

Spreading Branches

Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.

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Issue 120 – May 2019

Dedicated: Lorraine Taylor Research Room



Our 30th Birthday—see pages 3-4



Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.

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Family History Research Room

We have a large collection of books, maps, microfiche, CDs and journals from all over the world available to our members and visitors.

Location

Cranbourne Library,
65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road,
Cranbourne.

NWDFHG is a member of:

Casey Cardinia Local History Reference Group
Genealogical Society of Victoria
South Eastern Historical Association Inc.
Royal Historical Society of Victoria
Victorian Association of Family History Organisations
Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations Inc.

Opening Hours for Research

Tuesdays and Saturdays 11 am to 3 pm

Thursdays 7 pm to 9 pm

Research room phone number: (03) 5995 3032

Meetings

Cranbourne Complex Meeting Room,
65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne

Entry Cost \$3

October - April: 7.30 pm

2nd Wednesday of the month (except January).

May - September: 2.00 pm

3rd Saturday of the month.

Membership

Single \$35, Joint \$50. Payable 1 July each year.

Casual visitors \$5 per day.

Membership Renewal

You are welcome to renew your membership by Direct Deposit into our bank account.

Bank: National Australia Bank

Branch: Fountain Gate

BSB: 083 802

Account No: 539450013

Please don't forget to use your name as a reference.

Please email a copy of your renewal form to the Membership Officer.

Research Queries

We offer a research service for those unable to visit our Research Room personally, but please note that we can only research our own holdings and those of the local municipal libraries. The cost for this service is \$15 per hour plus photocopying expenses. All research queries can be sent to the Research Officer at the above postal address or email: research.officer@nwfhg.org.au

The Narre Warren & District Family History Group gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of Casey Cardinia Libraries and the City of Casey.

Disclaimer: Contributions made to this newsletter are accepted in good faith and the Committee does not accept responsibility for accuracy of information of submitted articles nor opinions expressed.

President's Report

Our 30th anniversary seems to have been an item on the committee meeting agenda for ever so long. It took a while to figure out exactly what we'd like to do and where we might be doing it. Then came the questions that had to be answered, who would we be inviting (besides our members) and why? How would we include our invited guests in the day's proceedings? How were we going to manage the special presentation we had been planning since the move to Cranbourne? It took a long time to formulate the plan and then it took a lot of attention to detail to carry it out. From my point of view, I can only thank the committee for their input, they all thought long and hard about the questions put to them over the past 12 months. I am in awe of our Secretary who kept track of those decisions and planned their execution in minute detail. If the day's success belongs to anyone, it belongs to Eileen Durdin and for my part, I can't thank her enough. The day ran like clockwork and

the committee all had parts to play, behind the scenes in the lead up and then front and centre on the day. And, from a president's point of view it was a fabulous day on a number of levels. If you came, we hope you enjoyed it. The phrase 'it was an honour and a privilege' is used a lot, but I think it best sums up how I felt about being president of NW&DFHG on the day.

We're now on the downhill run to the 2019 AGM. All committee positions will become vacant, even mine. As a member of the group, you have the right to nominate for a position. If two or more people nominate for the same position we'll hold a secret ballot to find a winner. I hope you will give it some thought, we may have a vacancy or two, and if we don't, you still have the right to challenge anyone currently holding office (even me) if you would like a turn at a particular committee position. VIPs are another thing entirely, their jobs are theirs to keep until they decide to relinquish them.

Lynne Bradley

Our 30th birthday!

Well, what an afternoon! We were joined by the Mayors of Casey and Cardinia, Cr Amanda Stapledon and Cr Graeme Moore, Chris Buckingham CEO of Casey Cardinia Libraries and our local history librarian Heather Arnold. Other guests included Jenny Ferguson (Narre Warren Library branch manager in our early days), Grant Newman (from the City of Casey who was responsible for building the new RR), Max, Janette and Amanda Thomson, Phyllis and Ted Bould, and Val Holland (who was at the first meeting). And, of course, Lorraine Taylor's family (photo page 1) who were sneaked in to see the Research Room being dedicated to Lorraine and the plaque unveiled.

The afternoon has been described as 'a cracking

event', 'a fantastic day', 'a really well organised day, thoroughly enjoyable', 'a great celebration for a great organisation', 'awesome day of celebration' 'Wow!' 'a wonderful day', on our guestbook pages, social media and emails.

We've been described as 'a remarkable organisation that makes a significant contribution to our region', 'a friendly and knowledgeable group', and 'a wonderful friendly, helpful group'.

But perhaps the best comment was 'was a great afternoon, congratulations, and here's to another 30 years!'

We look forward to seeing you in the Lorraine Taylor Research Room soon.



Our life members cutting the birthday cake: From left: Rex McFarlane, Fay McCoubrie, Eileen Durdin, Lorraine Taylor, Val Holland, Jenny Hayes, Lynne Bradley and Anne Blair



We all had a great time!

A Bee-utiful Morning Tea

Our 2019 Volunteers' Morning Tea was held on Wednesday 1 May. This was a little earlier than we would have liked, it's usually held in National Volunteer Week which is later in May this year. But we didn't have a lot of dates to choose from so we went with it.



