

The Surf Coast Family History Group

Vol. 65 Spring, September 2017 Edition

(Sub group of the Anglesea and District Historical Society Inc.)

Inverlochy Log



From painting by Geoffrey Soames

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Quarterly Journal of The Surf Coast Family History Group

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Library and Research Facilities

Tuesday 10.30am - 1.00pm

Wednesday by appointment

Saturday 10.30am - 1.00pm

Meetings held on the 2nd Thursday of the month

commencing at 10am at History House

unless an excursion has been scheduled

5a McMillan Street Anglesea 3230

Visitors Welcome

Enquiries: surfcoastfh@gmail.com

Susan Clarke: Phone 0438 070 560

Forthcoming Meetings

SEPTEMBER: 10.00am Thursday 14 September

Speaker: Susan Clarke

Topic: "On The Job: - English employment and apprenticeship records"

OCTOBER 10.00am Thursday 12 October AGM

Speaker: Beryl O'Gorman

Topic: *Ask Before It's Too Late* - An introduction to Oral History.

NOVEMBER 10.00am Thursday 16 November \$12

Outing - Film at Moriac

Oranges and Sunshine

DECEMBER 10.00am Thursday 14 December

Christmas Breakup Quiz.

Members and visitors welcome to all activities.

No activities are held on days of code red or extreme fire danger for the Central Region.

This newsletter is available electronically. If you wish to receive an electronic copy please email us on

surfcoastfh@gmail.com

Committee Members 2016 - 2017

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THE VALUE OF OCCUPATIONAL RECORDS

Susan Clarke

Records relating to our ancestors' employment can provide us with genealogical information, but they can also 'flesh out' the story of their lives beyond the bare facts of birth, marriage, death, and census records. Information about an ancestor's occupation can help us understand its status, and consequently our ancestors' status within the community, the degree of training that was required, and possibly indicate what personal records may have been created and where they are likely to be located now.

Here are a few thoughts about the value of occupational records, based on my own research into my English ancestors.

An ancestor's occupation can provide an explanation as to why he/she either stayed where they were born or migrated within the British Isles or overseas, and where they might have gone, or come from. If they were in an occupation where the industry failed, they had to move on. Framework knitters in Nottinghamshire suffered when lace-making machines were introduced, and many moved. Alternatively, if there were opportunities overseas for their skills, they might choose to move, for example Cornish tin miners came to Australia during the gold rushes and copper booms, and went to South America throughout the nineteenth century. Estate workers could be moved from one part of the country to another if estate properties were scattered, and staff mobility became a job requirement for many company workers.

Knowledge of an occupation can help us to understand how our ancestors spent their working hours, what income they might have had, and what conditions they experienced. Also, it can shed light on family skills and traditions, whether or not these were passed down the family via father to son apprenticeships.

Occupational conditions and hazards can explain the family's health and welfare issues – there was a high mortality rate in some dangerous occupations, for example railway navvies, and the death of a breadwinner had a flow-on effect for the lives of the rest of the family. Some health hazards are well documented, for example the phossy jaw of the matchworkers, and the mercury poisoning of hatmakers.

An ancestor's occupation can explain other aspects of their lives, for example their religion. Some communities based around a single industry like coalmining, for example, had very strong social ties which included church attendance. And it might also explain political actions, as in the case of the Nottinghamshire workers mentioned above. The first Luddite disturbances took place in Nottinghamshire in 1811. The Luddites destroyed textile machinery as a form of protest against the threat to their livelihood.

Finally, occupation can provide clues about why they married who they did – the status of their occupation affected this choice. There were more direct occupational ramifications – apprentices sometimes married their master's daughter. Business connections were often cemented by marriages. Those who moved around as part of their job often married in locations far from family bases. For example, men in the Royal Navy often married in a distant port.

