

Spreading Branches

Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.

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Issue 146 – November 2025

Lang Lang Cemetery Walk

Thunderstorms were forecast for Sunday 26 October when I checked the BoM website on the Friday before the tour. The question was, when would they come? I checked again on Saturday, and it was the same and I wondered if we should cancel.

We had bookings for thirty-four people for our third walk at Lang Lang. We had fifteen stories to tell, a new book, a great team and an uncertain window of opportunity. So with a positive attitude we set up for the morning and placed the plants on our graves, constantly checking the grey overcast sky.

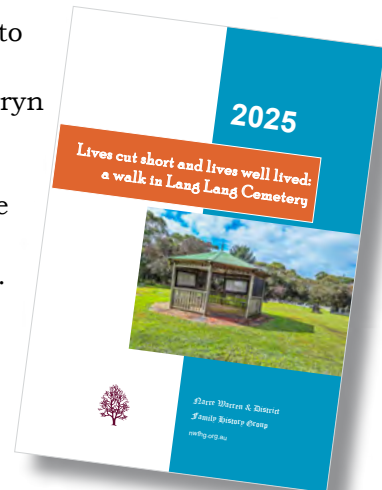
Barbara and Garry arrived with the generator to make sure we could have a hot drink. Lori and Barbara looked after the morning tea. Robyn and Wendy had the new book displayed along with our other walks. Val in her own bright way welcomed everyone as they checked in and paid their money.

Fay was our marshal for the day and had the first

group assembled and ready to go by 9.50 am. They set out with Moreyn and Eileen. Kerry and Grace led the second group out ten minutes later. After a bit of a wait to ensure we had everyone, Jane and Lynne led the last group out. David moved around the groups taking photos for us, ensuring that the two visitors who did not want to appear in any photos, didn't.

We welcomed people new to our tours and reconnected with long-time friends and supporters. We also had Cardinia Shire's Councillor Trudi Paton; members of the Lang Lang Cemetery Trust

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Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.

110 High Street, Berwick, Vic 3806

Web: www.nwfhg.org.au Email: president@nwfhg.org.au Phone: 0412 084 671

ABN 15 397 153 919



Committee Members

President	Jane Rivett-Carnac
president@nwfhg.org.au	
Vice President	Fay McCoubrie
vice.president@nwfhg.org.au	
Treasurer	Lynne Bradley
treasurer@nwfhg.org.au	
Secretary	Eileen Durdin
secretary@nwfhg.org.au	
Correspondence Secretary	Robyn Jones
correspondence@nwfhg.org.au	
Librarian	Moreyn Dimsey
librarian@nwfhg.org.au	
Membership Officer	Kerryn Maxwell
membership.officer@nwfhg.org.au	
Newsletter Editor	Marianne Rocke
newsletter.editor@nwfhg.org.au	
Publicity Officer	Lori Barker
publicity.officer@nwfhg.org.au	
Research Room Manager	Barbara Sharp
research.room.mgr@nwfhg.org.au	
Cemetery Tours	
cemetery.tours@nwfhg.org.au	

Lorraine Taylor 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.

Opening Hours for Research

Tuesday and Saturday 11 am to 2 pm

Casual visitors \$5 per day

Research room phone number: (03) 8905 4239

NW&DFHG is a member of:

Casey Cardinia Local History Reference Group	The Narre Warren & District Family History Group gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of Connected Libraries and the City of Casey.
Genealogical Society of Victoria	
South Eastern Historical Association Inc.	
Royal Historical Society of Victoria	

Meetings

October - April: 7.30 pm

3rd Wednesday of the month

(no meeting in January)

May - September: 2.00 pm

3rd Saturday of the month.

Membership

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

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 \$20 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

Coffee Catch-ups

Meet with friends for a social chat and a bite on the last Sunday of the month at 10 am

Our next Coffee Catch Ups will be:

Sunday, 30 November 2025

Margo's Fine Chocolates and Coffee, 215-225 Shop, 18 Parkhill Drive, Berwick

Sunday, 22 February 2026

Ducky in the Field - Shop 6 55 Old Princes Highway, Beaconsfield



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

The group has been busy over the past three months. We have had talks on a wide variety of subjects. We enjoyed another excellent presentation from Patrick Ferry at our AGM. *The men that didn't come home: local servicemen from Pakenham* was an appropriate topic eighty years after the end of World War 2.

In September and October we had talks from members. In September Jan showed how she tracked her Dutch ancestors to New Amsterdam (New York City) and the value of old maps. In October our librarian and research officer demonstrated TinyCat and Victorian Collections. We learned that while we all know about going down Trove rabbit holes, Victorian Collections is just as easy to get lost in with all it has to offer.

On the 21 August we held a Discovery Day with four speakers and topics covering crime and punishment, occupations and work, old magazines and newsletters and a demonstration of our scanners. We had lots of positive feedback from members and visitors and many people came in to the room to put into practise their new knowledge of scanning.

Paula Taylor was our guest speaker in November. She presented a fascinating talk on the life of botanical artist Ellis Rowan, who was the aunt of Lady Casey.

The project team have begun the next phase of work with the Friends of Wilson Botanic Park along with the ongoing cataloguing every Wednesday. In amongst the chatter and laughter they beaver away at individual tasks. It's a great way to learn or refine new skills and they welcome any members to come and help.

We have also been out and about, in September Moreyn and I attended the Prahran Mechanics Institute history showcase. Eileen and I attended the Berwick Mechanics Institute AGM in October.

I attended two book launches, the first in September at Emerald Museum for the revised *Emerald in Focus 1858-1958*. Then in October at Pakenham for *When the Army came to Pakenham 1892-1919* by Penny Harris-Jennings. Both books have been added to our Casey Cardinia Collection.