And what a fabulous decision that turned out to be. Twenty trusting NW&DFHG volunteers assembled



Graham Rose fitting out Barbara Sharp for the visit to the apiary.

at Fay's and followed us in convoy to the secret destination. Getting there actually turned out to be half the fun, Eileen's car was in the lead and Rex made sure none of us got lost by

waving an Australian flag from his window. This was a good thing, because a road closure on the day meant we had to reach our still secret destination via an apple orchard. This prompted a few to think we'd arrived, but no, we continued on and arrived at our destination, the GWS Anderson Scout Park in Officer. Thanks to Rob, Graham, Gillian and Sam we had a fabulous morning learning about the Scout Park and its



history. We were also given a talk on beekeeping, some of us donned the appropriate safety gear and visited the bees in the apiary before we all enjoyed a lovely morning tea.

Congratulations to Barbara Sharp who came away with the Shirley Award for 2019 (The new kid on the block). We had a fabulous morning, all who came enjoyed it immensely.



Lynne Bradley

Be Connected

Be Connected is a free Australian Government initiative designed to help you get the most of going online. It offers you an opportunity to gain new skills and refresh old ones in the comfort of your own home or our Research Room. It offers you a series of short and easy to follow online courses to help you get the most from your computer, laptop, tablet and smartphone.

For instance, the Getting started online course covers using the internet, online forms, email, search engines and internet safety. The Safety first module covers things like safe passwords, paying securely online, avoiding scams and tricks downloading and downloading and saving documents.

There's even help on getting your photos from your mobile phone or camera to your computer - a problem we've heard about more than once in the

Research Room. If you register and choose us as your Network Partner you would be helping us to secure a \$2,000 grant which we'd put towards the purchase of three new laptops to replace the current black computers in the Research Room. All we need is 30 people to do a few courses online for us. Group sessions in the Research Room can be arranged for those who would like them if you let us know.

Why not take a look around the website and see for yourself at www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au You could help us to get new computers by helping yourself to have better online experiences.

If you can't do this at home, please contact Lynne (0413 182 551) and arrange a time to do this in the Research Room.

Lynne Bradley

Be Connected
Every Australian online.

General Meeting Saturday, 15 June 2019 • 2 pm

**Heather Sheard: Women to the Front—
the Extraordinary Australian Women Doctors in the Great War.**

Cranbourne Complex Meeting Room, 65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne. Use Casey Radio entrance.

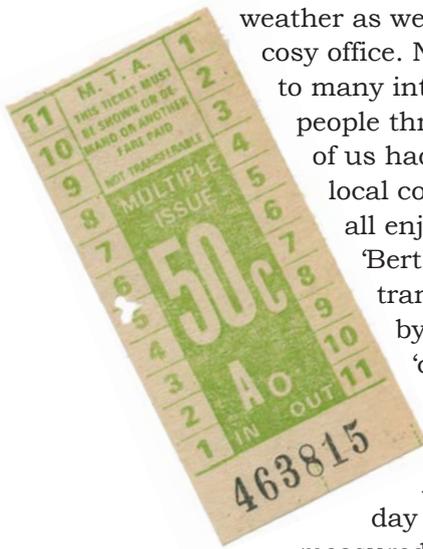
Casey Cardinia Heritage Festival at the Fisherman's Cottage Tooradin Saturday 4 May 2019

Thanks to the team of Kerry, Moreyn, Jane, Eileen, Wendy and Mary our group was well represented at the Casey Cardinia Heritage Festival held at the Fisherman's Cottage on the Tooradin foreshore on Saturday 4 May.



Fisherman's Cottage at Tooradin

We had some concerns about the weather as we set up our display in the cosy office. Nevertheless, we chatted to many interested and interesting people throughout the day, some of us had a selfie taken with a local councillor and we all enjoyed meeting 'Bert' and getting our tram tickets clipped by one of the last 'connies' to work on Melbourne's trams.



A successful day is not always measured by dollars – it can be judged just as successful by the people met and knowledge shared with laughter.

Jane Rivett-Carnac



Jane, Wendy, Mary and retired tram conductor Roberto 'Bert' D'Andrea.

Ballarat Briefings

Well, here we are, almost half way through 2019. Days are quite chilly up here, and nights even colder.

Since early this year I have attended several meetings of the Ballarat and District Genealogical Society in which we heard of developments to the Eureka Centre.

The Eureka Centre in Ballarat East is to become the home of a new shared resource and research hub for the community. The Ballarat Library's Australiana Collection, Ballarat and District Genealogical Society and Public Record Office Victoria will all come together under the same roof as part of a collaborative hub aimed at making records and collections more accessible. It is currently in the design and fit out stage with an official opening likely to take place mid year.



RSL section at the New Ballarat Cemetery

Parking will be much better, but public transport could be a problem. I will send more details when they come to hand.

The Ballarat Branch of the Cornish Association of Victoria held a tour of some Cornish Graves in the Ballarat Old Cemetery on a lovely sunny day in early April. I joined four other members talking about our Cornish Ancestors.

