

Camden Calling



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OFFICE BEARERS August 2018 — July 2019

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F'book: **Camden Area Family History Society**

Normal Membership Subscriptions: Single A\$30.00 Couples A\$35.00
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W E B S I T E

www.cafhs.org.au

RESEARCH FEES

Non- members use of Resources- \$10.00 per session.
Written enquires \$30.00 — provides up to fifteen printed or photocopied pages.
A4 size stamped addressed envelope to be included with your enquiry.

RESEARCH CENTRE

Family History Room
Camden Library/Museum Complex.
John Street. Camden. NSW 2570
Thursday 10.00am— 3.00pm
Friday 10:00am— 3.00pm
Saturday 9:30am— 12 noon
(Closed late December to late January)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Camden Area Family History Society Inc. is held on the first Tuesday of August each year, immediately following the general meeting.

The Society meets on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) at 7.30pm in the Community Meeting Room of the Camden Library/Museum Complex

40 JOHN STREET CAMDEN.

MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS ALL WELCOME

~ Camden Calling ~

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Camden Calling is the Journal of the Camden Area Family History Society Inc published twice a year in May and November, it is free to members and \$2.00 for non-members.

Articles for inclusion are to be handed to the Editor no later than the meetings of April and October. Unless an article is marked copyright, Family History Organisations have permission to reprint from this Journal, providing that the source is acknowledged and it is used only for the purpose of family history research. Copyright remains the property of the submitter. This Society does not accept responsibility for information contained or opinions expressed by authors in this Journal

Presidents Report.

Presidents Report

May 2019.

Since taking over the position as President in August last year, the society has started a number of projects. We were offered the opportunity to take part in a Bunning's Sausage Sizzle again in January this year, which netted a profit of about \$1300. We have commenced our program of new Cemetery transcription and grave photographs at Cawdor Cemetery, it was well attended with the bulk of the work completed on the Saturday and completed on the following Wednesday. The transcriptions have been typed up and the photographs have been all identified. The next stage is checking and corroborating the photographs to the transcriptions before publication.

We have planned an Open Weekend in the Resource room as part of Heritage Month on the weekend of 4th & 5th of May this year. This will include 6 short talks over the weekend in the Multipurpose Room, the program is on our Website as well as in our room.

Our speaker for May is Liza Murray from the Sydney City Archives and she will be talking about the Archives and possibly the Dictionary of Sydney. The June meeting speaker will be Jeff Madson who will be speaking about Mapping Family History.

Our planned Seminar in June has had to be postponed until next year due to problems arranging a suitable venue, the seminar next year will be held up at Wivenhoe House (date to be advised). As yet the visit to Rookwood Cemetery has yet to be organised.

Don't forget the State Conference in October at Knox College, early bird Registrations are now open till 31st July, refer to their website for details.

<http://exploringthepast.khs.org.au/>

Tony Jackson

President

MEMBERSHIP

C.A.F.H.S. Inc. Membership falls due on the **1st July each year**, and the prompt renewal of your membership is appreciated. To ensure all your details are current, e.g. telephone number and email addresses, please complete a Members Information Update form if your details have changed or notify the Membership Officer.

Normal Membership: Single \$30.00 Couple \$35.00

Pensioners/Concession Membership: Single \$25.00 Couple \$30.00

We welcome new members from Australia and Overseas.

One has vanished ...

By Janet Howe

Until the 1850s the incidence of typhoid, also known as colonial or enteric fever was sporadic, but after the mass influx of people during the gold rushes, it became epidemic.¹

In 1853-54, typhoid was linked to the deaths of around 460 people in Victoria and the Melbourne District Coroner commented on:

*Miners urinating where they stood, defecating in shafts or behind their tents, the diggings bestrewn with 'scores of tons' of human and animal dung and festering rubbish. ... Melbourne lanes, vacant lots and yards were similarly fouled.*²

At the time, there was general consensus on the link between typhoid and unsanitary conditions which contrasted with the furious debate about the nature of the link. The official position was that the disease was caused by foul odours and 'exposure to miasms',³ in other words that fever could be generated from:

*... festering detritus, impure water and other dirt acting separately or in concert to lower the 'vital force' of susceptible individuals, and thereby start the vitiation process of the blood and decay in the organs which manifested as forms of disease*⁴

However, there were those who believed in an alternate 'germ' theory, and in the early 1870s several doctors discovered that the spread of typhoid was related to drinking water contaminated by the excrement of typhoid victims.⁵ The hunt for the offending micro-organism began, but it wasn't until 1880 that the *salmonella* bacillus responsible for typhoid was discovered.

