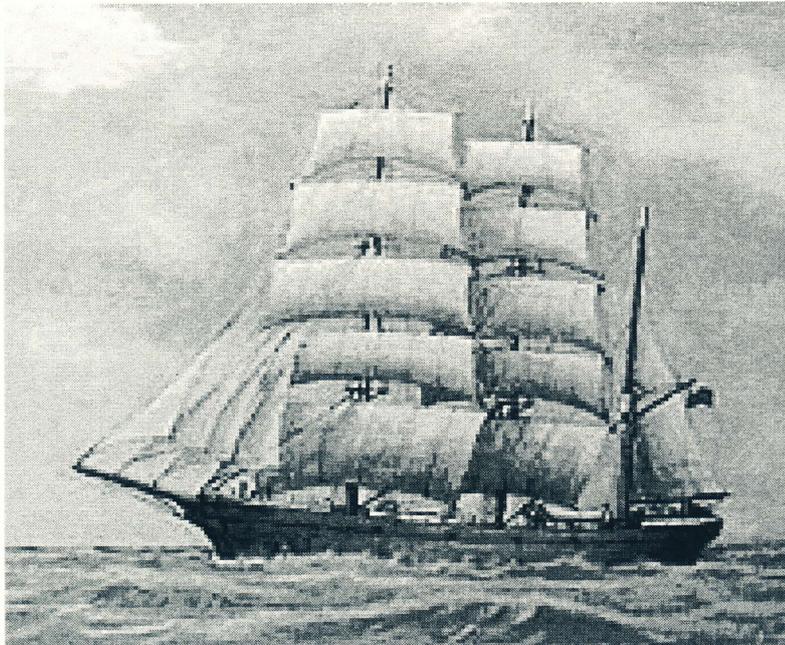


# The Surf Coast Family History Group

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Vol. 35, Autumn - April 2009 edition (Sub group of the Anglesea and District Historical Society Inc.)

35a



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Quarterly Journal of the Surf Coast Family History Group

**Surf Coast Family History Group**  
C/o P.O. Box 98 Anglesea Victoria 3230

**The Society is housed in the Anglesea Historical Society Museum**  
**McMillan Street Anglesea 3230**

**Library and Research Facilities**

Tuesday 10.00am - 12.00noon  
Or until 2.00pm on request

Meetings are held

The 2nd Thursday of the month  
Commencing at 10.00am at the  
Historical Society Museum  
McMillan Street Anglesea 3230

Visitors Welcome

Enquiries

Dulcie Quinlan      5263 3017  
Thelma Western      5263 2865

**Forthcoming Meetings**

Thursday April th 10.00am  
Topic

*'Parish Chests'*

(a summary of one of Lady Teviot's talks)  
The highlights have been extracted by Yvonne  
Schneider. The talk will be read by Harry Davies.

Thursday May 14th 10.00am

Speaker—Jan Morris  
"Earl Grey's Irish Orphan Scheme"

*You may be surprised to discover just who did  
flee the Potato Famine as an Irish orphan.*

*All meetings held at the Museum.*

**Surf Coast Family History Group Committee**

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Secretary	Yvonne Schneider	gertschn@bigpond.com	
Treasurer	Thelma Western	tdwestern@yahoo.com.au	5263
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Committee Member	Christine Gerow:	5264 7602	

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## THE EARL GREY IRISH ORPHAN SCHEME

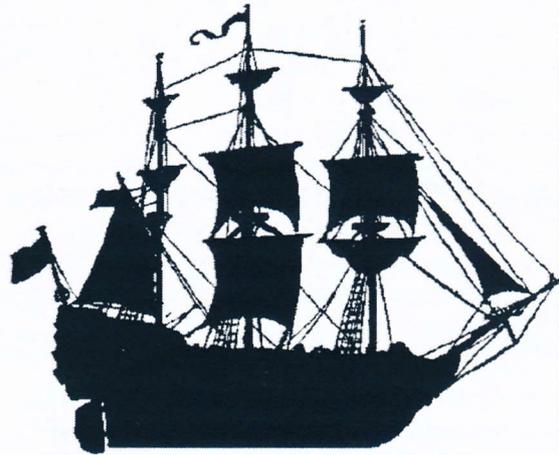
ELLEN LLOYD (nee Corbett) - Waterford to Violet Creek

by Colin Lloyd, Anglesea



In 1845 my great, great grandmother Ellen Corbett found herself in a Waterford workhouse/orphanage. Her mother had died. She had never known her father. She didn't even know his name. She was unable to read or write. She owned almost nothing in the way of clothes or shoes. Her job in the workhouse was doing laundry for the 'well off' folk of Waterford. Washing, starching and ironing was heavy work. In 1849 at the age of 17, things changed for Ellen. She was excited to be chosen to emigrate to Australia.

