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Visitors are most welcome with a $15 daily visitor pass, or a $25 one calendar month visitor pass, allowing access to our Family History Research Centre, plus the cost of any printouts and/or photocopies. Reciprocal visits apply with some overseas, interstate & intrastate societies. Please show your current membership card.

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The Vice President's Report

Christine Harris

This past month, our editor, Peter Forrestal, has stepped down from his volunteer role for health reasons and this issue of *WesternAncestor* has been produced by a team of volunteers who have stepped up to fill Peter's very big shoes. This has caused me once again to reflect on the role of volunteers in our organisation. I recently came across the letter that was sent to all FHWA volunteers in December 2020, looking back on a year that none of us were likely to forget. That letter spoke of the challenges of the pandemic and the fundamental changes that came in the wake of COVID-19. Changes that happened in every aspect of our lives and particularly changes that happened within our own Society.

There is one thing, however, that did not change in 2020, has not changed in the five years since, and will not change in the future. That is the crucial role that volunteers play in our organisation. Every role in our Society is filled by a volunteer. They are our lifeblood. Without volunteers, we have no Society. There are so many roles that offer opportunities to everyone to contribute to our society. If you can help in any way, please contact Garry Keath at volunteers@fhwa.org.au and offer your time.

It has been a while since the last *WesternAncestor* was published and we have had some significant things happening in the society. Last August, the Enrolled Pensioner Guards, Convicts, Military and Western Australia groups banded together to bring us the "They Came By Ship" event. A great deal of research and writing and organisation went into an extremely successful event—so successful that a sequel is being planned for later this year!! Our Technology group celebrated its 40th anniversary and outgoing convenor, Ian Dew, did a wonderful job of bringing together a complete history of those 40 years. Ian has now stepped into the role of Liaison Officer, providing a single point of contact for all of the group convenors, and has implemented a program of quarterly convenor meetings to provide ongoing support and training for our groups. Our Military Group celebrated its 10th anniversary, and its ongoing support for the Western Australian Military Digital Library is an amazing achievement, and our Convict Group has produced a wonderful resource with the Western Australian Convict website - far and away the most visited of the websites hosted by our Society.

In April, FHWA was invited to join a group of like-minded organisations working together as the WA History Collective. The 2029 Bicentenary is an opportunity to "Unlock Our History" —all our history, both positive and painful. Western Australia has a rich and diverse history, and all Western Australians should be able to discover their stories. The Collective will work with the State Government to deliver objectives that will enable this discovery. Watch for more news on this initiative over the coming months.

While on the subject of the Bicentenary, our 2029 project, People of Western Australia's Ghost Towns, has marked its own achievement with the development of an online data collection tool that will make record indexing faster and more accurate, as well as ensuring consistency and accuracy of the records being collected and stored for the future. This tool, funded by donations from our Interest Groups, our members, and the public, has been developed in such a way that it has the capability of being adapted for all future data collection projects, and so has greatly enhanced the future capabilities for the Society.

On 28 June, our Annual General Meeting will be held at May Street. I would like as many as possible to come along and be part of this important occasion in the life of our Society. If you can't make it to May Street, think about attending online. Watch for the official notifications and take part in guiding the Society into the future.

A note from the *WesternAncestor* Editorial Committee

Welcome to the first issue of *WesternAncestor* for 2026. As you will have read in the recent letter from the FHWA Management Committee sent to all members, the journal faced difficulties in late 2025 with only two of the three scheduled issues produced. Since then, our Editor Peter Forrestal has unfortunately resigned due to ill health. Peter gave generously of his time and skills for over three years, and we thank him sincerely for his dedication to FHWA and *WesternAncestor* and wish him well.

Now a small group of enthusiastic FHWA volunteers has formed an Editorial Committee to ensure the journal continues. Our goal is to return to the full schedule of three issues this year, and this is the first step towards that. We know it is later than normal, and we are committed to publishing the remaining two issues on time.

That said, a committee is not a substitute for a dedicated editor, and we are actively seeking someone to take on that role permanently. If you have publishing experience—whether in editing, layout, or print production—and would be willing to volunteer your skills to FamilyHistoryWA, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact the Management Committee. You will be supported by an editorial committee and proofreaders.

In the meantime, thank you to our members for your patience and to everyone who worked behind the scenes to bring this issue together. We hope you enjoy it.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS AMBULANCE SERVICE WWII

Seeking information to document a history of ambulance service by the Australian Red Cross in Perth during World War II.

The majority of drivers were women, who formed a strong brigade and worked tirelessly in their spare time.

Can You Help?

If you have an ancestor who was part of the brigade, please share information or photos with:

Margaret Little | Albany WA | Member 13596
marglittle@gmail.com

The Watchmaker - Thomas Emery Standven

CJ Eddington | Member # 14038

Thomas Emery **Standven**, my great-great-great-grandfather, was born in 1792 and is named as a watchmaker on his son's 1815 baptism registration. Thomas was 22 and he had married the year before. Initially I thought he had completed his apprenticeship and was now free to marry, but it now appears that he was never an apprentice. More on that later.

Just a word on his name—he is unique among my ancestors of this period to have a middle name—*Emery*. This appears to honour an ancestor of his, Francis **Emery**, who was probably from Brittany in France, and it may have been him who was the first watchmaker in this family.

Between 1815 and 1826 Thomas's children's baptisms record his movement at various locations around central London - Kings St (now the location of Christie's and Rolex), Queens St, Cartereal St (maybe Carteret St), Bond St, St Marylebone, and Pilgrim St. All these locations are in the wealthy part of central London. This constant movement over these ten years suggests that he was employed by other watchmakers.

Another three children were baptised in Ramsgate, Kent after this. At some point, Thomas left London and set up his own retail establishment in Broadstairs, Kent. By 1840 he is listed in Pigot's directory as a watchmaker at 107 High St, Ramsgate, Kent.[1] After this, he was based in Broadstairs (1839-1840) and then Ramsgate (1840-1851).[2] Ramsgate was and still is a prosperous town on the Kent coast of the English Channel.

In the early 1800s watchmaking was at its peak. Watchmaking in Britain has a long history dating back to the 1500s. Along the way innovations like the balance spring, the repeating watch movement and the use of jewels all created an improved watch. Eventually in 1755, Thomas **Mudge** invented the lever escapement. This invention was a pivotal moment in the watch industry and is still an integral element of watchmaking today.

By the late 1700s watchmakers were building their watches with aesthetic and design in mind, rather than solely functionality.[3] It's worth noting that in this period these were all pocket watches not today's more familiar wrist watch.

Watchmakers sometimes worked for a master watchmaker in a large concern and sometimes as a sole trader. There are certain dangers inherent in the manufacture of watch and clockmaking that few know about. Workers are exposed to the dust and gas of the metals they work with. While fire guilding watch movements, workers were exposed to mercury fumes. Hats were worn to limit dust and chemicals settling on their heads and to keep them warm. Early death from mercury poisoning was not uncommon.

"Turret-Clock Shop" in Clerkenwell, London; The Illustrated London News Sep 20, 1851.

Despite the name, most watchmakers in the 1800s did not make watches—they were High Street retailers. The vast majority of English-made watches of the nineteenth century do *not* carry the name of the person who made them;

Stop thief!

Watchmakers were targets for thieves. They stocked high-value, easily-moved items in High Street shops with low security. Until the second half of the 18th century pocket watches were a luxury item. In June 1848 Mr Standven was robbed of 40 watches from his premises. The offenders were apprehended soon after and sent for trial at the Sandwich Quarter Sessions.[8] This was not an isolated event, although the large number of stolen watches was unusual. A search of British newspapers on the Findmypast website turned up numerous reports of watches being stolen from watchmakers in the 1800s.

John Scriven watch

instead, the name of the retailer, who ordered the watch and sold it in his shop, was engraved on the movement, and sometimes enamelled onto the dial.[4] The High Street watchmaker also supplied jewellery, but again he was only a retailer. He often offered a cleaning and repair service for watches and jewellery.

In general, many of the watchmakers listed would be mainly retailers of watches, jewellery and similar items - not makers. Apprentices who gained their Freedom of the London Clockmakers Company[5] appeared in the register of London Clockmakers. Since Thomas Standven's name does not appear there it suggests that he never completed an apprenticeship.[6] He was merely a retailer.

Skilled workers like bricklayers, carpenters, masons, and smiths earned six shillings (s) six pence (d.) per 10-hour day, six-day week. A modestly priced pocket watch cost £5 – with 20 shillings to the pound it would take just over two weeks to make £5. You need to imagine a carpenter in Australia paying a fortnight's pay for something today. According to the website *Seek*, today a carpenter grosses $1500 per week.[7] A watch was a significant purchase. And even into the 20th century watches were given as a 21st birthday present—an expensive, prestigious gift. From

"Stop thief!" from Dickens's The Adventures of Oliver Twist, Household Edition, page 33. 1871.

1825, as railways spread across the UK, a uniform system of time was established. The first standardised railway time was in November 1840, and over the next seven years it was adopted by all the different railway companies, and station clocks were brought into line with 'London time', better known as Greenwich Mean Time. The possession of a personal pocket watch was part of this response to needing accurate time keeping.