In both Victoria and Western Australia, typhoid was characterised as a 'goldfields disease' because of its prevalence in the camps. During the 1890s, the largest typhoid epidemic in Australian history killed nearly 2,000 people on the Western Australian goldfields, and it is believed that due to under-reporting and misdiagnosis the number may have been far larger.⁶

As the colonies grew, overpopulation, poor housing and inadequate sanitation in the burgeoning cities led to urban outbreaks. Epidemics in Melbourne in 1866-67, 1869-70 and 1872-77 resulted in about 980 deaths. 'These rates were 400 to 300 per cent higher than those for ... the worst British towns of Croydon, Glasgow and Paisley.'⁷

The *Empire* newspaper of September 11, 1860 printed the quarterly report of the Health Officer of the Sydney Council which in part stated:

*The health of the population generally within the city, has been bad, and the mortality has greatly exceeded the average of former periods.... The general extension of sewerage to all parts of the city is most essential. Those who pass frequently along Kent and Sussex Streets south, with their intersecting lanes and alleys, cannot but recognise the offensive effluvia constantly evolving from pent-up decomposing matter, obstructed drains and accumulated filth. In such parts low typhoid fever always exists.*⁸

In 1889, an outbreak in Balranald saw 120 cases among a population of 670 with 15 deaths and in 1903 'a typhoid epidemic linked to contaminated milk swept through Coonamble, with more than 200 cases and a dozen deaths in a population of 1,600.'⁹

¹ Michael Willem de Looper, 'Death registration and mortality trends in Australia, 1856-1906', A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University, May 2014, p.168

² F.B. Smith, 'Disputes about typhoid Fever in Victoria in the 1870s', *Health and History*, Vol.4, No.2 (2002), p.1

³ In homeopathy a miasm is an underlying disease pattern which when awakened in the body can imbalance the mind and emotions and contribute to physical disease. Homeopathy College Website: <http://www.homeopathytraining.co.uk>

⁴ Smith, p.6

⁵ Filio Marineli, Gregory Tsoucalas, Marianna karamanou and George Androustos, 'Mary Mallon and the history of typhoid fever', *Annals of Gastroenterology*, (2013) 26, p.132

⁶ 'Typhoid Fever: A Raging Epidemic', WA Museum Website: <http://museum.wa.gov.au>