This only happened after she had passed the medical examination and had been given a character reference to say she had never worked as a prostitute. Others from the orphanage had gone to Australia the previous year, so Ellen knew that this meant she would be given several new outfits of clothing and a box in which to keep her things in. Their clothing allowance for the voyage consisted of 6 shifts, 2 flannel petticoats, 6 pairs of stockings, 2 pairs of shoes, 2 gowns, one made of warm material. Ellen had never owned so many clothes, so this distribution was of great excitement for her.



*The Irish Orphans came to Australia by sailing boat*

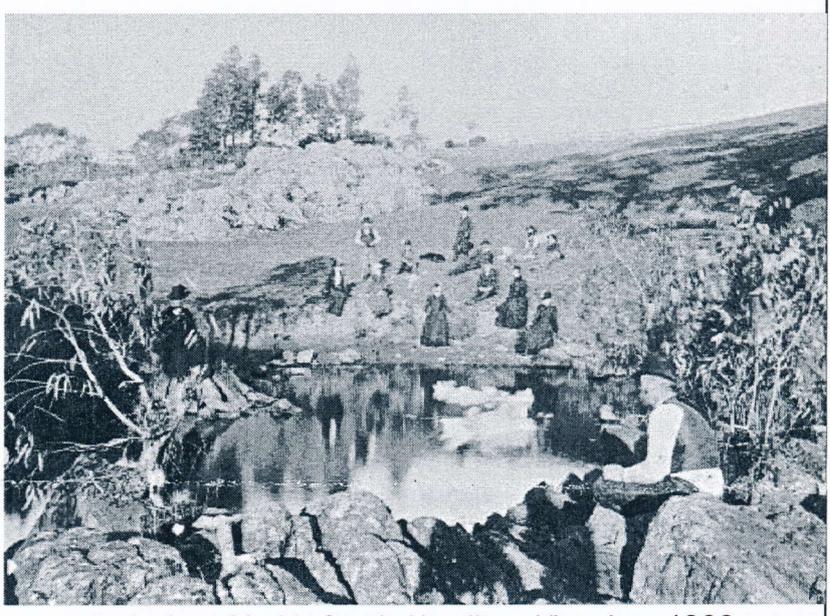
Prior to the voyage their food allowance was increased from the basic "milk and gruel" standard workhouse diet, to include such items as beef, pork, preserved meat, peas, rice, sugar, butter, in the hope that a better intake of food would ensure their good health on the long journey to their new home.

The first group of Irish orphan girls had been hastily selected as the Irish government was anxious to off load as many orphans as possible, thus reducing their responsibility. On the other hand the Australian Colonies were anxious to provide husbands for the many men, thus reducing the imbalance of the sexes. The first boatload of orphans to arrive was on the ship the *Earl Grey*, named after the person who first proposed the scheme. On 6<sup>th</sup> October 1848, 150 girls between the ages of 14 and 18 arrived in Sydney. They were all from Northern Ireland, 56 of them being labelled 'The Belfast Girls.' These girls were soon separated from the rest of the group as there were complaints about them from the other passengers on the ship. Many had worked as prostitutes, many had put their age back and two of them were even married. They were kept away from the other girls, so they would not influence them. It is interesting that the 56 "Belfast Girls" on arrival in Sydney, were immediately shipped to Moreton Bay (Brisbane), where many continued their trade as prostitutes.