It wasn't just watchmakers who were targeted by thieves. In 1745 Thomas **Piggot** was attacked in the street and his pocket watch and money were stolen.[9] To foil thieves pocket watches eventually came with chains. There was no Police Force, so Piggot was effectively responsible for getting his watch back. He tried to instigate informal settlement by placing a 'lost' notice in the newspaper, offering a substantial reward. His watch was valued at 20 pounds (£20) and the reward was 10 guineas (£10 and 10 shillings).

On 25 May 1745, six other lost notices appeared in the *Daily Advertiser* alongside Piggott's. Watches were one of the most frequently advertised objects in lost notices, making up 15 percent of the notices surveyed between 1702 and 1820. Publishing a 'lost' notice with detailed description was often a successful way to have the watch returned. Newspapers had an enormous readership and an advertisement cost between two and four shillings.

Sometimes watchmakers themselves were the perpetrators. In July 1844

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Theft vs robbery

Theft is the dishonest taking of property with the intent to permanently deprive the owner of it, while robbery is a more serious crime that involves theft committed with the use or threat of force, violence, or intimidation against a person. Therefore, all robberies are a form of theft, but not all thefts are robberies.

Another Ghost Town story – revealing the lives of some remarkable characters

The Burtville Baroness

Louise Clarkson | Member # 12644

Out at the 42-Mile Hotel, on the Burtville – Merolia Road in May 1897 there was a great commotion – after an extensive manhunt, police captured pistol-wielding Jim **Connolly** described as a "Yankee desperado" and allegedly the murderer of a lady named May **Wain**.[1] The hotel landlady, Mrs Hastings **Scott**, dismissed his plea for water. "You cur," she said, "You could shoot a defenceless woman. Why didn't you shoot the Sergeant." Tall, willowy and always immaculately dressed, Mrs Hastings Scott then drove the shackled prisoner and attending police into Coolgardie in her buckboard and pair—not an easy feat, but well within her accomplishments as a skilled horsewoman.

Whether she said those exact words is difficult to prove; the anecdote surfaced ten years later in a newspaper article entitled "Crimes of the Early Days". But if the line was embellished, the attitude was not. For years this lady had embraced adventure and lived as though society's rules were suggestions meant for other people. Whether Western Australian society knew of her past is uncertain. But from the glowing press Mrs Hastings Scott received, some people probably did know but admired her anyway. She seems to have been charismatic, wooing both men and women in her earlier days with her close friendship and charm.

From Torquay to Belgravia

Mrs Hastings Scott (she used her husband's first name and surname as her own) was born Jennie **Hodge** in Devon 1866; child of George Hodge, a draper turned auctioneer, and Fanny **Hobbs**. Jennie and her two sisters worked as milliners in various establishments in the area.

They all appear to have been very attractive which gave them entrée into the Victorian *demi-monde* of rich, bored husbands and poorer, beautiful women who were interested in securing their futures. Torquay and other seaside resorts in Devon were lined with fashionable hotels providing discreet service for couples under assumed names. In the 1890s it was fertile ground for private detectives and divorce lawyers: the newspapers of the day loved it.

By the time she was 19, Jennie had met a German ex-army man, Baron Hermann **Frericks** and they married in 1887.[2] The Baron raced horses, Jennie visited Switzerland and Paris, and they had a house in Belgravia. But during 1890 he became suspicious that Jennie was not faithful. Baron Frericks had one man in mind, but after having his wife investigated settled on another for his divorce case, his personal doctor and close friend, Dr Gilbert Oscar **Lynch.**[3]

Dr Lynch was a society physician, often in the newspapers due to his high-profile cases involving suspicious deaths and he was also the medical man in attendance for the boxing fraternity at the National Sporting Club. Dr Lynch was no stranger to the divorce court himself. His wife, Adelaide, had been granted a final decree four years earlier in 1886 claiming cruelty and adultery on his part.

Baron Frericks' divorce was granted in 1892 with Jennie and Dr Lynch guilty of "impropriety". The Baron, perhaps wary of his reputation being impacted further, arranged for

AI coloured rendition of image from the *Illustrated Police Budget* - Saturday 9 June 1894

AI coloured rendition of image from the *Penny Illustrated Paper* - Saturday 2 June 1894

Jennie to have an allowance of £200 a year on one condition: she was not to use the Frericks name. Jennie did anyway.

Scandal as a Career

More entanglements occupied Jennie in the years that followed. One was a curious case where she seemed to have captured the affection of both Mr *and* Mrs **Dunhill**. Jennie dined and travelled with Alice and William Dunhill and, having adjoining rooms when staying in hotels, they often breakfasted together. So when Mrs Dunhill claimed her husband and Jennie were lovers and began divorce proceedings it is hard not to suspect connivance. Was Jennie working with Alice Dunhill to get rid of her husband? Considering the intimate friendship these three enjoyed, it's not impossible.

Such was Jennie's magnetism, that the newspaper *Illustrated Police Budget* breathlessly reported on the rush of junior barristers eager to find a seat in court when she was to appear. Her demeanor was confident, her hats and white gloves exquisite and her responses unapologetic. "Do you represent yourself to be a woman of irreproachable character?" she was asked in 1894. "I never said that I was" was her reply.[4]

It was during Alice Dunhill's divorce case that Baron Frericks' first consideration for Jennie's partner in adultery was explored to cast doubt on her credibility and morals. Jennie had been in correspondence with a certain 'Mr **Farnham'** who turned out to be William Edward John Basil Farnham, landed gentry of the Quorndon estate in Leicestershire. William was, by all accounts, a kind and amiable man, but he was financially irresponsible: both a lavish spender and a speculator who made terrible investments, resulting in the accumulation of massive debts.[5]

One of Jennie's letters to Mr Farnham was read in a crowded court in 1894, to general amusement. Jennie addressed him as "Birdie" and spoke of the £1300 he had already given her and asked for £800 more per annum. Confessing to being too extravagant, she also mentioned—in the most delicate manner—that she had kept his name out of her divorce case from Baron Frericks and assured him Mrs Farnham was unlikely to find out.[6]

Was she protecting his assets, or exploiting them? When Jennie then took Mr Farnham to court seeking the income she expected, her actions appear callous in the extreme. But the case could not progress, as Mr Farnham was removed to an asylum and died in 1910 seemingly estranged from his family, and virtually penniless. A bankrupt herself, Jennie narrowly avoided a prison sentence and blithely moved on.

Cutting a Dash in Western Australia

In 1896 Jennie married Captain Hastings Curtis Folliott Scott. Hastings, an ex-Indian military man, was the youngest son of a Bedfordshire family of Church of England clergy. He and Jennie probably disembarked at Fremantle in early 1897.

Within a year of arriving Jennie and Hastings launched right into action running the 42-Mile Hotel and buying mining leases. While Hastings is occasionally mentioned regarding their business affairs, Jennie grabbed the attention with detailed newspaper accounts of her adventures. In 1905 after she secured a half interest in the 'Sons of Westralia' mine she appeared unstoppable. The newspaper *The Truth* reported:

And nowadays we have Mrs Hastings Scott…whose graceful form in all the glory of spotless muslin and glittering ornament cheers the vision of the way-backer as she flits among the mines at Burtville. The lady is conversant with every development… she claims she's "been down 'em all and sampled

The Burtville Baroness (Cont.)

everything" …[and] talks the technical side of the business with wonderful accuracy.[7]

The mine, however, did not live up to its promise and had to be offloaded for a fraction of its development costs.

Town Life Doesn't Suit Her

By 1907 Jennie was back in Perth, running the Hotel Continental in Claremont. If only hotels had the same services to offer these days! Fresh vegetables were supplied from their own garden, along with fresh milk for child guests from their own cows. A bungalow residence was available for families, with a specially fitted nursery and a children's nurse attached to the establishment: all under the eagle eye of Mrs Hastings Scott. But one newspaper article wondered if she was happy there, considering she may sooner be back in the mulga despite its lack of luxury, and that she could find the old-fashioned ways of narrow town streets constraining after the freedom of the outback. They were probably right.

By 1909 Jennie and Hastings had relinquished the hotel and reportedly planned to return to England, though evidence suggests they lingered in Western Australia until at least 1912. They then appeared in Camden, New South Wales, where Hastings tried poultry farming.

Another move in 1917 places them in Brisbane, with Hastings promoting films and seeking finance partners for vaudeville shows to tour from an office in the Kodak Building on Queen Street while Jennie, worked as a dressmaker. Eventually Hastings and Jennie settled in the suburb of New Farm buying a bungalow they named *Deolali* after the Indian military transit camp where Hastings had once been stationed. By early 1930, Jennie was running a dressmaker's shop in the newly opened and fashionable Brisbane Arcade.