⁷ Smith, p.2

⁸ *Empire*, 11 Sep 1860, p.8

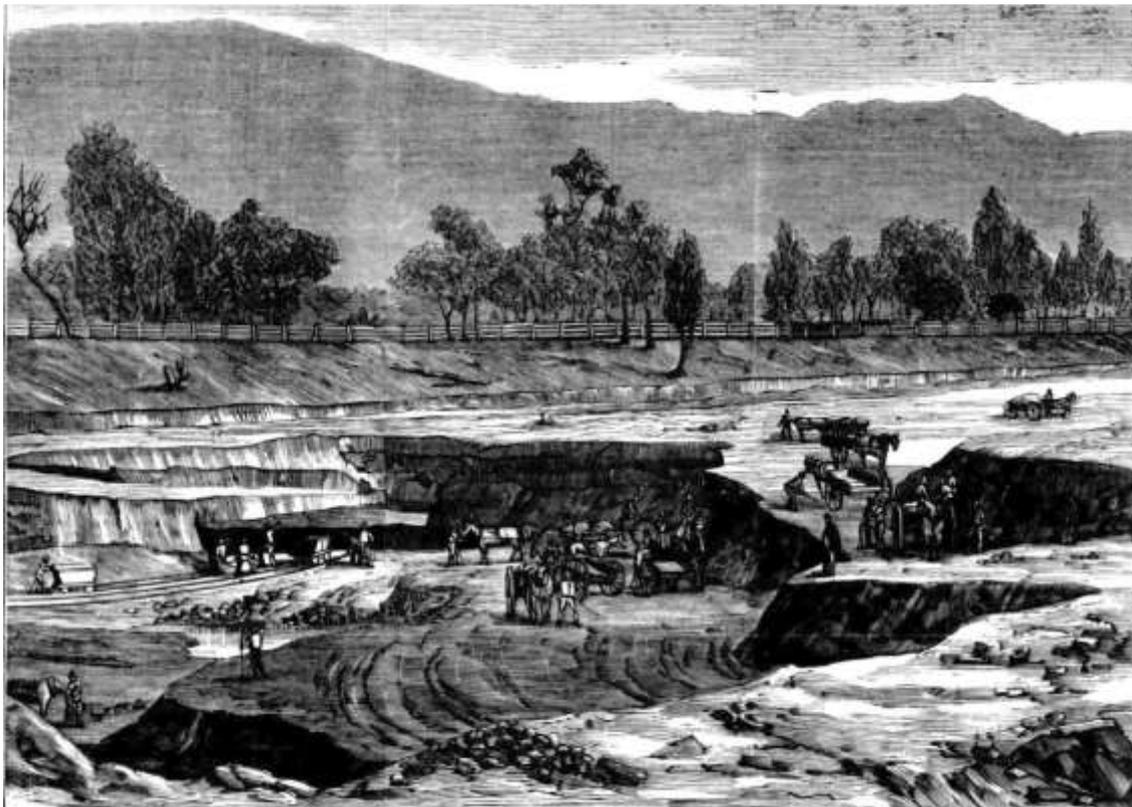
⁹ De Looper, p.171

In 1863-64 the Araluen valley, some 26km south of Braidwood and 2,000 feet lower, was one of the most famous and richest alluvial goldfields of New South Wales. Two early prospectors were my maternal great-great-grandfather, Faustino Delponte and his friend Giovanni Baptiste Palazzi my great-grandfather who married Faustino's daughter Assunta. The pair along with many of their countrymen had arrived from Canton Ticino in southern Switzerland in the 1850s in search of a better life. Tragically, after just 2½ years disease struck and three of the Delponte family of seven died.

On February 18, 1866 my great-great-grandmother Theresa Delponte died after a five-week battle with typhus fever during which time she nursed and lost two of her five children. Eleven-year-old daughter Rosa had died on February 2 and 14-year-old Guidetta had died a week later on February 10. The death certificates for the three raise some questions that should serve as a warning to family historians about the nature of the information they contain which we, too often, simply assume is accurate.

Firstly, all three had a recorded cause of death as Typhus Fever. Typhus is a flea-borne disease which, while not unheard of in Australia, is rare and most likely to occur in parts of the tropical north, whereas Typhoid is now known to be a foodborne disease transmitted through contaminated food or water. The two diseases had been authoritatively differentiated since the 1850s but the literature on typhoid in 19th-century Australia suggests that not only was it often misdiagnosed, other diseases such as respiratory tuberculosis, diabetes, dysentery and diarrhoea were often diagnosed as typhoid.

The other questionable pieces of information on the certificates are place of death and place of burial, both of which were given as Araluen. While that would make sense as place of residence, burial records from the Braidwood Old Cemetery indicate that all three were interred there in what are now unmarked graves. One possible explanation is that being Catholic, the family were buried by the priest of the parish of Braidwood ¹⁰ in Araluen and the burial site wrongly recorded.



Gold Mining by the Southern Cross Company at Araluen.
[*The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 25 September 1880, p.600]

¹⁰ The Catholic Parish of Braidwood was established in 1851 in response to the gold rush the the Church of St Bede's built in 1866.

One of Australia's most cherished colonial poets, Henry Kendall, made his home in Araluen for a time and such was his affection for the place that he named a daughter after the town. Baby Araluen Kendall died in 1879 and the following poem suggests that short of money, Henry was forced to bury his daughter in an unmarked grave in the bush. This extract from a Kendall poem called *Araluen* also makes a fitting epitaph for my great-great-grandmother and her daughters.