Graves visited were Ford, Hicks, Gribble, Eddy, Quick, Curnow, Lanyon, Johns, and Eustace.

On Anzac Day graves of all former servicemen flew an Australian flag, placed there by school students earlier in the week. The over 1300 flags flowing in the breeze were a breathtaking sight.

Di Christensen

Then And Now

The Max Thomson Collection

We all enjoy looking at old photos and try to put stories to them. Have you ever wondered what their story would be in today's world?

Modern conveniences



The kitchen at "The Grange" a'Beckett Road, Narre Warren North, c1908. Max Thomson Collection.



The modern kitchen, c2018

Can you imagine a home without electricity or fresh running water? What would you wear if you didn't have an app that told you what the weather would be for the day? What about going to the toilet using a chamber pot that was under your bed – wouldn't that smell? Who would clean it?

With Mother's Day just gone, I asked a few friends if they recalled what type of things their mothers did that we take for granted today. There were some interesting stories told, plus a few good laughs. I also talked to my parents to see what they could remember. It did make me wonder could I have lived in those times.

My Mum was so pleased with the newly installed lounge room gas heater, as it meant she didn't have to get up early to clean the fireplace from the day before and then get the fire started again for us kids. The gas heater only gave off enough heat for the lounge room, all the other rooms in the house were still cold. Now I live in a house that has ducted

heating, with an automatic timer to make sure that the whole house is warm before I get out of bed.

Electricity eventually came to county towns at different stages. These towns even had parties to celebrate the connection of electricity in the area.

Fridges began as ice chests. Blocks of ice were delivered once a week. You may have had an ice chest with a drip tray, this was a luxury as it made it easier to empty out the melted water. Then came the kerosene fridge which operates similar to today's electrical fridges. You would need to ensure that the flame of the wick would not go out. The kerosene fridge could not be kept in a confined room as breathing in the fumes could be fatal.

Most items of clothing were made at home by using a treadle sewing machine.

Clothes washing was done in the copper. Most "coppers" were actually cast-iron tubs. They were filled with water from a bucket, and clothes were moved around using a stick. To get the excess water off the clothes you would feed the items through a wringer. Once dried on a clothes line outside (no clothes dryers around then) the clothes then required ironing. Flat irons were used, and had to be continually heated. You normally had at least two irons to do the ironing; as one was being heated the other was being used to iron the clothes. A piece of cloth would go between the iron and the clothing, to ensure that the clothes were not soiled. Eventually the electric iron was invented and could be used in houses that had electricity. It was not unusual for the first electric iron cords to be connected to the lights in the roof, as initially no one had installed power points.

wasn't quite the same. I think because the Ellett grandparents were from a different background they related differently to Alan's family.

"Grandma was a gentle, kindly soul and seemed to me to be at least fifty years older than Grandpa, and had an air of permanent bewilderment about her.

Grandpa would pound the table and roar for his deck (of cards), and his dust, which was some form of medication, and Grandma would run around saying 'Yes, yes, Pappy, don't get excited,' and I would check for the hundredth time that there was nothing between me and the door.

I didn't realise until Grandpa died that it was just a game they played and that they loved each other deeply. On Grandpa's death, Grandma turned her face to the wall, switched her motor off, and died within a few weeks."

Religion was a major issue for any new immigrant, as their Catholic or Protestant beliefs followed them to their new country. How many have heard stories of religions that divided their families? Alan recalls the bigotry in their family.

"Grandma was also born in Australia, of Irish parents emigrated from Ireland. Grandma's father was a staunch and bigoted Catholic and ordered Grandpa off

his property, with the aid of a stock whip, forbidding him to court Grandma. Grandma climbed on the back of Grandpa's horse and left with him. Such was the wicked bigotry of the time that father and daughter never met again."

Alan's is just one oral history that is included in *The Ellett Story*. By reading *The Ellett Story*, you can read more Grandmas' stories and find out about:

- what people did to get through the depression?
- how the war affected many lives?
- what happened to the shoes the cobbler took to fix?
- how rabbits were trapped to feed us?
- what happened when it was old Strawberry's turn to be milked?
- how to teach your younger sister to talk by making her repeat words – Dad, Dad, Dad, Mum, Mum, Mum, bloody, bloody, bloody.

The Ellett Story is part of our Casey Cardinia Collection so it cannot be borrowed, but you can have a read when visiting the Lorraine Taylor Research Room.

Eileen Durdin

March general meeting: "A Scout in the family"

Our March general meeting was a little different. As I have a family Scouting connection we decided that our general meeting would be held at the 1st Cranbourne Scout Hall, so that we all could learn a little about Scouting and its history.

We all met at the hall and were greeted by Joey Scout Leaders, Natalie Kenward and my son, Justin Maxwell for the evening's presentation. Natalie gave a short informative talk about the history of Scouting, which had officially started in August 1907. We gained a little insight into Lord Baden-Powell and how the idea of the Scouting movement came into being and how its popularity brought the movement to Australia in 1908.