Hotel Continental, 25 Victoria Avenue, Claremont 1905. Reproduced with permission of the Town of Claremont Museum

A Woman Ahead of Her Time

Hastings is a somewhat shadowy presence in this story, trailing behind Jennie, a woman ahead of her time. While he had the credibility with an education and background without reproach, Jennie had the sort of star-quality which newspaper journalists recognised. Her story is littered with gems such as her roller-skating championship success in 1893 at the Royal Aquarium in Westminster, the fright she gave the Italian goldminers at the bottom of the shaft after she had climbed down to inspect their progress, or even the advertisement asking for someone to find her green parrot in Kalgoorlie 1912. It is not surprising then, to find that at the last, Jennie had embraced the Christian Science faith. This movement, begun by Mary Baker Eddy[8] in Boston 1879 had an increasing number of followers in Brisbane of the 1930s. There had even been a small group of worshippers in Kalgoorlie when she and Hastings lived there in 1907.

A central belief of Christian Science is that healing the body by spiritually elevating thought can overcome what is seen as a material belief in sin and disease. This concept must have suited Jennie who had such drive and confidence in her own ability to manage her life. As was usual for the Church, she would have attended services for a year or more before being formally listed as a member. But Jennie, at the age of 68, died at home of a cerebral stroke and subsequent heart attack in October 1934. Hastings, who avowed no religious preference, died in April 1941 of bronchopneumonia when he was 75 years of age.

A fitting epitaph for Jennie was written in one Perth newspaper as early as 1905.[9] The language used is the slang of the day, so here I will paraphrase a little:

The Burtville Baroness (Cont.)

Some day historians will undertake the task of placing on record the things that have happened and the deeds of daring so incidental to the pursuit of gold in the West. There the men are diamonds in the rough and sternly set their faces against narrow attitudes. But woman too, has needed to be unconventional in nature and will supply abundant material for the heroic, whether she hung out her signboard saying "Washing Did Here" or dabbled in mines like the double-barrelled subject of this paragraph.

The Burtville Baroness References

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The Watchmaker (Continued from page 65.)

Thomas Emery Standven Jnr was charged with illegally pawning a watch entrusted to him to repair. He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.[10] As an aside, Standven changed his name to Standen and migrated with his family to Ohio, USA in 1870.[11]

In 2025 London street-theft has moved from watch theft to phone theft.[12] Mobile phones have similar characteristics to the pocket watch of the 1700s. That is, small, high value, ubiquitous and by its nature unable to be secured

The Watchmaker References

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Beneath the peppercorn tree

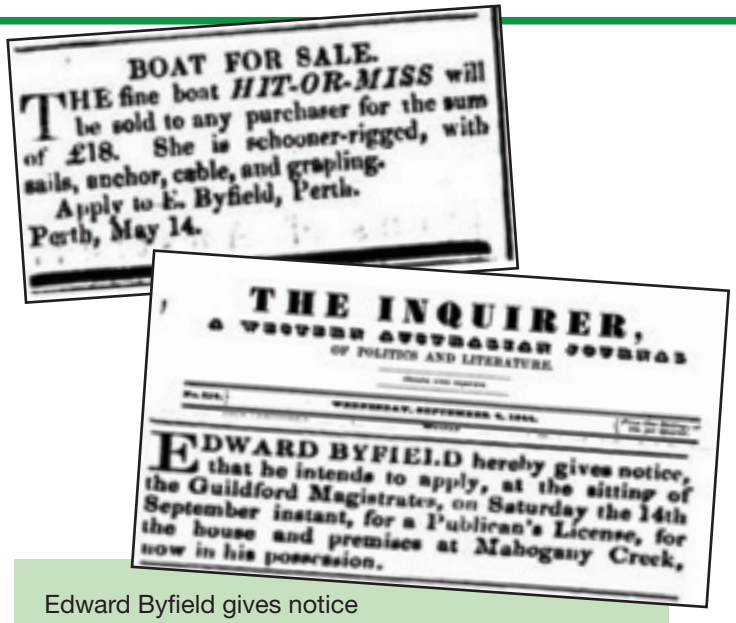
Rebecca Byfield | Member # 15294

"Notwithstanding the disadvantage she has always laboured under has lately married a man of excellent character and industrious habits of the name of Byfield."

J. B. Wittenoom, 24 August 1841

It is the week before Christmas and Perth is gearing up for a freak summer storm set to up-root fully-grown trees and flood roads. Missing the power blackouts and traffic chaos at home, I'm instead sweltering in my Dad's dusty backyard under a huge, gnarled, and ancient peppercorn tree, in York, an hour's drive north-east of Perth. The mercury's hitting 40 and beyond and it's raining a different sort of stormy chaos – our annual festive rellie bash. Sweating out the small talk with relatives I haven't chit-chatted with since a year ago, some not in decades, I'm stuck, literally, to a plastic chair next to my Dad's elderly cousin who is equally stuck in his, from both the heat and his age. Despite being unsteady on his feet, John's mind proves quick and his recall of family anecdotes is impressive.

Our shared enthusiasm for family history sees us make a superb dent in the dragging afternoon and, happily, we wander back through generations, settling on our family's



BOAT FOR SALE.

THE fine boat *HIT-OR-MISS* will be sold to any purchaser for the sum of £18. She is schooner-rigged, with sails, anchor, cable, and grapling.

Apply to E. Byfield, Perth.

Perth, May 14.

THE INQUIRER,

A WESTERN AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND LITERATURE.

EDWARD BYFIELD hereby gives notice, that he intends to apply, at the sitting of the Guildford Magistrates, on Saturday the 14th September instant, for a Publican's License, for the house and premises at Mahogany Creek, now in his possession.

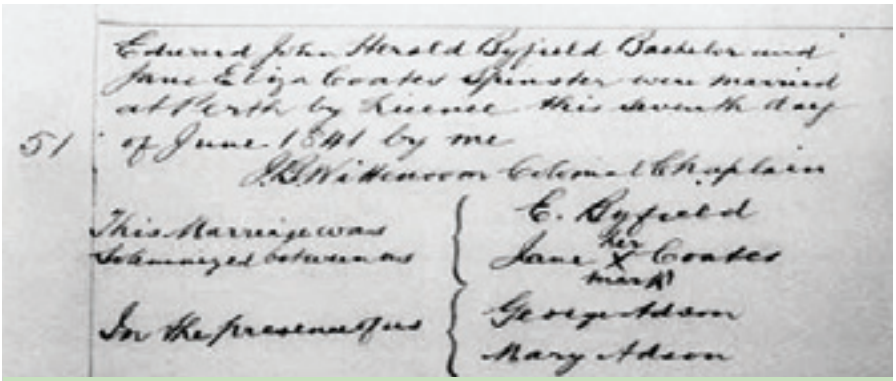
Edward Byfield gives notice

first settlers to Western Australia's Swan River Colony. One lot arrived in 1829, the other side, 1834 and 1840. Our three-times-greats all worked for Governor Sir James **Stirling** and his wife Lady Ellen. Big families gave birth to multiple generations, and John and I sit at the bottom of our large over-grown, many-branched family tree – he with grandchildren, I with my own children; seventh, eighth generations of Western Australians.

We share and confirm what we know of our generic-named Smiths—of Richard and Mary **Smith** who farmed in Guildford and the Avon Valley, having arrived in 1829 with Richard an indentured carpenter with the **Henty** and **Camfield** families. We coyly speak of Richard being recorded as bringing the first three rabbits to Western Australia (and whether we should admit this to others).

Frederick William Byfield

Beneath the peppercorn tree (Cont.)



Marriage of Edward Byfield and Jane Coates

Also Richard building the colony's first coffin (for a drowned sailor), and Richard building the Stirling's first home at Woodbridge. This was a wattle and daub hut: not the grand brick mansion someone else later built that is still standing today (and was recently used as a film set for a television ghost series). We marvel at how the Stirlings paid Richard for his labour with flour.

I tell John about TROVE, and the advertisement in that newspaper archive I found there from our 3 x great-grandfather advertising his boat for sale in 1842. A free settler, Edward **Byfield** had only arrived in the colony in 1840 and, after less than a year spent in Perth, placed a notice in the *Perth Gazette* advising his fellow pioneers of his intention to leave the colony forever and return to England.[4] Pre convict labour, the Swan River Colony was struggling, people were starving.[5]

Luckily for Edward—and for John and I—he met Jane **Coates** before his return ship sailed. They likely met at their place of employment at the time—he working as a porter, she as a nursemaid—at Government House.

This original building, termite-ridden and inadequate, was at least a step-up from the first Government House which was a tent. So the building the Stirlings occupied was adequate, though still not water-proof. This dwelling was subsequently dwarfed by the third and fourth Government Houses (the fourth being the present-day Governor's House still standing in Stirling Gardens).[6]

Jane was employed as the Stirling family's nursemaid, having arrived on the ship *James Pattison* in 1834 with returning Governor James, wife Ellen and two of their infant children, plus the newborn Ellen birthed on board before departing England. Her husband was impatient to return to Western Australia and had not wished to delay further an already much-delayed voyage.[7] Jane's younger brother William also sailed with them, together with other orphaned street urchins who had been rounded-up from grimy English streets and institutions to be sent to British colonies as a cheap source of labour under the so-called philanthropic 'Children's Friend Society'. This organisation was officially titled "The Society for the Suppression of Juvenile Vagrancy". Child immigration schemes proved as controversial in Victorian times as they are today, with many stories later emerging of children stolen from families and forced into leaving their country of birth. Not orphans at all; permission neither sought nor given by their parents who were still living.[8]

'*HIT-OR-MISS* …' I tell John, '… that was the name of Edward's boat'.

