



Balwyn Historical Society Newsletter

June 2019

Meetings

Thursday 13 June 2019 – 8 pm

Speaker: Dr Max Lay AM., FTSE

Topic: The Roads and Streets of Balwyn

Dr Max Lay was former Executive Director of the Australian Road Research Board and a past president of the RACV. Since 2000, there has been a “Dr Max Lay Perpetual trophy for best outstanding car” at the RACV Great Australian Car Rally. He is author of *Melbourne Miles*, a history of Melbourne’s streets and roads.

No meeting in July

Thursday 8 August 2019 – 8 pm

Speaker: Dr Helen Doyle

Topic: To Be Announced

Dr Helen Doyle is a senior heritage consultant with Context Pty. She has worked on a number of projects including the Moyne Shire Heritage Study and the City of Melbourne Heritage Study. She is also a writer and editor and two of her publications have won Victorian Community History awards.

Thursday 12 September 2019 – 8pm

Speaker: Dr Rosemary Francis

Topic: Finding the Links

Dr Rosemary Francis will speak about Italian migration to Victoria in the second half of the nineteenth century.

<p>Meetings are held at the Balwyn Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn Email: balwynhistory@gmail.com website: www.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs</p>

BHS Membership 2019-2020

Membership fees are due on July 1. The fee will remain the same as for the last financial year.

\$25 - single membership

\$35 - joint membership i.e. 2 adults at the same address.

A renewal form accompanies this newsletter.

You may renew your membership at the next meeting. Payment may be made by cash or cheque (payable to *Balwyn Historical Society*). It would be helpful if you could place your payment in an envelope marked with your name(s). Otherwise please send the completed renewal form together with a cheque to **The BHS Treasurer, Balwyn Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Ave, Balwyn 3103.**

For membership enquires contact Barbara Russell – 9857-6416

Recent Speaker: John Barnao

John Barnao spoke about orchards, fruit and machinery in Doncaster and Box Hill. Fruit was grown in hilly, well-drained Doncaster being sold in flat Box Hill. In the 1920s, there were 20,000 acres of orchards in Doncaster, which dropped away to 2,000 acres in the 1970s.

The first electric tram service in Australia opened in 1889 running between Box Hill and Doncaster regularly breaking down as it approached Doncaster, and closing in 1896. A replica of a tram is in Schramm's Cottage in Doncaster East. Due to religious conflict in the 1840s, many families left Germany settling in Doncaster. James Read was an early commercial orchardist at "Bedford Place" Templestowe in the 1850s.

Orchardists used mechanical sprayers, with chemicals that would not be used nowadays, and other equipment. Cool stores used initially for meat and butter in the 1880s, with stores in Doncaster (1905) and Mitcham (1912) holding 20,000 cases of fruit. Italian fruiterers commenced in 1927, often stocked aerated water, and started selling bananas (a herb, as it has no seed) from Queensland with faster shipping, reducing travel times. They also introduced zucchini, broccoli, tomatoes, eggplants, capsicums and garlic.

Eighty per cent of Melbourne fruiterers came from the Aeolian Islands, north of Sicily:

- G Alaimo in Malvern bought in new lines and formed pyramids in displaying goods.
- Cincottas at 604 Station St Box Hill for 38 years; Toscano in Kew, over 50 years
- Joe Defina, corner of Carrington Rd & Station St (Sky One skyscraper now)
- Don Vozzo & Charles Vetere; Vincent Barnao (John's father) 52 years
- Joe Luca in Bulleen 65 years; Giovanni Taranto in Balwyn recently sold out after 65 years– All made a good living.

Stackers, the sole Australian fruiterer in Box Hill in the later 1970s, introduced self- service, Italian fruiterers preferring to pack fruit for customers.