Sources

Colin G Pooley & Jean Turnbull, 'Migration and Mobility in Britain from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries', http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/pdf/lps57/lps57_1996_50-71.pdf [access 17 July 2017]

London matchgirls strike of 1888 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_matchgirls_strike_of_1888

Pauline M. Litton, *Pitfalls and Possibilities in Family History Research*, Swansong Publications, 2010

DIGITISED VICTORIAN WILLS

PROV is the place to search for Victorian Wills and probate, but only some wills and probate records are digitised: records 1841 – 1925 can be viewed online

records 1926 – 2015 can be ordered to view at North Melbourne

view the records in the Reading Room for free

or, pay for a copy to be emailed to you or posted to you

But note that other jurisdictions hold copies of some Victorian wills, and their records, covering dates after 1925, may be available to view online. For example, New South Wales Will Books 1800 – 1952 are available through FindMyPast. The NSW Wills Books includes some wills of those in other states and countries, typically in cases where the individual was a resident of NSW but their last place of residence was outside the state. In other cases, people who lived elsewhere may have lodged their will in NSW despite not living there, particularly if they had property or shares in the state. The records for Tasmania cover an even longer period, 1800 – 1989, and are also available in FindMyPast. A copy of the will of John Francis Baxter (see article on page 6) was found in both these record sets.

“Dunkirk” the movie.

The present release of the movie reminds me that an ancestor of mine who is connected to the *Titanic* also played an important part at Dunkirk.

Charles Herbert Lightoller, DSC & Bar, RD was the second officer on board the RMS *Titanic* and a decorated Royal Navy officer. He was the most senior member of the crew to survive the *Titanic* disaster. Lightoller's parents were Frederick James Lightoller and Sarah Jane Widdows. His siblings, Richard Ashton and Caroline Mary Lightoller, both died of scarlet fever in early childhood.

On an Australian run on board the SS *Suevic* in 1903, Charles met Sylvia Hawley-Wilson on her way home to Sydney after a stay in England. On the return voyage, she accompanied Lightoller as his bride. The couple had five children: Frederick Roger, Richard Trevor, Mavis, Claire Doreen, and Herbert Brian (1917–1939). Their youngest son Herbert Brian, an RAF pilot, was killed in action on September 4, 1939 in a bombing raid over Wilhelmshaven, Germany on the first night of Britain's entry into the Second World War. Their eldest son, Roger, served in the Royal Navy and died in France in the final month of the war. Richard joined the army and gained the rank of lieutenant colonel, serving under General Bernard Montgomery.

During the interwar years Lightoller had acquired a private 16 metre-long motor yacht called *Sundowner*. At the age of 66 in 1940, the old seaman found himself once more taking part in history during the most famous rescue mission of World War II: **Operation Dynamo**. Lightoller's adventures were still not over.



Sundowner is a motor yacht that participated in the Dunkirk evacuation and is now as one of the "little ships," at the Ramsgate Maritime Museum in Southern England.

Originally built in 1912, the former Admiralty steam pinnace was bought in 1929 for £40 (equivalent to £2,000 today) by Charles and Sylvia Lightoller.

The hull was recovered from the mud at Conyer Creek east of the River Medway was fitted with two masts and ketch-rigged with jib, mainsail, mizzen and mizzen staysail. Because Sylvia was Australian, they named their converted yacht *Sundowner*, an Australian term for a tramp or hobo. Originally 52 feet long, she was extended to 58 feet, and fitted with 60 hp (45 kW) Parsons petrol-paraffin 4-stroke engine .

Sundowner was launched on 28 June 1930, and undertook her first voyage to France. During the next ten years the Lightollers cruised along the northern coast of Europe, taking part successfully in many international competitions.

In 1936 Lightoller replaced the engine with a more powerful 72 hp (54 kW) Gleniffer diesel engine giving her an extra 2 knots (3.7 km/h; 2.3 mph)

In 1939, with the threat of war looming, Lightoller was tasked to secretly survey the European coast for the Admiralty. *Sundowner* was requisitioned by the admiralty on May 31st, 1940 as part of the call for the '**little ships**' in needed to assist with the evacuation from Dunkirk.