While John finds this name hilarious he is also intrigued by Edward, who was set to become a Methodist minister in the Swan River Colony before he and Jane moved from Perth to Mundaring in the Perth Hills, where together they built and ran the Mahogany Inn in Mahogany Creek, naming it 'The Prince of Wales Inn'.[9] John and I talk about Edward and, although no known photograph exists, we can picture him through the pieces recorded about him that remain today, while we also dream of further information yet to be discovered. Hardworking and industrious, a skilled carpenter, a family man, a loved and caring husband.

And so from Edward, we come to Jane. Our shared granny also remembered as hardworking. But this ancestor excites a different pace of conversation. Suddenly both John and I have slipped forward on our plastic chairs—caused in part from the sweltering humidity, but mostly from mutual excitement over our intriguing and surprising ancestor. For even though a single image has survived of Jane—seated together with two of her twelve children, slumped between them, faces grim—so much of this orphan-child-to-hardworking-businesswoman's life remains a mystery.

Reverend **Wittenoom** wrote in his report to the Children's Friend Society on the immigrant children …' I begin to say to John.

"Yes, yes,' he chimes in with me …

"*Notwithstanding the disadvantage she*

Beneath the peppercorn tree (Cont.)

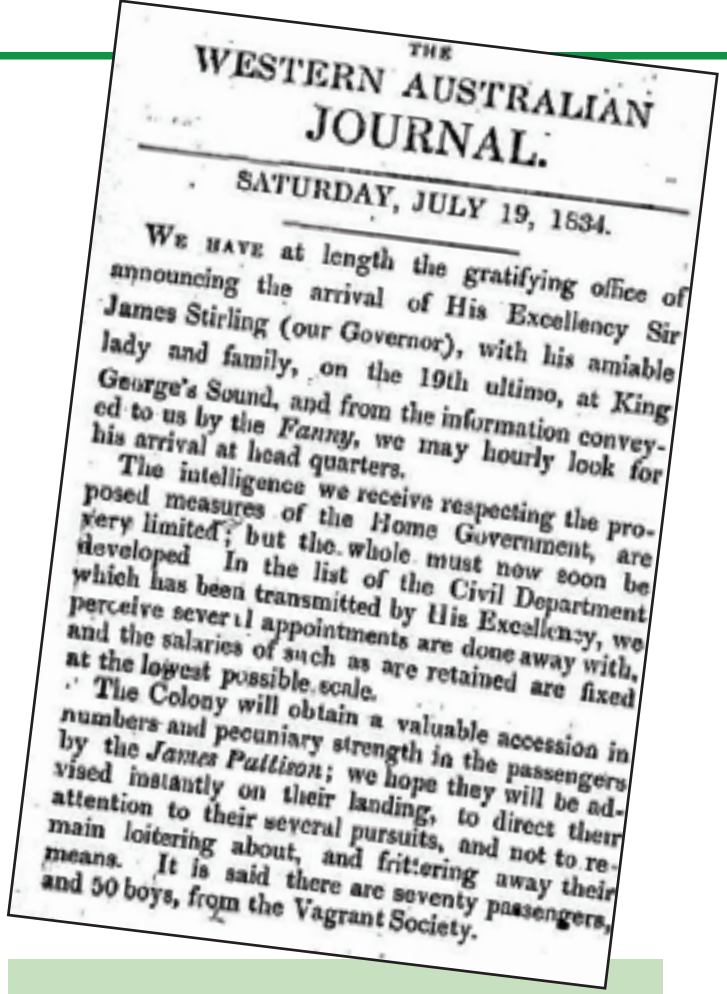
has …" we both begin to say together, before we stop and grin, having each memorised the words.

'Was it some sort of disability?' I ask John, 'I've found no further details…'

'Haemophilia,' he replies. 'I've not found any further information either to confirm this but it's my best guess,' he says, 'other than family records saying that, of the children she birthed upstairs at the Inn – at least eight of them were born there – it was a total blood bath. Blood everywhere!'

We both fall silent then and it's clear we're both considering Jane's second husband, the ratbag drunk she had to marry after Edward tragically died young from hepatitis, leaving Jane with their nine children, all underage, herself illiterate, with no possibility of gaining a publican's licence to run the Inn. Married in 1843, Edward died in 1863, and Jane left a widow with no means of support for herself or children. Impressively, she applied for a land grant just after Edward's death, for a block opposite the Inn with plans to build stables as a source of income. Before he died, Edward and Jane had purchased the Inn and Edward had left it in eight equal shares to their eight sons, along with lifetime tenancy for Jane.

Jane Eliza Coates and children



THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL.

SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1834.

We have at length the gratifying office of announcing the arrival of His Excellency Sir James Stirling (our Governor), with his amiable lady and family, on the 19th ultimo, at King George's Sound, and from the information conveyed to us by the *Fanny*, we may hourly look for his arrival at head quarters.

The intelligence we receive respecting the proposed measures of the Home Government, are very limited; but the whole must now soon be developed. In the list of the Civil Department which has been transmitted by His Excellency, we perceive several appointments are done away with, and the salaries of such as are retained are fixed at the lowest possible scale.

The Colony will obtain a valuable accession in numbers and pecuniary strength in the passengers by the *James Pattison*; we hope they will be advised instantly on their landing, to direct their attention to their several pursuits, and not to remain loitering about, and frittering away their means. It is said there are seventy passengers, and 50 boys, from the Vagrant Society.

Jane and her brother William arrived on the James Pattison in 1834

Apparently the beatings started before the formalities were signed between Jane and her second husband—he signing his name, she marking an 'x'. Stories remain of the ex-navy man's drunken temper, which he took out on Jane. Edward had used his hands to build their home, to clear their land, to surface the road before convict labour and road-gangs arrived. He worked away often, felling timber while Jane ran the Inn and birthed their children, she also worked as a midwife for local women. All Jane's second husband used his hands for was to raise a bottle, or hurt Jane.

Perth's first Anglican Bishop Mathew Blagden **Hale**, Lieutenant Sir Edmund Frederick **Du Cane**, and supposedly bushranger Moondyne Joe—these men and others stayed at the Prince of Wales Inn, where the food and hospitality were noted as "excellent".[10] In 1869, Western Australian Governor Sir Frederick **Weld** stayed at the Inn where he was served by Jane. He later wrote a letter from York about his stay at the "neat little roadside inn at a place called Mahogany Creek" and described Jane as, "a nice looking woman".[11] Another time, Jane meticulously prepared the Inn for more visiting dignitaries: white tablecloths beneath dinner settings. The second husband stumbled in, grabbing the tablecloths, yanking everything to the floor and smashing the crockery, making his way towards Jane. The three eldest of the Byfield brothers seized

Beneath the peppercorn tree (Cont.)

upon him, dragging him upstairs, they had to break his arm in the process to get the grown man to leave their mother alone, before he could break her. [12]

These same stairs that Edward built are in the heart of the now heritage-listed Mahogany Inn. Smooth jarrah steps shaped by footfalls through generations, Edward and Jane's steps landing on freshly sawn timber; Jane labouring up and down through years of carrying children both in her belly and, for those that lived, in her arms. The colony's 'mahogany', the jarrah wood, like Jane, proved durable and resilient. One time the second husband came down this staircase with a loaded single-barrelled gun and out onto the front veranda, threatening to shoot them all. By that time though, the Byfield brothers were bigger and Edward George, Jane and Edward's eldest son, took the gun from his step-father and, twisting it around a veranda post, handed it back to the drunken fool, 'Go ahead and shoot,' he is recorded calmly stating.[13]

The land Jane bought for stables next to her home, the former Prince of Wales Inn, is now named in her honour 'Jane Byfield Reserve' and she is remembered as Mundaring's first businesswoman and one of the state's early pioneers.[14] Hardworking, resilient to the end, Jane died from diphtheria in 1872, shortly after the same illness took her two little girls, her only daughters. Jane was not quite fifty years old. Her sons kicked their step-father out immediately following their mother's death. He disappeared to live with his sister, drinking himself to the grave. Jane's brother, William Coates, helped his nephews to sell their shares in the Inn, none of the brothers wishing to run it themselves; they had seen the toll it had taken. William Coates also adopted Jane's infant son from her second marriage and helped run the Inn for a few years until it passed onto new families—new stories echoing against old timbers, fleshing out the Inn's solid bones. Upstairs, where Jane birthed and bled, the walls and windows remain as they were in her time. The top dormer window now looks out towards Jane's reserve.

John and I sit back in our sticky chairs. While we briefly speak of more recent ancestors and eventually come back into the present to share in festivities, melting along with relatives still breathing, it's clear to both of us that Jane and Edward's stories are the shared memories, shared blood, we feel connecting us. Blood ties running through time, passing through generations. Both John and I are in awe of our grandparents' journeys, marvelling at their endurance as we give breath to their stories, pass them onto our families, keeping them alive.

