to such taunts from a woman who loved only her sons, Dorothy didn't demur. She bathed in her father's love. She switched to New Town's Commercial High to learn accountancy and bookkeeping to join him in his business.

When Gen Chung HENRY died of tuberculosis aged 56, Dorothy's world collapsed.

The fifteen-year-old left school and suffered a nervous breakdown. Isolated and vulnerable, within two years she fell into the arms of her brothers' charming friend Charles CHUNG. His father launched a new shop for the young couple, W Chung Sing & Co. a block from her family's Henry & Co. Dorothy gave birth to my sister, Lehene, and then me. But it proved an unhappy marriage. Despite Charles' plea and parental protests, she left her husband and scandalised Hobart: their divorce splashed over *Truth*.

Ironically, this improved relations with her mother. After two years' crying over the loss of her husband, Grandmother delighted in baby Lehene and lavished care on both of us. She declared, 'The girls will be brought up as Henrys.'

Yet Grandmother died before I turned three. Dorothy would spend the next two decades raising us to independent adulthood with never a guaranteed

income. As children with bowls of rice and chopsticks around the kitchen table with extended family over dinner, we listened as our mother argued with Uncle Gordon.

'They need school uniforms.'

'What's wrong with what they've got.'

'They've grown out of them. And they're back at school next week. They need new shoes too.'

'What about their father? Why can't he pay for something for a change.'

'You know he never pays a penny.'

School fees, doctors' fees, ballet fees, art fees, piano fees. Everything raised a row.

In desperation Mama sometimes urged Lehene, 'Pet, go and cry to Uncle Lester.' She was his favourite. She stood shyly at his feet, twisting her hair around her little finger. He wrote out a cheque.

As an adult in London, Lehene reflected, 'We had the best of everything, but what we had to go through to get it. No child should have to go through what we went through.'

Dorothy decided to try hairdressing but was too old to be apprenticed in Hobart. Sydney enabled her to enrol in classes. Eileen BROOKER, who submitted her portrait of Dorothy for the 1947 Travelling Scholarship award, suggested: 'Pay your fees and support yourself through modelling.'

So Dorothy spent evenings as a full-figure model at East Sydney Technical College,

the Antonio Dattilo Rubbo Art School, the Julian Ashton Art School and elsewhere. Sydney introduced her to a bohemian world of art, books and ideas. She sat through coffee conversations above her head, but absorbed enough to filter some through to Lehen and me. After barely six years' schooling, she transformed our room over the fruit shop into a rich cultural milieu, with strains of her violin, the wireless tuned to classical music, tomato cases filled with Penguin paperbacks, prints of works by Miró and Picasso on the wall and children's versions of Chaucer and Shakespeare among our earliest books.



*Dorothy Henry, oil by Eileen Brooker, 1947*

After her death at 95 in Melbourne, in October 2020, this childhood flooded back to me. I returned to Hobart as a Melbourne COVID-lockdown refugee. Growing up in 1950s Anglo-Celtic Hobart had been alienating. Everything about my mother set me apart from my peers. I could never belong.

She embarrassed me by speaking Chinese in front of my classmates. People stared at anyone speaking anything other than

English, as though watching monkeys perform under the circus tent. She insisted on being called Miss Henry, when the only others called Miss were young unmarried ladies or spinsters. She alone of all parents at my Catholic school was a divorcee. She lived in sin with not just one but two 'foreign devils'. And she drove an open-top red MG, when most women didn't drive – though a few ventured behind the wheel of an Austin or Holden sedan.

Now, hurtling towards my eighties I appreciate how advanced my mother was: before the era of single mothers, no-fault divorce, openness about relationships and multicultural Australia, when women had to be married or be pitied as spinsters, my mother defied conventions, both East and West, to live as an individual.

My only sight of Mama modelling was in 1951. We stayed for a while in my uncle's new unfurnished house in Lenah Valley while he travelled abroad. Water colourist Max ANGUS and two others arrived weekly to draw her. I slept in the dining room linked by double glass doors to the lounge where they worked. Sheets of newspaper covered the doors to let me sleep. One night I rose and urged Lehen to peep.

We could just make out Mama's tummy. We saw her navel. She stood in front of the unlit fireplace, right elbow draped on the mantelpiece, her hand hanging down loose over the edge, her head turned to the right gazing into the wall, her lips not quite closed. Clean-shaven future sculptor Stephen WALKER chalked furiously, shading in a section on his pad. Tas FEHLBERG studied her feet, the right foot a fraction in front of the left. From his

position in the far corner, Max sketched at a steady pace with a stick of charcoal.

It all looked very serious. We remained quiet. Then I glanced at Lehene and we burst out giggling.

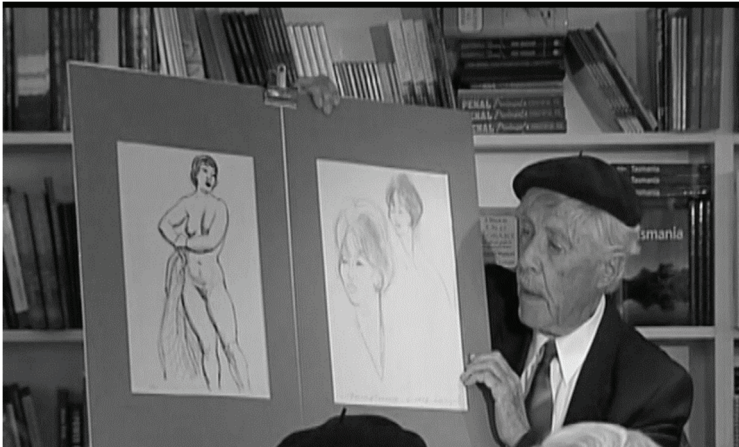
As Max said at the Hobart launch of *Ching Chong China Girl*: their art was serious.<sup>1</sup>

We blokes were earnest about our work and we loved to draw Dorothy, the most wonderful model that you could imagine ... Dorothy could strike a pose in an instant or move from one pose to another in the most natural way ... she knew more about body language than the exponents of that term today. Years ahead of her time.

Now that my mother reposes outside Hobart at St John's Church Cemetery, Richmond, I have finally overcome the embarrassment of childhood and appreciate her value as my mother.

In November 2023 I heard of Alison Alexander's biography *A Salute to Max Angus: Tasmanian painter*. I immediately bought a copy. It had been published by Forty South in 2021 when I was absorbed by the move from my Melbourne home of 34 years back to Hobart.

When I saw a print of a carbon pencil and wash of her upper body by Max, I realised how fortunate – indeed, privileged – I was, as the daughter of two Chinese fruit merchant families, to have been raised by such a model mother.



*Max Angus at The Hobart Bookshop, Thursday 22 May 2008*

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<sup>1</sup> Helene Chung, *Ching Chong China Girl: from fruitshop to foreign correspondent*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2008

# What is that Publication About?

Maurice Appleyard (Member 4093)

Numerous publications are named in the Acquisition Lists of the various Branches of our Society but on some occasions the title does not give a clear indication of the subject matter. The following details of a few in the Hobart Branch Library may help to describe some of the more obscure titles and deserve a look. Perhaps the publication may also be held in your local library?

Unimaginable Futures – Lamb, Ezzy, Irwin and Skuthorp families: The first generation in Australia.

This paperback publication of some 130pp, by Janice Cooper was first published in 2022.

Three women, arriving in New South Wales before 1810, laid a foundation for thousands of Australians in succeeding generations.

These women, convict and free, are central to stories of the first Australian generation of the Lamb, Ezzy, Irwin and Skuthorp families. Their lives were full of drama, of successes and failures, of sadness and joy.

The experiences of these four families reveal the diversity and complexity of lives spent in early colonial New South Wales and Tasmania.

Their stories are set within the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental contexts of their time and place.



Australia's largest online family history resource\*

Research and build your family tree online

 [ancestry.com.au](https://www.ancestry.com.au)

\*comScore, 2011

# Jessy Spurling – Portrait of a Widow in Van Diemen’s Land: Part Two

Christine Burgess (Member 8433)

Jessy SPURLING and her nine-year-old daughter, Emma arrived in Hobart Town, Van Diemen’s Land on 5 February 1836. It had been a fraught journey and her pre-arranged employment with the ticket-of-leave convict and aspiring novelist, Henry SAVERY must have proved daunting.

For a little over a month after their arrival, on 17 March 1836, a George WEITH, wrote a letter on her behalf to the Colonial Secretary’s Office, stating Jessy was unable to support her daughter, and requesting Emma be admitted to the King’s Orphan School.<sup>1</sup> Jessy had evidently forsaken her employment, and had thrown herself and her daughter at the mercy of the authorities.

Jessy was not the only *Boadicea* arrival dissatisfied with her position. Three weeks earlier, on 20 February, *Bent’s News* noted, ‘Many of the women per the *Boadicea*, who took situations in the country, have already left them, dissatisfied therein, and returned to town ...’<sup>2</sup>

Curiously, there is no record of Emma enrolling at the King’s Orphan School, and no record of what Jessy did next, but

she presumably found accommodation and employment. Meanwhile, back in England there were changes afoot ...

On 2 June 1836, Jessy’s elder son, Stephen I was discharged from Christ Hospital (the Blue Coat School) and released into the care of his aunt, Emma Spurling, who was then living in Peckham.<sup>3</sup> Twelve months later, in June 1837, he and his brother Ansley set sail on the *Andromeda*, bound for Hobart Town. The boys, who were then aged sixteen and thirteen respectively, travelled as second-class cabin passengers. Among the other passengers on board, was the eight-year-old Henry BUTTON, who would later write an account of their voyage in his book, *Flotsam and Jetsam*. As their ship departed, the passengers heard the tolling bells and firing guns proclaiming King William IV’s death and Queen Victoria’s ascension to the throne.<sup>4</sup>

The two boys arrived in Hobart Town 14 November 1837. Ten months later, in September 1838, Jessy opened a Millinery, Dress and Toy Warehouse in Liverpool Street, Hobart Town.

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<sup>1</sup> Tasmanian Archives, CSO1/1/853 Z 1947, pp. 223-224; Campbell, ‘A proper class of female emigrants ...’, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Bent’s News and Tasmanian Three-Penny Register*, 20 February 1836, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Guildhall Library, London, Ms 12818A/96 no. 79, Christ Hospital Presentation Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Button, *Flotsam and Jetsam*, Birchall & Sons, Launceston, 1909, pp. 25-40.



**MRS. SPURLING'S**  
**Millinery, Dress, and Toy**  
**WAREHOUSE,**  
 (Next door to Derwent House,)  
 LIVERPOOL STREET.