Also in October, Eileen and I represented the group at the Casey Cardinia Heritage Festival at the Nar Nar Goon Soldiers Memorial Hall. We had an enjoyable time with the visitors, the mayor and a number of local councillors and fellow history groups. Fay came and gave us both a break, all in all it was a good day.

Two weeks before the cemetery walk, I spoke to a group of interested family history beginners at Pakenham Library about the things you can learn in a cemetery and how you can also be misled. And of course, there was the cemetery walk itself, reported on elsewhere in the newsletter.

The Thursday History talks this year have covered a wide variety of topics, Heather spoke about some of the less used data sets on Ancestry in October and in the last talk in November I covered researching the military in your family. Heather and I have enjoyed the last three years of talks and are having a break in 2026. Thank you to all the many people we have shared the time with on the third Thursday in the month.

A big highlight for the group was morning tea with Julian Hill, MP for Bruce. Thanks to our secretary Eileen, he had helped us with a successful grant application this year. We feel honoured that he took time out of his very busy schedule to sit and hear about our group. It was also nice to have our local councillor Scott Dowling attend our AGM and spend time getting to know us.

It wouldn't be December without Kerry's Christmas activity, we are looking forward to another night of laughter. Summer is almost here, so too are Christmas and New Year festivities. I wish all our members and friends safe travels, the joy of the company of loved ones and success with your family history projects and research.

We are closed during January so our volunteers can enjoy a break, but we will open the room by appointment for visitors from interstate or regional Victoria. Contact: president@nwfhg.org.au

Jane Rivett-Carnac

Christmas meeting Wednesday, 17 December – 7.30 pm

at Lorraine Taylor Research Room, 110 High Street, Berwick. Entry fee is \$5 to cover expenses for tea and coffee, speakers, and other meeting operating costs.

Come along to our Christmas trivia night. Wear something Xmassy and bring a small plate of something for supper to share.

Put on your thinking cap and prepare for some fun.





Cemeteries in Victoria

Many family historians visit cemeteries on a regular basis. Sometimes we're looking for the grave of a newly found ancestor, and at other times we might just be sight-seeing. I've spent many an afternoon wandering around a cemetery reading the headstones and looking at the graves. Every cemetery is unique, having been shaped by the community it serves and those that have served it through time.

I think Dr Celestina Sagazio summed it up beautifully:

Cemeteries are fascinating places that are full of history. They are sacred tranquil sites that honour and celebrate life, not morbid places to be shunned and forgotten. Cemeteries provide valuable information about our forebears and their societies. Unlike most histories, burial grounds document the lives of all – rich and poor, prominent and humble. They also reflect changing cultural values with inspiring examples of artistic, architectural and aesthetic endeavour and of botanical and landscape beauty. Cemeteries not only illuminate our past but also provide a sense of continuity and identity.¹

So, while our cemeteries are quietly preserving our past, many of them are still serving their community in the present. Burials are occurring, ashes are being placed, plaques and monuments are being erected, lawns are being mowed, plants pruned, structures repaired and records and registers are being continually updated. At the same time, plans and strategies are being formulated to carry the cemetery into the future.

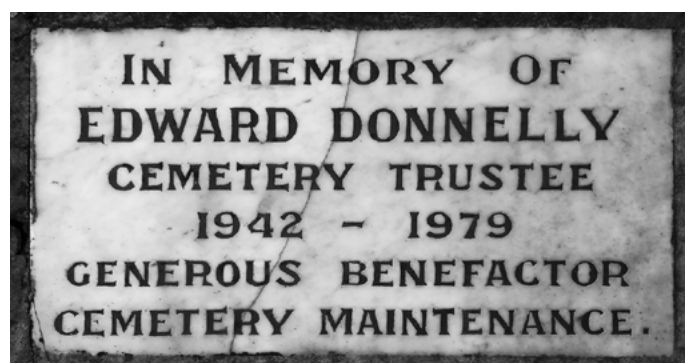
That's such a big job, don't you think? Do you know who does it?

Victorian cemeteries are divided into two categories with very unimaginative names – Class A cemeteries which are managed by Class A cemetery trusts and Class B cemeteries which are managed by Class B cemetery trusts.

There are five Class A cemetery trusts in Victoria that manage our larger metropolitan and regional public cemeteries across more than one location: Remembrance Parks Central Victoria, Ballarat General Cemeteries, Geelong Cemeteries, Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries and Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trusts. Class A cemetery trusts have between 6 and 9 members who receive a small remuneration and are appointed by the Governor in Council for a term of three years. All Class A cemeteries perform cremations.

Then there's about 480 Class B cemetery trusts that manage all the small, medium and large rural, regional or suburban cemeteries in Victoria. Of these 480 Class B trusts about 36 are managed by municipal councils. Class B cemetery trust members are also appointed by the Governor in Council for a term of five years and work in a voluntary capacity. Simply put, the Governor in Council is the Governor acting with the advice of the Premier and other government ministers.

Victoria's public cemeteries are all on Crown land. When you bury someone, you purchase a Right of Interment which gives you the right to



¹ *In memoriam : a guide to the history and heritage of Victoria's cemeteries.* Garrie Hutchinson & Victoria Department of Health (2014).

bury someone in a particular grave, but it does not grant you ownership of that piece of land. The Crown retains ownership of the land. All Victorian cemetery trusts, whether Class A or B are governed by the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 and the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025.² All Victorian cemetery trusts answer directly to the Victorian Department of Health.