*Ah, the saddest thought in leaving baby in this bush alone
Is that we have not been able on her grave to place a stone!
We have been too poor to do it; but, my darling, never mind!
God is in the gracious heavens, and His sun and rain are kind.
They will dress the spot with beauty, they will make the grasses grow:
Many winds will lull our birdie – many songs will come and go.
Here the blue-eyed Spring will linger – here the shining month will stay
Like a friend by Araluen, when we two are far away ... ¹¹*

Author's Note:

Theresa's granddaughter, my maternal grandmother Emily May Palazzi became a nurse and in 1904 she was appointed to the nursing staff of The Coast Hospital which was Sydney's emergency quarantine hospital. The hospital was established well out of town at Little Bay to the north of Botany Bay in 1881 during a particularly bad outbreak of smallpox. The name was changed to the Prince Henry Hospital in 1934. I wonder if the fate of her grandmother and aunts influenced Emily's choice of career.

¹¹ *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 27 September 1879, p.494

A Tragedy at Watson's Bay

Jo O'Brien

From the memoir "The Road we Travel" by Bill Wilmot

In this short extract from my grandfather's memoir - "The Road We Travel", Bill Wilmot, aged in his seventies, writes about a sad incident from his childhood. He was just over 7 years old at the time and living at Watson's Bay.

"Our milkman was an old German called VON Demlow or something like that. His name does not matter. His little daughter used to help out by delivering the milk to a few of the houses.

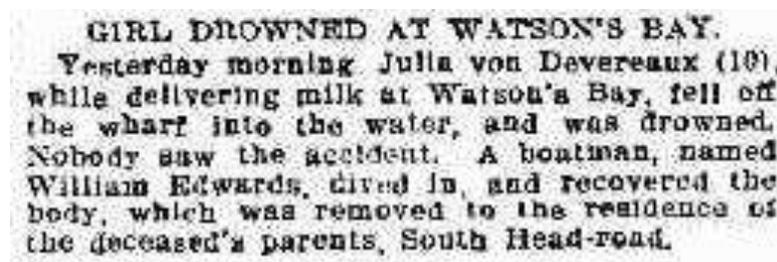
It was her custom to wash the milk measures down at the wharf. A flight of slippery steps led to the water's edge.

One cold winter morning while washing the measures she slipped and fell into deep water. A heavy cape she was wearing fell over her head and although she was a good swimmer she drowned very quickly.

Fisherman brought that little body to a house next to where I lived, and my mother did all she could to revive her but it was of no avail.

Later I remember tiptoeing into the room where she lay sleeping her last sleep, surrounded with beautiful flowers. That picture has never been erased from my memory."

I wondered if I could find a news report of this sad incident in Trove and confirm the name of the little girl. Searching newspapers using the key words 'drown Watson's Bay', and restricting the search to 1900-09 (Bill was born in 1896, so he turned 7 in 1903), I found several references to drownings in Watson's Bay, but soon found the one Bill was referring to – a girl called Julia who drowned on June 24, 1904...



GIRL DROWNED AT WATSON'S BAY.
Yesterday morning Julia von Devereaux (10), while delivering milk at Watson's Bay, fell off the wharf into the water, and was drowned. Nobody saw the accident. A boatman, named William Edwards, dived in, and recovered the body, which was removed to the residence of the deceased's parents, South Head-road.

Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW : 1883 - 1930), Saturday 25 June 1904, page 11

Her surname is given differently in the articles from different newspapers (e.g. Von Dem Leazzx, Van Devereaux) but it is either Vondemleux or Von Demleux, which I confirmed by checking the NSW BDM and the register of Coroners' Inquests on Ancestry. It is phonetically identical to the name Bill remembered when he wrote his memoir more than 60 years later.

DROWNING FATALITY.

Little Girl at Watson's Bay.

Senior-constable J. Hamilton, of Double Bay, has reported to the City Coroner the death by drowning of a well-known little milk girl named Julia Vondemieux, which occurred at Watson's Bay in very sad circumstances yesterday morning. The little girl was on her rounds, and was last seen alive at the last place of call at about five minutes past 8. She was in the habit of going to the jetty to get milk from the city, and she was always accompanied by a dog. The dog was found keeping guard over the milk-can, and the poor little girl, who was only 10 years of age, was found floating in the water. The sad feature of the affair is that the girl's mother and father are both ill, and she was the eldest and hardest-worker in the house at present. She was very popular amongst the customers.