**M**RS. SPURLING has the honor to inform the Ladies of Hobart Town, and the public in general, that she has opened the above Establishment, intending to execute such orders as may be intrusted to her care, with neatness, punctuality, and dispatch. By adhering to these principles, Mrs. Spurling hopes for a share of public patronage.

There will always be found a good assortment of Ladies' Boots and Shoes, Baby-linen, and ready-made Linen, Stays, &c.

A great variety of Seed and Gold Beads, for ladies' work.

Sept. 4, 1838.

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*Tasmanian*, 7 September 1838, p. 1.

The following month, on 10 October 1838, Emma set sail for London, aboard the *Wave*.<sup>5</sup> She was twelve-years-old, and she would be away for six years – studying first at a boarding school in Ashford, Kent, and then spending an extended period in France.<sup>6</sup> She would return to Hobart Town aboard the *Calcutta* on 30 October 1844.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, back in Hobart Town, Jessy's business venture proved short-lived. In March 1840, and just eighteen months after opening, Jessy was forced into liquidation, and a few days later, a Miss LAYTON took over the business.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Tasmanian*, 12 October 1838, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> 1841 Census, UK, Parish of Ashford, HO 107/471/2.

<sup>7</sup> *Courier*, 5 November 1844, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Tasmanian*, 22 March 1839, p. 1.

**Mrs. Spurling's Estate.**

**A**LL parties having demands against the Estate of Mrs. SPURLING, late of Liverpool-street, are requested to send in their claims to Messrs. J. Thomas & Co., Commercial House, on or before Thursday the 19th of March 1840.

March 6, 1840.

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*True Colonist*, 6 March 1840, p. 3.

Four months later, on 18 July, Jessy wrote to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir John FRANKLIN, requesting a position for her son, Stephen I. In the same letter, she also thanked Sir John for the 'kind and condescending attention' she had received from him 'on the occasion of' her sending her daughter Emma back to England to complete her education.<sup>9</sup>

By April 1844, Jessy was living at 83 Macquarie Street, and was advertising she had two spare rooms available for board and lodging.

That same year, on 9 November 1844, Jessy's elder son, Stephen I married Louisa LOVETT, daughter of the former convict, George Lovett. The couple would have three sons – Henry, Stephen II and Frederick.<sup>10</sup>

The following year, on Saturday, 18 July 1845, Jessy was walking down Patrick Street, Hobart Town, when a 'hulking looking fellow' snatched her reticule (purse) from her arm. Jessy gave chase, shouting "stop thief", but she lost sight of him. Constable Mason, who witnessed the incident, joined the pursuit, but he too lost sight of the miscreant. Fortunately, a Dr

<sup>9</sup> Tasmanian Archives, CSO 5/1/226/5756 p. 445.

<sup>10</sup> C H Burgess, 'The Spurling Legacy and the emergence of wilderness photography in Tasmania', PhD thesis, University of Tasmania, 2010, pp. 107-126.

Crook, who was passing-by managed to apprehend the thief, and returned Jessy's reticule, complete with contents. When brought to trial, the jury promptly pronounced the prisoner, 'guilty'.<sup>11</sup>

That same year, Jessy was assigned a convict servant, Ellen GRAHAM.<sup>12</sup> Ellen had been transported for the theft of less than £20 and a pair of gloves. She would be 'free by Servitude' on 22 July 1847.<sup>13</sup> As an interesting aside, the name above Jessy's in the *Hobart Town Gazette* was the notorious Isaac (Ikey) SOLOMON, who was assigned the convict servant, Ellis CASPAR. It is believed Solomons was the inspiration for Charles Dickens 'Fagin' in his novel, *Oliver Twist*.

The year 1847 brought several significant events. On 30 January, Jessy's second son, Ansley married Sarah Harriet BEAUMONT in St Georges Church, Hobart. The couple would have three children – Ansley, Jessie and Sarah Amy.<sup>14</sup>

The second event, in March 1847, saw Jessy and her sons Stephen I and Ansley, and a 'government servant woman' named Rose Ann MURPHY, who had been living with the Spurlings for some weeks, appear in court as witnesses. The accused, Peter KENNY, was charged with breaking into the home of James FRANCIS and stealing

some plates and other articles. There was a second charge of striking James with a tomahawk. Since the prisoner had worked for the Spurlings, they and Murphy were asked to identify a blue cloth cap belonging to the accused.<sup>15</sup>

Back in England, on 8 November 1847, Jessy's then twenty-nine-year-old daughter Frances gave birth to a boy. At the time, Frances was residing at the home of the landscape artist, Joseph HORLER at 4 Vineyards, Bath, where she was employed as a governess.<sup>16</sup> The baby's birth certificate shows his name as Frank Searl DARVELL.<sup>17</sup> Shortly after giving birth, Frances and her baby set sail for Hobart Town. Intriguingly, by the time of their arrival, the baby's name had been simplified to Frank SEARL, and Frances called herself 'Mrs Searl'.

In September 1848, when Frank was just ten-months-old, Frances advertised the opening of a 'daily boarding school' for young ladies, based 'upon an entirely new system'. Her curriculum would include a full range of academic subjects, with languages, music and dancing as extras. Her sister, Emma would oversee the French department.<sup>18</sup> Presumably Jessy cared for Frank while Frances administered her school. Certainly, the two families were very close.

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<sup>11</sup> *Colonial Times*, 2 September 1845, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette*, Vol. XXIX, 28 June 1844, No. 1468, p. 720, <https://stors.tas.gov.au/TGG-13-8-3-1>, downloaded 17 May 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Tasmanian Archives, CON 4014 & CON 19/1.

<sup>14</sup> Tasmanian Archives, Suzanne Seyfried, *The Story of the Lovett Family and their journey to 'An Island at the Bottom of the World'*, unpublished, undated. p. 2-51.

<sup>15</sup> *Hobart Town Advertiser*, 5 March 1847, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> From the Census Data for Somerset, UK for the years 1841, 1851 and 1881 as supplied by Daphne Spurling. At the time of Frank's birth, one of the servants in the Horler household was Jane Darvell.

<sup>17</sup> Frank Searl, Birth Certificate, Application no. COL 684458, Walcot, Somerset, England, 1847.

<sup>18</sup> *Courier*, 23 September 1848, p. 3 & 7 October 1848, p. 1.

An artwork, possibly a pastel over an albumen silver photograph, of Jessy and Frank has been handed down through successive generations of the Searl family. A descendant, Peter Searl, described it thus:

... we have a very large pastel drawing [of Jessy Spurling] and a small boy of about ten years in an ornate gold frame ...[She] is elegantly [dressed and] sitting at a table with a heavy gold cloth and has a doley type cap on her head.<sup>19</sup>

The Searl family also holds a pastel drawing of Frank Searl. Known within the family as the 'Blue Boy', the artwork is unsigned and undated, but is believed to be the work of Stephen I.<sup>20</sup>

On 19 December 1850, Jessy's daughter Emma married Frederick Lovett at St George's Church, Battery Point. Frederick was Stephen I's brother-in-law. He was also a widower, and already had two children from his first marriage.<sup>21</sup> Emma and Frederick would have five children: Emma Caroline, Charles, William, Frank and Mary. Frederick died in August 1860, just one year after the birth of their youngest child.<sup>22</sup>

Two weeks after her husband's death, Emma and her sister Frances set up a day and boarding school at Claremont House in Elizabeth Street, with Emma in charge

of the Juvenile Class.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps Jessy was now caring for Emma's children, while their mother worked?

In the late 1850s, Stephen I left his government employment and tried his luck on the goldfields, while his wife supported the family by opening a school for young ladies. After his return and several failed business ventures, in 1856, Stephen, his wife Louisa and their two younger sons fled to Invercargill, New Zealand, where they established a grocery business. When they returned to Hobart in 1864, Stephen I set up a photography studio.<sup>24</sup>

During this period, Ansley also tried various business ventures, which invariably failed.<sup>25</sup> To help support their family, Ansley's wife, Sarah opened a dressmaking business. Later she too, opened a school.<sup>26</sup>

By 1867, Jessy was living at Kangaroo Point, and advertising for two little girls, under twelve years of age, to board at her residence. In her advertisement, Jessy offered to provide music, dancing and laundry for 35 guineas (£36-15 shillings) annually.

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<sup>19</sup> Letter written by Peter Searl to Ted Spurling, 10 April 1983; Gillian Winter, 'Secure the Shadow ere the Substance Fadeth, Stephen Spurling, Colonial Artist-Photographer', THRA Papers and Proceedings, December 2012, vol. 59, no. 3, p. 202.

<sup>20</sup> Winter, 'Secure the Shadow ...', p. 194.

<sup>21</sup> Seyfried, *An Island at the Bottom of the World*, pp. 1-34, 2-22, 2-23, 2-51.

<sup>22</sup> *Mercury*, 28 August 1860, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Mercury*, 6 September 1860, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Burgess, 'The Spurling Legacy ... pp. 107-126; *Mercury*, 23 March 1863, p. 8; 2 April 1863, p. 2; 18 March 1864, p. 2; *Advertiser*, 30 April 1863.

<sup>25</sup> *Colonial Times*, 14 August 1849, p.2; *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 24 April 1858, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Mercury*, 16 January 1861, p. 3; *Tasmanian Morning Herald*, 19 January 1866, p. 3.

## EDUCATIONAL.

**SUMMER SIDE, KANGAROO POINT.**  
Mrs. JESSY SPURLING having accommodated for two boarders, wishes to receive two little girls under 12 years of age.

Terms, including music, dancing, and laundry, 35 guineas a year. 12 15f

*Mercury, 12 February 1867, p. 1.*

By September of that year, Jessy had evidently moved to Warwick Street in the city, for she was now advertising for a little boy, under twelve years, to share her grandson's room, again for 35 guineas annually. (Given the age of the prospective boarder, it seems likely this grandson was one of Emma's children.)

**TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.—**  
MRS. JESSY SPURLING, residing in Warwick-street, near Harrington-street, Hobart Town, wishes to receive a little boy, under twelve years, to board and share her grandson's room. Terms, 30 guineas a year including washing. The house is an easy distance from all the boys' schools. ttt 16j

*Mercury, 12 July 1867, p. 1.*

A few months later, 27 September 1867, Jessy's seventeen-year-old servant girl, Catherine CONROY rose at 5am to light the kitchen fire. An hour elapsed. Catherine decided to replace the matches on the mantel-piece. Since it was unusually high, she stood on the kitchen fender, and her dress caught fire. Her screams woke Jessy and her daughter, Emma (Mrs Lovett) who was also living in the house. Emma threw a bucket of water over Catherine, and partially extinguished the flames. Then Jessy's grandson, Frank Searl (who would have been nearly twenty years old), brought a

worsted rug, which he used to smother the flames.