She was crewed by the now 66-year-old Charles, his eldest son Roger and an 18-year-old Sea Scout, Gerald Ashcroft.

On 1 June *Sundowner* sailed out of Ramsgate with five other ships. On the way Lightoller encountered a motor cruiser called *Westerly*, which was on fire. *Sundowner* picked up its crew and proceeded to Dunkirk. Coincidentally Lightoller's second son Trevor had been evacuated from the beaches 48 hours previously. *Sundowner* only had a capacity for 21 people but at Dunkirk Lightoller squeezed in 130 men onto the boat. When one soldier heard that Lightoller had been an officer on *Titanic* he tried to jump overboard. However, one of his comrades said that if Lightoller could survive the *Titanic*, he could survive anything. The soldier stayed.

The excess weight of the soldiers meant that *Sundowner* lay deep in the water and was at constant risk of being swamped. Luckily the little ship made it back to Ramsgate and the soldiers were safely disembarked. Lightoller was determined to go back to Dunkirk but by then only ships capable of doing 20 knots could go. Thanks in part to the little ships 338,000 soldiers were evacuated to England in what became known as the "Miracle of Dunkirk".

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Sundowner remained in service as a coastal patrol vessel in the River Blackwater, Essex. She then moved to the River Clyde under the control of 647 Transport Company, Royal Army Service Corps. She was released from service in 1945, and after a refit was returned to Lightoller in 1946, and once again used as a family boat.



December 8th 1952
Charles Herbert Lightoller an hero of Dunkirk
and one of so many heroes of Titanic
passed away

Surf Coast Family History Group Member: Patricia Hughes

NEWS AND RESOURCES

Ballarat Rate Books

The historic rate books held at Ballarat Archives Centre are currently being digitised at PROV in North Melbourne. The digitised versions will gradually go up online over the next 12 months.

The GSV and the Digital World

The GSV now has a blog on which the publicity says 'you will find a potentially ever-widening range of posts on topics such as book reviews, new and/or interesting resources available in the GSV Library, news from the broader world of genealogy, and reports from and information about the activities of the various GSV groups.'

<http://blog.gsv.org.au/>

The List of Church of Ireland Parish Registers

The List of Church of Ireland Parish Registers is an online colour-coded resource featuring live links to other relevant online resources. The resource accounts for what survives (after the 1922 destruction of the Public Records Office of Ireland), where it is, with additional information of copies, transcripts and online indexes. The list now includes links to all Representative Church Body (RCB) Library collection hand-lists for 1,110 parishes.

See <https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/7250/church-of-ireland-parish-record>

Arrivals in Australia

Kerry Farmer has produced a useful handout listing many resources if you are researching for Australian immigration records. See:

<http://familyhistoryresearch.com.au/resources/Arrivals.pdf>

Family History Microfilm Discontinuation

FamilySearch has announced the discontinuation of microfilm services from 1 September 2017. The change is the result of significant progress made in FamilySearch's digitisation of microfilm, and the obsolescence of microfilm technology.

Presbyterian Church Records

More than 36,000 new Presbyterian Church records, covering the period 1744 to 1855, have been added to Scotland's People. These are potentially helpful for anyone searching for a person who was born or baptised, married or died before the introduction of statutory registration in 1855. <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>

Getting the Best out of Family Tree Maker 2017

GUM workshop on understanding the program. Bookings: www.vicgum.asn.au

In his publication *Early Anglesea Families*, Lindsay Braden lists John Francis Baxter and his wife Isabella (nee Hamilton) who erected the cottage “Beachmount” in Anglesea in 1889. John Francis Baxter came to Australia as a baby with his family in 1855 aboard 'Sea King'. The family was from Ipswich, Suffolk where John had been baptised on 4 June 1854, son of John (26), a sawyer, and Rhoda (29). The passenger list shows that John could read and write, but Rhoda could read only.