The Department of Health publish a list of current cemetery trustees on their website. As of October 2025, there were 3,250 cemetery trustees in Victoria. That figure doesn't include councillors on trusts managed by municipal councils. The vast majority of these trustees belong to Class B cemetery trusts; therefore they're unpaid volunteers managing and caring for their local cemetery. Some trusts are able to employ a trust secretary to handle the day to day administration and perhaps ground staff too. Some trusts do it all themselves. Class B cemetery trusts operate with between 3 and 11 members.

Cranbourne Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in the Casey Cardinia area. Officially, the people of Cranbourne have been managing their cemetery since the cemetery was gazetted, and the first trustees were appointed in December 1857.³ That's almost 170 years ago. But we know the real story is a little different because it's thought that burials occurred at Cranbourne before 1857, but weren't recorded.⁴

Ten acres were reserved for a cemetery in 1856, and the first recorded burial at Cranbourne was of five-month-old Jane Morrell in April 1857. Rev. Alexander Duff performed the graveside service and William Ridgway performed the undertaker's duties.⁵ Another six children were buried at

Cranbourne in the months between Jane Morrell's burial and the appointment of the first official trustees.⁶

The land set aside for a cemetery at Dandenong was developing along a similar timeline with the first five trustees appointed in November 1857, a month earlier than Cranbourne.⁷

Berwick Cemetery was gazetted three years later in 1860 and Pakenham Cemetery in 1865.⁸ All Casey Cardinia cemeteries are still overseen by Class B trusts except for Emerald, which is now part of the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust.

So, it's not the government that's looking after the cemetery your ancestors or loved ones now call home, and, in most cases, it's not the local council. It's people like you and me, who for a hundred and one reasons decided to put their hand up for the job. They meet on a quarterly, bimonthly or monthly basis depending on how busy their cemetery is throughout the year. And, as the circumstances of their particular cemetery dictate, may find themselves learning and doing things they'd never have imagined. The good news is that most graves are not dug by hand anymore, there's people with machines to do that!

Help and training for cemetery trusts is provided by the Victorian Department of Health and the Victorian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association. The Victorian Department of Health's website has a lot of valuable information on the appointment process, training and responsibilities of trust members if you're interested in having a look. Victoria Department of Health cemetery and crematoria information: health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria

I am immensely proud of our annual cemetery tours. They give our members the opportunity to enhance their research and writing skills to tell stories that in many cases had not yet been told. Our tours highlight the very best of our family history group – our enthusiasm for what we do and how well we do it. But even more than that, they encourage us and those who walk with us to visit and appreciate our cemeteries.

Thank you to all the cemetery trusts for their hospitality and assistance when we visit. Your cemeteries reflect your dedication to the job at hand and are a credit to you.

What's happening at your local cemetery? Do they

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² *Manual for Victorian cemetery trusts*. Department of Health (2025).

³ *No time to say goodbye: a walk in Cranbourne Cemetery*. Narre Warren & District Family History Group (2022).

⁴ *The life and times of Edward Donnelly: Early days of Cranbourne*. Edward Donnelly (1976).

⁵ *No time to say goodbye: a walk in Cranbourne Cemetery*. Narre Warren & District Family History Group (2022).

⁶ Cranbourne Cemetery Register on FamilySearch Film No. 008164513

⁷ *Casey Cardinia Connections at Dandenong Community Cemetery*. Narre Warren & District Family History Group. (2023).

⁸ *Cemeteries in Casey Cardinia (blog post)*. Casey Cardinia Links to our Past (3 Dec 2007).



need a hand? If becoming a cemetery trust member is not for you, can you help in other ways? Perhaps you could volunteer your time and expertise if you're a keen gardener. Or you might belong to a service group that could lend a hand every now and then. Does the cemetery have a 'Friends' group? If not, perhaps you're just the person to get one off the ground.

You can find contact details for your local cemetery, or any cemetery in Victoria on the above-mentioned website using the 'cemetery search' on that page.

Lynne Bradley

The Beaconsfield tip

Did you ever wonder where people's rubbish went in the past? For those that didn't burn it in their incinerators, or had private landfills on their land, council established a rubbish tip in Beaconsfield. Early tips are not well documented, but we know that there was a lot of sand mining on the Cardinia Straight. The depressions left behind were filled, and many old tips now have sporting grounds covering them.

The Beaconsfield tip for the townships of Berwick and Beaconsfield was operating along the Cardinia Creek from 1938 to 1979. Over time it stretched from near Montuna Golf Course to Inglis Road. Hugh Davidson Bell had bought a 93-acre farming property south of the golf course in 1936. He raised dairy calves and sold milk. Leasing some of his land for a tip must have been a good supplemental income.

Rubbish tips were only rarely mentioned in the local newspapers. We can read of rubbish deposited too close to Emerald Road, or even along the roadside, of the need for a bulldozer to push it to the proper spot, and a regular warning that the tip was nearly full. With tip management costs increasing, tip fees were introduced on a trial basis, and then abandoned, at least for the locals. In the early 1950s council employed a caretaker, Tim Webb at a salary of one pound per week.

Webb, whose proper name was Theodore Hodgson Pascoe-Webbe, grew up in a well to do family. He was a veteran of the first World War. Shortly after his return from the front, he married and had three children. The relationship did not last long. His war experiences affected his health, and he would withdraw and not speak to his family for many days. When he couldn't sleep he paced about the house. He was a sign writer by trade but was not regularly employed.