But it was too late. All Catherine's clothing, down to her stays, were blackened ruins. Her legs, back and abdomen were horribly burnt. The family immediately sent for a Dr Bright, who ordered the poor girl to the General Hospital, where she writhed in pain. Although this was considered a 'favourable' sign, she died less than a fortnight later, on 10 October. At the inquest into her death, the jury found her 'death resulted from the injuries so received'.<sup>27</sup>

**DEATH FROM BURNING.—**The young woman Catherine Conroy, who was so seriously burnt at the residence of Mrs. Spurling on the 27th ult., died at the hospital at 8-30 o'clock yesterday morning.

*Mercury, 11 October 1867, p. 1.*

Such a heartbreaking event must have affected Jessy's equilibrium. A little over two years later, on 21 February 1870, she died at her daughter, Frances' home, Broadland House, 77 Collins Street, Hobart.<sup>28</sup> According to Jessy's death certificate, the causes of her demise were 'Senilio and Hydrothorax'.<sup>29</sup>

Her death notice read:

**DEATH.**  
**SPURLING.—**On the 21st February, 1870, at the residence of her daughter, Mrs Searl, Broadland House—Jessy, aged 75 years, relict of the late Stephen Spurling, Esq., R.N.

*Tasmanian Times, 24 February 1870, p. 2.*

Initially, Jessy was buried at St David's Burial Ground in Hobart, but on 19 November 1879, her remains were

<sup>27</sup> *Tasmanian Times*, 28 September 1867, p. 2; *Mercury*, 28 September 1867, p. 2; 11 October 1867, p. 2; 14 October 1867, p. 2; *Cornwall Chronicle*, 2 October 1867, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Frances Searl conducted her school from this address between the years 1869-81, see *Walch's Almanac*.

<sup>29</sup> TA, RGD 35/7 1870/9147.

transferred to the Searl family grave at Cornelian Bay. Here she was interred with the remains of her great-grandson, Frank Searl, aged just 44 days. Over the years, more members of the Searl family were buried in the same plot.<sup>30</sup> Jessy's final resting place is amongst her family.

Jessy's decision to make a new life for herself and her children in a distant land, proved more challenging than she could have ever imagined. Yet, she managed. Her descendants lived on, and their lives became interwoven with the history of the fledgling colony. From setting up academic schools to dancing classes, from surveying to newspaper reporting, from department stores to flourmills and power-stations, and from the earliest days of experimental photography to exploring and photographing wild places, Spurling descendants and their spouses played their part. And the Spurling name lives on ... almost in the centre of the island now called Tasmania, there is a Mount Spurling, named in recognition of Jessy's great-grandson, Stephen Spurling III's contribution to Tasmanian wilderness photography.

## Postscript

For nearly 40 years, Frances Spurling (Mrs Searl) conducted a series of schools in and around Hobart. She died at 76 years of age at her son's residence 'Croftbourne' in Colville Street, New Town Road, on 27 August 1894, and was buried at Cornelian

Bay Cemetery.<sup>31</sup> Her son Frank became a draftsman, then a surveyor. He married Phoebe Abbott GIBSON (from the Gibson flour milling family) on 5 January 1875, and the couple had five children. Their daughter Ruby married Cecil Bertrand DAVIES, whose grandfather John Davies established the *Mercury* newspaper.<sup>32</sup>

When Stephen Spurling I first arrived in Hobart Town, he struggled to find employment. After deputations to the then governor, Sir John Franklin and others, Stephen I was employed first in the Convict Department, and then the Lands and Survey Department. On leaving government employment, he embarked upon a series of unsuccessful business ventures. Later, he turned to photography, and although he enjoyed a successful career for many years, eventually, this business too failed. Stephen I died on 13 April 1892, in the asylum at New Norfolk. It is possible his precarious mental state was the result of exposure to mercury and other toxic chemicals used in his early photographic experimentation.<sup>33</sup> Despite the hardships, his sons, Stephen II and Frederick continued the family profession. In 1873, Stephen II moved his photography business to Launceston, where he set up his own photography studio. He became renowned for his innovative photography, and in 1899 he was appointed official government photographer for northern Tasmania. In 1911, Stephen II's daughter Lilla married

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<sup>30</sup> TA, Suzanne Seyfried, *An Island at the Bottom of the World*, p. 2-52, and from information provided by Peter Bridley.

<sup>31</sup> *Mercury*, 8 September 1894, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Margaret Davies, 'Davies Family',

<https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/9379>

265, downloaded 14 May 2023; and from information provided by Peter Bridley, Lindisfarne.

<sup>33</sup> Burgess, 'The Spurling Legacy ...', pp. 137-38.

John DINEEN, who in 1906 had taken up the position of Superintendent of the Duck Reach Power Station.<sup>34</sup> Stephen II's son, Stephen III inherited his father's business and would become one of Tasmania's most significant early Tasmanian wilderness photographers.<sup>35</sup>

[Editor's note: *Photographs by Spurlings: A treasure trove of Tasmanian images* was published by Forty South in May 2024.]

For some years, Ansley Spurling battled to establish financially viable businesses. In 1854, he moved to Sydney, but when his venture here failed, he returned to Hobart.<sup>36</sup> To help the family finances, his wife Sarah and his two daughters, Jessie and Amy conducted a well-patronised finishing school in Hobart. Their dancing classes were extremely popular, and their descendants' involvement in ballroom dancing classes would last for more than a

century.<sup>37</sup> Ansley died at the age of sixty-four at his daughter's residence in Macquarie Street, Hobart on 30 June 1888. An obituary written a week later, described him as a pressman, who had held positions with various Tasmanian newspapers. He was also a competent accountant, who in his later years worked in the accounts department of the Lands and Works department.<sup>38</sup>

For many years, Emma Spurling taught at her sister, Frances' various schools. When Frances retired in 1882, Emma took over the administration of the school, which was then situated at 2 Davey Street, Hobart.<sup>39</sup> Two years earlier, in 1880, her eldest daughter, Emma Caroline had married G. P. FITZGERALD, founder of the department store of the same name.<sup>40</sup> Emma died on 8 July 1909, aged eighty-three years.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Examiner*, 7 December 1911, p. 3; Julian Burgess, 'Obituary: Graeme Dineen', <https://www.julianburgess.com.au/single-post/2020/01/22/obituary-graeme-dineen>, downloaded 15 May 2023.

<sup>35</sup> *Examiner*, 11 March 1922, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> Winter, 'Secure the Shadow ...', pp. 198–99.

<sup>37</sup> Roy Bridges, *That yesterday was home*, Sydney, 1948, p. 151, *Mercury*, 30 September 1947, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> *Mercury*, 7 July 1888, p. 4; *Colonist*, 7 July 1888, p. 14; Winter, 'Secure the Shadow ...', p. 194.

<sup>39</sup> *Mercury*, 21 June 1881, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Mercury*, 29 November 1935, p9.

<sup>41</sup> *Mercury*, 10 July 1909, p1.

# Joseph Dell (1800–67) – A Colonial Life, Lived ‘Close to the Wind’ Part Three: Shop Fire, Arson? and Aftermath

Tony Dell (Member 8111)

In Parts 1 and 2, I traced Joseph’s life from his birth in Sydney, his travel to England and return to Sydney and then Launceston. From his privileged position, we followed his stuttering steps in commerce and the births and deaths of his children and we left him at the point where a fire in his Brisbane Street, Launceston, Grocery Store was to be the subject of a Fire Inquest.

Press reports indicate that the fire bell in Launceston was rung about 1.40pm on Wednesday 1 September 1858 because ‘.. a fire was raging in the upper part of Mr Joseph Dell’s wooden grocery shop, in Brisbane-street, opposite the Club Hotel.’<sup>1</sup> The local fire brigades were quickly on the scene, setting up a fire hose, while others kept the blaze under control with buckets of water. The fire was quickly extinguished, but the roof was destroyed and the stock and interior of the building damaged by water.

The police were also on the scene and, in a separate article in the same newspaper, it was noted that the Launceston Insurance Company had gained consent from the

Police Magistrate, W GUNN, Esq., to hold an inquiry into the origin of the fire.<sup>2</sup>

The context of this development is that the fire occurred in the midst of a public campaign for legislation to make the holding of inquests into fires mandatory.<sup>3</sup>

The inquest opened on Saturday 4 September 1858 before the Coroner, Mr William Gunn Esq. and a seven-man Jury. Both daily newspapers in Launceston reported on the proceedings extensively.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph DELL was the first witness and was examined about the fire which appeared to have broken out in the loft where there were newspapers, store dummies filled with wood shavings, loose wood shavings and possibly some matches. He was also examined about access to the loft and the whereabouts of a ladder usually used to access it.

It was noted that an open fire had been left burning in a ground floor fire place and had been checked for safety immediately before departure for lunch.

Joseph was at home in Cameron Street, close behind his shop and connected by a laneway, having lunch when the fire broke

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<sup>1</sup> *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas.: 1835-1880), Thu 2 Sep 1858, p.3

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Tue 7 Sep 1858, p.2; and *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas.: 1835-1880), Wed 8 Sep 1858, p.3

out and, along with family members and a luncheon guest, rushed back to the shop to save his papers, cash box, accounts books and, with the assistance of bystanders, some stock.

He told the inquest that he saw his sons assisting to put the fire out **on** [my emphasis] the roof, that he didn't know how the fire occurred, and that it must have been '...by [presumably from] the chimney which was an old one'.

Meanwhile, his sons and others were attacking the fire with buckets of water, until the fire brigades arrived, set up hoses and brought it under control.

He was also asked about the insurance on his stock and on the building, which he described and noted were insured separately with different companies. He also noted that at the time of the Inquest he had given notice of the fire but made no claim on his insurances.

His son, Thomas, was then examined and gave conflicting evidence about the ladder used to access the loft, saying it had taken up too much room and was taken away and that he used a cask to access the loft to get access to the fire. Thomas then fainted, after which the hearing was adjourned until Monday, 6 September 1858, at 10am.

At the resumption of the inquest on Monday there were a series of witnesses, one of the most important being a fireman, Martin THOMPSON, who was at the fire before the engines arrived, but without his badge or uniform. He described how he was prevented from going up into the loft and then getting up on the roof and taking off shingles to get access to the fire, and being told not to. He describes, after

making the hole in the roof, seeing the floor '... strewn with shavings. ... On one side of the opening a bag of shavings was burning. On the other side loose shavings were strewn. ... I saw hardly any smoke coming up the chimney, it came up through the shingles; I saw nothing to indicate that the fire commenced from the outside.' In other words, he pointedly didn't substantiate Joseph Dell's suggestion that sparks from the chimney must have started the fire.