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The Mahogany Inn

Fawcett, Fothergill and an Old Kero Lamp

Anthea Kalajzich | Member # 6201

After our father Bert **Fawcett** passed away in 1990, we were helping Mum (Dulcie née **Mutter**) sort through the accumulation of forty years of living and farming in the Chapman Valley out of Geraldton. Bert and Dulcie were on *Chalnooka,* a property at Yetna originally belonging to the **Murphy** brothers.

In the back corner of the kitchen sink cupboard, in a little cottage on the property, we found an assortment of kerosine lamps plus other bits and pieces. By this time Mum had had enough of house clearing and declared they could all go to the tip. In the end however, they came home with me in a cardboard box and from memory there they stayed for several years. I can't recall now why I ended up in Fremantle, seeking out a handyman by the name of Mr **Fothergill**. I think he was just the local go-to fix-it man.

On first sighting my lamp, 'old' Mr Fothergill revealed, etched on its base "RD No. 294313". Then, to my amazement, from within his workshop he produced a catalogue showing the lamp had been made in America during the 1880s.

How the lamp arrived in WA is conjecture, although it is well known American whalers were fishing along our coastline during these early years. Contraband goods, usually petty items such as tobacco and spirits were known to enter the State, and Champion Bay (now Geraldton) and Smugglers Cove (now Drummonds Cove) were known points of entry. It is likely the lamp was a part of trade between Michael and Sarah Murphy (former occupiers of *Chalnooka*) or one of their eight children, as the whalers needed to reprovision their vessels if they were to keep fishing along the Western Australian coast between May and October each year.

Back in Fremantle Mr Fothergill repaired my lamp and explained it was still missing its ornamental glass mantle. I was surprised and delighted, when he offered to replace it on his next trip home to the UK. Several months later and true to his word, the lovely old gentleman handed me a fragile, etched glass replacement.

Years passed and as I researched my Fawcett ancestors I discovered Mr Fothergill and I quite likely share DNA, right back to the 16th century and beyond. For my search had revealed the surnames Fothergill

The Kero Lamp

Old Kero Lamp (Cont.)

and Fawcett were local names, coming from what is now Cumbria. Thanks to the assistance of an American family of Fawcetts I submitted Y-DNA to Family Tree in 2009 and discovered our line had left Ravenstonedale in Cumbria in about 1529. To say I was gob smacked is an understatement. In a further development I discovered between the years 1577 and 1602 there were five Fawcett to Fothergill marriages! More than thirty years passed as I traced my father's Fawcett line from WA back to a family of pharmacists in South Australia. Thanks to an obituary I discovered my great-grandfather, Robert Fawcett, had arrived in Adelaide in 1853, working for FH Faulding & Co prior to opening his first chemist shop in Kapunda in 1857. The newspaper also revealed Robert had come from Norton near Malton in Yorkshire. There I found Robert's birth, the youngest of eight children born to William Fawcett, a stonemason, and his wife Sarah **Tindall** of Carlton near Snaith. William died in Norton in 1832 and I felt sure he must have left a will, yet it was years before I found it. I don't know why but it remained unproven for more than twelve years until 1845. It was worth finding as it was a wonderfully wordy will, containing the vital information that William's place of birth was Thirsk in Yorkshire.

It had taken me years to discover his place of origin but once found I was able to follow our line of Thirsk builders and bricklayers, right back to 1583 and the marriage of Elizabeth **Monkton** to yet another William Fawcett, my ten times great-grandfather.

Just last year, with the help of archivists in Yorkshire we found sufficient evidence to show that William was baptised as the son of Robert Fawcett in the nearby village of Bagby in 1568. These Indexes also revealed no sign of our family in or near Thirsk prior to that date, corroborating DNA evidence they had moved from Cumbria.

I have yet to find a definitive link to Ravenstonedale, though some years ago while in Kendall, I discovered there were twenty-one persons with our Fawcett surname holding farms and tenements in the Parish of Ravenstonedale in 1541. They owned a total of eighty-six acres and eight cottages.

While my search goes on to bridge the gap between Thirsk and Ravenstonedale, I've never forgotten Mr Fothergill, nor his act of kindness. I do wonder if there was a sense of recognition, of our shared North England traits?

If only I'd known then what I know now.

From Beneath the Peppercorn Tree (p73) References

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Changes to FHWA Fund Raising – end of the annual raffle

Traditionally the main fund raiser for FHWA has been the annual raffle. Sadly, over the past several years there has been a steady decline in ticket sales with diminishing funds being raised. Last year only $2,000 was raised compared to over $5,000 five years ago. With high costs and a huge volunteer effort of more than 75 hours involving four volunteers, the effort outweighs the benefit. Consequently, the Annual Raffle will not be conducted this year.

In its place the Society will be conducting a fund-raising campaign in the latter part of this year. This will be based on donations made directly to the FHWA Donation tab.

I sincerely hope Members will get behind this campaign and continue to support the Society and beat last year's $2,000 effort. More information to come nearer the time.

Robert Atkins | Co-ordinator

Digitising the Langley Collection

Edwina Shooter | Member # 2951

Neil Bradley | Member # 8276

In March 2024, John James sent me an email saying he was looking for a new home for several family history files compiled by his wife, Maureen, and her mother before her. Some of the names were well known in WA's early colonial history such as **Hunt**, **Devereux**, **Pollard**, and **Witherell**. He thought we might not have space for them and wondered if I had any other suggestions as to what to do to save the files.

I replied:

Have you thought of digitising the files? If you did that, then you would be able to provide copies of the research to other family members.

We are certainly interested in the content of the files. Space is at a premium in our library, and it really boils down to how much space the files would take on our shelves. How many files are there? Please could you let me know and I'll have a chat with some colleagues as well. There are certainly some options we could discuss.

John liked the idea of digitising the files but said he didn't have the time to do it, and we agreed that he would bring some files to the Family History Research Centre (FHRC), and we would discuss what we could do.

John brought in eight lever arch files for me to look at and they were a family historian's dream. Each file was labelled, and there was so much material. Letters by researchers from decades ago, photos, certificates, death notices, newspaper clippings and more. All well arranged. A genealogical bonanza! Each file was jam-packed.

I spoke with Neil Bradley, who has long been interested in offering digitisation of family history files as a service to help people conserve their research and also to raise some money for the Society. With many people needing to downsize as they move from larger homes to retirement living, lots of paper becomes a storage problem.

It's easier to hand relatives a digital file than ask them to take eight heavy lever arch files. Neil has done a lot of digitising of documents for his own research and for the Convict Database. He suggested some steps for the digitising project, John agreed, and thus we started.

I would select the file, write and print a title page, and add it to the front of the file. One of our Library Volunteers, Marg Mansfield, would then set to work, taking all the documents out of plastic pockets for scanning. This had to be done as the plastic created a shine to the images and they didn't scan well. She also glued dozens of newspaper clippings to blank paper and added them into the file at the appropriate place. Photos in envelopes were separated. Staples and paper clips were also removed. All these steps meant that the task of scanning would be quicker. Preparing files for scanning is a slow step in a digitisation project, but it certainly makes the rest of the process flow easier.

Neil spent a fair bit of time experimenting with the best way to do the scanning, and once he had a process, he scanned the first file in about one and a half hours and added some bookmarks to make the files more accessible.

After scanning a few files, Neil decided that it was better to add more bookmarks as he went, to enable the user to find information more readily. I consulted with John, and he agreed to this as it obviously made good sense to have better searching ability.

John James - Digitising the Langley Collection

Digitising the Langley Collection (Cont.)

As a side note to this project, many of you would know that Neil is busy working on the Convict Interest Group project recording everything that can possibly be found about all the Convicts that were sent to Western Australia. When Neil reached file number five, he sent me a message to say that he had found a story about Convict Number 988 and could I contact John for permission to publish it in the Convict database. John said yes. Without this digitisation project, Neil wouldn't have been aware of this story and missed a good source of information for the Convict database. Ultimately, there were seven WA Convicts amongst the files. What luck that we had a convict fanatic doing the scanning!

Neil's attention to detail brought to light that he felt we were missing a few files. I contacted John and he found more files at home, and they were duly prepared, scanned and bookmarked. In the end 17 files were scanned though a few were quite small.

Finally, I wrote a cover page to the whole project, saying who had compiled the research, permissions, copyright details and other information. John was then given a USB with the scanned files.

At this point we had learnt a lot about how to prepare for scanning, the process, and bookmarking, but we had another learning curve when it came to file sizes. Neil has a computer with so much power that he could probably run NASA's Kennedy Space Centre. John couldn't open the files! His computer didn't have the power to manage such a big searchable PDF. Neil divided the whole database into smaller sections and John was then able to access the files. This is something we will have to bear in mind for future digitisation projects.

The final version of the project ended up with two files of 1,534 MB (2,352 pages) and 637 MB (914 pages) which John was able to read on his computer. We didn't record how much time was spent preparing the files to scan but it was substantial. The actual scanning and file preparation took 27 hours.