Australian Star (Sydney, NSW : 1887 - 1909), Saturday 25 June 1904, page 11

In this next article, the washing of the milk measures is mentioned, just as Bill remembered...

GIRL DROWNED AT WATSON'S BAY.

While some boys were at the wharf at Watson's Bay yesterday they were rather surprised to see the body of a girl floating in the water near the steps. The child was speedily removed from the water, and the services of Dr. C. W. Read, the Port Health Officer, were requisitioned. He worked hard for about an hour, but failed to restore animation. The child proved to be Julia Von Dem Leaux, aged about 11 years, and daughter of Mr. W. G. Von Dem Leaux, a milk vendor, of Watson's Bay.

It has transpired that the child went to the foot of the steps, evidently to wash a measure which she was carrying. She must then have either slipped or overbalanced herself, and fallen into the water, for the measure which she was carrying was found at the bottom of the water and a milk can was on the wharf. The girl was accompanied by a dog, which watched the milk can after the girl disappeared. It had to be driven off before the can could be secured. A sad feature of the case is that the girl's father is ill, and her mother is also in delicate health.

Evening News (Sydney, NSW : 1869 - 1931), Saturday 25 June 1904, page 6

The inquest was held at the Palace Hotel, Watson's Bay

"I find that the said Julia Von Demleux in the waters of Watson's Bay, Port Jackson, in the District of Sydney, in the State of New South Wales, on the 24th day of June, 1904, was accidentally drowned"

(from the Register of Coroners' Inquests 1821-1937 on Ancestry)

This tragedy certainly had a lasting impact on my grandfather for him to recall the circumstances so clearly so many decades later. Little Julia was not forgotten. Bill's final comment from his memoir on this sad event was:

"My young brain could not understand what it was all about but nature came to my aid that night and I cried myself to sleep"

I plan to research more of my grandfather's memoir, it is fascinating to read the contemporary accounts of the events he recounts, find the relevant documents, and to confirm the stories he remembered.



WATSON'S BAY JETTY, WHICH WILL BE THE TERMINUS.

Contemporary photo of the wharf - from *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* (NSW : 1871 - 1912) Wed 10 Jun 1903 Page 1432 *Beauty Spots of Sydney*.

(found by searching Trove - key words "'Watson's Bay' wharf' and limiting to Illustrated articles from 1900-1909)

Received from Anne McIntosh: An Article retrieved from Trove with a definite Camden Flavour...

This may have been done before... perhaps many times. But if not, are there insights in immigration records or church records or marriage records?

I came across this story in the Camden News accidentally. However, using modern digitised techniques, are we able to shed any more light onto the following mystery:

[The Argyle Street Tombstone.](#) *Camden News (NSW : 1895 - 1954) Thursday 18 June 1908* p 4 Article

Was Catherine born in Australia or in Scotland? Do we know whether Catherine moved to Australia as Catherine Campbell?

Known facts as per the article:

Archibald Campbell 10yo died 14 April 1839

(mother?) Catherine McDonald (wife of Alexander McDonald) died 11 April 1843 aged 32.

Alexander (and/or Catherine and possibly Archibald) was born in Argyllshire Scotland in Little Canonsay (perhaps illegible or mistranscribed – was it referring to the almost uninhabitable island of Little Colonsay?)

As her son has a different surname, was Catherine previously married to a Mr Campbell? **Questions raised in the article:** had he been buried at the Wesleyan Chapel, subsequently sold, which was in Elizabeth Street and the bodies had to be moved? Was the tombstone created by Argyle Street's Scottish stonemason, Mr Buchan?

I'm curious. It's a totally optional investigation, but I'd love to know who they were and how this mother and son were immortalised when their stone ended up being available for incorporation into the Whitemans' building?