The other important witnesses were Detective Constable ROSE and Police Superintendent James O'CONNOR.

D.C. Rose was at the fire from early on and saw Joseph Dell looking up through the open trap-door into the loft as buckets full of water were being thrown up. He continued his evidence as follows: '... Howell, the fireman, came in and I assisted him in getting into the loft; Mr Dell said "don't go up there you will be burnt to death"; at the same time catching hold of him; Howell afterwards went up, water was handed to him, and he put the fire out in a minute ...'.

D.C. Rose continued '... I have since examined the premises; Mr. Dell was present; I think there is no doubt the fire originated inside the roof.' Then, in answer to a question from the jury, he said that in his view, the fire could not have originated from the chimney, and that he '...did not see Mr Dell use any exertion in extinguishing the fire'.

Superintendent O'Connor reiterated much of the evidence of D.C. Rose and added that he:



... went up into the loft, requesting Mr. Dell to accompany me, which he did; upon the floor in the inner room, under a quantity of plater, which had fallen from the roof, we found a quantity of shavings, several pieces of wood, a piece of hempen sack, and a sugar bag much burnt, which I produce; I showed them to Mr. Dell; I came to the conclusion that the fire had originated within the inner lining of the inner room; occupying about five square feet; this lining was all round about eighteen inches from the walls; on the outer side of the lining there were no signs of fire; the inside of the lining was charred; Mr. Dell was quite of my opinion that the fire had originated there, and said a spark from the chimney may have caused it; the portions of the chimney within the roof were free from signs of fire; I should say there must have been several bags of shavings in the loft burnt away.

At this point, the evidence concluded. The Jury then asked that Mr. Dell's evidence on Saturday be read over to them and they then retired to consider their verdict. After half an hour they returned the verdict 'That the premises had been wilfully set on fire with intent to defraud the Launceston and Liverpool Insurance Companies.'

After the verdict had been delivered the Superintendent of Police arrested Joseph and brought him before the Police

Magistrate and '... charged him with arson, i.e.: Feloniously setting fire to his premises, with intent to defraud certain Insurance Companies.' He was remanded in gaol.

On Saturday 11 September, Joseph was again remanded in custody by the Police Magistrate until the following Thursday.<sup>5</sup> On that day he again appeared before the Police Magistrate; his lawyer, Mr. ROCHER, asked that bail be set but this was denied. Joseph was again remanded in custody for Plea the following day.<sup>6</sup>

Appearing before the court on Friday 17 September on the charge of Arson:

Joseph Dell was brought up and on being asked the usual question intimated through Mr. Rocher that he had nothing to say, and no witnesses to call. The magistrate then fully committed him for trial.<sup>7</sup>

While Joseph was awaiting trial, on 23 September, notice was given in the daily press that groceries from his fire damaged shop were to be auctioned off the next day, including '... tea, blue, starch, pipes, Irish pork, fine and coarse salt, whiting, pearl barley, pickles, cleaning crystal, soap, salad oil and vinegar &c, &c.'<sup>8</sup>

Joseph appears to have remained in gaol awaiting trial until the Supreme Court sat in Launceston on 8 January 1859 when he '... was brought to the bar and discharged,

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<sup>5</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Tue 14 Sep 1858, p.3

<sup>6</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Thu 23 Sep 1858, p.5

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Sat 18 Sep 1858, p.4

the Attorney-General having returned no true bill in the case.’<sup>9</sup>

Joseph, it seems, escaped what looked like a certain conviction on a technicality. The technicality was that, as stated in the Inquest, he hadn’t actually made a claim on the insurance companies. There would seem to be no doubt, however, from the evidence that the intention was there!

I have not been able to determine what eventually happened to Joseph’s wooden grocery store in Brisbane Street, Launceston but it appears that he moved from his Cameron Street property, as from 1863<sup>10</sup> onwards, he was living in his brick two-storey premise next door, possibly again operating a grocery store. This is uncertain, as there are no advertisements at all for sale of his groceries that I can find in Trove for the years 1859 until his death in 1867.

Financial stresses must have been still pressing as, shortly after his discharge from prison, on 23 March 1859, he advertised in the daily press cautioning against his wife, Mary Dell, incurring debts in his name without a written order.<sup>11</sup>

He does seem to have returned to the public arena, briefly, in the early 1860s, being noted on juries in the Recorders

Court and Supreme Court in 1862 and 1863.<sup>12</sup>

From 1860 onwards, if media reports on court appearances can be seen as an indication, Joseph’s fortunes were spiralling in a downward direction. This started in a very minor way with him being fined 10/- and 7/6d costs in 1860 for non-registration of dogs.<sup>13</sup>

Then in February 1862 he was fined for not having a license to brew ginger beer.<sup>14</sup> It certainly seems that the forces of law and order were keeping a close and jaundiced eye on him as in February 1863 and again in March 1865 he was convicted – and fined 10/- on each occasion – for being drunk and disorderly.<sup>15</sup>

Towards the end of his life there was still friction in the family because of the spending habits of his wife, Mary. In March 1866, a court list under the heading of ‘Sureties’ notes that a case, Joseph Dell v Mary Dell, had been dismissed as neither party had appeared.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after their father’s death, three of his sons, Thomas, William and David, gave a notice of caution against giving credit to Mary Dell, wife of the late Joseph Dell.<sup>17</sup> They were now in control of his estate.

Joseph Dell died at his home in Brisbane Street, Launceston, of consumption

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<sup>9</sup> *Courier* (Hobart, Tas.: 1840-1859). Wed 12 Jan 1859. p.3

<sup>10</sup> *Mercury* (Hobart, Tas.: 1860-1954), Tue 22 Sep 1863, p.2

<sup>11</sup> *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas.: 1835-1880), Wed 23 Mar 1859, p.2

<sup>12</sup> Launceston daily newspapers, Dec 1862- Dec 1863

<sup>13</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Thu 2 Aug 1860, p.3

<sup>14</sup> *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas.: 1835-1880), Wed 26 Feb 1862, p.5

<sup>15</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Sat 14 Feb 1863, p.3 and Sat 25 Mar 1865, p.3

<sup>16</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Sat 10 Mar 1866, p.5

<sup>17</sup> *Launceston Examiner* (Tas.:1842-1899), Thu 21 Nov 1867, p.6

(tuberculosis) on 18 March 1867, having left his 1847 Will/Deed of Trust unchanged and thus excluding his last two living children, Harriet and Joseph, from any legal share in his still significant estate.<sup>18</sup> I speculate that this may well have been based on legal advice that if he tried to change his Will/Trust Deed, his creditors from his past insolvency may have an opportunity to recover the remainder of their debt.

He was buried in the Cyprus Street Anglican Cemetery, Newstead, Launceston.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that there was only the one brief death notice in the local press and no funeral notice or obituary would suggest that, at his death, he was not held in high esteem by the local community.

An interesting but sad life!

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<sup>18</sup> *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas.: 1835-1880), Sat 23 Mar 1867, p.4; and Death Registration 298/1867, Names Index:1153392, RGD35/1.36 no.298 (Libraries Tasmania)

<sup>19</sup> Australia and New Zealand, Find A Grave Index, 1800s-present (Ancestry.com)

# James Ah Catt 蘇元吉 Chinese–Australian Entrepreneur

Juanita Kwok

In 1883, a reporter from *The Tasmanian* visited the tobacco ‘manufactory’ of Ah Catt & Co. in St Johns Street, Launceston, which had opened some two months earlier. It was reported that twelve employees were engaged by the firm, with more expected to arrive from Melbourne. Managed by James WHITELAW, it was the first such factory in Tasmania. The company’s plantations were at Invermay and Scottsdale and the factory was equipped with appliances for manufacturing tobacco in all its forms for local consumption and export.<sup>1</sup>

James AH CATT, who gave the company its name, was born in Canton, China c.1838. I have not established his date of arrival in Victoria, but it was reported he made money on the Wooragee goldfield.<sup>2</sup> He then turned to growing tobacco at

Kiewa, before establishing a tobacco manufactory in Yackandandah, Victoria.<sup>3</sup> At nearby Ellen Flat he married Clara REA, a native of Stourbridge, Staffordshire in 1871.<sup>4</sup> Most likely assisted by Clara to master the English language, Ah Catt was acting as an interpreter in court cases by 1878.<sup>5</sup> He established tobacco factories in Wangaratta and in Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, before moving to Launceston in 1882 and settling there with Clara and their daughter Louisa.<sup>6</sup>

In February 1883, Ah Catt & Co. exhibited tobacco manufactured from local leaf and from leaf imported from America at the Tasmanian Juvenile Industrial Exhibition. It was remarked that the cigars were “exceedingly well-made and are equal in appearance to the best continental cigars.”<sup>7</sup> In September, Ah Catt & Co.

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<sup>1</sup> A Promising Industry. *The Tasmanian* (Launceston, Tas. : 1881 - 1895) 30 June 1883: 712. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article200314969>.

<sup>2</sup> Brief Notes and Comments. *Upper Murray and Mitta Herald* (Vic. : 1885 - 1955) 5 December 1907: 2.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article271035813>.

<sup>3</sup> Yackandandah Tobacco Manufactory. *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* (Beechworth, Vic. : 1855; 1857 - 1890; 1892 - 1955) 14 February 1878: 3. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article/199686117>.

<sup>4</sup> BDMVIC 22/1871; A Chinaman’s complaint. *The North Western Chronicle* (Latrobe, Tas. : 1887 - 1888) 21 May 1888: 2.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article215574717>; Obituary. *The Mercury* (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) 9 April 1935: 8.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article30081251>.

<sup>5</sup> Telegraphic Despatches. *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* (Beechworth, Vic. : 1855; 1857 - 1890; 1892 - 1955) 4 June 1878: 2.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199692688>.

<sup>6</sup> Wangaratta Borough Council. *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* (Beechworth, Vic. : 1855; 1857 - 1890; 1892 - 1955) 14 February 1880: 1. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article200192238>; BDMVIC 13324/1875.