Why wills are important in family history research

By Marilyn Poole

Wills are very important in family history research. A will provides details about the deceased person such as where they lived, their occupation, their family relationships and what they owned at the time of their death. A will contains the wishes of the testator in terms of their bequests and provisions. The closer the will is to the date of death the greater the accuracy as money, property and goods can change in intervening years. Older wills often contain the terms 'last will and testament', the will referring to immovable property such as land or buildings whereas testament refers to moveable property such as money, clothing or furniture. A codicil is a signed, witnessed addition to a will. A probate document is the record created (by the court) after the person's death that relates to the validity of the will and the distribution of their estate. Probate documents often give the names and addresses of beneficiaries in the will and can also provide details about the deceased such as reference to deeds, debts and relevant documents prior to settling the estate.

Wills contain the date when the will was written and the date when the will was proved. Wills will tell you how wealthy a person is. The inventory of property, money and goods can reveal the social status of an individual. We must consider the social history of the period in which the will was written as our views on what constitutes affluence or wealth have changed over time.

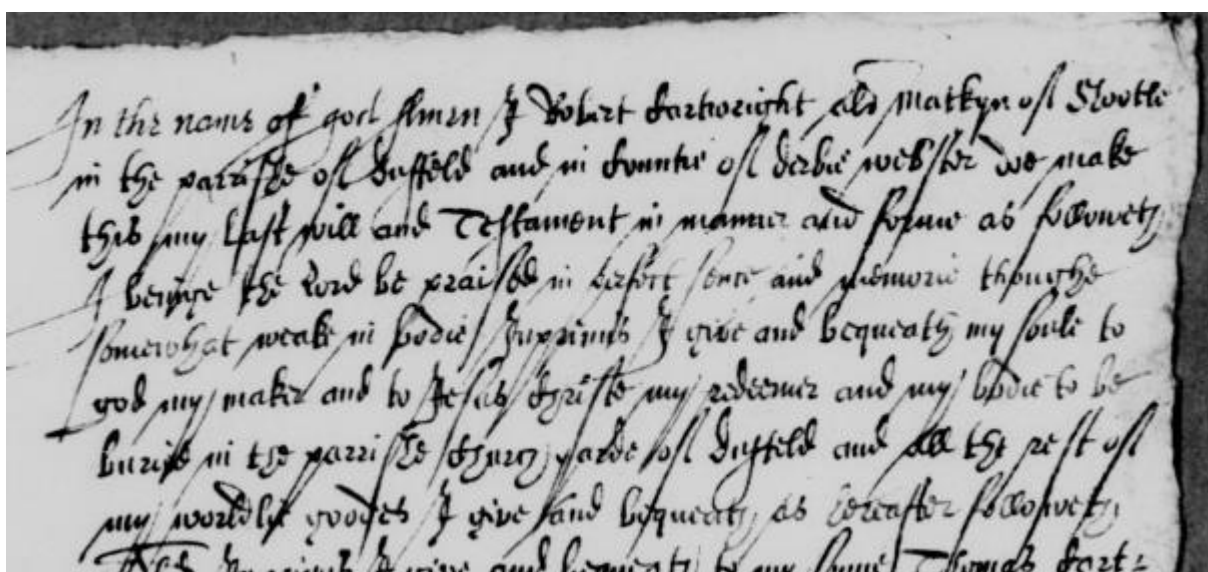
Perhaps the greatest use of wills in family history research is what they reveal about family relationships. The person writing the will names the person to whom something is bequeathed and the relationship between them such as wife, son, daughter, grand-daughter or son-in-law. A will is useful in checking the accuracy of your family tree. The will may give us a clue about the feelings of the deceased to other family members such as indications of hostility or disapproval e.g. "to my grandson Thomas, I bequeath one shilling...".

Another clue from a will is the address of the deceased that can provide the family historian with insights into how a person lived but also offers some sleuthing opportunities. I recall looking for a house in George Street, Fitzroy. There was no house at that particular number just a disappointing block of units. However, when we checked an old MMBW map we realised the street numbering had changed. We returned and to our delight found a lovely two-story Victorian still in good condition complete with the house name emblazoned above the door as stated in the will. Of course, not all searches give such pleasure. A search in Collingwood for what was presumably a laneway (which no longer exists)

indicated that this particular member of the family tree probably lived in a Collingwood 19th century slum.