Then Justin handed everyone a short rope length for a little bit of fun of learning how to tie a reef knot. It was a little challenging for some who had never tied a knot before – but after a few tries everyone got it done. This was followed by singing campfire action songs for our supper. Natalie and Justin prepared some for us to sing along. Some of us got to be a little silly singing and acting out the actions, me included – luckily

supper was called. I had a batch of scones cooking in the camp oven on the fire out in the yard. Unfortunately, these were, how can I put it nicely – a 'little caramelised on the bottom'. But a good Scout is prepared, and we just cut off the bottom half and with a little jam and cream you can hide all faults. Michael Walkom brought along some of his Scouting memorabilia and over a cuppa all members and guests looked over his treasured scarves, posters and mementos and many of us looked at the names on the hall trophy boards. All in all, it was a great night out and enjoyed by everyone.

Scouting history

While preparing for this night I looked into Scouting history on 'Trove'. I came across an article about the 1st Dandenong Scout Troop's Christmas camp¹ which took place at Rosebud from 27 December 1910 until 4 January 1911. The article describes the Boy Scouts leaving Dandenong and walking with their camping gear in a cart pulled by a horse. The boys left Dandenong and walked till they reached the foot of Mt Martha, where they



1 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article66203045>

made camp after walking a total of 22 miles. The next morning, off they went again to complete the final 30 miles to reach Rosebud. It sounds like they had a bit of trouble as their horse escaped and they had to capture it again. Lessons were learned from this and suitable watches were set to overcome this happening again. On conclusion of the camp, and with pack up completed, some boys returned to Dandenong by sea and rail (that sounds interesting). The rest of the troop began their long hike home via Flinders where they camped for the night. The next morning they set off towards Hastings where they had a look around the town and finally pitched camp for the night 12 miles from Cranbourne at about 7 pm. On 6 January they started their final leg of the journey, arriving at Dandenong at 6 pm. The boys were reported to be a little tired, but satisfied. The trip of about 100 miles in total was well worth it.

I can't really imagine doing this walk myself, but I find myself amazed by the simplicity of the era then. It reminds me of the *Famous Five* books I loved to read as a child and the kids going off by themselves and getting into all sort of adventures. This got me thinking about my father who was a Scout at Essendon in the late 1940s to early 1950s, so I asked him about his scouting days in regards to camps. He told me of his Scout camps to Gilwell Scout Park at Gembrook, Victoria. He only remembered ever camping at Gilwell and it was only once a year. The Scout Master had a large furniture removal van, it had enclosed sides but an open back with a rolled canvas drop attached.



Photograph from <https://scoutsvictoria.com.au/media/1411/the-iconic-gilwell-park-v2.pdf>

The Scouts would pack the patrol boxes with all the cooking equipment, tents, sleeping bags and a couple of bikes around the wall and would then sit on this for the journey to Gilwell. On the dirt roads the canvas drop on the back of the truck would be rolled down to prevent the dust coming in. Dad thought it took about an hour to get there. This camp was held over the Christmas school holiday break and dad thought it was about a 10–14 days camp. The two bikes were used to ride to the Gembrook township shop to get fresh food supplies. Dad was unsure of the frequency of these rides. I googled this distance and found it is a 6.6 km trip today which is about 4.1 miles although it's probably not the same road. I know this road is very hilly today and it boggles me how they rode a bike in those days on the dirt road with food supplies on board. Dad remembered making billy tea and swinging the billy in a circle from ground to sky, both with and without a lid on. The boys swam in the Lochan River and had a great time at the camps.

I found this picture from the Iconic Gilwell document. It's exactly what dad describes, obviously it was a common occurrence in those days and lots of groups travelled this way.

Mum was a Girl Guide, so I asked her about her camping days as a Guide and her memories were similar to Dad's. She remembered that all of the camps were for the weekend or the occasional long weekend. The parents usually drove them from Balwyn to a property at Donvale, as someone knew someone who owned this property, and this was where they would make camp. Mum recalls that no one knew how to cook and one time they tried to make a stew over the camp fire – only problem was they added too much water and had soup instead. She also remembered sleeping straight on the ground probably on a sheet of plastic (so as not to get moisture coming up through the ground) and a sleeping bag filled with feathers which wasn't very warm. She told me with a laugh in her voice that in the morning when she got up she would have feathers that had escaped the sleeping bag stuck to her.

I'm really glad that I thought to ask this question of my parents' early Scouting/Guiding days and I'm sure many of you will have similar stories of Scouts in the family. It sounded like so much fun. It's great to know that the same youth organisation that my parents got to enjoy as young teenagers are still available to children today, just in a different format. Four generations of our family have been involved in Scouting. My grandchildren are lucky enough to be able to experience something that their great grandparents, myself (their Nanna), and their father and aunt experienced and that is the wonderful world of Scouting.

Kerryn Maxwell

A short sad life

Catherine Doherty was born in 1889 on February 24th in St. Leonards in the county of Berwickshire in Scotland. She was the fifth child and known to be her dad's favourite. The family called her Katie. Her parents were Irish immigrants and as such worked as agricultural labourers on farm estates in the borders of Scotland.

She would have been expected to help with work even as a child as there were eventually 8 children in the family and one brother was deaf and dumb. Accommodation was rudimentary and there were often yearly moves to continue in work.