<sup>7</sup> Tasmanian Juvenile Industrial Exhibition. *The Mercury* (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 -

exhibited at the Calcutta International Exhibition in India and were awarded a Certificate of the First Class with a Silver Medal for tobacco and cigars manufactured from leaf grown in Northern Tasmania.<sup>8</sup> However, even as Ah Catt was seeking to establish local and export markets for Tasmanian grown and manufactured tobacco, the Tasmanian government had appointed two customs officers to investigate Ah Catt & Co.'s plantations and factory.<sup>9</sup>

The first part of 1884 was a promising time when James Ah Catt, a committed Christian, met with Archdeacon HALES and the Reverends LAW, BAKER, PRICE, MARSHALL and WHITE at the Mechanics Institute in Launceston and a committee was appointed to establish a Chinese Mission in Tasmania.<sup>10</sup> In August 1884, however, it was reported that the tobacco factory was losing money. James Ah Catt had invested £5000 in the factory, but found the climate in Deloraine, Invermay, Lefroy, Scottsdale and Pipers River, where the company had expanded to grow tobacco, was not altogether suitable and the Tasmanian grown leaf required several years seasoning before use. Consequently, the firm had to reduce the number of employees and divert them

to making cigars from American leaf. The Tasmanian government had imposed a tax of 3s per pound on imported leaf, and heavy taxes on everything used in the production of cigars from rum, gum arabic, liquorice, molasses to cigar-boxes etc. Ah Catt & Co. asked the government to assist the business by remission of some of the duties or they would be compelled to abandon the enterprise.<sup>11</sup>

Victoria had some years earlier introduced excise duties on colonial tobacco, tariffs on imported leaf and exorbitant licence fees for tobacco manufacturers. In 1880, a deputation of cigar manufacturers waited on the Victorian Commissioner of Customs to tell him that the introduction of a licence fee of £150 a year would ruin small manufacturers. They were told 'the government desired to stop the manufacture of bad tobacco and worse cigars now carried on in the country by Chinamen and others because the vile rubbish produced by these men injured the general trade.'<sup>12</sup> Now Tasmania was doing the same to its new local industry. In November 1884, Ah Catt met with the Tasmanian Premier and Treasurer to ask them to consider reducing the duty on imported leaf. The reply of the Ministers

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1954) 9 February 1883: 3.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article/9026901>

<sup>8</sup> *Official Report Of The Calcutta International Exhibition*

[https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.32152/2015.32152.Official-Report-Of-The-Calcutta-International-Exhibition-1883-84--Vol1\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.32152/2015.32152.Official-Report-Of-The-Calcutta-International-Exhibition-1883-84--Vol1_djvu.txt)

<sup>9</sup> The Board of Immigration. (1883, September 22). *The Tasmanian* (Launceston,

*Tas. : 1881 - 1895*), p. 1114.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article200315965>

<sup>10</sup> Launceston. *The Mercury* (Hobart, *Tas. : 1860 - 1954*) 25 July 1884: 3.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article9090803>.

<sup>11</sup> *The Mercury*. *The Mercury* (Hobart, *Tas. : 1860 - 1954*) 7 August 1884: 2.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article9091416>.

<sup>12</sup> Advertising. *The Avoca Mail* (Vic. : 1863 - 1900; 1915 - 1918) 5 November 1880: 3.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article201295415>.

was ‘that it would not be the policy of the government to accede to the request.’<sup>13</sup>

This was not the only obstacle placed in the way of Chinese Australian business enterprise. In 1887, Tasmania followed the lead of other colonies by introducing a poll tax on Chinese entering the colony. Ah Catt expressed his opposition to the poll tax in a letter to the *Launceston Examiner*, writing of the contribution Chinese had made to the development of North East Tasmania, declaring, “The Chinese get nothing but what they work exceedingly hard for, and that too, under the most disadvantageous circumstances.”<sup>14</sup> In the mid-1880s, NSW and Victoria stopped granting naturalisations to people born in China. In Tasmania, Chinese people were permitted to be naturalised up until the introduction of the Commonwealth *Naturalisation Act 1903*. James Ah Catt was one of almost 600 Chinese people who were naturalised in Tasmania up to December 1903.<sup>15</sup> In 1887, the 46 year old tobacco manufacturer was naturalised as a British subject.<sup>16</sup>

In 1888 James Ah Catt was informed by the Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company that they would refuse to grant him a passage in their boats in

consequence of him being a native of the Empire of China and in consequence of the fact that the government threatened to quarantine their steamers should any Chinese be on board as passengers. Ah Catt wrote to Premier Gillies stating he had been a resident of Victoria, NSW and Tasmania for upward of 31 years; that he was naturalised, married and the owner of property in Carlton.<sup>17</sup> As was his right, James Ah Catt continued to travel between his home in Launceston, where Ah Catt & Co. had stores in Brisbane and Charles Streets, and to Victoria to attend to business affairs at the Ah Catt & Co. store in Little Bourke Street.

James Ah Catt was highly respected in the Launceston community as a member of the Tasmanian Turf Club, Vice President of a number of football and cricket clubs and shareholder in a gold mines along with some of Tasmania’s wealthiest businessmen. He was a dedicated philanthropist, who together with his business partners Chin KIT and Henry Thom SING, raised funds for the Launceston City and Suburbs Improvement Association by staging a spectacular Chinese Carnival at City Park in 1891, a performance of Cantonese Opera at Albert Hall in 1893 and a

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<sup>13</sup> Tasmanian News. *The Tasmanian (Launceston, Tas. : 1881 - 1895)* 1 November 1884: 19. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article200330850>.

<sup>14</sup> The Chinese Question. *Launceston Examiner (Tas. : 1842 - 1899)* 23 July 1887: 1 (Supplement to the Launceston Examiner.). <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article39533902>.

<sup>15</sup> Bagnall, Kate, A Naturalised Chinese Tasmanian: Ah One from Hobart, The Tigers Mouth, accessed 27 March 2024,

<https://chineseaustralia.org/category/chinese-naturalisation>

<sup>16</sup> James Ah Catt, Certificate of Naturalisation, *Tasmanian Names Index*, Libraries Tasmania, NAME\_INDEXES: 1797567, accessed 27 March 2024.

<sup>17</sup> A Chinaman’s Complaint. *The North Western Chronicle (Latrobe, Tas. : 1887 - 1888)* 21 May 1888: 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article215574717>.

dazzling fireworks event at Cataract Gorge in 1895.<sup>18</sup>

James Ah Catt died on 15 November 1907, aged 68 at his home in Welman Street, Launceston, survived by his widow, Clara, daughter Louisa and adopted son, Harry.<sup>19</sup> At his funeral, the hymn 'Rock of Ages'

was sung, first in English by the European mourners and then by the Chinese mourners in their own language.<sup>20</sup>

I would like to acknowledge and thank Megan Neilson and Gillian Oxley for their contributions to this article.

## Help Wanted

I live in South Australia.

I am trying to trace information on Jessamine Gertrude TOBIN born 18 December 1885 Launceston to parents Richard TOBIN and Gertrude GARCIA.

Gertrude then married William CARROLL.

Gertrude placed Jessamine in a home or convent run by nuns. I have been unable to find anything on where she was placed.

Jessamine married Henry CROWHURST.

I am hoping you can help us with information on where to look.

Graham Austin rabbitohos@yahoo.com.au

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<sup>18</sup> The Carnival. *Launceston Examiner* (Tas. : 1842 - 1899) 19 February 1891: 3.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article39563981>;

Chinese Opera Company. *Launceston*

*Examiner* (Tas. : 1842 - 1899) 9 May 1893: 5.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article90215897>;

Cataract Cliff Grounds. *Launceston Examiner* (Tas. : 1842 - 1899) 8 March 1895: 7.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article39603404>.

<sup>19</sup> James Ah Catt, Will, *Tasmanian Names Index*, Libraries Tasmania, accessed 27 March 2024,

<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/Record/NamesIndex/1991642;AD960-1-59> [Will No. 20836] -

Catt, Clara Jane Ah,

[https://libraries.tas.gov.au/Digital/AD960-1-59/AD960-1-59-20836\\_1](https://libraries.tas.gov.au/Digital/AD960-1-59/AD960-1-59-20836_1)

<sup>20</sup> K.S. Liew, 'Chin Kaw (1865-1922)',

*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Australian National University,

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/chin-kaw-5581/text9523>, published first in hardcopy

1979, accessed online 26 March 2024.

# The Boy in the Iron Lung

Janine Marshall Wood (Member 7145)

As if the Great Depression years had not been grim enough for Tasmania, 1937 brought another horror to torment. The Tasmanian Infantile Paralysis Epidemic struck between 1937 and 1938. There was no protection against the disease until 1956, except natural immunity due to a prior attack.<sup>1</sup> Over 2,000 adults and children were affected statewide, with 81 deaths, making Tasmania the second-highest infection rate per capita in the world.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Joan MCMEEKEN explained that:

Houses were fumigated, people quarantined, and entire families ostracised. Desperately worried parents resorted to hanging pungent camphor around their children's necks in a misguided effort to ward off the virus, and some fled to the mountains to escape.<sup>3</sup>

I grew up hearing about my second cousin once removed, and concurrently my third cousin once removed (this is Tasmania, after all), Geoffrey GRAY of Waratah, who contracted polio as a six-year-old.

Geoff was the second of three brothers. He was an ordinary little boy who loved to

play cowboys and Indians, cricket and football, learn about aeroplanes, dote on his pets, and explore in the bush. He also loved books, appearing more thoughtful and contemplative than others his age.



*Cowboy Geoff*

Geoff collapsed during recess at Waratah State School. When the doctor noted the fever, headache, muscle and joint tenderness, he knew that immediate and complete bed rest in hospital was essential

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<sup>1</sup> Killalea, Anne. *The Great Scourge: The Tasmanian Infantile Paralysis Epidemic 1937-1938*. Tasmanian Historical Research Assoc., Sandy Bay, 1995, p 7

<sup>2</sup> Polio epidemic (1937-1938). <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/ref/tas/biogs/TE00387b.htm> accessed 23 Mar 2024.

Anne Killalea, in *The Great Scourge*, however, states that Tasmania was the worst place in the world to experience the epidemic.

<sup>3</sup> Remembering Australia's Polio Scourge. <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/remembering-australia-s-polio-scourge> accessed 23 Mar 2024



with careful nursing, including saline baths. He was also mindful that once the disease entered the body, it was impossible to halt its relentless advance.<sup>4</sup> A relative, whose 1937 Ford doubled up as the town's only ambulance, rushed Geoff and his mother, Elvie, to Launceston. In the way of epidemics, that Ford V/8 sedan had to be quarantined in the city for a month and for 'deep cleaning'.

It took at least 4 ½ hours, probably much longer, along the unmade road to Burnie, thence to Launceston General Hospital. This less-than-ideal ambulance could not have helped Geoff because not only were there innumerable hairpin bends, potholes aplenty and hazardous conditions throughout, but he required a firm bed and total rest, being in imminent danger of severe paralysis.