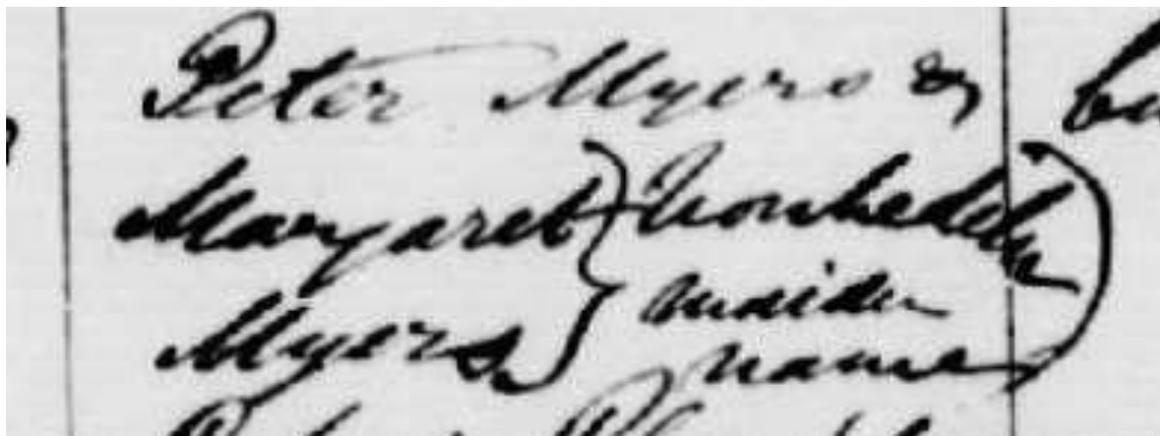
When a Certificate is not enough.

Janet Howe

In 1980, not long after I started my family history journey, I applied for the Marriage Certificate of my paternal 2nd great-grandparents in order to learn their parents' names. Sadly, when the certificate arrived, those fields were blank. So, I wrote to the Bishop of Bathurst whose diocese included Christ Church Sofala where the marriage had taken place, to enquire after the location of the parish registers. The reply from the Bishop's secretary, the appropriately named Miss Carol Churches, not only advised that the registers were stored in the attic of the Bishop's residence, but she also included a transcript. The groom's German parents were Peter Myers and Margaret Norshedeln, but Miss Churches wrote that the writing had been hard to decipher.

Many times in the ensuing years I wondered about my 3rd great-grandmother's name as I got no hits from every database I interrogated. To my mind, if the name was correct, it was illogical not to find a single instance. Recently, I returned to that part of my tree and in the hope that a second pair of eyes might fare better, I bought a transcript only to discover that despite the passage of 39 years, the parents' names field was still blank. Not long afterwards I learned from a friend who volunteers at the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG), that their collection included the Christ Church Sofala registers and as a consequence a trip was planned and a copy of the register obtained.

The name is hard to decipher but my brother and I decided that it is possibly Von Hedeln, a name (with variations) not uncommon to the Hanover region of Germany where Peter Myers was a Custom House Official. The next task is to find a way to prove it!



The importance of preserving our current family history

Jo O'Brien

As family historians we spend much of our time researching our distant ancestors and seeking out elusive records, documents and photographs from the past, but what are we doing to preserve our own history, and that of our living relatives?

We should all write our memories of the past now. We will not remember things any better as we get older, and in the future, there will not be as many other people that were there at the time to verify stories, facts and fill in those missing details.

Even a few notes with dates, locations and basic facts will help piece things together if we want to write more at a later time. Our impressions of life in the past will also be increasingly valuable, for example, many younger people today cannot picture life without the internet and mobile phones and can't imagine how we managed without constant communication.

We should also think about writing up our immediate family's history while our family are still here. We may have documents and photos, but do we know all the stories behind them? Sometimes the questions only become apparent when we piece the story together and attempt to write it down.

I have recently embarked on a search through my mother's photos and documents, trying to piece together her overseas travels in the 1940s and 1950s. Mum talked often about her travels, and left albums with photographs where she had written details on the back. Even so I am struggling to put together a time line, and have thought of many questions I can no longer ask her, or details that I only have a vague recollection of. Why didn't I know the name of the ships she travelled on? What was it she said about Aden and Colombo? Why did she decide to go to Canada?

