



Cobram Genealogical Group Inc.

Cobram
Genealogical
Group Newsletter
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History of Our Old School House

The Old School House in Cobram is where we have our meetings and have our Research rooms. Here is a brief history of the School.

Cobram State School, No. 2881, commenced on this site in April 1893 after having first opened in a leased building in Pine Street in April 1888. The original Punt Road brick building measured 50' x 20' (15.2m x 6.1m) and included a gallery at the eastern end which was occupied by infants. Curtains separated the infant section from the remainder of the school, which had an enrolment at this time of 98 children looked after by two teachers.

In February 1896, a verandah and shelter shed were added, but the Education Department would not agree to increased accommodation although the average daily population was by now 158. Many petitions and letters were sent to the Department requesting immediate action. In 1900, a disused school building from Nuggety Reef was placed on site and this remained as very inferior accommodation until its removal in 1916.

In 1906, water was laid on from the new town scheme which was a 60,000 gallon tank filled directly from the Murray River. Also in 1906, an adjacent block of land was purchased for £50 thus alleviating the critical shortage of playing space. In 1908, a brick extension measuring 31'6" x 24' (9.6m x 7.3m) was added to the southern side of the western end of the original brick building resulting in an "L" shape.

In 1915, the galleries were removed and blackboards and furniture brought in from the closed Cobram East School at a cost of £6/10/-. As further additions and renovations were taking place late in 1915, children had their lessons at Victoria Hall. The Hall burnt down on 6th December and all school records were lost. The school re-opened in 1915 having acquired its present shape. The condemned wooden room was finally disposed of.

The school population exceeded 220 when St. Josephs opened in 1922 and only slowly increased in size during the next twenty years. With the advent of irrigation after World War II, space again became a problem and by 1952 the Consolidated School opened on the site now occupied by the High School. Lessons continued to be taken in this building until the present Consolidated School in William Street opened in 1964.

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Excerpts from “In the Days of the Punt”

The Barnes Family

On 16 September 1856, James Barnes, a maltster from Foxton, Cambridgeshire, arrived in Australia aboard the ship “Omega”, with his wife Mary Ann and six children: William, Frederick, Sarah, John, Isaac and Susan. Alice Omega was born on the ship, and Rebecca and Eliza were born in Australia.

The eldest child, William was born in 1838. On his arrival in Australia he worked as a farm labourer in the Geelong district, then rented a farm on his own account and carted to the diggings. In 1858 he married Alice Wright at Geelong. Four sons, Henry, David, James and Charles were born at Highton. David died when only a few months old. They then farmed at Jan Juc for two years, where two daughters were born— Sarah and Alice. Alice only lived for months. In 1873 William selected 32 acres at Cressy where he took three crops off his selection. Two sons were born, Arthur and Thomas, but Thomas died in infancy.

In April 1876, William paid a £1 application fee for a licence for 287 acres at Katamatite, selecting four miles north of the town, and on 9 May he paid a survey fee of £9 18/-. It wasn't until 1 February 1877, that he was granted the licence, due to the delays in the survey of his Cressy selection, which he had to sell before coming to Katamatite. William and Alice travelled from Cressy in a wagon with five children—Henry 16 years, James 12 years, Charles 9 years, Sarah 7 years and Arthur 4 years; arriving on 1 April 1877. They found their way from Shepparton by following a line of trees with a piece of bark sliced off. Two more sons, Walter and Andrew were born at Katamatite. Within two years they had built a 24' x 24' weatherboard house with an iron roof, valued at £110, stable and outhouse valued at £10, one mile chock and log fence at £56 5/-, and one and a half miles of log and brush fence at £67 10/-. The first years proved hard and they struggled to pay their rents. William cultivated ten acres the first season and sowed wheat, but it was too late for the crop and they cut it for hay. In 1878 he sowed forty five acres which promised well until rust destroyed most of it. Because of the lack of grass with the bad seasons, all horse feed had to be brought from Shepparton. By 1880 he had made further improvements with a stable, barn, out buildings, garden and was laying out fruit trees and shrubs.

William's half brother Isaac, and their father James, followed him to Katamatite also selecting land. Isaac had previously worked a small 29 acres selection at Cressy and in June 1877 he applied for a Katamatite selection which had been forfeited by I. Greig. He had 290 acres on the west side of William's block. Their father James, selected 29 acres to complete Isaac's block, and lived with his son. Because the brothers had previously selected land at Cressy, which had been sold at their own request, they were limited in the acreage they could select at Katamatite, and their blocks were not complete. William wrote to the Minister of Lands in 1878 asking for the extra 20 acres, but it was disallowed. His father immediately applied for the licence and this was granted to him. James lived at Katamatite until 1885 when he transferred his land to his sons. Two years later Isaac left Katamatite and transferred his selection to William. William now had 600 acres, and later added a further 300 acres with the block adjoining to the west, which had been selected by Thom. Carlton. William and his sons continued to crop and graze the properties, clearing the land, fencing and making improvements, until ill health forced William to leave the farm and in approximately 1891, he and Alice with their two youngest sons, went to Geelong West. William died of dropsy aged 72 years, and Alice lived in Geelong West until 1934, when she died aged 94.