We were delighted to have John agree to a photo at our FHRC showing many of the files that were digitised, and in his hand, a tiny USB with all the content. So much more portable, and so much more shareable. John's intention was to then provide copies of the USB on portable drives, to several family members, so that the decades of research compiled by his mother-in-law, Nellie Lillian **Langley** nee **Roberts**, and his wife, Maureen, would be preserved. A copy of the research, now called The Langley Collection, is also available at the FHRC in our Electronic Document Depository [EDR].

It has been a big project, a lot of learning curves, but very satisfying to be involved in such a large project, with so much valuable research material. I think it has been well worth the work to preserve this research and make sure it is available for generations to come.

FEATURE

The Davilak Murder

Ron Pimm | Member # 13108

The following is mainly sourced from a 281-page police file entitled: *Murder of Abdul* ***Husain*** *or* ***Hoosin*** *by Mulchand* ***Chowdri****, near Fremantle in 1896*.[1] The setting for the crime was the area around Davilak and Hampton Swamp in Hamilton Hill, where the murder site was known as Sampey's Flat[2] or Sampey's Hollow, at the south-east corner of what is known today as Davilak Reserve.[3]

Swaying Ships of the Desert

Like so many others, cameleers came to Western Australia in response to the gold rushes of the 1880s and 90s, and with them came their camels, whose pacing gait resulted in their famous swaying motion. Ideal as pack and riding animals, they were well-suited to the harsh desert conditions of the gold mining areas and by the mid-1890s they were being imported into Western Australia in their hundreds. While the cameleers were collectively known as Afghans, they were actually from India, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Egypt, with most shipping to Fremantle from Karachi, now in modern-day Pakistan.[4]

Not all camels were imported and on average a South Australian bred *pack bull camel* sold for about £40 a head,[5] whereas an imported animal sold for £10 less to cover the risk from disease during acclimatisation. *Pack cows* were worth £5 more because a *yearling camel* was worth between £12 and £15. A good average load for a full-grown camel was about 250kg as well as carrying a driver, while camel trains were essential in the hauling of great wagons from Fremantle to the Goldfields, carrying everything from food and water to mining equipment. The great length of most camel trains determined that the width of main streets in Southern Cross, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie was sufficient for them to turn around, as can be seen today.

Camel Train. Image: ex Facebook, Lost Perth

Above left: The camel quarantine camp at Davilak in the mid-1890s. Image: City of Cockburn

The Afghan Camel Dealer

In 1896, one such Afghan was Abdul Hoosin, a young Muslim from Karachi, who dressed in dapper western clothes and almost always wore a red fez with a black tassel. His father, a well-to-do Karachi merchant named Ebrahimiee **Soolemanjee**, had sent him to Western Australia on the steamer *Hubbuck* with an amount of money, thirty camels and three servants, Mulchand Chowdri, Ramsan and Shiroo. It was Mulchand's cousin, Lalchand, a cashier at the Agra Bank in Karachi, who induced Abdul to take the Hindu Mulchand with him to Western Australia, vouching for his good character.

Abdul's mission was to sell his father's camels for £30 each before returning to Karachi with the profits. He left Karachi on the steamer *Hubbuck* on 13 April 1896, the voyage enjoying fine weather all the way to anchorage at Gage Roads on the morning of Thursday 7 May. Next day, after health clearances had been given, the vessel berthed at the recently extended Robbs Jetty, where its ungainly cargo of 488 camels was unloaded, probably by sling. Abdul now had to pay £2 duty for each camel plus another 9 pence per head wharfage fees, as well as another charge of 10 shillings and 6 pence.

At Karachi, 511 camels had been loaded aboard the *Hubbuck*, but during the voyage 23 had died, one belonging to Abdul, leaving him with twenty-nine beasts to undergo quarantine and inspection. Until January 1895, all camels had been quarantined at Woodman Point, but as their numbers increased, during the next three years, land around Davilak, home of the **Manning** family, became regularly used as a camel quarantine paddock. While their camels

Centre Rear: Abdul Hoosin Image: courtesy Dr. Criena Fitzgerald
Right: Moolchand (Mulchand)

were kept in isolation, the cameleers would remain at Davilak or in the surrounding Hamilton Hill area, camping beside the paddocks in tents or leasing huts from local families like the **Dixons**.[6]

Once the animals were landed, Abdul and his servants camped at Manning's Paddock while his 29 camels were in quarantine, a process that could take a couple of weeks, or more than a month, depending on the contagion. During this time, Abdul travelled to Coolgardie, presumably to organise the sale of his camels. On his return, Abdul went to James Dixon's property, where he arranged to rent a paddock for his 29 camels from James' brother Horace, who lived on 26-acres of adjoining Lot 6. The four Afghans would stay in a tent on James' much smaller 3.6-acre property on Lot 5. As it turned out, however, when their tent blew down, Abdul and Mulchand occupied an outhouse about 100 yards from the Dixon house, while servant Ramsan remained in the tent. James Dixon and his family became very close with the Afghans living just metres from their door. James's young brother Charles claimed he spent many evenings in Abdul's company.

About a fortnight after their arrival at the Dixon property, the servant Shiroo departed for Coolgardie with another Afghan, presumably taking camels to Coolgardie for sale. Abdul then made his second trip to Coolgardie, probably travelling most of the way by train, since the railway line to Southern Cross had opened two years earlier and by 1 July 1896 it had been extended as far as Boorabbin, but still 96km short of Coolgardie. Here in July, Abdul sold 18 of his camels to Fatteh **Mahomet**, who paid him £150 in cash and £386 on a promissory note, which would fall due four months from the date. Abdul then returned to Fremantle and his lodgings at James Dixon's house to sell his remaining camels. It was around this time that another of Abdul's animals died while in Horace Dixon's paddock.

On his return to James Dixon's house, Abdul told James' wife and daughter that once he had sold his remaining camels, he intended to travel to South Australia for about two months before returning to Coolgardie to cash the £386 promissory note. The three Afghans remained living on James Dixon's property until early in August, when things suddenly took an evil turn.

Murder & Deceit

It was 7am on Sunday 2 August 1896, when camel dealer Abdul Hoosin and his servant Mulchand left their lodgings at the Dixons' property. Mulchand returned about five hours later, but he was alone. That afternoon, three men arrived to purchase the remaining 10 camels, and strangely it was Mulchand who conducted the transaction and pocketed the £300 cash. When asked for the whereabouts of Abdul, he responded that he had gone to Perth to meet a girl, whom he intended to marry.

When quizzed again later, he said that Abdul was going to South Australia.

The next day was Monday and Abdul was still absent. At about 10:30am, Mulchand returned to the Dixon house in a cab drawn by two grey horses driven by James **McKenzie**. Mulchand had met McKenzie plying his trade on South Terrace in Fremantle at about 9am that morning and enquired how much McKenzie would charge to drive him to Hampton Hill Swamp where the Dixons lived. The pair agreed on a fare of eight shillings and on arrival Mulchand hurried into the dining room, demanding the Dixon's give him Abdul's bedding, clean shirts, gold watch and chain. He claimed that Abdul was going away on a boat that was leaving at 12 o'clock that day.

Mulchand returned to the cab with the items and what appeared to be Abdul's red fez, but minus its

The Davilak Murder (Cont.)

black tassel. McKenzie drove him to the Beaconsfield Hotel, where the pair shared a drink together, and Mulchand gave the red Turkish fez to the hotel landlord George **Beard**. Having finished their drinks, McKenzie drove Mulchand in his cab to the Railway Station, where the Hindu took the bedding bundle onto the platform, saying he was going to Coolgardie. It was just another lie.

Much later, when George Beard was interviewed by the police, he would tell them how Mulchand's visits to his hotel had become more numerous during the month of August and that his drinking became heavier, at the same time representing himself as a camel proprietor rather than a servant. He also testified that sometime in July, Mulchand had asked to borrow Beard's revolver to go shooting at the lake, and how Mulchand had persisted with his appeal even when Beard maintained that the gun was too small for such sport. Beard stated that he did not lend the weapon to Mulchand, and related how, in late August, Mulchand had shown him a bundle of banknotes, about £300 he thought. On 4 September, Beard met Mulchand for the last time, when Mulchand told him, "He was going to Albany to catch the mail [vis mail steamer] to Karachi." On this occasion, Mulchand was telling the truth.

A Grisly Discovery

By November 1896, Abdul Hoosin had been absent from the Dixon household for more than three months. The Dixon family were oblivious to the web of lies Mulchand had spun to them and knew nothing of his deceitful scheme perpetrated beyond their gaze. As far as they were concerned, Abdul was in South Australia, and they would never see him again. No-one had cause to think something ungodly may have occurred and no enquiries were made. It was not until sometime between 3 and 5 o'clock on Sunday 15 November that the crime was finally revealed. As James Dixon was woodcutting in the bush a little more than a mile from his home, at a place named Sampey's Flat, he made a grisly discovery. James later told the police that:

Mulchand hurried into the dining room, demanding the Dixon's give him Abdul's bedding, clean shirts, gold watch and chain. He claimed that Abdul was going away on a boat that was leaving at 12 o'clock that day.