It is not known when he first came to Beaconsfield, but by the mid-1940s he occupied a 20-acre property on High Street, Guys Hill. He was

described as an eccentric hermit, and at some time was living in one of the old sandpits. It was more a trench, which he covered with corrugated iron, to make an improvised dwelling. There he would live with his dog. His tip employment lasted for about eighteen months, but then the health officer recommended that his employment be terminated. This did not stop him checking out what people discarded at the tip. He loaded his treasures on to a handcart and proceeded to his shack on High



*The Cardinia Straight tip.
January 1970 (image PROV)*



*The Cardinia Straight tip.
January 1978 (image Connected Libraries)*

Street. At times, going uphill, the load became too heavy, and Tim unloaded part of the load along the road. A neighbour commented that Tim's treasures could be found all the way along the road to his shack.

After that, Hugh Bell took over as tip manager. Some residents remember that the tip was known as 'Bell's supermarket'. There was a trade of second-hand materials, some of which are still furnishing local homes. The Bells were also known for their shell museum. A resident remembers a large sign that said 'See Bell's Sea Shells'. Others remember a 'Shell Museum' sign on the house itself. The house with its museum were lost in the Ash Wednesday fires.

Comparing aerial photographs of the early and late 1970s show how the tip had spread to the southern boundary of Bell's land. In 1973, council took up another lease from Bell, but this area was also filling up by early 1974. A 16-acre property between Bell's land and Inglis Road had been used for a piggery in the early 1940s. By 1974 it was owned by Mrs Wardle, a widow. Council approached her to lease three acres to extend the tip, which at this time was still entered from Beaconsfield-Emerald Road. In 1977 the tip was extended to the southern portion of her land, and an entrance established from Inglis Road.

In late 1974 council organised a hard rubbish

collection and removed 120 truckloads of rubbish. While council wanted to make the removal of rubbish largely the responsibility of the individual, residents preferred council to organise transport to the tip.

In 1975 council reminded residents that disposal of derelict vehicles along road reserves was illegal, and that they could be disposed of at the tip, as long as they were cut into small pieces (the size of a car door). In early 1979 residents were advised that the tip would be full in two months' time. It lasted a little while longer and was finally closed on 18 November 1979.

Closer Settlement

The history of the land before the tip was established is equally interesting. George Miller and the Cameron family originally settled the area. In the 1880s the northern part was owned by the Fuller family, who built a 10-room brick house. They named the property 'Cardinia'. Their land was on both sides of Beaconsfield-Emerald Road.

In 1904 Charles Edward Liddell, a director of a linen import company bought the place. He renamed the property 'Banoge'. By 1910 the Bunting brothers had a lease and ran a dairy farm with 40 head of cattle and kept pigs. An article in the *Leader* newspaper noted that they grew potatoes, canola, oats, and maize. Their lease ended when Liddell sold the farm to the Crown under the Closer Settlement Scheme. The Buntings held a clearing sale in August 1913.

The Closer Settlement Scheme was a forerunner to the Soldier Settlement Scheme. Under the scheme a property was evaluated by two or three assessors, who determined the viability of the farm and suggested the price of purchase. This farm was assessed for about £2000, with the land being worth between £6 and £16 per acre. In the inspection report it was mentioned that years ago 'a substantial amount of sand was taken from this area and there are excavated depressions left'. The Crown purchased the farm and then allocated it to Harold Sugden Rudduck, a successful veterinary surgeon, under a conditional 31-year purchase lease.

Rudduck had obtained a scholarship for the Melbourne Veterinary College while he was a student at Longerenong Agricultural College. In 1895 he obtained his diploma with first class honours in all subjects – no other student had achieved this before. After his graduation he was the resident surgeon at the Melbourne Veterinary Hospital. He then established a private practice at Kirk's Horse Bazaar in Exhibition Street, later moving to Tattersall's Horse Bazaar. In 1900 he enlisted for the Boer War and served as Veterinary Captain. He was in charge of the welfare of the

horses, and was scathing about the men he was assigned, as they knew little about horses, while those who did, were not considered senior enough in rank. Many horses died needlessly. When his unit returned to Australia in October 1900, he remained in South Africa, being in charge of horses in another brigade. In July 1901 he left the Cape for London, where he married his cousin Edith May Durkin the following year, before returning to Australia. They arrived in Heidelberg in May 1902. Rudduck returned to private practice for the following four years. In 1906 the family returned to England, where he continued his studies and assessed livestock in many places. Shortly before returning to Australia four years later, he offered to purchase livestock on commission and personally bring it to Australia.

Among the animals he brought over were some for his own stud – Welsh ponies and Guernsey cattle. It is believed that he had a property at Lilydale at the time but was keen to expand his stud. The Beaconsfield farm seemed to be a perfect fit. As soon as he moved to the property, now called 'Beaconsfield Stud Farm', he advertised that his Welsh pony stallion was at stud for about £5/5 (about \$850) a serve. Just three months later the price had dropped by nearly half. By the following year he sought to sell the nucleus of his pony stud, as well as some Guernsey bulls. At this time, he promoted the worm medicines he manufactured. At some stage he enquired if he was permitted to sell sand from his property. The government granted



Harold Sugden Rudduck (image Weekly Times, 12 June 1897)

his request as long as the money was paid towards his lease.

His experience with horses was the reason that Rudduck was recruited to accompany two shipments of horses to the front in 1916. During the war years it was difficult to find labourers, and this meant that Ruddock decided to give up the farm. He informed the Lands Purchase Board of his intention in August 1918. By this time, he had already paid off the purchase money, though was not eligible for a crown grant before 1925. When he sold it to William Hill in 1920, the farm carried 200 Stud Romney Marsh sheep, ten breeding cattle and eight horses. Rudduck had spent about £300 on drainage, fencing and fertilising the property. He also planted one hundred fruit trees.