The Geelong Advertiser, 24 May 1855 published the parting address delivered to the emigrants aboard the 'Sea King', which had sailed from Southampton to Geelong, by John Coate Esq., surgeon superintendent. The address included the following:

'there is one feature that distinguishes our long journey ... permit me then to congratulate you most sincerely on the small amount of sickness and disease amongst our passengers, nearly 400 in number, of all ages, habits and constitutions; and that we have not lost one of our company by the hand of death.' [He concludes] 'the step that you have taken is an event in your personal history of the utmost importance; it has doubtless been the result of much deep and anxious consideration; ... having made the sacrifice ... remember that here as well as in the country you have left, your future welfare depends upon those just and honourable principles that you bring to bear upon the relations of life you may be called upon to fill. Especially beware of intemperance, since the allurements to this vicious indulgence are even greater in Australia than in England. In other respects it is a country where independence is the sure reward of honest and diligent labour; and where the purest blessings of home are open to everyone who has the will to make them, and the heart to enjoy them.'

It is interesting to review the Baxter family story in light of these words. When John Francis died in 1941, *The Argus* (25 June) reported that he was for a long period engaged in a timber and ironware business in Geelong West. In fact, John Francis had been in business with his father, and the family is listed among the early 20th century builders of the Waterloo Heritage Precinct in Geelong West. The Ashby Heritage Review document states as follows:

A number of local builders are known to have constructed multiple dwellings in the Waterloo area during the Federation and particularly interwar eras. The two almost-identical Edwardian styled dwellings at 36 and 38 Cando-ver Street were the work of John Baxter & Son in 1906-07. The building firm was also responsible for building the dwelling at 65 O'Connell Street in 1913-14, and possibly the similarly-designed house at 63 O'Connell Street at the same time. It had been several years earlier in 1889 when Baxter had advertised in the *Geelong Advertiser* as timber merchants, importers of galvanized iron and builders, hardware, Geelong West. The largest known grouping of dwellings by Baxter and Son were built in Coquette Street and surrounding streets (these streets form part of the Pineville Heritage Precinct).

Apart from his business interests, John Francis was very much 'community-minded'. The same newspaper article mentioned that he was a member of the council of the Geelong Institute of Technology, and he was actively interested in the development of the Geelong West Bowling Club and the Geelong West Free Library. In fact, John Francis left several bequests in his will to local organisations and these were listed in the newspaper a year later when they were paid: Gordon Institute of Technology and Geelong Hospital 300 [pounds sterling] each; Protestant Orphanage and Bethany Babies Home 200 each; Ashby Methodist Church trustees and Ladies Benevolent Association 100 each; King Edward VII Sailors Rest, Try Boys Brigade 50 each; Yarra Street Kindergarten, Geelong West Kindergarten and Newtown and Chilwell Kindergarten 25 each.

This legacy of philanthropy was continued by his son, John Percy Hamilton Baxter O.B.E., whose name is well-known as a Geelong City councillor and benefactor. The official website of the Percy Baxter Charitable Trust that he initiated indicates that as of June 2015, the trust's assets were valued at over \$67m, and that it made grants of approximately \$3.8m to Victorian charities (with special emphasis on the Geelong and Ballarat regions where Percy and his wife Hilda spent most of their lives) and medical research annually.

Sources

The Ships List <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/australia/aust1850s.shtml>

Ashby Heritage Review Stage 2: Waterloo Heritage Precinct

<http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/library/docs/ashby/Ashby%20-%20HRS2%20-%20Vol01d.pdf>, p. 267

Percy Baxter Charitable Trust - History <http://www.baxtercharitabletrusts.org.au/#history>

Death of philanthropist – *The Argus* 26 August 1954 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/23415311>