NEW RESOURCES IN OUR LIBRARY

- Melbourne General Cemetery Headstone Inscriptions (CD)
- Victorian Marine Birth, Death and Marriages 1853–1920 (CD)
- South Australian Marriage Index 1842-1916 (CD)
- Finley General and Lawn Cemetery Transcriptions 1913-2001 (Book)
- Deniliquin Obituaries and Profiles Vol 1 & 2 (Book)
- Stories of Early Deniliquin (Book)
- Deniliquin General Cemetery Transcriptions (Book)
- Deniliquin Lawn Cemetery Transcriptions (Book)
- Story of Cochrane Creek (Book)
- Numurkah Leader Newspaper Index 1890–95



The Barnes Family—Continued from P. 2

When her parents moved to Geelong, Sarah was left at Katamatite to cook and housekeep for her brothers. As children they had attended the Muckatah school, walking across the tops of the chock and log fences when it was wet. Their teacher Mr Von Weihaan boarded with them. In 1877 William bought an organ for Sarah from Allan and Co. in Melbourne, and it was sent by rail to Numurkah in two cases. She was taught to play the organ by Mr Worland, a neighbour. Apparently Sarah wasn't happy housekeeping for her brothers. She was lonely and nervous being left on her own when the boys were out, and a few months later she too went to Geelong West where she married William Thomas Dolley, a butcher in 1893. Five children were born: Lil, Myrtle, Roy, Hector and Ida.

During the next few years the boys married: Jim married Mary Thomas from Dunbalane and they had 9 children: Herbert, Sarah, Jim, May, Ernie, Leslie, Una, Ruby and Ray who died at the age of 20 years. They farmed one and a half miles north of Katamatite on the land that was later owned by Jack Mills. Some of the children went to school at Katamatite. The family left in about 1902 and went to Langwarren. Charlie married Annie Rosetta Worland in 1894. They lived on the property later owned by Lorraine Horsburgh (nee Barnes). Their six children attended the Muckatah school, one and a half miles away. Charlie Barnes and his family left Katamatite in Jun 1920 and went to the farm at Murrumbeena. Arthur farmed his Uncle Isaac's selection and lived in the house originally built by his uncle. After leaving Katamatite Arthur married Henrietta McWhirter and farmed at Hallum. Their children were Cyril and Gladys.

The only son not to move away from Katamatite was Henry (Harry) who was born in Geelong in 1861. He married Elizabeth Dolley in Geelong in 1894 and they lived in the house built by his father. They had two sons: Stanley and Lesley. Elizabeth died from TB in 1919. Harry married his sister-in-law Emma, in 1922. During his lifetime he, he bought the farms belonging to his father's estate and also his 3 neighbours, Worland, Charles and Jessop. He rented land from other farmers in the district. He was an agent for buying wheat at the Katamatite Railway Station, bought and sold superphosphate and chaff, and was the agent of New Zealand Loan. Sheep in the district were taken to a large shed in Cobram for shearing until Harry Barnes built his own shearing shed, which was used by other graziers in the district. Similarly with dipping—he built a plunge dip which was used by many farmers. Henry died in 1935, aged 75 years. His sons continued to farm land, and today his grandson Harold is carrying on the tradition.



**"In the Days of the Punt" back
in print see list of surnames
covered on our website.
Volume 2 is under
construction for 2002.**

What was Happening in Australia One Hundred Years Ago

Births and Deaths: b. Albert Namatjira, artist, on 28th July. B. Christi na Stead, writer on 17th July, d. Nicholas Chevalier, artist, aged 73 on 15th March. D. James Brunton Stephens, poet, aged 67, on 29th June.

Song of the Year: 'In the Good Old Summertime'

Sport: Melbourne Cup winner The Victory ridden by R. Lewis. St awell Gift winner A. Tredinnick. Aussie Rules Premiers in the VFL Collingwood.

Happenings:

8 January: Fingerprinting introduced in Sydney known as the Bertillon system of identification.

15 January: *Sweet Nell of Drury* is a success at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne.

9 March: British New Guinea is formally transferred to Australian control.

18 March: The High Court of Australia is established.

23 March: Her Majesty's Theatre in Sydney burns down.

March: The National Council of Women of Victoria is established to campaign for welfare reform.

22 April: The Crookwell rail branch line in NSW is completed.

April: Brisbane's new City Library is the first in Australia to use the Dewey classification system.

Members Interest List

Check out a complete list
on our website—more in
our next issue.