Hill did not stay in Beaconsfield for a long time. In March 1924 he exchanged his lease for a farm in Shepparton, previously occupied by Fred Vandeleur, who moved to Beaconsfield. Vandeleur

had previously managed large stations in Queensland and New South Wales. Now getting on in age, he milked a few dairy cows and sold their milk. At least once a year he wrote to council asking for attention to drainage on Beaconsfield-Emerald Road. After his daughter Tara married, the farm was managed by her and her husband Clifford Tolhurst. A clearing sale was held in 1936.

On the southern portion there were many owners after the Cameron family. The most well-known owner was Raymond Buller who established the Greenacres piggery in the 1940s.

Marianne Rocke

Upcoming General Meetings

at Lorraine Taylor Research Room, 110 High Street, Berwick. Entry fee is \$5 to cover expenses for tea and coffee, speakers, and other meeting operating costs.

February General Meeting
Wednesday, 18 February – 7.30 pm

'Unlock your surname'

Presented by Penny Harris Jennings. Proving the origin of your surname may help you to find further ancestors. How to know facts from hearsay regarding your name and the surnames of your forebears.

Lang Lang Cemetery Walk

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and the Lang Lang Historical Society join us. A late but welcome arrival was the photographer from the Star News Group. All listened to our stories of the policeman, the postmistress, the teacher, and the men, women and children we remembered.

Everyone enjoyed the morning tea and the chance to chat after the walk. No one seemed in a hurry to leave until it started to drizzle. As we started to pack up the rain set in.

I heard the rumbling of thunder at home later that afternoon. I'm so glad it took a long time to get here. I hoped it wasn't windy; the gazebo was drying on the deck.

Thank you to the Lang Lang Cemetery Trust for your hospitality, and the Lang Lang Historical Society and the Star News Group for your support. Thank you to Southern Advanced Plants at Dromana for the plants that adorned our graves for the walk.

Thank you to everyone who took a chance on the weather and came to walk with us. And, thank you to each and every member and the two non-members who contributed to this walk on the day and in the months leading up to it.

We hope to see you at our next cemetery walk at Harkaway Cemetery on Sunday 25 October 2026.

Jane Rivett-Carnac



Roots Tech 5-7 March 2026

For those of you who are new to family history research or maybe just aren't aware, there is an international conference called Roots Tech that is held in Utah in the USA every year. As a result of the pandemic, it is now also online for those of us who can't travel to the conference. It's free and features sessions on family history skills around the world and new developments in genealogy. There are also general sessions about the biggies like FamilySearch and Ancestry and others. Because many sessions are recorded, either in advance or from live presentations, there is a huge selection that we don't need to wake at 2 am to view. These recordings are also added to the growing library.

Registration is open right now. The general website is: familysearch.org/en/rootstech/

The link to the program preview is:
familysearch.org/en/rootstech/schedule

I went through the list and grabbed the descriptions of topics you may be interested in to give you a flavour of what's ahead.

Jan Whitaker



neglect the twentieth century as being 'not really history'; sometimes we don't research our more recent ancestors with the same vigour as earlier ones. Perhaps because we knew them in person, we don't seek them out in the documentary record. Twentieth century research brings with it the difficulties of larger and more mobile populations, as well as records that are closed to view but families can be traced and many records are available.

Using the General Records Office (GRO) indexes for post-1837 England and Wales research

If you have ever done a search for your English or Welsh ancestor on FamilySearch or Ancestry, you have probably discovered someone in the birth or death indexes that you think might be your ancestor. But how can you be sure? This session will cover five ways you can use the General Register Office (GRO) indexes to further your research. These include discovering or verifying maiden names, untangling remarriages, and finding missing children who were born and who died in between census years.

Poor, pauper, or pragmatic? Victorian burial and identity

Based on original research into burial practices in Victorian cities, this talk explores how the treatment of the dead reflected the values, identities, and struggles of the living. In Britain's fast-growing industrial cities, burial was shaped not just by grief, but by class, religion, migration, and public health. Whether an individual was laid to rest in a family plot, a pauper's grave, or excluded altogether, these final decisions reveal powerful stories about social status, belief systems, and community belonging.

Never at sea – women and the Royal Navy

This session will examine the origins, roles, and evolving duties of Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS), from their pioneering work in communications and intelligence during the First World War to their expanded responsibilities in the Second. Using archival records, personal testimonies, and service documents, the session will highlight how these women navigated naval life, contributed to wartime efforts, and left behind valuable records for researchers.

Finding and accessing French archives online

Over the past decade, nearly all French historical vital records have become available free online. However, without a known date and municipality, you need to use indexes or other pointers to avoid endless online page turning. In this session, we will discuss retrieval methods specific to birth, marriage, and death records, censuses, military records, and more.

Finding your pre-revolution French ancestors

In this session, we will discuss useful online sources: baptism, marriage, and death parish registers, military records, and other sources.

Historical migrations will be touched upon: the Wars of Religion, colonial emigration, border changes.

Finding your post-revolution French ancestors

The French Revolution and the Napoleon's Premier Empire brought civil registration, the Tables Decennales, inheritance tax registers, cadastral

Searching for burial and cemetery records in Australian states and territories

Are you missing out on family information by not looking for a burial record. Gravestones often contain details such as birth or place of origin. Other burials in the grave may provide information on members of the family.

Researching Australian ancestors: More than convicts

This session will help you uncover your Australian ancestors, particularly those who arrived as free settlers, gold miners, assisted migrants, or post-war arrivals. We'll explore how to access birth, death and marriage records, immigration and naturalisation files, land grants, and newspapers.