Katie did go to school and afterwards also became a farmworker as was seen in the 1901 and 1911 census.

At the age of 20 she gave birth to a daughter whom she names Margaret McGlen Doherty. The father was not known. Katie and the child continued to live with the parents. The little girl was commonly called Maggie.

In 1915 aged 26 Katie already pregnant marries George Douglas another agricultural labourer. Soon after the wedding she delivers her first son George who was commonly known as Dod. The following year Agnes arrived but died aged 2yrs. Her cause of death is not known. In 1917 Sarah arrived but died in infancy.

John was the next baby in 1918. He became Jock as they could not help shortening his name.

At this time Spanish flu raged through Britain and all the cottagers fell victim to it. All except George Douglas that is and he fed and cared for everyone in the farm cottages. When his neighbours had improved George contracted the influenza and died of it. His funeral cortage was crossing the bridge



Katie aged 20

into Berwick on Tweed as the Armistice bells sounded for the end of WW1.

Now Katie was in dire straits. No man to support her or the remaining three children and she would have been ousted out of the tied cottage once her husband was not working there.

Somehow she ended up living in the village of Coldingham and working as an agricultural worker. She must have been in a relationship with a man as the next document we find is the birth of yet another child in 1921. The child was premature and lived only eight hours. A neighbour registered his birth

and death and not being sure what to document registered him as James Doherty or Douglas. Ten days later Katie who was back working in the fields, develops a Pulmonary embolism and dies aged 32 years.

She was buried in Coldingham Priory in a pauper's unmarked grave. Her daughter Maggie was put out to service as she was 12. The two boys were passed around relatives till they were old enough to go their own way. They were not treated too kindly.

When Katie was dying she asked for a priest being a Catholic but her family refused as she was a "Bad Woman." So she died begging her daughter to return to the Catholic church.

A sad life ending tragically short at 32 and having had 6 children with only three surviving and her husband also dead so young. I visited her grave (my great grandmother) with her grandson and we both had a strange experience of feeling she was glad that someone had actually come to visit her resting place.

Her 3 children grew up had good family lives and all lived to old age.

Meg Hunter

Branching Out

To celebrate Family History Month join members of the Narre Warren & District Family History Group and the Local History Librarian, Heather Arnold, for a morning of family and local history.

Ask us a question about your family history or local history. We also want to collect information and images, so come along and tell us what you know about your area from the past. If you want to share



**Casey
Cardinia
Libraries**

your photos, we can scan them on the spot and return the original to you straight away.

All welcome, no bookings required.
All sessions are 10 am to 1 pm.

Doveton - Wednesday, 7 August
Endeavour Hills - Monday, 12 August
Emerald - Wednesday, 14 August
Pakenham - Thursday, 15 August
Hampton Park - Friday, 16 August
Cranbourne - Tuesday, 20 August
Bunjil Place - Friday, 23 August

James Ralston

My grandmother died when I was 21. In all that time I never saw any of the sadness that she had had in her life. I am not sure that today's families could cope with losing a brother, brother-in-law, first cousin and then a son, another son a P.O.W. and the last one wounded on the Kokoda Track. All during the 1st and 2nd World Wars.

This story is about one of these men.



James Ralston enlisted in the 1st World War on the 13 September 1914 at Ballarat. His record tells us that he was 28 years old. His height was 5 feet seven inches, and he weighed 154 pounds. His chest span was 34-36½ inches. He was of fresh complexion with light blue eyes and dark brown hair, with a mole on

the back of his neck. For two years he had been a volunteer in the army.

The ship H.M.A.T. *Runic* with James on board sailed from Australia on 12 February 1915. James fought in Egypt until he was redeployed to the 60th Battalion in France, where he disembarked on 29 April 1916 at Marseilles. Warfare in the European countryside was of a completely different type than in the desert of Egypt. The Australians were not prepared for this.

James' Battalion was sent to Fromelles. The English were in charge and they decided that the Australian troops would put on a display of getting ready to attack the Germans. It was a ploy to try and deceive the Germans into not sending their troops south to the battlefield of the Somme. After three days of this charade the Germans were now fully prepared for the attack. Unbelievably, the English command changed their minds and decided that they would attack here at Fromelles. In hindsight it was either a very poor decision or a stupid mistake. The Australians were told to be ready to attack and go "over the top" on the morning of 19 July 1916.

The previous night roll call of James' Battalion was held and 1,000 men answered. A lot of the men wrote letters home that evening as they must have realised how serious their situation was.

It proved to be a very costly mistake. At nightfall on 19 July 1916 a mere 80 answered roll call. In all,

Australia on that one day lost approximately 5,500 men.

The dreaded telegram

The first telegram the family received reported James as "missing in action on the 19 July 1916".

The next telegram stated that he was a Prisoner of War with the Germans, yet another stated that he "died whilst a Prisoner of War in Germany". What a roller coaster ride for the family.

I guess the letter written by his sister Rebecca on 14 November 1916 asking for more information about his death showed that they knew nothing about his death. There is nothing in his army file to show us that this letter was ever answered.