Later, Geoff found himself isolated in the infectious ward of Launceston Hospital, where, for three weeks, he could not be touched. Elvie could only view him through a window, but being tiny, she had to stand on something to even so much as glimpse her lonely, frightened little boy.

For 6½ years, he was confined to the hospital, never to return home. Most of this time was spent in an 'iron lung' or respirator, with paralysed limbs – a sealed space that created a negative pressure so the air was sucked into the chest. As the *Advocate* of 9 August 1944 observed: 'In spite of his affliction, he was always bright and cheerful.'



*Geoff outside the hospital*

His parents, Elvie and Carl, were determined to keep his spirits up and to support him to the hilt. For the first years, Elvie and oldest son Alyson moved into the Exchange Hotel to be close to Geoff and for Al to attend Technical College. In 1940, Elvie and Carl bought a house opposite the hospital, and there were a few rare days when Geoff was permitted to visit in the large hospital pram bed, purposely built for patients. Carl drove his Essex at least every fortnight to see the family, with Geoff cherishing these times together.<sup>5</sup>

Being unable to move his arms, Geoff wrote, drew and painted by mouth. His 1944 diary patiently and painstakingly

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<sup>4</sup> Killalea, op cit, p 6

<sup>5</sup> This is obvious through multiple references in his diary, held by the family.

written by this method is a precis of his days. He plays the usual games of Monopoly, Draughts, Checkers, etc., noting his victories (and occasional losses). He remarks upon every visit from family and friends never missing a name. It is striking that so many of the large extended family from Waratah and Launceston came often to see him.

He also comments every time Elvie or either of his brothers go to the cinema. Was he wistful ... envious ... jealous ... or perhaps thrilled for them? It's impossible to tell with the bald statement, 'Neville went to the pictures.' In the same vein, he also states each time Elvie returns to Waratah. Did this cause him anguish? Did he suspect that he would never return?

Twice in 1944, he was allowed 'downtown' in the hospital pram bed, where he bought books and gifts. He loved to read but depended upon somebody to turn the pages. Radio (or the wireless then) was vital for Geoff. He feasted upon the Argonauts and other children's programs, gaining a wide circle of friends through them. The *Examiner* believed that he 'was known to practically every child in the community' of Launceston.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, he adored receiving letters and dictating replies to a range of correspondents. His nurses even wrote to him when on holiday.

Newspapers were another lifeline for Geoff. He was a well-known contributor of letters, stories, and poetry, often winning prizes through the *Advocate* and *Examiner*.<sup>7</sup> His poem *Buzzie Season* won a competition when he was 12:

There are buzzies on my jumper,  
And buzzies in my hair.  
The buzzie season's here again,  
There are buzzies everywhere.

There are buzzies on the tablecloth,  
And down upon the mat.  
The buzzie season's here again,  
There's one in Dad's new hat.

There's some in Uncle's slippers,  
And also on his chair.  
The buzzie season's here again,  
For everyone to share.

They are growing on the hilltop,  
And up beside the shed.  
The buzzie season's here again,  
They're even in my bed.

There are buzzies in the wardrobe,  
And in my brother's suit.  
The buzzie season's here again,  
I've found one in my boot.

There are buzzies on my pillow,  
And buzzies in my socks.  
The buzzie season's here again,  
Mine are in a box.

We had a buzzie fight today,  
And don't know which side won.  
The buzzie season's here again,  
And we had a lot of fun.<sup>8</sup>

When he was 12, the *Burnie Advocate* wrote about his remarkable mathematical skills.

In a test he was asked (*using mental arithmetic*) to multiply 541,510 by 79 and multiply the result by 20, the answer, 124,884,410 was arrived at in 10 minutes. He brought £23/9/9 to

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<sup>6</sup> *The Examiner*, 9 Sep 1944

<sup>7</sup> *Op cit*

<sup>8</sup> *The Advocate* (Burnie) 17 Jan 1944, p 4.

halfpence in 70 seconds ....is also keenly interested in aeroplanes and can give practically any information as to speed, weight and other dimensions and characteristics of almost any plane.<sup>9</sup>

To return to his diary of 1944 . . .

Tuesday 15 August: Nev began his exams. Today posted letter to Roberts and Mullins.

The following two days are blank. (He had never left pages empty before).

Friday 18 August: [In another's handwriting] *Day Geoff died*. He was 13 ½.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Op cit

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/212861187/geoffrey-carl-gray>; *The Examiner*, 9 Sep 1944

# A Fighting Spirit – Thomas Dixon: A Convict Case Study

Judith Meehan

Submitted for the Patron's Award

Thomas DIXON was born on 12 April 1785 to John and Ann Dixon and was baptised soon after at Fitzroy Chapel in Middlesex.<sup>1</sup> He was, it seems, a rather luckless prize fighter as his lack of finances meant that he found himself hauled before the Middlesex Sessions at the Old Bailey on 29 May 1811, where he pleaded guilty to knowingly possessing forged £5 bank notes.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately for Thomas, he was acquitted of having personally forged the notes – a capital offence—as the prosecution declined to provide any evidence.<sup>3</sup> Thomas was 26 years old at the time and said to be ‘a prize fighter’; the sentence handed down to him was that he be transported for the term of 14 years.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to transportation, Thomas would spend almost a year incarcerated in England, initially at the infamous Newgate Prison where conditions for prisoners housed on the Common side were pitiful and disease was rife. It is quite likely that Thomas would have been kept in irons during this time and possibly would have been required to pay for even the most basic necessities – food rations were considered hardly capable of sustaining life.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, on 3 August 1811, Thomas was moved on board the prison hulk *Laurel* which was moored at Portsmouth harbour, there he remained until May 1812.<sup>6</sup> Upon boarding the hulk, Thomas was issued with a jacket, breeches, two shirts, gloves, a

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<sup>1</sup> Baptism of Thomas Dixon, 5 May 1785, Fitzroy Chapel, St Pancras, Camden, Middlesex, England, London, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812, Ancestry.com.

<sup>2</sup> Trial of Thomas Dixon (t18110529-23), May 1811, Old Bailey Proceedings Online, www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 8.0, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18110529-23>; Thomas Dixon, Newgate, National Archives, Kew, Surrey, England, HO 26/17, England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892, Middlesex, 1811, Ancestry.com.

<sup>3</sup> Trial of Thomas Dixon (t18110529-24), Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 29th May 1811, Old Bailey Proceedings Online, www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 8.0,

<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18110529-24>.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Dixon, England & Wales Criminal Registers, 1791-1892.

<sup>5</sup> W. Eden Hooper, *History of Newgate and the Old Bailey and a Survey of the Fleet Prison and Fleet Marriages, the Marshalsea and Other Old London Jails*, Underwood Press, London, 1935, pp.51-52, HeinOnline, accessed May 2021; Daniel Isaac Eaton, *Extortions and abuses of Newgate, exhibited in a memorial and explanation, presented to the Lord Mayor ... February 15, 1813*, London, 1813, p. 22, Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature, Senate House Library, University of London, GALE|U0107017581.

<sup>6</sup> Thos Dixon, National Archives, Kew, Surrey, England, HO9/9, Convict hulks

handkerchief, shoes and stockings, as well as one blanket and the obligatory leg irons.<sup>7</sup> For 267 days his daily routine would have consisted of long hours of hard labour and the most basic rations, which, very surprisingly, may have been supplemented with fresh vegetables grown alongside the *Laurel* hulk around this time.<sup>8</sup>

The *Indefatigable*, carrying its cargo of 200 male convicts, including Thomas, set sail from England to Hobart, via Rio, in June 1812 – initially in the company of the *Minstrel*.<sup>9</sup> This was the first instance of convicts being transported directly from England to Van Diemen's Land.<sup>10</sup> Presumably, those aboard the *Indefatigable* received some unusual

measure of sustenance and care as there was just a single death recorded for the journey of 137 days, when the average at that time would equate to about 1 death per 300 persons for each month of the voyage.<sup>11</sup> The convicts were disembarked at Hobart Town in October 1812 and although no record of assignment for Thomas was found from this date, it can be seen from a later convict list that he was disposed of to Government labour.<sup>12</sup> It could be possible, given the time of his arrival, that he might have been amongst those convicts that were appropriated by the commandant of Hobart Town, Major Andrew GEILS, for his own private use, much to the immense disapproval of Governor MACQUARIE.<sup>13</sup> During this

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moored at Portsmouth: Laurel, York, Hardy, Convict Prison Hulks, Registers and Letter Books, Image 24 of 329, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286833>.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Dixon, *Laurel's Book for Year 1810, 1810-1812*, National Archives, Kew, Surrey, England, T38/320, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Findmypast.com.

<sup>8</sup> James Nield, *State of the Prisons in England, Scotland and Wales*, J. Nichols and Son, London, 1812, pp. 628-629, <https://archive.org/details/stateofprisonsin00neil/page/n7/mode/2up>, accessed June 2021; 'Convict Hulks', Digital Panopticon, [https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/Convict\\_Hulks](https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/Convict_Hulks).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Dixon, *Indefatigable*, 1812, New South Wales, Australia Convict Ship Muster Rolls and Related Records, 1790-1849, *Indefatigable*, 1812, New South Wales Government, Ancestry.com.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Statistics - Tasmania, 2008, 1803-1850s, British outpost*, 1384.6,

<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.Nsf/39433889d406eeb9ca2570610019e9a5/f2cda952576f9fa5ca2573c5000da199?OpenDocument>, accessed 17 June 2021; 'Postscript', *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 24 October 1812, p. 3,

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article628559>.

<sup>11</sup> John Mc Donald and Ralph Shlomowitz, 'Mortality on Convict Voyages to Australia, 1788-1868' *Social Science History* 13, no. 3 (1989): 285-313,

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1171373>.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Dixon, *Indefatigable*, 1812, New South Wales, Male, 1818, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey, England, HO 10/10, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, Ancestry.com.