On arrival in Sydney, the young immigrants were kept at the British Army's Hyde Park Barracks until they were hired. This barracks had formerly been a prison for Irish and English convicts sentenced to serve out their prison sentences in Australia. Many of these young orphan girls

THE EARL GREY IRISH ORPHAN SCHEME continued....

became the brides of farmers and goldminers, and had large families. Many had tragic lives, and died young in the harsh surroundings of pioneer farms. Others became wives of what was described as marrying above their station. After all there were few brides to choose from in the predominantly male population of Australia. Today, their memory is held in high regard by their many Australian descendents.



A picnic at Muddy Creek, Hamilton, Victoria c. 1900 from the State Library of Victoria collection

By the time Ellen was on board the ship *The New Liverpool*, things had changed somewhat. The orphans were brought out on separate

ships, not sharing a ship with other passengers. They received an education during their six months at sea. Ellen learned to read, but not write. She was also schooled in how to be a maid to an English lady, so manners, household chores and some etiquette was taught. The girls had been more carefully chosen and were better equipped as the Irish Poor Law Commissioners were desperate for the scheme to succeed. They had given the candidates extra food rations for some months prior to the selection process and ensured they were scrubbed up and well dressed for their selection.

Ellen had left Waterford in early April 1848 with other girls from the workhouse. She was bundled into a carriage, dressed in her new finery, with her wooden box of belongings strapped on the roof, and taken to Dublin and from there by sea to Plymouth, which was the port of embarkation for her ship *The New Liverpool*. The cost of getting her there, victuals included was one pound and her passage to Australia was two pounds. All this was paid for by the Poor Law Commission, which was glad to be rid of her and thus have one less in the overcrowded workhouse.

Under the Earl Grey Scheme, 4,143 orphan girls came to Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart and Port Phillip and from these ports spread across eastern Australia. Ellen was one of the 50 girls on board *The New Liverpool* that were chosen to go to Portland on the boat *The Rave*. Some months earlier James Blair, the Police Magistrate at Portland, had asked Governor La Trobe to send some female immigrants to Portland, that were no ex convicts. There was a great shortage of female labour as well as a shortage of marriageable girls in the area.

When *The Rave* reached Portland in September it was met by many prospective employers. One of these was Mr Angus Cameron of Violet Creek, a squatting run five miles west of The Grange (now Hamilton). Ellen travelled to Violet Creek in a horse drawn carriage. There she met William Abraham Lloyd, a 29 year old labourer. Just four months later Ellen and William were married by the Presbyterian minister, Rev. Thomas Richardson at the home of Mr Cameron.

William had already applied for land under pre-emptive right. He was allotted land at Muddy Creek, on the outskirts of what is now the township of Hamilton. They started life with a wattle and daub hut and gradually built up their own farm, milking cows to make cheese and butter.

#### THE EARL GREY IRISH ORPHAN SCHEME continued....

One can imagine the primitive life Ellen had, but she was happy and considered herself fortunate to bring 14 children into the world. She was very proud of her children, many of whom became farmers in the area. William died in 1875. Ellen lived another 40 years, dying in 1915, aged 83. During that time she married Charlie Hardingham but he also predeceased her. She spent the last few years of her life living with her youngest daughter's family. She was active until just a few weeks before her death. She had given Australia her best, and was very happy with the life she had here. Her obituary spoke of how she was liked and respected in the town of Hamilton, her home. Her descendants are spread across Australia now but some still live in the Western District of Victoria.

Ellen Corbett was just one 'Earl Grey Orphan' that became the backbone of Australia. The mother of author Steele Rudd was another. A monument has been erected in the grounds of the Hyde Park Barracks Museum. The Australian Famine Monument is a memorial to the million or so who died during the Irish famine period. It is also a monument to those who survived and in a very special way to the 4,143 famine orphans who arrived in Australia under the Earl Grey scheme (1848 -1850). It is a monument to their success, and a recognition of what they contributed to.

There is a complete list of the Earl Grey Irish Orphans, listed in shipping groups on the site [www.irishfaminememorial.org/orphans/earl\\_grey.htm](http://www.irishfaminememorial.org/orphans/earl_grey.htm).

*If you would like to know more about this interesting group of woman, and see if your ancestor was one of them, come to our May Family History meeting when Jan Morris will speak on this topic.*

#### MAKING THE MOST OF NEWSPAPERS

We all know that the death notices are an excellent source for family history research. If we know when someone died we can look up the newspaper and read the death notices. This immediately gives us a list of family members and friends and also often organisations with which the person has been associated.