The only communication was the inventory form the kit store in London had compiled showing the effects of the late James Ralston. All the belongings from the deceased soldiers were returned to London then onto the family. All they had was a War Office Book No 7 with 60 Marks. Not much for the family to hold onto.

We are not sure that the family ever saw the official documentation that was written in German on 18 September 1919. It recorded that James was killed at Fromelles and buried there. As far as the family was concerned that was the end of James' story.

Lambis Englezos AM

Then, about 88 years on, a Victorian school teacher, Lambis Englezos AM, became fascinated with the 1st World War. He did a lot of research and found some discrepancies in the number of dead soldiers compared to the number of graves around Fromelles. He was convinced that not all graves sites had been discovered after the War. Researching in archives in Europe, he found what he believed was proof that a grave site at Fromelles had not been found. The German letters to the Australian Army, about soldiers being buried at Fromelles, was a great lead. Then he found a reference to some communal graves around Pheasant Wood, Fromelles. After much discussion between France, the War Graves Commission, England and the Australian Army, the Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division was contacted. They requested a non-invasive evaluation and a trial excavation at Fromelles. The investigation concluded that the Germans had used the site to bury British and Australian soldiers. They believed that between 220 to 400 soldiers were buried there.

The announcement of the discovery sparked many relatives of those who had lost family at Fromelles to come forward.

After considerable discussion the Governments of Great Britain and Australia agreed that the

soldiers would be carefully recovered from the graves. Attempts would be made to recover as much historical evidence as possible. DNA would also be taken from the recovered bodies. The contract was awarded to Oxford Archaeology Ltd, one of the leading service-provider in this field in Europe.

The remains of 250 soldiers were recovered and stored in a mortuary to await burial.

It was fundamental that the soldiers be laid to rest with dignity and respect. Both the British and Australian Governments were pleased to find that land was donated making it possible to establish a new cemetery at Fromelles, close to where the men had fought and died. 249 of the soldiers were buried individually with full military honours during January and February 2010.

Today 166 Australian soldiers have been identified, the remaining still awaiting identification.

Spokesperson for the Ralston family

In 2007 we held a Ralston family reunion. It was with a fair bit of excitement that it was decided that I would be the contact for the family. The army had contacted us asking for details about James and his family. I had to produce a family tree and they also asked for DNA to be provided by both male and female descendants. We were told that the likelihood of James being in this grave was very high.

You can imagine how excited we were when the War Graves Commission invited us to a dedication ceremony at the new cemetery on 19 July 2010—exactly 94 years after they died.

We never had any contact with the Royal family before. Here it was! An invitation from His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, President of the War Graves Commission. One drawback for us was that I had to wear a dress and Robin a suit. It added extra weight to our suitcases.

The big day

19 July began with an 8 am departure. The town was decorated with Australian flags flying high beside their own flag. It was very touching to see how much the Australian people meant to them. Driving into Fromelles we went past Pheasant Wood where the grave site was found.

Australians were everywhere with a crowd of 5,000 people there for the service. We were very lucky to



be on the invited list as we were seated in the stand with all the dignitaries. A large paddock had been set up for all the others, where they could watch the ceremony on a large screen.

The Duke of Kent opened the service. Relatives of the soldiers read from the letters they had written the night before they went into the battle. They were very poignant and not a dry eye could be seen in the stand. It was sad that these letters all arrived home after the families had been told their loved one had died.

Then the coffin of the last soldier to be buried arrived on a First World War Military Wagon. (This had been restored and carried Princess Diana at her funeral). It had departed from the grave site at Pheasant Wood proceeded through the town to the cemetery. It was just pomp and ceremony that only the British can do—but it was very moving.

Next came the flag bearers from every country of the Commonwealth. Two children from the local school were part of the flag bearers. You could see that they were very proud to be part of the service.

Chaplains lead the bearer party and the coffin to the gravesite. It was done with just so much dignity and respect that you could not help feeling very privileged to be at this service. It made you very proud to be Australian.



The coffin was laid to rest with all the official guests laying poppies on top. Three volleys were fired into the air. A great reaction to this was to see all the birds fly up into the sky.

Then the last post was played with a minute's silence, before Reveille was played.

HRH The Prince of Wales, the Governor General of Australia, The Duke of Kent and other dignitaries then laid wreaths at the monument.

The French Minister for State of Defence and Veterans spoke in French. Most of us could not

understand a word, but we all clapped when he finished.

The Governor General of Australia Quentin Bryce just spoke brilliantly. When she spoke of Lambis finding the graves the cheering and clapping started out in the paddock and echoed around to us in the stand. It was a wonderful reaction. Only Australians could cut straight to the point amid all the pomp and ceremony.

HRH The Prince of Wales then dedicated the cemetery. Then the anthems of Australia and France were played.

The finale was the singing of *Keep the home fires burning* with all the visitors singing this song. It was a special way to finish the service.

As this was being played the official guests left, and along the road leading up to the cemetery the flag bearers, the gardeners and workers who had worked on the cemetery, formed a guard of honour. The official party walked down this road thanking all these people on the way. It was a wonderful gesture.