<sup>13</sup> Frederick Watson, *Despatches and Papers Relating to the Settlement of the States, Tasmania, July 1812 - December 1819*, Historical Records of Australia, Series III, The Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1921, pp. 53-54, <https://arrow.latrobe.edu.au/store/3/4/9/2/0/public/B13858427S3V2Frontcover,%20prelim&pages1-220.pdf>.

period of building the colony, it was not unusual for the administration at the time to select those whom they considered to be the better convicts for Government labour, which might offer some slight insight into Thomas's character or skills.<sup>14</sup> The Alphabetical Lists of Male Convicts afford some personal details regarding Thomas. He is recorded here as prisoner number 11, who is 32 years old and a native of London, with light brown hair and grey eyes, with a large scar on his left thigh; he is of short stature at only five feet, four inches tall. Interestingly, he is described in this record as a shoemaker: whether or not he worked for the government in this capacity is unclear.<sup>15</sup>

Thomas appears to have kept his nose clean during his time as a convict, or perhaps he was clever enough to fly under the radar as his conduct record is devoid of entries.<sup>16</sup> In his defence, the case for his

good behaviour is reinforced by a letter which accompanied the petition of his wife Sarah, also known as Charlotte, to join him in the colony, stating that 'Lieutenant Governor DAVY has countinanced [countenanced] her husband for his good conduct'.<sup>17</sup> Thomas is also noted in additional convict records, further to those already mentioned, including a ships muster roll and a convict muster for New South Wales and Tasmania; however, there was no more information to be gleaned from these regarding his life, or his experiences between transportation and emancipation.<sup>18</sup> What is known is that Thomas's wife Sarah, along with their two young daughters, Eleanor and Mary Anne, undertook the gruelling journey from England to join him in Hobart Town in 1815.<sup>19</sup> After being reunited, the Dixons went on to have six more children who were born in the colony.<sup>20</sup> On 31 January

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<sup>14</sup> Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, *The Bushrangers and the Convict System of Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1846*, 1990, as cited in Richard Tuffin, *The evolution of convict labour management in van Diemen's land: Placing the 'penal peninsula' in a colonial context*, Papers and Proceedings: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Vol. 54, No. 2, Aug 2007: 69-83, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Dixon, PN 11, *Indefatigable*, Alphabetical Registers of Male Convicts, 1 Jan 1803-31 Dec 1830, Surnames A-F, D1-32, Convict Department (TA60), Libraries Tasmania, CON23/1/1.

<sup>16</sup> Conduct record of Thomas Dixon, *Indefatigable*, 1812, Conduct Registers of Male Convicts arriving in the Period of the Assignment System, Tasmanian Archives, CON31/1/9.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew Bowly to Governor Macquarie, letter, June 29 1815, Main Series of Letters Received, 1788-1826, New South Wales,

Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, Ancestry.com.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Dixon, *Indefatigable*, 1812, List of convicts (incomplete), 1820, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey, England, HO 10/44, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, Ancestry.com.; Thomas Dixon, New South Wales, Australia Convict Ship Muster Rolls, 1812.

<sup>19</sup> Charlotte Dixon, *Northampton*, 1815, Main Series of Letters Received, 1788-1826, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, Ancestry.com; Charlotte Dixon, *Emu*, 1815, Copies of Letters Sent Within The Colony, 1814-1827, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, Ancestry.com.

<sup>20</sup> Birth register entries for Caroline Dixon, born 17 June 1816, Tasmanian Archives, RGD32/1/1/ no 485; Emma Augusta Dixon, born 9 November 1817, Tasmanian Archives,

1820, Thomas Dixon, convicted felon, received an absolute pardon, having served just over half of his original 14-year sentence.<sup>21</sup>

It appears that Thomas wasted no time in establishing himself. Free of the constraints of being a convict, he was granted a publican's license for the Kangaroo Inn on Liverpool Street, Hobart Town on 7 October 1820, just nine months after his pardon.<sup>22</sup> Between 1823 and 1838 he received several grants of land in Ralphs Bay totalling 400 acres.<sup>23</sup> From fighter, to felon, to farmer, he appears to have triumphed over his circumstances

and must have felt an incredible sense of achievement and pride in January of 1842 to see the words "that beautiful farm of Mr. Thomas Dixon" in an advertisement for a neighbouring property.<sup>24</sup>

Sadly, in September 1842, Thomas, aged only 57, along with Sarah, who had moved across the world to be with her husband, perished in a freak boating accident while returning home to their property in Ralphs Bay.<sup>25</sup> Their small schooner was overturned by a gust of wind as two of their daughters watched helplessly from the shore. Despite extensive searches, the body of Thomas Dixon was never found.<sup>26</sup>

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RGD32/1/1/ no 604; Thomas Dixon, born 23 June 1819, Tasmanian Archives, RGD32/1/1/ no 730; Edward Dixon, born 22 November 1820, Tasmanian Archives, RGD32/1/1/ no 881; Henry Dixon, born 10 July 1822, Tasmanian Archives, RGD32/1/1/ no 1250; Sarah Dixon, born 10 August 1827, Tasmanian Archives, RGD32/1/2 no 5231.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Dixon, *Indefatigable*, Absolute Pardon, 1820, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Registers of Conditional and Absolute Pardons, 1788-1870, Ancestry.com.

<sup>22</sup> 'Government Public Notice', *Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, 7 October 1820, p. 1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article658504>.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Dixon, grant of 100 acres at Ralphs Bay, 30 June 1823; Thomas Dixon, grant of

100 acres at Ralphs Bay, 10 May 1838; Thomas Dixon, grant of 200 acres at Ralphs Bay, 7 September 1838, [all from] Tasmania, Australia, Deeds of Land Grants, 1804-1935, Ancestry.com.

<sup>24</sup> 'Advertising', *Colonial Times*, 4 January 1842, p. 1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8752329>

<sup>25</sup> 'Dreadful Calamity', *Austral-Asiatic Review, Tasmanian and Australian Advertiser*, 30 September 1842, p. 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article232480708>.

<sup>26</sup> 'Local', *Courier*, Hobart, Tasmania 1840 - 1859, 30 September 1842, p. 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2953721>; 'Dreadful Calamity', *Austral-Asiatic Review, Tasmanian and Australian Advertiser*.

# Updating Tasmanian Birth, Death and Marriage Records: You can Help

Andrew Cocker (Member 6865)

**B**irth, death and marriage records are very dear to the heart of all family historians and it is now some 20 years since our last project which resulted in the Federation Index. This and the earlier Pioneer Index have become difficult to access for most people because it requires older, 32-bit versions of Windows software to run. Fortunately, the data has been incorporated into Library Tasmania's Names Index, but further work is at hand.

Release of BDM information is restricted for both personal privacy and national security reasons as follows:

- Birth records: until one hundred years (1924)
- Marriage records: until 75 years (1949)
- Death records: until 25 years (1999)

There are projects underway, or planned, to bring the Names Index up to these dates.

## Births

Archives Tasmania is currently adding new volumes of the original birth records to *DigiVol* as others are transcribed and validated by volunteers. The data is then extracted and cleaned, and uploaded to the Names Index. When an entire year of records (and all districts) are completed, it is removed from the corresponding Federation Index data.

## Deaths

The BDM Registrar has given permission to Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart to digitise death records from 1929 to 1970 (funded by an Australian Research Council grant) for the purposes of assisting important research work on Intergenerational Inequality. In future, there is potential for these records to be added to the Names Index. As the records are scanned, they are being put through an AI transcription model, and a researcher will then work to correct and clean the data. The scanning and AI process is now three-quarters complete.

## Marriages

It is planned to add early Tasmanian marriage records to the *DigiVol* project for volunteer transcription as work on the early births continues.

## How long will all this take?

It depends upon the number of volunteers, which is where we come in, because every one of us can register and become a volunteer transcriber, choosing to do as much or as little as we are able.

## What is DigiVol?

DigiVol is a crowdsourcing platform that was developed by the Australian Museum in collaboration with the Atlas of Living Australia. It is used by many institutions



around the world as a way of combining the efforts of many volunteers to digitise their data. This data may be in the form of museum object labels, field notebooks and diaries, recording sheets, registers or photographs. It is also perfect for family history records.

Its focus on biological and geological records means that it uses somewhat strange language (to us) about expeditions and field trips but in essence it is simply a system to provide high quality digital images and a matching template to be completed by the transcriber. Each Expedition or volume (set of images to be transcribed) has a printable tutorial that provides guidance for the transcriber.

After transcription the records are checked by an authorised validator who has final say. Several TFHS members have been approved as validators. The data is then subject to a final quality assurance check

by Archives staff and added to the Names Index.

### **You can help**

All members are encouraged to consider contributing to this project. Even half an hour per week spread across many members would make a big difference.

More detail about DigiVol and how you can volunteer and get started may be found at the bottom of this page: <https://volunteer.ala.org.au>

‘Our’ records can be found by searching Institutions for Libraries Tasmania.

You will also find further information and support on becoming a volunteer transcriber by following the link on the home page of the society website, [www.tasfhs.org](http://www.tasfhs.org).

The assistance of both the BDM Registrar and Archives Tasmania in preparing this update is gratefully acknowledged.

## Library Acquisitions

\* Indicates a donated item

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6224	WARD Dr Malcolm maward7190@gmail.com	PO Box 275	ORFORD	TAS	7190
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7848	McMILLAN Mr Andrew Mcmillanandrew57@gmail.com	2 Lake Vue Pde	MIDWAY POINT	TAS	7171
<b>The above members have re-joined after a break and have been allocated their original number</b>					
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8401	SPEED Mr Anthony aspeed01@gmail.com	531 Nelson Rd	MOUNT NELSON	TAS	7007
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8414	LENNON Mrs Michelle	Not for publication			
8415	GREEN Mrs Fay mwg4fbg@xtra.co.nz	763 Weedons Ross Rd	WEST MELTON	NEW ZEALAND	7618
8416	WOODLAND Mrs Judith judith.woodland@outlook.co	45 Hamilton Dr	RINGWOOD NORTH	VIC	3134
8417	COOPER Ms Donna	Not for publication			
8418	McMASTER Mr Andrew andrew@bridgecrofttas.com	23 Prossers Rd	RICHMOND	TAS	7025
8419	LOWE Ms Leonie	Not for publication			
8420	RANSLEY Mrs Sally sransley002@gmail.com	6 Merley Rd	AUSTINS FERRY	TAS	7011
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8423	HANSON Ms Helen	Not for publication			
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8440	PECK Mr Rodney rodandfleur@gmail.com	PO Box 452	KINGS MEADOWS	TAS	7249
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8443	FISHER Mr Greg Gregory.david.fisher@gmail.com	PO Box 8071	TREVALLYN	TAS	7250