Migration waves to Australia: Researching 20th century newcomers

Uncover the stories of migrant families who arrived in Australia as part of post-WWI settlement schemes, post-WWII migration waves, Ten Pound Poms or as refugees. You will learn how to access ship passenger lists, immigration and naturalisation documents, and migrant hostel files. We will also explore records available from the National Archives of Australia, online databases, and local repositories, showing you how to create a comprehensive timeline of your family's migration experience.

Victorians to Elizabethans: British research in the twentieth century

Did your family live in Britain in the twentieth century? Are you interested in their story? We often

registers, the modern départements (counties), and the mysterious Republican calendar! In this session, we will cover vital records of course, but also the bountiful sources you may not be aware of: the 'Tables de deces et de successions', notarial records, mortgage records, hospital records, and incarceration records.

Great uncle Bill in India: an overview of British India records

If you have discovered a family member who lived in British India, passed through, or the family were there for generations, where do you go next to research your relatives. This session will discuss: Online traditional and non-traditional sources, archives and libraries, social media, family history societies

Italian genealogy 102: Preparing to work with Italian records

Ready to research your Italian ancestors in Italian records? This session will give you the tools and confidence to get started. We'll cover key geography and history – how Italy is organised (regions, provinces, comuni, frazioni) and how shifting borders affect where records are found.

Learn to navigate language barriers with essential Italian genealogy terms, name variations, translation tools, and tips for reading old handwriting and occupations.

Italian genealogy 103: Italian civil records: What they are & where to find them

Unlock the power of Italian civil records to grow your family tree! This class will teach you how to locate and navigate birth (Nati), marriage (Matrimoni), and death (Morti) records-plus understand the difference between standard (Parte Uno) and special (Parte Due) entries.

Digging up your German roots: Finding ancestors from German-speaking regions

What does it mean to have ancestors from 'Germany'? In this talk we set the stage by describing conditions in German-speaking European lands during the 18th and 19th century. Then we will discuss useful sources to find the town in Europe they came from, noting clues from family, friends and neighbours and immigrant churches. Finally, we will explore a variety of civil and religious records from Bavaria, Prussia, Austria, Wurttemberg, Hesse, and other places where German speakers lived before there was Germany.

Navigating Archion: How to use the German Church record website

Archion, hosting over 175,000 German church books online, is an essential resource for the German genealogist. Learn how to navigate Archion step-by-step, locating your ancestor's church records with ease. You'll walk out of this session confident and excited to find more church records on your own!

Tracing transnational lives: Bridging records between countries

Uncover strategies for researching ancestors who crossed borders. This session highlights lesser-known European and North American record sets, explores name and language variations, and introduces translation tools to help genealogists follow immigrant families across oceans, languages, and generations.

Finding and using US obituaries more effectively

Obituaries can help you reconstruct families and find missing relatives, whether you're doing genealogy or building trees for DNA matches. Learn strategies for finding obituaries based on the era, as far back as the early 1800s, up to recent ones that don't appear in newspapers. Learn to access obituaries in newspapers online and offline. Learn about major obituary portals, and consider how to evaluate their content. Learn a trick for finding citations for unidentified news clippings.

Question everything: Sharpen evaluation, avoid assumptions, & clarify your writing

No matter how long you've been a genealogist, asking yourself the right questions can transform your research and your writing. In this session, we'll look at how questioning yourself can guide you in testing assumptions, deepening your analysis, and refining your writing. Whether you're working through conflicting evidence, or polishing your proof arguments, these straightforward strategies will help you sharpen your work.

Using AI to write and share compelling stories

Learn how to craft compelling stories that will draw your readers in and help them feel a connection to your family. Then learn the best practices for use with AI to enhance your work through words and pictures.

Timelines for genealogy: a powerful research tool

Do you have an ancestor who refuses to reveal vital facts about their lives? Are they lacking parents, or do they disappear without trace? Maybe you are preparing to write up your family story, or you are trying to work out where to go next. If so, you need a detailed timeline; something much more than might be created by your genealogy software. Well constructed timelines are a valuable summary of an individual's life and a working document to inform your ongoing research. This session will provide step by step advice on producing just such a working document.

Discover your ancestors in the new Wilford Woodruff Papers' relative finder (2 parts)

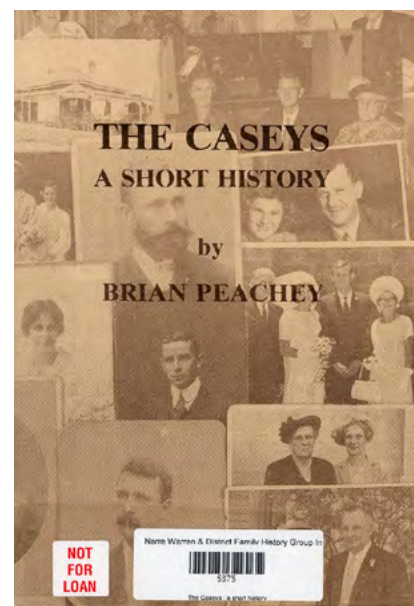
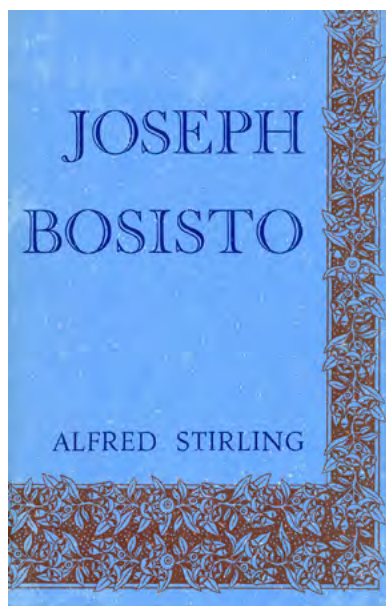
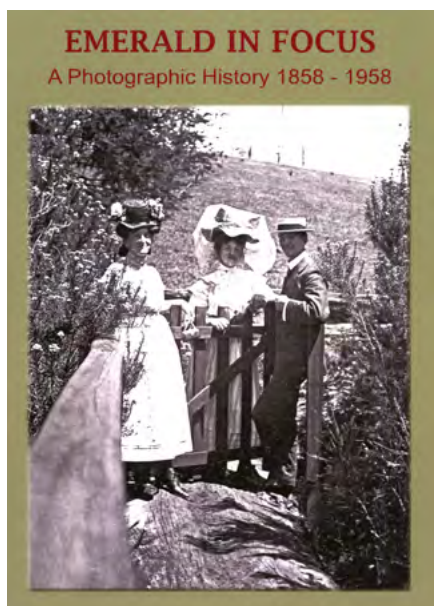
Whether you're new to family history or a seasoned researcher, using this powerful new tool will make new connections possible. The Ancestor Connector links your FamilySearch account to a unique database of over 21,000 individuals, documented through more than 14,000 digitised primary source records from the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific Islands.