Genealogy or family history research usually begins with births, marriages and deaths. However, this is basic information and most of us want to go much further and fill out a picture of our ancestors in terms of how and where they lived, their relationships and the social and political events which shaped their lives. We like to obtain a picture, a snapshot of the person and their life. A will goes some way in providing this information.

Let me begin with some old wills from my own family history. Perhaps the greatest challenge is to be able to decipher the writing and the vagaries of non-standardised spelling and make some sense of it all. The will below is an extract from the will of Robert Cartwright alias Matkyn, a webster (weaver of cloth), dated 1630. The term 'alias' is a puzzle and something of a mystery. I had no explanation for it until I found reports of a family bible together with a 1607 copy of the Book of Common Prayer (4th edition) tucked away in an American university library. A family tree written in the bible indicates the use of 'alias' came about because a member of the Matkyn family was a Puritan killed in an encounter with a Royalist (Cavalier) during the English Civil War. The man's widow, fearing reprisals for her children, remarried and took on her new husband's name (Cartwright) for herself and her children. Hence the 'alias Matkyn' terminology. However, the will does nothing to solve the mystery. Robert Cartwright alias Matkyn could hardly have been killed during the English Civil War of 1642-1651 as he died in 1630 and the alias was in use at the time of his death in 1630. So, the story remains unsolved.



Source: findmypast.

In the name of God Amen, I Robert Cartwright als Matkyn of Shottle in the parishe of Duffeld and in Countie of Derby, webster, do make this my last will and testament in manner and forme as followeth: I beinge, the Lord be praised in perfect sense and memorie though somewhat weake in bodie. Imprimis, I give and bequeath my soule to God my maker and to Jesus Christe my redeemer and my bodie to be buried in the parrishe church yarde of Duffeld and all the rest of my worldly goodes I give and bequeath as hereafter following, Imprimis, I give and bequeath to my sonne Thomas Cartwright alias Matkyn 102 pence. Item I give and bequeath to my sonne Henry Cartwright als Matkyn 102 pence. Item I give and bequeath unto my daughter Anne Cartwright als Matkin 102 pence. Item, I give and bequeath all the sheepe which are mine ownd unto my wife Issabell Cartwright alias to due with them what she will. And And as for the rest of my goodes quick and dead whatsoever I doe wholie give them to my wife Issabell Cartwright als Matkyn and to my sonne Robert Matkyn als Cartwright and to my sonne William Cartwright als Matkyn, and I do make my sonne Robert Cartwright als Matkyn my full and sole executor of this my last will and testament. And I doe make Henrie Cartwright als Matkyn and Wm. Cartwright als Matkyn supervisors of the same and give to each of them wyd for there paynes, my funeral discharged, my debts paid. In witness where of I the said Robert Cartwright als Matkyn have unto this my last will and testament sett my hand and seale the seventeenth daie of April in the first yeare of the raigne of our Sovereigne Lord Charles King of England, Scotland, Ffrance and Ireland, defender of the faith, Anno Dom 1630

Saleable goods had to be valued for probate and the inventory of goods reveal something about a person's life. Below is the list of goods from the will of Robert Cartwright alias Matkyn dated 1630.

Here is a true and pfect inventorie of the goods of Robert Cartwright in the pishe of Duffeld and Countie of Derby made the third daie of Julie in the yeare of the Lord God 1630 in manner and forme as heare followeth: Item, his purse and his wearing apparel Item, his feather bed, one mattress, 3 boulsters and 1 pillowe Item, seven paire of sheetes, 2 pillowbeares and 1 napkyn Item five coverletts, 3 blanketts Item, three bedsteads Item, 2 coffers Item, a borde and a panne Item, an amuberie Item, the wodden ware usuale worne in the house as chaires, stooles, xxx, and bowes and all such like Item, 3 paire of loomes and geares and all other furniture belonging hereto Item, brasse and pewter Item, iron ware Item fower kyne and a calfe Item, beste Item, a pigg Item, all the fether foule Item, the manor aboute the house Item, all the corne on the ground

In contrast is the inventory of all 'the good cattles and chattelles of Edward Bramley late of Postern Park in the parrish of Duffield' dated 1704. Edward was a yeoman, that is someone who farmed his own land, and married to a descendant of Robert.