On the positive side I do have an amazing amount of material to help fill in the gaps. Mum wrote on many of her photos, and quite a lot are organised into albums. I did ask a lot of questions in the past, while I do have some of her memories written down, there are other family members who can help fill in some of the gaps. Thanks to online passenger lists at Family Search and Ancestry I have found most of the ships that Mum sailed on, so now I have the dates and details of those voyages.

My mother was a keen family historian, as I have been for nearly three decades, and she kept an enormous amount of family history, photographs and ephemera. She lived to a grand age, therefore there was plenty of time to ask any number of questions. Why were there important details that I didn't know?

This experience made me think about why we might not be as focused as we could be on our recent family history. Some of the reasons might include:

- There is an assumption that relatives will always be there to ask if we want to know more.
- Talking about the past can mean reliving sad events or raise difficult questions. We may find people are reluctant to talk about the past.
- As people age there can be times where they won't talk about the past. Or their memories become flawed, and the details are lost. We can lose the opportunity to find out more before we realise it.
- Do we value recent history as much as the distant past?

I would definitely recommend interviewing family members, and attempting to write your immediate family's history now, even if you don't plan to share or publish it anywhere. The quality of your writing is not as important as the information. It may seem overwhelming, but it can be very fulfilling once you start, and really helps to focus your family history research. It is the perfect gift for the future family historians in our own families.

And don't forget to write your own history!

A few things I have realised as I go through my family history boxes:

- Keep. I don't regret the amount of family history photos and documents that Mum kept, I would be happy to have more.
- Sort. I wish some things had been sorted better – there are a few boxes of mixed unidentified photos, and important family history mixed with unimportant papers.
- Writing on photos. I am happy that she wrote on them – even though it was ball point pen!
- Identify. Keep records of what things are and their significance.
- Organise. One location for family history – keep the originals separate & work with copies. Scan, backup, distribute to family in different locations and always keep originals.
- Storage. Sometimes this was good, sometimes not. Things were mostly kept well, but there have been issues with mould, and the dreaded sticky albums. It is worth investing in archive quality albums and sleeves.
- Pictures of people and family events and places are more valuable than holiday snaps.
- Write down anything you hear at the time – even if it is only notes.

- Keep up to date with changing formats and keep all versions of important recordings. It is not easy to view old films now, and even VHS and cassette tapes are going to be impossible to watch/hear soon.
- And in this digital age, what will our descendants have to look at in the future? Will there be any printed photographs or documentation for family to keep? Make sure things are printed and information is kept in accessible formats.

UNDERSTANDING CEMETERY SYMBOLS, PART I



BillionGraves, 2 months ago 10 min read 37243

Learning to Read a Cemetery:

Do you remember when you learned to read? As a child, it was fun to look at pictures in books as someone older read the words. But, oh, that magical moment when you realized you could read the words yourself! It opened a whole new world!

Would you like to learn to “read” a cemetery? It’s a genealogical adventure!

On many older gravestones, there are pictures and symbols that tell stories about your loved ones and ancestors. If you can’t read “gravestone-language” you are missing part of the story.

The first time I walked through a cemetery after learning about cemetery symbols was incredible. It was like someone was walking along beside me, introducing me to each person. “Samuel Hanover died at sea.” “Mary Smith passed away suddenly as an infant.” “John and Hannah hope to be together eternally.”

<https://blog.billiongraves.com/2019/01/29/understanding-the-cemetery-symbols-on-your-ancestors-gravestones/>



In the early 1800s, epidemics in London were leading to deaths by the tens of thousands every month. Because people didn't understand how infectious diseases were spread, they came up with some pretty odd solutions to ward off illness.

It was commonly believed that the bad smells associated with dead bodies were the cause of sickness. You are probably familiar with the nursery rhyme, "Ring-around-the-rosies, pocket full of posies." The theory was that carrying a bunch of flowers in your pocket could mask the smell of death and keep you from contracting a disease.

It was also believed that igniting barrels of gunpowder in the middle of the city of London would stop the spread of cholera. Naturally, the smell of the burning gunpowder would overpower the smells of decay and restore public health.