The research for these individuals, completed by trained genealogists, also includes their spouses, parents, and children, multiplying your potential discoveries to hundreds of thousands.

How to Use the FamilySearch Research Wiki

This beginner class offers an in-depth introduction to using the Research Wiki, providing essential tips and techniques. Learn how to navigate its vast resources and leverage its powerful features. By mastering these techniques, you'll gain the skills to effectively solve even your most challenging research problems.

New in the Lorraine Taylor Research Room



Casey Cardinia Books

- * Joseph Bosisto by Alfred Stirling
- * Emerald in focus: A photographic history 1858-1958 by Nobelius Heritage Park and Emerald Museum

Victorian Books

- * They Wouldn't Talk About It: The Service Men and Women of Ensay by Wayne George
- * Warrawong: The first fifty years by J Green
- * Templestowe: A folk history by Hazel Poulter
- * Oakleigh's golden days by Oakleigh and District Historical Society
- * The Basin 1867-1992: 125 years by Rick Coxhill
- * The Rushworth gold mines. Reprinted from Rushworth Chronicle files 1918.
- * Tales of the Tablelands: a history of Ruffy and District, including a history of the Terip Terip Primary School by Jenni Hobby
- * Loyalty: special commemorative edition to celebrate the 65th year of the News Bulletin by Terry Beaton. Ex POW & Relatives Association Vic
- * Broadbent's official road guide to central Victoria 50th Edition
- * Municipal Directories 1949 and 1919

American Books

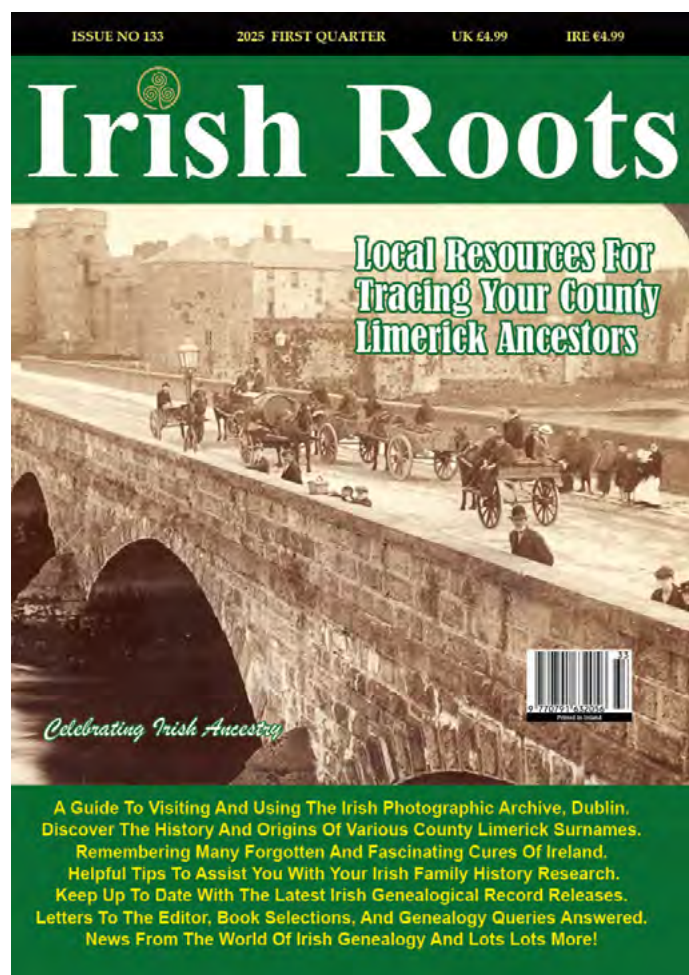
- * Passage to America by Terry Colman

Family histories and Biographies

- * The Caseys: A short history by Brian Peachey

Magazines

- * Ancestor Sep 2025
- * Family Tree Sep Oct 2025
- * The Genealogist Spring 2025



- * Irish Roots 1994-1998, Issue 132 2024, Issues 133 & 134 2025
- * The South Australian Genealogist Aug 2025
- * Tasmanian ancestry Sep 2025
- * Traces: Uncovering the Past Edition 32 2025

Happy Reading.

Moreyn Dimsey,
Librarian

The Lorraine Taylor Research Room is at 110 High Street, Berwick

Roster Tuesdays and Saturdays 11 am–2 pm

Please find a replacement yourself if you cannot do duty.