During the last century many small country papers wrote very full obituaries. Once you know the exact day of death, look up the local newspaper for a few days after the death and you will often discover an obituary or a report on the funeral. It may list the pall bearers and coffin bearers, have a summary of the person's life and list the family members. Sometimes they even listed who the wreaths were from. Lots of good family information can come from these papers.

The State Library has the newspapers of many Victorian towns on reel. These can be read in the library and relevant pages copied. Once someone has shown you how to copy and where to pay, it is quite easy. Don't forget to take your reading glasses as some are difficult to read.

Some newspapers have been indexed. These include the early Geelong papers. This gives far more than just deaths. It includes sporting events, court proceedings and other newsworthy items. Weddings were often written up in detail, naming the people in the wedding party, stating their relationship. Some of these reports were extremely flamboyant but they do have good information.

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## NEWS & NOTES

### **Bad News becoming Good News**

*Our president Norma Morrison is home after spending several weeks in hospital in Queensland. She will be convalescing for quite sometime.*

*Also on the sick list is our vice-president Pat Hughes, who has been unwell. She is in Brisbane with her daughter and been unable to return. She hopes to be back home in the next few weeks.*

*Norma and Pat are extremely grateful to those who have stepped in and taken on their jobs. They wish to send a big thank you.*

### **Backing Up**

*Colin Wood and Thelma Western have organised to back up all records on CD held by our Society. Thelma has copied about half so far. When this project is finished they will be housed away from the museum to ensure we have a copy of everything in the case of a fire or some other disaster.*

*Thank you Thelma and Colin.*

### **Our Banner**

*Our new Family History banner is completed and looks most attractive. It visually shows who we are and what our business is. The banner was the result of a group submission resulting in a grant. It will be great to use when we are holding displays.*

### **Acquisitions**

*Some of our records have been donated by members who purchased them, used them to get information and then donated them to our collection for others to use. Have you thought of doing this. Maybe you have used records someone else donated.*

## **Genealogy Humour**

1. My family coat of arms ties at the back....is that normal?
2. My family tree is a few branches short! All help appreciated.
3. My ancestors must be in a witness protection program!
4. Shake your family tree and watch the nuts fall!
5. Gene-Allergy: It's a contagious disease, but I love it.
6. How can one ancestor cause so much TROUBLE??
7. I looked into my family tree and found out I was a sap.
8. I'm not stuck, I'm ancestrally challenged.
9. Genealogy is fun? The answer to one problem leads to two more!
10. A family tree can wither if nobody tends its roots.

<p><b>FOR SALE:</b>  <b>Schools of the Surf Coast Shire</b>  <b>Anglesea to Wurdi Boluc</b></p> <p><b>Surf Coast Cemetery Records</b>  <b>On CD</b></p>	<p><b>At Surf Coast Family History Group</b>  <b>we research records using</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ CD'S</li> <li>◆ Microfilm</li> <li>◆ Listings</li> <li>◆ Books</li> <li>◆ Internet</li> <li>◆ and more</li> </ul>
<p><b>Internet Research</b>  <b>at Surf Coast Family History</b></p> <p><b>\$4 per hour</b></p> <p><b>Assistance provided if needed</b></p>	<p><b>The Inverlochy Log</b></p> <p>Share your exciting discoveries with others by submitting your findings for publication in the 'Inverlochy Log'</p> <p>Send to Jan Morris at  <a href="mailto:janmor@netspace.net.au">janmor@netspace.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>Raffle Result</b></p> <p>The winner of the Surf Coast Family History Raffle was Maxine Schneeberger.</p>	<p><b>Research!</b></p> <p>Do your research in the comfort of Your own home.</p> <p>We have Microfiche Readers  For hire  \$5 per week  With Victorian Pioneer Index</p>

**LIBRARY OPENING TIMES**

TUESDAYS 10.00AM - 12 NOON  
OPEN UNTIL 2.00PM IF REQUESTED ON THE DAY  
"PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE CLOSED DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS"

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**Surface Mail**

If undelivered return to  
The Surfcoast Family History Group  
P.O. Box 98 Anglesea  
Victoria 3230

Peter MATTHEWS  
PO Box 44,  
Anglesea 3230