The next day we were able to go back to the



cemetery and walk around and reflect on the day before. We were able to take photos of men from James' unit that had been identified. The wreaths and flowers still looked fresh and new. We then walked through the village and talked to some of the residents. We did have some trouble understanding them as they did us. When they realised we were Australians, they went and got the newspapers, and their order of service books. They all wanted to shake our hands.

It finished our Fromelles experience on a high note.

It was a wonderful journey that we had. Unfortunately they still have not been able to identify James' remains. Some they may never be able to identify as they cannot find relatives of the soldier.

They are still trying with us and have now just got DNA from all the female line only. I am sure that my Great Uncle James Ralston will be identified one day.

Fay McCoubrie

In the Research Room

New on the shelf in the Research Room is *Traces*, an Australian magazine published four times a year. It is described as a magazine promoting itself as "Uncovering Australian history, from ancient culture to convict settlers, genealogy, local history, artefacts and antiques". Each issue has a broad range of stories and articles that will capture your interest.

You can read about the unsolved mystery of the swamp ladies of Tullaree or the murders at Harmers Haven that involved Truganini and Redmond Barry. There are stories on convicts and you can take a journey back in time to Norfolk Island. Another particularly interesting story is that of a 14 year old boy, transported on the first fleet, who ends up



sailing with Matthew Flinders on the *Investigator*. Each issue has articles to help you research your family history, with helpful advice on finding information on your ANZACs, freemasons, asylums, nurses and many more.

Traces is always on the hunt for great Australian stories, and encourages its readers to share some of their ancestors' stories with them. Every issue has a listing of new online resources available in Australia and worldwide. If you love Australian history you will really enjoy this magazine. Next time you are in the Research Room be sure to have a look at *Traces*.

Happy reading.

Moreyn Dimsey
Librarian

Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.

Annual General Meeting 2 pm, Saturday 17 August 2019

Cranbourne Complex Meeting Room
65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne

Agenda

1. The reading and acceptance of the minutes of the 2018 AGM
2. The reading and acceptance of the Committee Reports
3. Election of Office Bearers for 2019-2020.
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
4. Election of Committee Members for 2019-2020.
 - Correspondence Secretary
 - Librarian
 - Newsletter Editor
 - Publicity Officer
 - Research Room Manager
 - Membership Officer
 - IT Officer

All positions will be declared vacant and a ballot will

be held if two or more persons nominate for the same position.

Membership Renewal Forms and Proxy Forms are available in this edition of Spreading Branches. As detailed in Clauses 34.6 and 34.7 of our Constitution, Proxy Forms sent by mail or email must be received by the President at least 24 hours prior to the AGM and members holding Proxy Forms must lodge them with the President prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Completed nomination forms need to be lodged with the Secretary by **9 August 2019**. Forms may be left in the "nomination box" in the Research Room or posted to 1/65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne Vic 3977.

Nomination forms are also available with this edition of Spreading Branches or from the Secretary secretary@nwfhg.org.au

** Please note that only financial members may vote at the AGM. Membership fees are due **1 July**. Please arrive by 1.30 pm if you wish to pay your membership fees on the day.*

Research Room Roster: *Please find a replacement yourself if you cannot do duty.*

June 2019		July 2019		August 2019	
11 am-3 pm		11 am-3 pm		11 am-3 pm	
Sat 1	Barbara Sharp Lynne Bradley	Tue 2	Fay McCoubrie Brenda Wheeler	Sat 3	Lynne Bradley Kerryn Maxwell
Tue 4	Fay McCoubrie Bev Lambie	Sat 6	Kerryn Maxwell Robyn Jones	Tue 6	Barbara Sharp Wendy Goodwin
Sat 8	Eileen Durdin Robyn Jones	Tue 9	Jane Rivett-Carnac Moreyn Dimsey	Sat 10	Eileen Durdin Pat Sherwell
Tue 11	Wendy Goodwin Mary McGrath	Sat 13	Eileen Durdin Pat Sherwell	Tue 13	Bev Lambie Brenda Wheeler
Sat 15 <i>open to 1</i>	Di Brodbeck Judy Mehegan	Tue 16	Bev Lambie Barbara Sharp	Sat 17 <i>open to 1</i>	Di Brodbeck Judy Mehegan
Tue 18	Jane Rivett-Carnac Brenda Wheeler	Sat 20 <i>open to 1</i>	Di Brodbeck Judy Mehegan	Tue 20	Jane Rivett-Carnac Mary McGrath
Sat 22	Kerryn Maxwell Pat Sherwell	Tue 23	Mary McGrath Maureen Abbott	Sat 24	Kerryn Maxwell Lyne McGregor
Tue 25	Moreyn Dimsey Maureen Abbott	Sat 27	Lyne McGregor Wendy Goodwin	Tue 27	Maureen Stagg Maureen Abbott
Sat 29	Lyne McGregor Lynne Bradley	Tue 30	Maureen Stagg Moreyn Dimsey	Sat 31	Robyn Jones Wendy Goodwin

180th anniversary of the arrival of the *David Clark* 27 October 1839

To mark the 180th anniversary of the *David Clark* dropping anchor in Hobson's Bay on 27 October 1839, a reunion is planned for Sunday, 27 October 2019, at Gulf Station, 1029 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen, Victoria. Descendants of those 229 passengers are invited.