December 2025			
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>11 am–2 pm</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>11 am–2 pm</i>
2	Jan Whitaker Eileen Durdin	6	Lynne Bradley Robyn Jones
9	Barbara Sharp Moreyn Dimsey	13	closed until 3 February 2026

February 2026			
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>11 am–2 pm</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>11 am–2 pm</i>
3	Barbara Sharp Jan Whitaker	7	Eileen Durdin Lynne Bradley
10	Barbara Sharp Jenny Bramich	14	Barbara Sharp Jane Rivett-Carnac
17	Maureen Abbott Fay McCoubrie	21	Jan Whitaker Barbara Sharp
24	Eileen Durdin Jane Rivett-Carnac	28	Robyn Jones Lynne Bradley

We need more volunteers. We need more volunteers to help out in the Lorraine Taylor Research Room. The times would be once a month on a Tuesday or a Saturday from 11 am – 2 pm.

There are always two volunteers on duty, so you would never be alone. Please give it a thought.

Contact Barbara Sharp
research.room.mgr@nwfhg.org.au

Spreading Branches February 2026

We would like to read your articles or stories.
Please submit your contributions
by 15 January 2026



About the research

My name is Rachael and I'm a PhD candidate at La Trobe University. I am researching the history of women employed by the Victorian Railways (VicRail) (1856 - 1983).

I am seeking biographical information, employment history, and photograph(s) of women previously employed in the Victorian Railways/VicRail in any grade or position.

For further information please contact:

Rachael Cottle
PhD Candidate
La Trobe University

email:
21276634@students.latrobe.edu.au

Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Emma Robertson, La Trobe University

Who can contribute?

Women previously employed by the Victorian Railways and/or VicRail.

Family members with information about a woman previously employed by the Victorian Railways.

This research has received La Trobe University ethics approval ref HEC25373



Image: PROV VPRS 12903/P0001, 236/03

Publications for sale

NEW! Lives cut short and lives well lived: a walk in Lang Lang Cemetery (2025)

Visiting Lang Lang Cemetery we learnt about the lives of fifteen families, including that of a policeman, a post mistress, a teacher, as well as farmers and farm labourers. We found out about children who died in tragic circumstances, and a woman who was involved in many community activities.

\$20 + \$5.50 postage + handling

Life and death in the hills: a walk in Emerald Cemetery (2024)

On our first visit to Emerald Cemetery we explored the lives of an Indigenous artist, a socialite, a co-founder of Amnesty International Australia, a writer and poet, and many ordinary people.

\$20 + \$5.50 postage + handling

Casey Cardinia Connections at Dandenong Community Cemetery (2023)

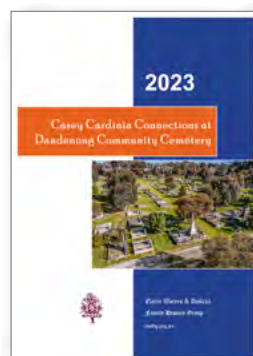
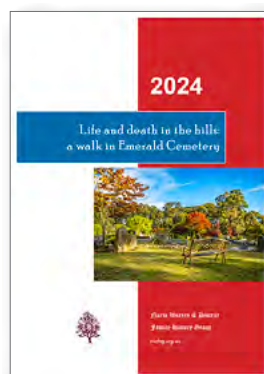
We explore a cemetery a bit further afield at Dandenong. Many people with Casey Cardinia connections are buried at Dandenong. The cemetery has a fascinating early history. We researched the lives of residents, who after living in Narre Warren, Lyndhurst, Hallam, Lang Lang and other places, were buried at Dandenong.

\$20 + \$5.50 postage + handling

No time to say goodbye: a walk in Cranbourne Cemetery (2022)

This book tells the stories of twenty-six people who died suddenly, without giving them or their families a chance to say goodbye. Some died in accidents at work or on the road. Others' deaths were caused by unexpected illness, murder or by their own hands.

\$20 + \$5.50 postage + handling



Life and death on the edge of the swamp: a walk in Bunyip Cemetery (2019)

The official burial register of Bunyip Cemetery didn't begin until 1894 when six-year-old William Henry Barnes was buried. Nineteen of the first twenty recorded burials were of children.

\$20 + \$5.50 postage + handling

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

This book abounds with 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.

\$20 + \$5.50 postage + handling

World War 1 walk cemetery books

- **100 men, 100 years: a World War 1 Walk in Berwick Cemetery (2015)**
- **Sacrifice and Patriotism: a World War 1 Walk in Pakenham Cemetery (2016)**
- **For some the bell tolled: a World War 1 Walk in Harkaway Cemetery (plus Harkaway Avenue of Honour) (2017)**
- **Peace at last: a World War 1 walk in Lang Lang Cemetery (2018)**

Each book \$25 + \$8.50 postage + handling

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

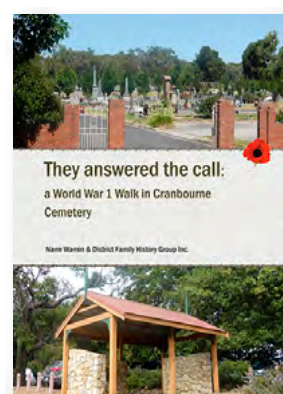
This book \$25 + \$15.30 postage + handling

Cemetery Tour booklets

Pakenham (2011), Cranbourne (2012), Lang Lang (2013) \$15 each

Berwick (2014), Pakenham (2015) \$20 each

Add \$5.50 for postage + handling



More details, order forms and indexes are available on our website at nwfhg.org.au/publications-2/