Eventually, it was realized that decaying bodies buried in close proximity to dense populations in large cities - often without coffins - was contaminating the water supply and causing disease. Thus, London officials came up with a solution and seven park-like cemeteries were built around the perimeter of London. You can read more about it in BillionGraves' latest blog post: [London's "Magnificent Seven" Cemeteries](#). This blog post also explains how the location of our ancestor's final resting place can sometimes reveal their status in life.

On another note - we recently hit the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere. If this is bringing warmer weather to your area and you would like some help planning a group cemetery documentation event, send an email to volunteer@BillionGraves.com and we will be happy to assist you! Have a "magnificent" week!

The BillionGraves Team

**2 Local Members recognised in 2019 Australia Day Awards
– Ian Willis (President of the Camden Historical Society)
-- Ron Shepherd CAFHS Member**



Congratulations to Ron Shepherd for being awarded an OAM for services to Bell Ringing in Australia. For those who are not aware, Ron devotes a lot of his time and effort into not only restoring bells in many churches, but he also spend much time in creating bell ringing groups associated with each of these installations.

Ron has been involved with Bell installation/ringing groups at St James Menangle Anglican, St Hilda's Anglican Katoomba, Bowral/Kangaloon Uniting Church, Wagga Anglican and All Saints Cathedral Bathurst. These are but a few of, in excess of 20, churches Ron has been involved with over many years.

Once again, Congratulations from all our members of Camden Area Family History Society, we are proud of your achievements and a well deserved recognition of your efforts and passion.



***Ian Willis OAM
'For Service to
Community History'***



***Ron Shepherd OAM
'For Service to the Community
through Bell Ringing'***

THE RED CROSS NURSE

Tom Skeyhill

When you're lying in your bed, with a buzzing in your head,
And a pain across your chest that's far from nice
She moves about the place, with a sweet angelic grace,
That makes you think the dingy ward is paradise.

She's dressed in red and grey, and she doesn't get much
pay,
Yet she never seems to worry or complain.
She's Australian through and through, with a heart that's big
and true,
And when she's near the deepest wound forgets to pain.

With her hand upon your head, she remains beside your bed,
Until your worries and your pains begin to go,
Then with fingers true and light, she will bind your wounds up
tight,
And when she leaves you're sleeping fast and breathing
slow.

When the ward is sleeping sound, she begins her nightly
round,
With eyes that share your sorrows and your joys.
With a heart so full of love, she beseeches Him above
To watch and care for all her darling soldier boys.

There is something in her face, that can hold your tongue in
place,
When you'd curse because your wounds refuse to heal.
But if once you get her cross, you will find out to your loss,
The velvet scabbard holds the tempered sword of steel.

When you're once again yourself, and they pull you off the
shelf,
And send you back again to do the fighting trick,
You'll just grip her by the hand, with a look she'll
understand.
Outside you stand and curse your wound for healing
quick.

Though she hasn't got a gun and she hasn't killed a Hun,
Still she fights as hard as veterans at the front.
When Allies start to drive and the wounded boys arrive,
It's always she who has to wear the battle's brunt.

She's a queen without a throne, and her sceptre is her
own
True Woman's smile and sympathy so sweet,
So when guns no longer shoot, I'll spring to the salute
Every time I pass a sister in the street.

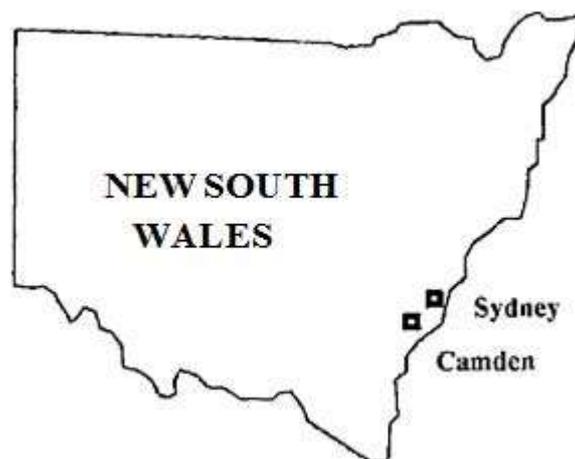
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