My attention was drawn to a sawpit there by the track of a snake and I went down into it. When I got down I noticed the part of a collar of coat appearing just above ground. When I saw it, I thought something had been buried and pulled it up and up came a skull free from any attachment. The pit was not filled in and I saw what I took to be some flesh appearing above the ground, a little distance from the coat. The pit had been there for years and had naturally filled in a little. There were a few bushes placed there which had been set fire to…

James Dixon sent a messenger to the police station at Beaconsfield, from where Inspector **Back** and First-Class Constable Thomas **Kelso** journeyed to the scene. It was getting late in the day and with another constable Kelso secured the site until the following day, when Fremantle Medical Officer Dr. **Hope** and Coroner Dr. **Lovegrove** with a hurriedly sworn in jury viewed the scene at 3pm on Monday afternoon. Next day, Dr. Hope examined the remains at the morgue but, due to the advanced state of decomposition, he was unable to determine a cause of death. Dr. Hope discovered that the clothes he was given for examination had been washed, and he was unable to determine whether staining on them was blood. His only conclusions were that the remains were that of a dark coloured man, between 5 feet 7 inches and 5 feet 8 inches in height. The inquest was then adjourned and now it was up to the local newspapers to describe the discovery in gruesome detail.

At 10:30am on 23 November, the inquest resumed at Fremantle's Water Police Station, while Western Australian Police attempted to locate Abdul, issuing an appeal via page 263 of the *Police Gazette* on Wednesday 25 November 1896.

At the inquest, witnesses one by one told their stories to the Coroner and Jury. Several members of the Dixon family, who had been shown articles of clothing, shoes, studs, loose buttons and other items discovered in the sawpit, all attested that they were similar to those they had previously seen worn by Abdul Hoosin. It was also revealed that telegrams purporting to be from Abdul had been sent from Port Adelaide by an acquaintance of Mulchands', informing the recipients that he was in South Australia.

Once all evidence had been heard, the Jury, after a short retirement, returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased was Abdul Hoosin, that he was murdered, and that the evidence pointed to the fact that the murder had been committed by

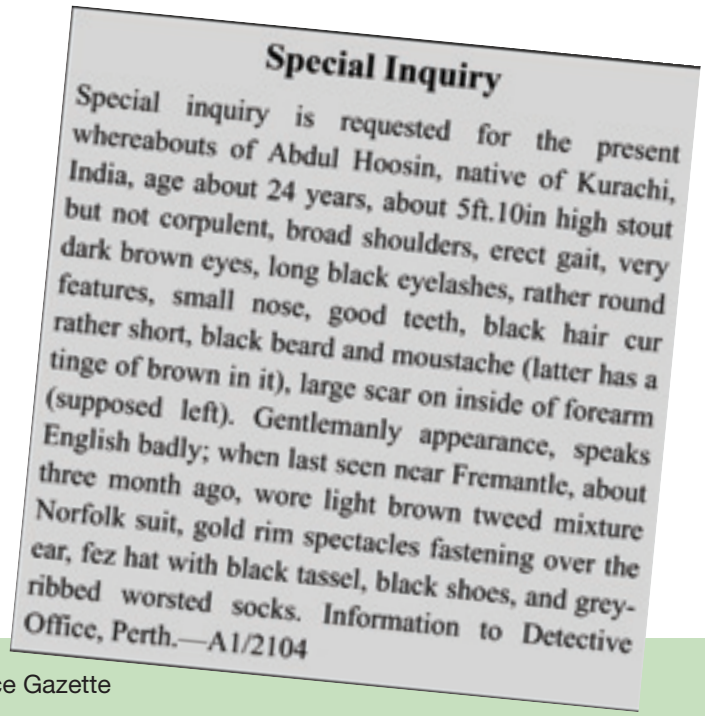
The Davilak Murder (Cont.)

the Afghan Mulchand. A verdict of wilful murder was therefore returned against Mulchand. The coroner said that he fully agreed with the verdict and the inquest concluded at 7pm on 11 December 1896.[7]

Constable Kelso's Odyssey

A warrant for Mulchand's arrest was now issued, even though the police knew he had already fled the country, having sailed from Albany to Colombo aboard the steamer *Orizaba* on 5 September, seven weeks after the murder. The police sent telegrams to their Indian counterparts as they prepared for one of their own to proceed to the sub-continent and escort Mulchand back to Western Australia to face justice. Surprisingly, the individual chosen to go to British India was none other than forty-year-old Irish born First Class Constable 0077, Thomas Kelso, who had been involved in the enquiry from the very start. Kelso had been a member of the Western Australian Constabulary since about 1892, and before that had been a Sergeant of Police at Auckland in New Zealand. He was well-regarded, being smart, kindly, honest, diplomatic and experienced, just the sort of man to send on a sensitive mission, in which he would need to work with members of the Indian Imperial Police, without necessarily understanding their protocols and at the same time operating in a very alien environment.

While out of the country, Kelso would be allowed expense money for accommodation and sustenance, 10 shillings per day when on land, but just 2 shillings and 6 pence per day when at sea. On 4 February 1897, Kelso travelled by mail train to Albany, taking with him the original warrant for Mulchand's arrest, witness depositions, various exhibits, photographs of Mulchand, pages of his superiors' instructions, and a copy of the *Fugitive Offenders Act 1881*. Knowing he could be away for up to six months, Kelso must have felt some trepidation for what lay ahead as well as concern for the welfare of his wife and three children during his absence.



Special Inquiry

Special inquiry is requested for the present whereabouts of Abdul Hoosin, native of Kurachi, India, age about 24 years, about 5ft.10in high stout but not corpulent, broad shoulders, erect gait, very dark brown eyes, long black eyelashes, rather round features, small nose, good teeth, black hair cur rather short, black beard and moustache (latter has a tinge of brown in it), large scar on inside of forearm (supposed left). Gentlemanly appearance, speaks English badly; when last seen near Fremantle, about three month ago, wore light brown tweed mixture Norfolk suit, gold rim spectacles fastening over the ear, fez hat with black tassel, black shoes, and grey-ribbed worsted socks. Information to Detective Office, Perth.—A1/2104

Police Gazette

A £25 ticket bought Kelso a Second-Class Saloon passage on the *RMS Orient*, leaving Albany at 11pm on Saturday 6 February and arriving at Colombo at 9am on Wednesday 17. At 5pm on the same day, Kelso set sail on the British India steamer *Wardha* and reached Bombay Monday 22 at 3pm. Two days later, Kelso wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Police back in Western Australia, George Braithwaite **Phillips**, reporting his meeting with the Commissioner of Police in Bombay, who had told Kelso that when Mulchand heard he would likely be arrested, he had absconded from Karachi on 14 December and had not been heard of since. Kelso also affirmed that the original warrant for arrest he had brought with him had been countersigned by the British Governor, Lord Sandhurst (William **Mansfield**), and that he had been instructed to remain in Bombay until it became known where he should go next.

In a postscript, Kelso added that Bombay was experiencing an epidemic of Bubonic Plague, causing 120 deaths daily, with over six thousand fatalities to date. With a mortality rate of 75-85%, the deadly pandemic had originated in China four decades earlier, and by the time Kelso arrived it was said that about half the city's population of more than 800,000 people[8] had left, most fleeing north into the countryside. In early March, a Singapore newspaper[9] reporting on Bombay's plight wrote, "The condition of the plague-stricken city of Bombay is almost too dreadful for utterance".[10] While Kelso remained in Bombay his life was in mortal danger.

Meanwhile, after leaving Australia in September 1896, Mulchand arrived in Bombay and telegraphed

The remains of Abdul Hoosin found at Sampey's Flat (Sampey's Hollow)
Image: ex the police file

his cousin for advice on returning to Karachi. However, Mulchand did not act on the affirmative response and travelled onwards. He contacted his cousin again and repeated his inquiry. Mulchand was being extremely wary, knowing that at any moment he could become a hunted man, while also fearing possible retribution by Abdul's father. When Mulchand at last returned to Karachi, he avoided Abdul's father and falsely told Abdul's acquaintances that Abdul had squandered away all his money and had kept a European woman who he intended to marry. He also claimed that after a disagreement with Abdul, he had been dismissed from his service and that Abdul was now moving about in Melbourne and Sydney. But in Karachi, Mulchand was being observed spending significant amounts of money on a prostitute, which led to suspicions that he might have been involved in defrauding Abdul. Mulchand's mother was even telling people that her son had earned 20,000 rupees in Australia (£1250) but when news of Abdul's murder finally reached Karachi, Mulchand fled.

Kelso remained in Bombay for eight days before traveling to Karachi, where he arrived on 5 March and promptly submitted Mulchand's arrest warrant to the Police Superintendent's Office. Kelso spent seventy days in Karachi, with a brief trip to Hyderabad, 140km away, accompanied by Abdul's brother. The reason for their visit was that Mulchand had recently been spotted at Hyderabad, but the wily fox was always one step ahead and by the time Kelso arrived there was no sign of him.