His purse and apparel, In the house plate puter & brass and the fire irons, One table & form, one cupboard, one long chear, chears, stooles & som other wooden things; In the parler next the house two beds with furniture to them, one chest & one cofer; In the chamber over the same parler two beds with furniture & two coffers ; In the chamber over the house cheese, bacon & other; In the ould house one bed with ffurniture, one bedsted; Kitts, tubs, loomes, barrels & other wooden wares Hey & corne in the barns and forty of dores; Foure cows, one heifer, two bullocks, stirkes & three yearlings; Twenty five sheepe; Three horses & three

mares belonging to the teame; one two year ould mare and one yearling coulte; one store and reg; the reversion of two leases in Postern and the corn sewed thereon; reversion of one lease in Chevin in carts; .Tow carts, ploughs, sorrows, sleds and other horse husbandry wares; For odd items seen and unseen; Reddy money and money at interest;

But what of more modern wills here in Victoria? Fortunately, the Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV) has digitised many wills which makes it easier to find information. Wills from 1841-1925 may be read on-line. Those from 1926- 2016 are not yet digitised but can be ordered to view at the PROV in North Melbourne. Copies may be ordered then posted or emailed. Prior to 1994, will and probate records were two separate documents. For those researching wills, the search is usually undertaken in the name of the deceased and (if known) the date of death.

The following are two examples of 19th century Victorian wills which give insights not only into the relationships of the deceased with family members but something of the social history of the period.

The last will and testament of Dr Johann Werner Günst of Collins Street, Melbourne in the Colony of Victoria, physician, who died in April 1894 reveals some interesting genealogical information and relationships.

“I nominate and appoint the said William Duncan Walker Guardian of my son Johann Werner Francois hereinafter mentioned. I give devise and bequeath the whole of my real and personal estate wheresoever and whatsoever unto my said Trustees upon trust for my said son Johann Werner Francois by me born on the body of the late Sarah Ann Kate Walker absolutely and lastly revoking all former wills by me at any time herebefore made I declare this to be my last will and testament.

We learn from this will that Dr Günst left nothing to his wife who outlived him and nothing to his adult adopted son. He left everything to his son born out of wedlock to his mistress (who presumably died in childbirth) and appointed someone (possibly a relative of hers) as trustee. No birth record of his son has been found in birth records in Victoria nor the rest of Australia.

In the 19th century and earlier daughters were sometimes excluded from a will as settlement was made to them at the time of their marriage. There was another difficulty. Until the reforms of the *Married Women’s Property Acts* were passed in the Australian colonies, married women had no legal identity and no right to own property. Their property was considered to be that of their husband. Consequently, fathers or husbands made provision for women in their wills and excluded access by present and future husbands. Victoria passed the *Married Women’s Property Act* in 1884.

Thomas Murray, a Scottish migrant, who farmed in Hawthorn for many years wrote the following codicil to his will dated 1878 which was prior to the Victorian legislation regarding married women.

I direct that the one fourth part or share of the monies to be delivered or received by my Trustees from the proceeds of and upon their conversion and collection of any real and personal estate as directed by and in my said will shall be paid to my daughters Christina Dyason and Mary Ann McIntosh in equal shares and proportions share and share alike absolutely for their sole and separate use and free from the control debts or engagements of their present or any future husbands ...

Wills are invaluable to the family historian and well worth the effort of including them in any genealogy.

Post-script

Both Ancestry and Findmypast hold digitized English wills and probate records. Ancestry has Victorian probate records from 1841-2009. Wills and probate records from 1841-1925 have been digitized. Digitized images can be ordered from the Public Record office of Victoria (PROV). Both Ancestry and Findmypast can be accessed on Boroondara library computers if you are not a subscriber to these sites.

Balwyn Historical Society - Contact details

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