Kangaroo Ground. This historic farm is now managed by the National Trust of Australia (Vic) (see www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/gulf-station). Gulf Station was the venue of an event that was part of the 150th *David Clark*

anniversary weekend celebrations, and of a small event for the 175th anniversary.

To receive more information as plans progress, email now to: davidclark1839@gmail.com

Publications for sale

Peace at last: a World War 1 walk in Lang Lang Cemetery (2018)

We uncover the stories of 98 soldiers from the Lang Lang district and the 48 families who waved goodbye to them and prayed for their safe return. Just over half of these families sent two sons or more. Not everyone's prayers were answered in the way they'd hoped for, prayers for the return of 24 fathers, sons, husbands and brothers were not answered at all.

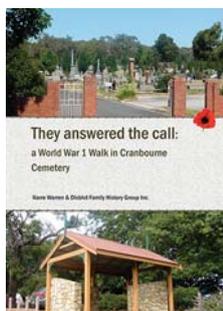
\$20 + \$13.80 postage + handling



They answered the call: a World War 1 walk in Cranbourne Cemetery (2018)

Stories of the courage and sacrifice of 111 men and 1 woman with connections to Cranbourne Cemetery or the Cranbourne area through their families, are told in this book. Sixty-five families waited for their return, also with courage and sacrifice and for some there was a happy ending. But, for others, there was not. Seventeen men did not return, 9 died on French battlefields, 6 died in Belgium, 1 at Gallipoli and 1 at Mudros. Two unfortunate soldiers died in training camp, never leaving Australian shores.

\$20 + \$13.80 postage + handling



For some the bell tolled: a World War 1 Walk in Harkaway Cemetery (plus Avenue of Honour) (2017)

This book tells the stories of 36 families of Harkaway who watched, waited and pined for the 66 men and 2 women who enlisted and tried to make it safely back to home. Ten did not return.

Most of the men served in the infantry across 18 battalions predominately in the 14th, 21st, 24th and the 59th. Four local lads served in the Light Horse, 3 in the Pioneers, 3 in the 4th Field Ambulance, 6 in the Machine Gun or artillery units. 1 soldier served with the Tropical Force in New Guinea until 1920. Two were awarded the Military Medal, one was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, and one a Distinguished Service Order. Others were mentioned in dispatches.

\$20 + \$13.80 postage + handling



Ordinary people, interesting lives: A walk in the historic Harkaway Cemetery (2016)

abounds with people who, once arrived, had to create a roof over their heads, people who needed to grow crops or nurture their livestock to be able to eat, neighbours who no longer remained strangers, faces who became familiar at church or school or the

general store or railway station.

Our volunteers researched and wrote the stories of families that travelled thousands of miles to a country on the other side of the world. A country with people who didn't necessarily speak the same language or held the same beliefs.

\$15 + \$8 postage + handling

Sacrifice and Patriotism: a World War 1 Walk in Pakenham Cemetery (2016)

This book tells the stories of 64 families who watched and supported 120 men and one woman as they enlisted. They include stories of sets of brothers, a father and his son, a nurse and a sailor along with two Indigenous soldiers. Soldiers who received awards, soldiers who served as troopers, gunners, sappers, drivers, and signallers; in the Light Horse, Pioneers, Railway Unit, Anzac Police and Provost Corps and in the Cyclist Battalion.

\$20 + \$13.80 postage + handling



100 men, 100 years: a World War 1 Walk in Berwick Cemetery (2015)

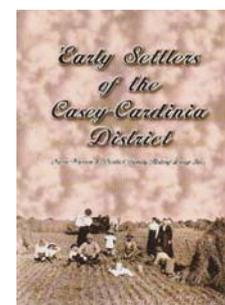
examines the cemetery's connections with the Great War. Our stories embrace 100 men from over 70 families – all linked to Berwick Cemetery and the community it served. Twenty-eight men did not return; they are still in France, Gallipoli, Belgium, Malta, Palestine, at sea and 6 have no known grave.

\$20 + \$13.80 postage + handling

Early Settlers of the Casey-Cardinia District (2010)

A 274 page book complete with index to people, properties and ships; plus a bibliography. There are over 300 entries containing birth, death and marriage information for individuals and families, many of which were submitted by descendants of those people and include photographs not published elsewhere. In many cases detailed biographies have been written by descendants or compiled by the family history group, giving an insight into the early days of many Casey Cardinia families and individuals.

\$30 + \$13.80 postage + handling



Kindred Spirits.

20 years of the Narre Warren & District Family History Group 1989 – 2009

\$25 + \$13.80 postage + handling

Cemetery Tour booklets

Pakenham Cemetery (2011)	\$10
Cranbourne Cemetery (2012)	\$10
Lang Lang Cemetery (2013)	\$10
Berwick Cemetery (2014)	\$15
Pakenham Cemetery (2015)	\$15

Add \$8 for postage + handling.

Order forms are available from the Research room or download from nwfhg.org.au/publications/