Barry 1700-1800 Cork, IRE Shirley Frappell	Broad Cornwall, ENG Lynette Farrar	Christiansen 1800+ Bergedorf, Hamburg, GER Shirley Frappell
Batty c1819 Monkfryston, YRK, ENG Gloria Primmer	Brown 1800's Nottingham, NTT, ENG Roy Bowles	Clempson 1800+ Staffordshire, ENG Barbara Coleman
Beaumont, Joseph & Hannah Hinton Blewitt/Litton, SOM, ENG Shirley Frappell	Bugg 1700-1900 Victoria, AUS Judy Nankiville	Close, John 1789+ Staffordshire, ENG/Worcester, ENG/ TAS, AUS Nicole Close
Bennett, William 1780+ Antrim, IRE Barbara Coleman	Bull 1800+ London, ENG Barbara Coleman	Close, John Thomas 1833+ Sorrell, TAS, AUS/VIC, AUS Nicole Close
Bensley 1800+ Berne, SWITZERLAND Barbara Coleman	Burcombe c1831 Evercreech, SOM, ENG Wayne Primmer	Coleman 1860+ Bristol, ENG Barbara Coleman
Bettridge 1850+ Smythesdale, VIC, AUS Roy Bowles	Burgoine Waltham, LEIC, ENG Lynette Farrar	Coward 1800-1900 all Australia Judy Nankiville
Birthisel Any worldwide Delma Birthisel	Burrell 1810+ Midlothian, SCOT/VIC, AUS/ NSW, AUS Nicole Close	Crow, Mary 1800+ Kilkenny, IRE Barbara Coleman
Bishop 1700+ Radford, NTT, ENG Roy Bowles	Campbell 1800's Lochgilthead, ARL, SCT Shirley Bowles	Cunningham all AYR, SCT Shirley Frappell
Blyton, William 1800+ Cooma, NSW, AUS Shirley Frappell	Campbell, John 1797+ Argyllshire, SCOT/VIC, AUS Nicole Close	Daly Any Co Cork, IRE/Sandmount, AUS Carmel Halligan
Boothroyde 1820+ Tasmania, AUS Nicole Close	Canning 1820+ West Mill, HERTFORD., ENG/ VIC, AUS Nicole Close	Dawes, Elizabeth 1780+ Redruth, Cornwall, ENG Barbara Coleman
Bowell 1600+ Brighton, SSX, ENG Nicole Close	Carley 1860's Kamarooka, VIC, AUS Shirley Bowles	Desailly Any Worldwide Jan Parker
Bowles 1800's Great Yarmouth, NFK, ENG Roy Bowles	Chaston 1789+ Suffolk, ENG/SA, VIC, NSW, AUS Nicole Close	

"Genea-Logies" 2001 Hotly Contested

The nineteenth annual "Genea-Logies" were held at the Cobram Special School, on the 12th December 2001, with judges, Diana Bouchier and Carol Elliot doing the honors. The members of the Cobram Genealogical Group enjoyed the usual Christmas festivities of a delicious supper and Surprise Santa. There were a record number of entries in many categories, and the judges had an interesting time examining all the entries in order to select the eventual winners.

Gigantic Generation Gap Award - *Greatest number of years between 4 generations in an ancestral line,*

Gloria Primmer took out the first award for the evening with a sizeable 123 year gap between her birth, in 1948, via her father, Fiorano Ferri, born in 1907, his mother, Giovanna Togno, born in 1870 and her great grandfather Pietro Togno, born in 1825.

Genetic Minute Margin Award - *The least number of years between 4 generations in an ancestral line.*

Old-stager, Wayne Primmer took out this award with an incredible 62-year margin between the 4 generations, from his 4x great grandfather, William Freshwater born in 1806, daughter, Mary Ann Freshwater, born 1829, her daughter, Elizabeth Surkitt, born 1852, and her daughter, Ellen Surkitt, born 1868.

Veritable Victorian Award - *For the most interesting one page profile of an ancestor who was living in Victoria on the day of Separation 1st July 1851.*

Wayne was again successful with a profile of his 3x great grandmother, Sarah Kell nee Shearer 1819 - 1904, a well respected pioneering lady of Koroit and Tower Hill, who arrived with her new husband and his family on board the "England" in 1841, and raised a prosperous family and maintained a very choice garden.

Box Brownie Award - *For the best display of family photos.*

President Nicole Close, won her second Box Brownie Award, with a beautiful framed sepia montage of the Pearce family, featuring Samuel and Susannah Pearce, 5 of their 7 children, and 1 grandchild. The judges found this display very attractive to the eye, and was in a form, which could be displayed in the home.