## New Members' Interests

NAME	PLACE/AREA	TIME	M'SHIP NO.
ALLPORT Lily	London ENG/Paris FRA/Hobart TAS AUS	1860–1949	8400
ALLPORT Lizzie	Hobart TAS AUS	1835–1925	8400
ATHORN Hannah	Sorell TAS AUS	1800–1850	8431
BADCOCK Mary		1881–1966	8422
BAILEY Edwin	St Helens/The Gardens TAS AUS	c.1800	8439
BAILEY Florence	ENG UK	1896–1956	8420
BAILEY William Ross	Hobart TAS AUS	1846–1939	8420
BATES	Brighton TAS AUS	1800–1900	8432
BLACK Leila Vera Ellen	Bracknell TAS AUS	c.1937>	8407
BLAKE	Great Bedwyn WIL ENG	1700–1850	6224
BOBE	Germany	1500>	8438
BOXALL John	Hobart TAS AUS	c.1800	7848
BRETT John McPherson	TAS AUS	1800–2000	8405
BROWN Gladys	Launceston TAS AUS	c.1900	8428
BROWN John William	Launceston TAS AUS	1854–1925	8428
BROWN Pleenerperrere Palawa Nancy	Ringarooma TAS AUS	1796–1845	8428
BROWN Richard John			8428
BROWNE Francis Edward Douglas	Hobart/Launceston TAS AUS	1826–1844	8424
BUNGE	Germany	1500>	8438
BURGESS Edward	Geeveston TAS AUS	1870–1954	8437
BURNES Mary Matilda	Glasgow SCT	1856–1917	8420
CARTY Michael	English Town KIK IRL/TAS AUS	1798–1876	2665
CHAPMAN James	TYR IRL	1785>	1171
CHARLTON Thomas William	Hobart TAS AUS	1841–1923	8420
CLARIDGE James	Argentina	1828–1890	8425
COCKER Willis	Wincobank YKS	c.1868	8434
CONNOLLY Margaret	Launceston TAS AUS	1850–1900	8416
CORRIGAN Thomas William John	Bethnel Green MDX ENG/Fremantle WA	1826–1905	8435
CRANE John Isaac	Sandfly /Strahan/Zeehan TAS AUS	1850–1900	2665
CURE John Dennis	Bishopsbourne TAS AUS	1835–1888	2665
CURTIS John Thomas	Birmingham SAL ENG/North Dandalup WA AUS	1832–1909	8435
DANN Irene Maude	Bushy Park TAS AUS		8419
DAVIS James	Launceston TAS AUS	1860–1879	8416
DAVIS Phillip	Launceston TAS AUS	1845–1880	8416
DIXON Alliston James	Perivale London ENG	1916–1930	8429
DIXON Mary Ann	Attleborough NFK ENG	1813–1851	8426
DOBSON Charles Rev	TAS AUS / NZ	1800>	1171
DUNCAN Alexander	Rothesay BUT SCT/Bendigo VIC AUS	1818–1888	8435
ELLIS Charles	ENG UK	c.1800	7848
FINN Richard	Recherche Bay TAS AUS	1850–1891	8410
FLEMING Henry			8401
FLUX Louisa	Southampton ENG	1850–1900	8429

NAME	PLACE/AREA	TIME	M'SHIP NO.
FRASER Alexander	Ross TAS AUS	1865–1869	6984
FRASER Alexander	Inverness SCT	1834–1855	6984
FREEMAN Evelyn			8401
FROST	Germany	1500>	8438
FULTON Arthur	Hobart TAS AUS	c.1800	7848
GARRATY Grace Constance		1884–1966	8422
GARSDIE William	Launceston TAS AUS	1815–1875	8425
GLOVER William Herbert	LAN ENG/St Helens TAS AUS	1873–1924	2665
GRAY Louisa Maude	TAS AUS	1909>	8405
GROVES Edith Elie	Scottsdale TAS AUS		8427
HABEL	Germany	1500>	8438
HALL John	Deloraine TAS AUS	1850–1900	8442
HALL Mary Ann	Deloraine TAS AUS	1860–1883	8442
HARRISON Albert	Peak Hill NSW AUS	1920–1985	8437
HATTON Geoffrey William	Salisbury SA AUS	c.1960	8434
HATTON Herbert	Balby Doncaster YKS	1888–1947	8434
HOLLIS Ellen	Co Tyr IRE	1820–1851	8418
INGLEBY William Thomas Percival	Birmingham ENG	1890 ? >	8422
JACOBSON George Arthur	Launceston/Burnie TAS AUS	1890–1981	8431
JACOBSON Nisan/Nisson	Sorell/New Norfolk TAS AUS	1800–1850	8431
JOHNSON Edward	Launceston TAS AUS	c.1843–1870	8426
KELTY William Ellis	Longford TAS AUS	1890–1953	8420
KENNEALLY Margaret	Launceston TAS AUS	1850–1900	8416
LADE C W	Latrobe TAS AUS	1900>	8406
LAMPKIN Arthur Edward		1888–1951	8422
LANGRIDGE Edward	ENG UK/WA AUS	1820–1898	8435
LATHAM Ruby Ethel		1892–1941	8422
LIPSCOMBE Frederick	TAS AUS	1830>	1171
LORING Samuel	Hobart TAS AUS	1830–1850	8408
MASTERMAN Robert	Devonport/Launceston TAS AUS	c.1850	8439
McKINLEY Alice	Brighton TAS AUS	1857–1948	8443
McKINLEY John	Donegal IRL	1822–1886	8443
McMASTER Thomas	Co Tyr IRE	1840–1850	8418
McMILLAN Henry	SCT UK	c.1800	7848
MENZIE Ivy Joyce	TAS AUS	1910>	8405
MITCHELL Richard	Latrobe TAS AUS	1875>	8406
MORRISBY James	TAS AUS	1756>	1171
MULLEN (FLUX) Alma	Burnie/Hobart TAS AUS	1895–1976	8429
MURPHY Mary Ann	Tartaraghan ARM IRL	1828–1849	8442
NORTH Alexander	Rowella TAS AUS	c.1907>	8407
OPIE Lelia Gertrude	WA AUS/Georgetown TAS AUS	1892–1974	8435
ORR Thomas	Edinburgh SCT/Launceston TAS AUS	c.1900	8439
PARKER George	Attleborough NFK ENG	c.1832	8426
RANSLEY George	TAS AUS/KEN ENG		1171
REID Allan Felix	St Helens TAS AUS		8427
RITCHIE Charles	London ENG/Paris FRA/TAS AUS	1863–1948	8400



NAME	PLACE/AREA	TIME	M'SHIP NO.
RITCHIE Hannah	Scone PER SCT	1797–1882	8400
SCHUEPMANN	Germany	1500>	8438
SCHULTZ	Germany	1500>	8438
SCOTT Joseph	Brighton TAS AUS	1854–1925	8443
SEABROOK	SFK ENG	1700–1850	6224
SEARL Frances	TAS AUS	1840–1900	8433
SHARITT Sophia		1826–1904	8428
SIBLEY William			8401
SMITH John	Hobart TAS AUS	c.1800	7848
SMITH Margaret Emily		1842–1924	8428
SPEED Joseph			8401
SPIGNELL Joseph	ENG UK	1816–1882	8443
SPURLING Stephen I, II, III	TAS AUS	1835–1962	8433
STAMMERS John Wright Crick	Burnie TAS AUS	1885–1905/1930-1933	8415
STEVENS Albert George	TAS AUS	1907>	8405
THIELE	Germany	1500>	8438
THOMPSON Peter	Hobart TAS AUS	c.1800	7848
TOOGOOD Titus	SRY ENG/Hobart TAS AUS	1791–1879	8435
VINCENT Eliza	Bothwell TAS AUS	? –1864	8437
VON STIEGLITZ	TAS AUS	c.1800	8430
WAKEFIELD	Lachlan TAS AUS	1850>	8410
WALKER	KINGSTON TAS AUS	1800–1900	8432
WARD	Chelsea MDX ENG	1750–1850	6224
WARNER George	Plomesgate Union Workhouse SFK	c.1902	8434
WHIGHTON Jessie Davanna	TAS AUS	1860–1934	8405
WHITFIELD Septimus Walter		1871–1951	8422
YOUNG Jemima	TAS AUS	1849–1898	8420

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If you find a name in which you are interested, please note the membership number and check the New Members' listing for the appropriate name and contact details.

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Here are some special guidelines relating specifically to journal contributions

- § Include your membership number.
- § Send your contribution as a Word document attached to an email addressed to [editors@tasfhs.org](mailto:editors@tasfhs.org).
- § We prefer short items of between 500 and 2500 words. Long articles can be broken into parts for publication in successive issues.
- § Do **not** indent paragraphs. Do not use tabs to indent whole paragraphs.
- § Use only **one space** at the end of a sentence.
- § Use footnotes to provide references. We do not mandate a particular style of footnote but expect sufficient information in a footnote to allow the reader to locate the source.
- § Place footnote intext number at the end of a sentence, after the full stop. if you want to reference more than one fact in a sentence, place a single footnote with as many sources as required.
- § Do **not** use a bibliography, reference list or end notes.
- § When providing the editor with an article, use the file name to identify the version – e.g. “Smith article version1.docx” – and increase the version number for later versions.
- § Provide images with captions in separate documents. Bear in mind that images will be printed in black and white – particularly important when including maps!
- § Write dates in the format “number month year” - no th or nd or rd, and no commas. e.g. “3 April 2021”
- § The first time a surname appears in an article, other than in the title or quoted material, write it in ALL CAPITALS.

If you encounter a situation not specifically covered by these guidelines, contact the editor.

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## **Please Check Branches for Opening Times**

**BURNIE** Phone: Branch Librarian 0427 354 103  
Library 58 Bass Highway Cooee  
Monday 11.00am - 3.00pm  
Saturday by appointment only 1.00pm - 4.00pm  
Meeting Branch Library, 58 Bass Highway, Cooee, 10.30am on last Monday of each month, except December and January.  
Night dinner meetings are held in winter and end of year, check with Branch Librarian for details.

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**HOBART** Phone: Enquiries (03) 6245 9351  
Library 19 Cambridge Road Bellerive  
Tuesday 12.30 pm–3.30pm  
Wednesday 9.30 am–12.30pm  
Saturday 1.00 pm–4.00pm  
Meeting Old Sunday School, St Johns Park Precinct, New Town, at 7.30 pm on third Tuesday of each month, except January and December.  
Check the website <https://hobart.tasfhs.org> for the latest information.

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**LAUNCESTON** Phone: 0490 826 863  
Library 45–55 Tamar Street Launceston (next door to Albert Hall)  
Tuesday 10.00am–3.00pm  
Monday to Friday by appointment only  
Check the website <https://launceston.tasfhs.org> for locations and times.

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**MERSEY** Phone: Branch Secretary 0408 059 990 Library (03) 6426 2257  
Library 113 Gilbert Street Latrobe (behind State Library)  
Wednesday & Friday 10.00am–3.00pm  
Saturday opening is now by advance appointment only.  
Meetings Check the website <https://mersey.tasfhs.org/> or email [secretary@mersey.tasfhs.org](mailto:secretary@mersey.tasfhs.org) for updates.

# MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASMANIAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

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