By late April, it had become obvious to the Karachi police that the likelihood of an imminent arrest was becoming increasingly remote, and Kelso was directed to return home. Accordingly, Kelso packed his bags and returned by steamer to the plague-ridden city of Bombay, but getting home would not be as easy as his journey out had been. It was now impossible to travel to Colombo, as Ceylon (Sri Lanka) had closed its ports to passenger traffic from plague-infected districts in India. Consequently, his return route would be protracted and circuitous. Kelso first travelled by train to Calcutta, where in a letter written on 18 May to his superiors in Western Australia, he suggested that "If Moolchand (sic) is arrested he could be forwarded in charge of a Native Constable at a very moderate expense, via Singapore".

Commencing the second leg of his journey, on 21 May Kelso left Calcutta, a city described as being "built on a sponge saturated with the filth of generations",[11] spending three days on a steamer travelling to Rangoon, where he waited four more days to tranship. The third leg involved another eight days aboard a steamer that took him to Singapore, even then one of the world's great ports and the gateway to the Far East. Here, Kelso must have been impressed at the sight of imposing British fortifications and naval warships. There, he remained for thirteen days while awaiting the *S.S. Sultan* to take him home.[12] In Singapore and Fremantle, newspapers ran daily advertisements for the three vessels *Sultan*, *Saladin* and *Australind*, who working in conjunction with one another supplied an 18-day service between Singapore and Fremantle, calling at "intermediate ports". Those intermediate ports included Derby, the Pearling Grounds, Roebuck Bay Roads, Cossack Roads, Ashburton Roads, Carnarvon Roads, Sharks Bay and Geraldton Pier, landing Kelso back at Fremantle on 12 July.[13] Kelso's journey home from Karachi had taken almost two months and when he finally stepped onto home soil, he had been absent for more than five months.

On Kelso's return to the Beaconsfield Police Station, he wrote a six-page report to his superior officer, outlining the details of his odyssey. In it he affirmed that to affect Mulchand's arrest in India, "everything that possibly could be done by the police authorities was done". He also advised that the Karachi Superintendent had suggested a reward of £30 might be offered, which would be used to motivate the native police in their search for the fugitive.

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Kensitt Street, Stoneville: Its Origins and Naming

Ewin Armstrong | Member # 8202

With recent news about the proposed development of parts of Stoneville in the Shire of Mundaring, Western Australia, it is an opportune time to reflect on the origins of the area and individuals who helped shape it. One such individual was my great-grandfather, Walter John **Kensitt**, after whom Kensitt Street is named.

Walter Kensitt was a prominent landowner and community figure in the early 1900s. Historical directories and genealogical records from the late 1920s to 1930s list a "Kensitt, Wltr Jno, bldr & contr, Stoneville", identifying Walter John Kensitt as a builder and contractor active in the area. During a period of gradual expansion, Kensitt played a key role in the early development of Stoneville. At a time when the town was still shaping its identity, he made several lasting contributions—most notably the construction of the original Stoneville Community Hall. This building became a cornerstone of community life, serving as a central venue for civic meetings, local events, and important decision-making.

The original town hall, designed by him and built under his direction, served the needs of a growing population until it eventually became necessary to relocate the structure to a more suitable site. While records of the exact logistics of the move are limited, oral history suggests that the relocation was a community effort, led by individuals like my great-grandfather, who had both the means and motivation to ensure Stoneville's continued progress.

In addition to his civic involvement, Walter Kensitt owned extensive parcels of land in and around the area. His holdings played a key role in shaping the early layout of Stoneville. Following his death in 1934, this land was gradually subdivided and sold off—a process that contributed directly to the residential expansion of the suburb. Streets like Kensitt Street were created as a result of this subdivision, becoming permanent markers of the families who once farmed and lived on the land.

The naming of Kensitt Street is a small but meaningful tribute to his legacy. In many ways, streets are living memorials. They link the past with the present, often without residents realizing the stories behind the names on the signs they pass daily. In the case of Kensitt Street, that name connects today's community with a chapter of Stoneville's founding history.

As the town continues to evolve, especially in light of recent development proposals, it is important to remember those who helped lay its foundations. Stories like that of Walter Kensitt offer not only a window into Stoneville's past, but also a reminder of the values—community spirit, civic duty, and foresight—that built it. I hope that as Stoneville grows, it continues to honour its roots while embracing the future.

Original Stoneville Hall - Walter John Kensitt designed and supervised the construction

Ewin Armstrong, son of Lilian Kensitt. The street was named after Lilian's grandfather, Walter John Kensitt.

The Davilak Murder (Cont.)

Conclusion

The cost of Thomas Kelso's trip to India had been diligently recorded to be £109/10/6, more than $20,000 in 2025 money.[14] Thomas continued to serve with the Western Australian Police Force, becoming a Sergeant of Police. In addition to Fremantle, Thomas's celebrated career included postings to Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Midland Junction and Albany. He had four children, three sons and a daughter. In retirement Thomas became an orchardist, outliving his wife Charlotte by two decades and was a resident at Mahogany Creek when he died on 1 August 1936, aged 80.

In July 1908, the Bombay Commissioner of Police sent a letter to his Western Australian counterpart Frederick Arthur **Hare**, advising him:

I beg to inform you that in view of the length of time that has elapsed since the murder was committed and the dispersal of the Crown's most important witnesses, I have decided to take no further action with regard to the extradition of Mulchand Chowdri, charged with the murder of Abdul Husain.

After more than eleven years, the case was finally put to rest and Mulchand the murderer would never face justice.

The Davilak Murder References

1. SROWA-series76-cons430-item1908
2. Thomas Sampey was a woodcutter, who had worked in that area.
3. Deduced by fellow genealogist Joe Baker, great grandnephew of James Dixon.
4. City of Cockburn Website; "Cockburn History; Afghans."
5. The Age (Melbourne, Vic.), Sat 28 Jan 1893, Page 12, "CAMELS IN AUSTRALIA."
6. City of Cockburn Website; "Cockburn History; Afghans."
7. The Daily News (Perth, WA) - Saturday 12 December 1896
8. Bombay 1891 census: 821,764 people
9. The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (Weekly), 2 March 1897
10. In 2020, Indian historian Aanchal Malhotra stated, "Between (the) plague's arrival in 1896 and 1921, an estimated 12 million Indians lost their lives, compared with 3 million in the rest of the world combined."
11. Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser (NSW), Tue 18 May 1897, Page 3, "Crumbs."
12. On the morning of 4 May 1897, the *SS Sultan* was the first ocean-going steamer of any importance to enter C.Y. O'Connor's new inner harbour and berth on the wharf opposite the locomotive workshops. Until then, ships had been at the mercy of the fury of the sea, owing to the rocky barrier that O'Connor removed at the mouth of the Swan River. (Ref: State Library of Western Australia)
13. The West Australian (Perth, WA) Tue 13 Jul 1897, Page 4, "PORT OF FREMANTLE ARRIVALS-July 12
14. £58/15/0 for accommodation and sustenance (10 shillings per day for 104 days on land and two shillings and six pence per day for 54 days at sea); £45/5/6 for travel fares; £4/10/0 to pay native police for information; £1 for ship's bursar fees

Exploring our Ghost towns

Ian Barnes | Member # 9003

Can you guess where this is? Write in to the *WesternAncestor* and tell us. No tangible prize, but plenty of kudos for knowing the history of our ghost towns here in WA. Bonus points for finding where the background image resides in TROVE. Suggest another, even harder town and we will use your suggestion!

This building is in a small town developed on a farm, which was established after successfully lobbying for a railway. This was established in the late 1890s and resulted in the townsite shifting.

It was an important railhead until around 1908. Its Roads board covered east to the SA border. The town originally had many facilities but today is much overshadowed by its more known neighbours. The building was restored in 2001. PS: There is great food nearby.

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https://www.broome.wa.gov.au/Community/Broome-Public-Library

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bunburymuseum.com.au

City of Belmont Museum
213 Wright Street, Cloverdale, WA, 6105
www.belmont.wa.gov.au/discover/places-to-go/ruth-faulkner-library-and-belmont-museum

Claremont Community Hub
327 Stirling Hwy, Claremont, WA, 6010
www.claremont.wa.gov.au/places/community-hub-and-library/

Fremantle Local History Collection
Walyalup Civic Centre, 151 High St, Fremantle, WA, 6160
www.fremantle.wa.gov.au/fremantle-history-centre

Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society of WA
61 Woodrow Ave, Yokine, WA, 6062
https://jhgswa.org.au/

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www.joondalup.wa.gov.au/category/community-and-libraries

City of Kalgoorlie Boulder Local History Archives
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mailbag@ckb.wa.gov.au

Karrinyup Library
Davenport St, Karrinyup, WA, 6018
www.stirling.wa.gov.au/leisure-and-culture/libraries-and-hubs

Nedlands Local Studies Library
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www.nedlands.wa.gov.au/community/libraries/local-history.aspx

Relationships Australia
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www.relationshipswa.org.au/services

Tuart Place
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www.tuartplace.org

Victoria Park Library
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www.victoriapark.wa.gov.au/Around-town/Facilities/Library

Vincent Local History Centre
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library.vincent.wa.gov.au/local-history-centre.aspx

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Pickpockets, from Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens; an illustration by George Cruikshank

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