The Fertile Years Award - *For the most number of years between the births of the first and last child of a female ancestor.*

Once again, Wayne Primmer managed to scoop the pool with one of his forebears. This time it was Mary Ann Surkitt, nee Freshwater 1829 - 1899, who gave birth to 12 children, her eldest son George, born in 1847, and her youngest son, John Alexander, born in 1876, an amazing reproductive span of 29 years.

Newshound Award - *For the most interesting newspaper article which mentions a direct ancestor*

First time winner, Lyn Farrer captured the eye of the judges with her fascinating account printed in The Mount Alexander Mail on 9 January 1909, of a "Sensation At Sutton Grange", a lamentable accident involving her great grandparents, Mary Elizabeth Howarth nee Broad who was accidentally shot with a pea shooter by her husband, John Daniel Howarth,

Celebrity Signatory Award - *For the signature of the most famous person on a document relating to an ancestor.*

Another new-comer, Graeme Hickey came up with the all time, well known signature, with his exiled ancestor, Daniel Wright's Royal Pardon was signed by none other than *Victoria R* on the 10th June 1846, Daniel arrived in Port Phillip per the "Maitland".

Victoria Day Award - *For the birth, marriage or death of an ancestor in Victoria, closest to the 1st July 1851,*

Long time winner, Roy Bowles, managed to stun the opposition, with the marriage of his paternal great grandparents, Stephen Jones, and Eleanor Maria White, at St. Peter's Church Melbourne, on the 25 June 1851, only 6 days before separation.

Heirloom Award - *For the most interesting item owned by an ancestor*

Persistence paid off for Wayne Primmer, as he finally won his first Heirloom Award, with a most unusual decorative gold inscribed pendant presented to his grandfather, Private Robert Edgar Dick, by his Caniambo friends on his return from the Great War, dated 15.5.1919.

Magna Carta Award- *For the most interesting certificate or document relating to an ancestor.*

Gloria Primmer bookended this year's awards, when she captured the judges' eye with a muster of the Master, Crew & Passengers of the ship "Regalia" which was bound for Macquarie Island on a fishing voyage, half way to the Antarctic, way back on the 4th December 1820. It featured her 3x great grandfather James Tapsell, recorded, as James Tapsale, a steward.

Judges Diana and Carol were presented with commemorative appreciation certificates and our special Cobram Genealogical Group coffee mugs, each containing Christmas confectionary. Another feature of the evening was the presentation of certificates by Jan Parker, to our regular members, awarded by the Government as part of *The International Year of The Volunteer*, Supper followed, with members being treated to Secretary, Barb Coleman's Special Strawberry Surprises, and many other goodies with which to celebrate the end of another successful year and "Genea-logies" at Cobram. **Page 5**



<http://www.angelfire.com/co3/cobramgenie>



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Treasurer: Rick Gardiner

Cobram Genealogical Group meets 2nd Wednesday of the month, February to November at the Old School House, Punt Road, Cobram at 8pm.

Research room is open every Thursday 1pm to 3pm or by appointment.

Membership Fees

Joining Fee \$10.00

Ordinary Member Fee \$25.00

Non-member research at rooms \$5.00

Research \$5.00 per hour, Send ssae to above postal address

A Transcription of a Letter from Rick Gardiner our

John Gardiner was born in Galloway Scotland in 1825, the son of John Gardiner and Mary Carson. He was christened John in April 1825 but I think he acquired Carson as his middle name in honour of his mother who died on the voyage out to Australia. He arrived in Melbourne 24/12/1851 onboard the "Eagle". He eventually settled in the Teredgerie District around the 1860's on his way back from Queensland, while his brothers continued on to Victoria. This is a letter written to a daughter.

Teredgerie
22nd Nov 1891

Dear Jeannie

Your intended visit here will have to be postponed for some time owing to the Influenza being so bad every where, and if you were here at present you would only be in a state of anxiety about Mr Bell and the two boys and it would never do for Mary to go to Gunnedah while there was any sickness in the town. But I can only say when all epidemics is cleared off we shall be glad to see you and the children here for a change and it is our earnest prayers that you will all escape the dire complaint that is killing so many both old and young. We are all in good health at present trusting you are all enjoying the same blessing. We were told the other day that Johnie Millers family were all laid up with it but did not know whether little Francis was ill or not.

Your Uncle William's last letter to your father says they are all getting over it at Brooklands but he does not mention whether he had it himself or not. I am afraid the little girl Jean will never be right again losing her sight as she has done.

The weather is very dry here at present with heavy thunderstorms but no rain, there was a fearful thunderstorm here last Thursday night but no rain I was all alone with the little boy your father having gone to Gorriamay for Rams that same day. Be sure and tell the children that their Granny will keep them a fat Turkey and Cake for them when they come to see her.

Dear Jeannie

The Influenza being so prevalent everyw here at present hope you see the good sense of your mother's advice. With kindest regards to you Mr Bell and family remains,

Your affectionate Father,
John C Gardiner

